

FORTHCOMING

Considering the Future State of Our City

Edited by Zachary Benedict, AIA



To Fort Wayne, with love.

FORTHCOMING

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Forthcoming: Considering the Future State of Our City
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“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”

-Jane Jacobs

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FOREWORD

By Patti Hays

I was a teenager when Alvin Toffler released his book *Future Shock*. In his book, he told me that society was undergoing an overwhelming change. He wrote about information overload and that the pace of change was leaving people disconnected and disoriented. We may be physically in the same place, but that change was so significant that it felt as if we were in an entirely new culture: a future shock.

That was 1970. We had landed on the moon just a year earlier, but we had yet to see a woman elected to a full term in the U.S. Senate or appointed to the Supreme Court. Cigarettes were still being advertised on television. There were no home computers or smart phones, no email, no MTV, no SNL, no GPS or www, no home video games, or Star Wars. How much change has accelerated since 1970!

He later wrote: “The secret message communicated to most young people today by the society around them is that they are not needed, that the society will run itself quite nicely until they — at some distant point in the future — will take over the reins.”

This book, *FORTHCOMING: Considering the Future State of Fort Wayne*, is one attempt to harness those reins and elicit a little of the

brains and imagination of Fort Wayne's emerging voices. What city do they see as part of their future in 2040?

Toffler reminded us that we have “got to think about big things when you're doing small things, so that all the small things go in the right direction.” These 20 authors ask us some of those big and small things.

- How tightly do we hold on to our history and legacy?
- Do we embrace our true identity, all parts of it?
- Can we be more curious and challenge our routine?
- Which is more important: social capital or financial capital?
- Are we only seeking the talent that mirrors those like us?
- How willing are we to test the unknown knowing failure may be the result?

In this city of three rivers, it is apropos to consider the Chinese proverb: “Learning is like rowing upstream; not to advance is to drop back.” We have made progress, but it will be with the full participation of these younger minds to nurture, in all of us, a greater aspiration and future for Fort Wayne.

PREFACE

By Zachary Benedict

The last two years have been difficult for everyone. Many of us have felt isolated, relegated to experiencing the world through endless virtual meetings, curbside services, and clumsy remote work arrangements as we watched more than 850,000 of our neighbors tragically die from a global pandemic. All the while, as we were confined to our homes, it seemed as though we witnessed the demise of the American spirit through our televisions. From the death of George Floyd to the invasion of the United States Capitol, we found ourselves forced to assess our behavior – as a nation, as a community, and as individuals.

There is nothing new about this need for self-reflection. In some ways, it's part of the experiment of democracy. As Paul Harvey once famously said, "In times like this, it helps to recall that there have always been times like these."

The human condition is a stubborn thing. It progresses and regresses in often painful ways. But that process, like these times, isn't unique to our current reality. Tragedy and fear have been constant companions throughout our evolution as a species. And we can find some relief in appreciating the struggles that previous generations have overcome when they felt similar fears and moved

forward with the hope of creating a better world. But how do we start that discussion when the world seems so fractured?

Before we can move forward, before we can attempt to define the “new normal” that so many are desperate to articulate, it seems important that we take a moment to pause – to reflect on where our priorities should be in response to the world we are currently experiencing. More importantly, we need to consider what we’ve learned about ourselves – and how these realizations should shape the future of our communities.

To begin that process on a local level, this project assembled a diverse group of local leaders (economists, lawyers, urban planners, entrepreneurs, artists, politicians, architects, etc.) to explore what ideas they consider to be misunderstood or underappreciated when envisioning the future of Fort Wayne, Indiana. The hope was to offer an assortment of concepts from a wide variety of voices who were passionate about the success of the city and the people it supports.

The result was this collection of essays – 20 ideas from 20 voices outlining 20 ideas that should shape community development for the next 20 years. In some ways, it’s a love letter to Fort Wayne, one that hopes to shape the narrative and leadership of the city moving forward. And while the topics offer a broad range of considerations, they all fall under one central theme.

Forthcoming.

To provide effective leadership, particularly at the community level, this project argues that we need to prioritize the ability to be forthcoming – both in the sense of (a) an ability to envision future events and (b) a willingness to be open, candid, and honest with one another. The more forthcoming we can be about our community (and ourselves) the more successful we can be at cultivating meaningful change.

