



Best Things About SP
• Good Schools
• Safe

FOUR AGREEMENTS OF CIRCLE
and listen
judgment
is said in Circle
circle
you can and
you need
also part
versation...

Round's
• Change
• 2014
• more gym
space
(community)
• students
• office
• jobs
• the
• more
part
of the supervision

2. What Peter is said a Circle
Stays in Circle
3. Offer what you can
do for...

IT NEVER GETS
EASIER
JUST GET
STARTED

REALITY CHECK

sponsored by the Sun Prairie Youth and Families Commission
April 30 2014

WHAT'S REALITY CHECK?

REALITY CHECK is a youth-driven, youth-focused after-school event held at Prairie Phoenix Academy (PPA) on April 30, 2014.

- ❖ The event was sponsored by the Sun Prairie Youth and Families Commission.
- ❖ It was designed to uncover important topics, create positive accountability, and connect youth through conversation.
- ❖ Students in grades 8-12 from Cardinal Heights Upper Middle School (CHUMS), Peace Lutheran, PPA, Sacred Hearts and Sun Prairie High School were invited.

WHAT'S REALITY CHECK?

- ❖ Applications were distributed through school staff.
- ❖ Teachers were encouraged to nominate students whose voices might not otherwise be heard.
- ❖ Adults who attended were observers and did not provide input in any way.
- ❖ Transportation was provided to PPA and back to students' neighborhoods.
- ❖ Adults served students pizza and ice cream.
- ❖ Fabulous prizes were awarded.

WHO PARTICIPATED?

46 students participated

- 35 submitted feedback forms
- 30 turned in “closing words” cards
- 5 requested information about joining the SPYFC

6 adults were trained as “witnesses,” including

- City Administrator Aaron Oppenheimer
- Superintendent of Sun Prairie Schools Tim Culver
- City Council member Andrea Gage
- Sun Prairie Youth and Families Commission members Mary Ellen Havel-Lang and Karen Bailey
- PPA Principal, Wendi Tavs



WHAT HAPPENED?

Students addressed three questions in table conversations, engaging with different people each time:

- What are the best things about this community?
- What opportunities are missing?
- What could we do tomorrow?

Students wrote/drew on tables as they explored each question. They transferred important points to sticky notes for sharing with the whole group.

At the end of the event, students shared two thoughts:

- What am I taking away from today?
- What do I want adults to know/remember?

WHAT DID THE MEDIA SAY?

NBC-15 News covered the event

- Interviews with James Pontius and Mary Ellen Havel-Lang were included
- To view, visit: <http://www.nbc15.com/home/headlines/Sun-Prairie-teens-voice-community-concerns-257441341.html>

The Star published an article promoting the event

- The story included comments from Andrea Gage and Mary Ellen Havel-Lang
- To read, visit:
http://www.hngnews.com/sun_prairie_star/news/government/article_4067ee92-af6a-11e3-98ba-0017a43b2370.html

WHAT DID WE DISCOVER?

Students organized their ideas about “best things” and “opportunities” into six main areas:



BEST THINGS: SCHOOL

“Best things” about the school system include:

- CHUMS/PPA/SPHS
- Amount of programs available at the high school to take our extra time and make us productive
- Business education partnership
- College prep, languages, music, technology, sports
- Education resources (teachers/library), tutoring
- In-school opportunities for grade enhancements
- MSAN, GSA support
- Programs are available for LGBT and other diverse groups
- School support
- Variety of different classes to choose from

BEST THINGS: OTHER AREAS



OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION: CITY COUNCIL

TRANSPORTATION

- Infrastructure: sidewalks and bike trails
- More buses for routes; add a metro
- 24/7 transportation; accessible transportation

JOB OPPORTUNITIES and INTERNSHIPS

- More jobs for age 14 and 15; jobs and internships for younger youth

EVENTS and SOCIAL OUTLETS for TEENS

- Not a lot of post-school “social spots” in Sun Prairie
- Need more free, fun programs to do
- We are looking for fun neighborhood/community events
- Roller blading/skate park
- Unused gyms should be open for public use
- Transportation

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION: SCHOOL BOARD

EXTRA and CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- Summer school (enrichment) classes
- Extra (weekend and summer) education
- Glee Club, open gym, field trips
- Career courses, young entrepreneur group

EQUITY

- Support for disability
- Talent and Gifted (TAG) program
- Equal distribution of supplies and space to all levels and genders of sports teams (for example, fields)
- Money to music and arts
- Enforcing school before athletics
- Do more about bullying

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION: STUDENTS

RECYCLING at SCHOOL

SOPHOMORES on SCHOOL BOARD

BETTER MUSIC for HIGH SCHOOL DANCES

- Mature but clean

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of EXTRACURRICULARS and ARTS from
SCHOOL, STUDENTS, COMMUNITY

WRITE LETTERS, DO FLYERS, TALK WITH PEOPLE

CONDUCT A DISTRICT-WIDE SURVEY ON NEEDS

TAKE-AWAYS

“I can make a difference in ways I didn’t know before!”

“Trust the people in our community. They actually care about what we have to say.”

“We can pull together as a community if needed to any time.”

“We as the students have a voice, and we don’t need the grownups to make a change.”

“How to be a better leader and how I am able to change my community.”

“I learned everyone has amazing ideas even if I don’t completely agree.”

“I need to get more involved with the community and make a difference.”

“I really like how I met a lot of new people.”

“Somebody cares about me.”

TO THE ADULTS...

“Teenagers are willing to help change society in Sun Prairie. If you assist us and show us the way to the tools to make change, 70% will use them.”

“Kids want to know what they can do themselves to help in the community.”

“Us kids have voices too, and we are the future, so listen and let us speak.”

“Kids are not just ignorant, we actually do care, even though we sometimes don’t show it. (More kids just need someone to listen.)”

“Our actions speak louder than words. Just because we’re small doesn’t mean we don’t have power.”

“Know that we have a voice, and it should be heard. Also try to start something that we care about.”

“Change must happen.”

APPRECIATION

“I liked how involved everyone was and the passion we had.”

“I liked how it was only the students who talked, and the adults were willing to listen to us.”

“Seeing all these people voicing their opinions was great.”

“Everyone was able to speak their minds.”

“I really liked how I met new friends and learned a lot of things about the community.”

“Everyone here took it seriously and put their best foot forward.”

“How we all came together as a community.”

“The actual important people being here who can make change for us.”

“I liked this a lot. Do it more often!”