As we face the anxiety and fear that continues to grow around us, these changes can only begin through the facilitation of honest conversations about who we are and who we want to become.

This project is an effort to start that discussion.

1. ACCURACY

By Kara Hackett

When I landed my first “big city” reporting internship in New York, I remember calling one of my co-editors on our college newspaper staff back in Indiana.

I was telling him about an article I was writing, proving how I was going to be “fair and accurate” by reporting “both sides” of the story.

“Both sides?” he asked. “That’s terrible. There are a thousand sides to every story.”

He was right. Once my initial embarrassment subsided, I began to consider objectivity and accuracy in my work differently than I had before. Instead of thinking about stories as boxing rings for two conflicting ideologies to duke it out, I began to think of stories as lights, illuminating the facts and revealing that which is not easily seen. I also began to think of stories as research projects.

While each report may not contain the myriad of “sides” to every issue, I made it a point in my research to seek out many facts and views, distilling what I found into what I verified and deemed important to craft the most accurate account I could manage. But

as we've seen in 2020, like many years leading up to it: Accuracy in the media is a controversial topic.¹

For decades, the perception of accuracy and, therefore, trust in the American press has been declining.² Just before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S., Gallup and Knight Foundation concluded a study to assess the damage.³ Of 20,000 Americans surveyed, they found that 88% say accuracy is “critical” or “very important” in news reporting. Yet, a majority also say the media is performing poorly at achieving this goal, largely due to “misrepresenting” (52 percent) or “making up” (28 percent) the facts. Sixty-eight percent say they see “too much bias” in news that should be objective as “a major problem.”

While the challenges facing modern media are many,⁴ and while I am implicitly biased, being the managing editor of a news magazine in Fort Wayne, I want to unpack one challenge complicating accuracy in our media and, by extension, our community. What you might be surprised to learn is that, sometimes, the perpetrator behind inaccuracy is that same, errant notion of objectivity I once subscribed to: Reporting both sides of the story.⁵

Take, for example, a headline from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution in the early hours of the 2020 presidential election, when no clear candidate (Donald Trump or Joe Biden) had yet been named: “Trump: I have Won, Biden: It’s not Over.”

¹ American Views 2020: Trust, Media and Democracy," Knight Foundation, Aug. 4, 2020, <https://knightfoundation.org/reports/american-views-2020-trust-media-and-democracy> .

² Brenan, Megan, "Americans' Trust in Mass Media Edges Down to 41%," GALLUP, Sept. 26, 2019, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/267047/americans-trust-mass-media-edges-down.aspx> .

³ Ibid., No. 1, p. 1.

⁴ Cohen, Rhaina; Vedantam, Shankar; Boyle, Tara, "Starving The Watchdogs: Who Fools The Bill When Newspapers Disappear?" *NPR*, last updated April 27, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/04/27/845559713/starving-the-watchdogs-who-fools-the-bill-when-newspapers-disappear>.

⁵ Dean, Walter, "Journalism Essentials: The Lost Meaning of Objectivity," American Press Institute, <https://www.americanpressinstitute.org/journalism-essentials/bias-objectivity/lost-meaning-objectivity>.

While perhaps attention-grabbing, these types of he-said, she-said narratives not only create false equivalencies, but also emphasize the often binary, polarizing viewpoints around a matter (Trump and Biden’s statements) rather than the facts of the matter at hand (votes are still being counted). In doing so, they risk confusing readers and politicizing facts (the election is not over), which should be acceptable to people from both parties.

To improve accuracy in the news, writer and Professor of Journalism at New York University Jay Rosen suggests what we actually need is not more objective news itself.⁶ Instead, we need to remember the role and limits of objectivity in journalism.⁷ While objectivity is critical to the process of reporting — to digging up facts, interviewing multiple sources, and verifying information — presenting the story from this objective, “neither-nor” perspective can end up obscuring facts that are established. Thus, Rosen suggests reporters put in the time and do the hard work of journalism. Then focus their stories on facts rather than the cacophony of voices around them, bringing readers into the process by being transparent about how they reached their conclusions.⁸

As we enter the next era of our community’s growth amidst a historically divisive political climate, our city — like our media — is facing an accuracy crisis. What brought this idea home for me was another product of 2020: A report in Politico called “When the Culture Wars Hit Fort Wayne.”⁹

⁶ Rosen, Jay, "The View From Nowhere: Questions and Answers," *PresThink*, Nov. 10, 2010, <https://pressthink.org/2010/11/the-view-from-nowhere-questions-and-answers/#p4>.

⁷ Nagel, Thomas, *The View From Nowhere*, Oxford University Press, 1986, <https://www.amazon.com/View-Nowhere-Thomas-Nagel/dp/0195056442>.

⁸ Rosen, Jay, "Optimizing Journalism For Trust," *The Correspondent*, April 14, 2018, <https://medium.com/de-correspondent/optimizing-journalism-for-trust-1c67e81c123>.

⁹ Savage, Charlie, "When the Culture Wars Hit Fort Wayne," *Politico*, July 31, 2020, <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/07/31/culture-wars-fort-wayne-373011>.

Written by the Pulitzer-prize-winning journalist and former Fort Wayne resident, Charlie Savage, the story investigates City Councilman Jason Arp’s successful attempt to pass an annual General "Mad" Anthony Wayne Day in Fort Wayne, and it presents an excellent starting point for us to delve into the deeper meaning of “accuracy” in our community. Arp’s Wayne Day resolution, proposed in February 2019, contains several factual errors and mischaracterizations of our city’s namesake, as well as its native tribes. These inaccuracies were clearly outlined in Savage’s report,¹⁰ so I won’t belabor them here. But two among the most prominent were that 1) by capturing Stony Point in the Revolutionary War, Wayne allegedly “foiled a bold British attempt to capture General George Washington,” and that 2) Wayne’s troops subjugated and destroyed the villages of “British-led” native forces, as opposed to a sovereign multi-tribal alliance desperately defending their homeland from invaders.

Upon Arp’s insistence that questioning the merits of Wayne or Wayne Day would not be “patriotic,”¹¹ City Council hastily passed the measure, 6-3, without verifying any of his fact claims. But Savage was not so easily fooled. Along with conducting detail-oriented interviews with Arp and others — both for and against Wayne Day — he also checked Arp’s claims about history with numerous sources, cited in *Politico*.¹²

Among his findings were several problematic revelations, including that Arp’s account of Wayne essentially saving Washington was unsubstantiated — and likely fabricated based on a fictional AMC TV show.¹³ But beyond this blatant inaccuracy and City Council’s blind acceptance of it, what troubles me about Savage’s report is the deeper level of inaccuracy it reveals in Fort Wayne’s community. It’s an inaccuracy that is not cleanly confined

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, No. 11, p. 2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, No. 11, p. 2.

¹² *Ibid.*, No. 11, p. 2.

¹³ *Ibid.*, No. 11, p. 2.

to one erroneous tale or embarrassing blunder, but one that lives among us comfortably, pervasively, and often silently.

Throughout the report, Savage reflects on his own upbringing in Fort Wayne — a city dominated by Wayne's image and trite mentions of his name, yet with little apparent knowledge of the sometimes-uncomfortable history behind our namesake or the tribes he displaced. While it is tempting to say that these issues only afflict people less educated or less interested in accuracy than myself, what strikes me about Savage's story is my own compliance. I, too, grew up in Fort Wayne, so Wayne's name has been around me most of my life without me questioning its backstories or trauma until now. Ignorance is a privilege that those of us who are white in Fort Wayne all too easily accept.

Yet, it is not merely personal negligence that causes Americans to perpetuate inaccurate, incomplete, or sanitized history; it's also a lack of accuracy that has been baked into U.S. historical accounts and monuments by design.¹⁴ In researching the Fort Wayne region, Savage learned the factual history of the Little Turtle Memorial, squeezed between two houses in the city's Spy Run area.¹⁵ While labeled for Little Turtle alone, it is actually a major Native American burial ground, where multiple bodies — including Little Turtle's — were dug up, looted, and displaced a short 100 years or fewer after they were buried. Early residents built houses on the gravesite, which remain today.¹⁶

In a follow-up post to his original story, Savage suggests that calling this site the Little Turtle Memorial for the past 60 years has misled Fort Wayne's community, downplaying the area's actual history, which is obscured, forgotten, and "almost literally covered

¹⁴ "Teaching Hard History: American Slavery," Southern Poverty Law Center, 2018, https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/tt_hard_history_american_slavery.pdf.

¹⁵ Savage, Charlie, "The Buried History of Fort Wayne and Culture War," *CharlieSavage.com*, Sept. 26, 2020, <https://charliesavage.com/?p=2052>.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, No. 17, p. 4.

up.”¹⁷ Case in point, when he asked Mayor Tom Henry about this burial ground in our city being more than just Little Turtle’s gravesite, the Mayor’s response was that he did not know.¹⁸

Cultural amnesia about the hard facts of U.S. history is not unique to Fort Wayne; it’s not confined to white-indigenous relations either. Until 2020, generations of knowledge about systemic racism and slavery had been suppressed in our society — both nationally and locally — as evident in the protests that erupted after George Floyd’s murder.

So why is factual history about the U.S. and Fort Wayne obscured? And why is accuracy a challenging subject for us to broach without being called “anti-American,” as Arp might say?¹⁹ After all, we value accuracy and objectivity in our news,²⁰ so why is accuracy in our history so repulsive?

Author and Professor of History Hasan Kwame Jeffries presents a theory in the 2018 report, *Teaching Hard History: American Slavery*, by the Southern Poverty Law Center.²¹

He writes: “We the people have a deep-seated aversion to hard history because we are uncomfortable with the implications it raises about the past as well as the present. We the people would much rather have the Disney version of history, in which villains are easily spotted, suffering never lasts long, heroes invariably prevail and life always gets better. We prefer to pick and choose what aspects of the past to hold on to, gladly jettisoning that which makes us uneasy. We enjoy thinking about Thomas Jefferson proclaiming, ‘All men are created equal.’ But we are deeply troubled by the prospect of the enslaved woman Sally Hemings, who bore him six children, declaring, ‘Me too.’ Literary performer and educator Regie

¹⁷ Savage, Charlie, "Buried Concerns: City's treatment of Miamis' grave sites, remains traces century of evolving thought," *The Journal Gazette*, Aug. 16, 2020, <https://www.journalgazette.net/opinion/sunday-centerpiece/20200816/buried-concerns> .

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, No. 11, p. 2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, No. 11, p. 2.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, No. 1, p. 1.

²¹ *Ibid.*, No. 16, p. 3.

Gibson had the truth of it when he said, ‘Our problem as Americans is we actually hate history. What we love is nostalgia.’”

If we take the time to question our history — if we transcend the bias we were born into and assume an objective view in processing this information — I believe we will begin to see an accurate path forward amidst these culture wars that divide us. But getting to that point will not be easy. Along with the desire to conceal, omit, avoid, or sanitize historical fact, there’s also the very real desire to heal uncomfortable history prematurely in cities like Fort Wayne — making sure the “suffering never lasts long,” as Jeffries might say.

As the fallout of Wayne Day continued throughout 2019, the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma — Fort Wayne’s displaced residents — appealed to City Council, not to cancel the celebration, but merely to correct the factual inaccuracies about their ancestors in Arp’s resolution.²² City Councilman Geoff Paddock took a sympathetic ear to these requests,²³ but instead of correcting Arp’s original resolution, he did something else. He reached out to Todd Maxwell Pelfrey, Executive Director of the nonprofit History Center in Fort Wayne, for help drafting a new resolution: This time, a holiday to celebrate Native American heritage in the city.

Pelfrey dutifully gathered input from more than 60 tribes and historical experts across the U.S. to draft the resolution,²⁴ which was passed by City Council in Nov. 2019, establishing November as Native American Heritage month.²⁵ But well-intentioned as it may be, Council’s move to establish a second holiday in Fort Wayne before addressing factual inaccuracies in the first is also

²² Gong, David, "Tribe asks to void day for Wayne," *The Journal Gazette*, March 26, 2019, <https://www.journalgazette.net/news/local/20190326/tribe-asksto-void-day-for-wayne>

²³ Gong, David, "City to recognize Native Americans," *The Journal Gazette*, Nov. 20, 2019, <https://www.journalgazette.net/news/local/20191120/city-to-recognize-native-americans>.

²⁴ Todd Maxwell Pelfrey (Executive Director of the History Center of Fort Wayne), interviewed by Kara Hackett, Phone, Thursday, Nov. 12, 2020, <https://www.fwhistorycenter.org>.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, No. 25, p. 5.

problematic. It's a prime example of telling "both sides of the story," while allowing us to evade the facts.

While Pelfrey points out that the new resolution corrects some of Arp's original claims regarding native tribes, unchecked facts about Wayne and other aspects of U.S. history remain in the Wayne Day resolution as part of public record and an annual holiday.²⁶

"We're now 21 months removed from City Council voting on the non-binding Wayne Day resolution, and there still has not been any kind of request for the History Center to review the entire content of it," Pelfrey says.

City Council has mentioned the possibility of retiring the resolution "after the dust settles from the 2020 election."²⁷ But look at what it has taken for us to get to this point. Look at the years, and the letters to the editor,²⁸ and the City Council meetings, and the national media attention, and the local media attention.²⁹ And still, the answer to whether or not verifiable historical fact will be upheld in our community is a solid maybe.

Savage's report says members of the Miami Tribe told City Council that Native American Heritage month resolves their concerns regarding Wayne Day.³⁰ Even so, it should not absolve Fort Wayne's elected officials from the duty of seeking out and defending the historical accuracy of our own community's founding. As novelist, essayist, playwright, and poet James Baldwin once said: "Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it has been faced. History is not the

²⁶ Ibid., No. 26, p. 5.

²⁷ Ibid., No. 11, p. 2.

²⁸ Gardner, John, "Council Resolution Misinterprets our Past," *The Journal Gazette*, March 10, 2019, <https://journalgazette.net/opinion/columns/20190310/council-declaration-misinterprets-our-past>.

²⁹ "City Council Should Rethink Wayne Day," *The News-Sentinel*, April 1, 2019, <https://www.news-sentinel.com/opinion/2019/04/01/news-sentinel-editorial-city-council-should-rethink-wayne-day>.

³⁰ Ibid., No. 11, p. 2.

past. It is the present. We carry our history with us. We are our history. If we pretend otherwise, we literally are criminals.”³¹

Soon after Paddock initially voted to approve Wayne Day in 2019, he received a letter from a retired pastor in his district, requesting a copy of the resolution for fear that it might contain “white nationalist” sentiments.³² Savage reports that Paddock passed the request on to Council Administrator Megan Flohr, who responded: “There’s no win on this one. If it failed, you all would have gotten dragged for not supporting history. But passing it is bringing up these points. No win.”

I would argue that the “win” we can achieve together is building a community, like a respectable news story, based on verifiable fact, as well as another critical element of journalism: Correction.

Cities of the future will not be those that parrot victor’s tales and craft carefully “balanced” measures to quiet dissension, but those that put in the hard work to seek out and wrestle with the unbridled truth, which underpins authentic community growth.³³ For those interested in improving historical accuracy in Fort Wayne, Pelfrey’s team at the History Center is a nonpartisan resource able and willing to help. It is our duty to utilize their knowledge.

Like effective news stories, powerful community narratives are not achieved by refereeing “two sides” of a conflict. They’re achieved by recognizing that a thousand sides exist — perhaps 267,633 sides, give or take. But what unifies the complexity of our many sides is the one element they have in common: Verified fact.

The choice to take accuracy for granted is the choice to remain a city divided against itself.

³¹ James Baldwin, “Black English: A Dishonest Argument” (speech, Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, 1980).

³² *Ibid.*, No. 11, p. 2.

³³ Piiparinen, Richey, “The Inclusive Growth Problem,” Bloomberg CityLab, Oct. 4, 2019, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-10-04/cities-need-to-think-beyond-inclusive-growth>.

2. ALIGNMENT

By Kristin Giant

Road maps know our destination before we start. They know everything about it. The arterial roads that guide you to and away from the destination, the “back way” where perhaps you’ll see more cows but lose an hour. Some of them, especially the ones on our smart phones, can even tell us where we ought to stop along the way. A simple query such as “coffee shop near destination” might dictate a new turn and we might miss something we will never actually miss. Roadmaps know it all.

In some ways, people hire consultants and outside experts like they use GPS or roadmaps. These experts know where they’re going, they know all the best gas stations along the way, they’ll advise the freeway instead of the back roads because they were hired for efficiency after all. These consultants and experts are often brought into our community of Fort Wayne from outside. And, like most underdogs, we’re excited about the prospect of a “shiny object” coming from a bigger geography. We listen. We plot out our course with the destination already in mind. We want to be a regional city! A *national* destination! We want to have one million residents. We want to have venture capital-worthy companies located here. These goals, like the consultants who can show us

the roadmap to get there, are set places in time and space. There are predetermined metrics that will tell us we've arrived. Just like Siri saying, "You have reached your destination."

But I can't help but wonder what is missed when we know the ending before we start.

I remember the thrill in my heart as a teenager going on daylong "road-trips" with my best friends. We loaded into Bennett's old Volvo station wagon with chips, candy, and soda and wandered through the backcountry of South Carolina following our instincts and our curiosity. We would often end up somewhere far from where we planned, shocked and surprised by the brilliant beauty we often overlooked in our day-to-day lives. We worked together to decide what was worth exploring, each of our four voices of equal importance.

So, as we look towards the future of our unique city, I can't help but worry about the cost of using GPS and roadmaps when what we really need is to wander, together, slowly, into the unknown. Encountering each idea for renaissance and innovation with curiosity, humility, and novelty.

There is a temptation to look outward for solutions. What did Des Moines do? How did Cincinnati reclaim that neighborhood? Louisville is a model city for where we're going! We study, we copy, and we start at the end and work our way back. We spend hundreds of thousands of dollars within the nonprofit sector and public sector for strategies and plans, for prescriptions for the symptoms that we don't yet fully understand.

Everywhere you look there are people and companies selling roadmaps. I wonder if this is what it felt like to drive on Route 66 years ago? There are roadmaps for ending hunger, empowering women, creating a pipeline of affordable housing, and for healthy aging. There are "cures" for symptoms that aren't even bothering us as a community. I wonder sometimes if anyone asked for a downtown full of murals? I am so glad this art is there, but sometimes it feels like a city planning manual presented a roadmap

for a “vibrant downtown” and the beautiful mural was the lowest hanging fruit.

Because ultimately what all these maps have in common is a final destination that is already determined. And we buy this map to tell us exactly the path to arrive there. This isn’t a journey where gut instincts are followed, or soft outcomes are accepted or failure becomes the best part of the story. This is a calculated path, starting at point A, ending with point Z. But cities are living organisms because they are home to humans —imperfect, flawed, longing, hopeful, pessimistic, messy humans.

So my question as I look twenty years ahead isn’t “where are we going.” Instead, my core question is: How do we align “who we are” with “who we want to be” and, more importantly, “who we want to feel welcome.” Because as I look at our beautiful and complicated city of churches and strip clubs, our rough and ready city of parks and inconvenient railroad crossings, our complicated city with a fully occupied new adaptive reuse at The Landing and vacant commercial strips in multi-ethnic neighborhoods around the city, our disparate city where the median family income of white residents is \$65,793 and the median family income of Black residents is \$25,230,¹ I can’t help but wonder if we’re not having the right conversations.

Who are we? It’s a complicated question. Who do we want to be? I think that’s simpler. I want Fort Wayne to be a city that is aligned with who we say we are. We say we are a Godly city, with a citywide prayer movement. We say we are a city for families and regularly top national lists for those statistics. We say we have Midwestern values. We pay consultants to tell us who we are, and we have lots of shiny reports and websites that echo their findings. But do we really want to be Des Moines? Or Louisville? Do we want their answers? Or do we just want to be a better version of Fort Wayne?

¹ <http://www.city-data.com/income/income-Fort-Wayne-Indiana.html>

What if we throw out the roadmaps and we fire the GPS consultants and we look within and talk to our neighbors? I think we'll discover that not everyone here feels like they can "make Fort Wayne his or her own." Not everyone here sees themselves in the shiny reports coming out of Chicago arriving on glossy paper.

So why do we turn to GPS and roadmaps? I believe its because in an age of information and short cuts we have forgotten that the journey — as messy and inconvenient as it often is — is worth so much more than the destination. Roadmaps provide inspiring sales pitches for where we *could* be. They whet our appetite for adventure, they stroke our egos (you're just ten simple steps away from being a world class city!!), and they energize us by promising a certain result.

But what I think is best in alignment with Fort Wayne's past and present, is a future where we all lock arms. We all load into the metaphorical Volvo station wagon. We make sure everyone has a seat. Everyone has snacks. Everyone has an equal say. And we take our time. We drive slowly, admiring the shell of International Harvester — learning from the mistakes that were made betting it all on an outside company. We celebrate that they were here, the livelihoods they created, and we ask everyone who was left in the rubble what they wish had been done differently.

We take a left turn that the quiet voice in the backseat points out. We see a memorial for the Native American lives lost through the colonization centuries before. We don't speak for several minutes. Some passengers cry. We admire the beauty of the monument and recommit to studying more. Learning from those who were here first. We celebrate the original culture of our city and we commit to not leaving it in the rear view mirror.

We do a U-Turn and head south. Even though the four-lane thoroughfares of Rudisill, Clinton, South Anthony, and Lafayette were designed to speed us through, we resist the temptation. We slow down. We acknowledge the beauty of every home, we take note of every vacant commercial space, and we remember when Southtown Mall was *the* destination. We reflect on the restaurants,

shops, and markets that are only memories now. We decide that we miss them. The chatter in the station wagon picks up as we all share ideas of what could be. No voice more important than any other. But respectful space held for those who have the most knowledge, the tour guides as it were.

In twenty years, I'd love for our city to have the patina of a road trip. The best memories being those that are the least expected: the barbeque in the gas station, the stranger who helped change our tire, the moment we looked around at our best friends and realized that we wouldn't have picked anyone else to go on this journey with.

In twenty years, I hope we're more aligned. I hope we're the city of churches where no one goes hungry or lacks for friendship or mental health support. I hope we're a city for families where every family can afford their utilities, where every school provides the same quality education, where no possibilities are off limits for any younger person. I hope we're a city of Midwestern values where everyone has an equal chance to work hard, to stay humble, and to experience the American dream. I hope we're a city where innocence is always presumed, and criminal justice is more rehabilitative than punitive. A city where we grow our own food, build our own industry, and invest in one another.

I hope in twenty years we've realized that we don't need to import roadmaps or GPS consultants. I hope in twenty years we've learned to trust where we've come from, where we are, and where we're going and most importantly — everyone in the car.

3. AWARENESS

By Kristin Marcuccilli

In January 2020, I was introduced to some interesting statistics about the manufacturing sector in our eleven-county Northeast Indiana region that have had my nerdy economic development and risk management wheels turning ever since. While it may not seem the most urgent or pressing matter our city and region face, I cannot help but wonder what failing to embrace its significance might mean for Fort Wayne over the course of the next 20 years. A 2019 study conducted by the Community Research Institute (CRI) at Purdue University Fort Wayne found that seven of our eleven counties are in the top 5 percent of all 3,200 counties nationally for concentration of manufacturing employment or wages.¹ The manufacturing sector is so extensive it accounts for roughly 30 percent of jobs in the region. In ten out of eleven counties, that number is closer to 50 percent. According to Rachel E. Blakeman, J.D., of CRI, Indiana's dependence on manufacturing is double the rate of the nation. The National Bureau of Labor Statistics from January 2020 quantifies the region's employment

¹ Community Research Institute, Purdue University Fort Wayne

and wage statistics at 95,356 jobs representing 1,457 employers and average wages of \$51,355 per year.^{2 3}

Our national ranking, as a result of this overwhelming concentration in the manufacturing sector, is astounding. Today, our region can proudly boast the strength of its manufacturing assets, which are highly diversified and fuel our regional economic growth. In banking, we often talk about concentration risk. Certain asset concentrations can bring strength and propel growth; however, they can also become liabilities and even turn into threats. As we consider the significance of this for Fort Wayne and the surrounding region and look to the next 20 years, how impactful is this manufacturing concentration? Why should we care? How do we ensure this manufacturing focus remains a continuous opportunity for delivering prosperity? What could make this diversified strength turn into a threat? To answer these questions, I think it's important that we first become aware of how rapidly and radically the manufacturing sector, like many industries, is changing through what many call the rise of the "Manufacturing Renaissance."

An article from Cerasis defining the Manufacturing Renaissance shares that it "refers to a medieval period in which art, technology, music, design and culture changed drastically from tradition. Most of what our modern world considers the greatest achievements in history come from this medieval time period. This change is exactly what baby boomers are feeling about today's manufacturing industry. It's radically different from what they know, and change is shocking. However, change is a necessary advancement, and society will benefit from the manufacturing industries world-wide change."⁴

A colleague of mine who works for a California-based, high-tech manufacturing company recently shared that one of the

² National Bureau of Labor Statistics

³ U.S. Census Department

⁴ Cerasis, a GlobalFranz Company; *The Manufacturing Renaissance: This Ain't Your Grandpappy's Manufacturing Industry*. Adam Robinson

biggest mistakes a company can make is to hold on to the historical legacy of the organization as its strength. Even worse, he shared, if the broader community holds the same thinking and maintains any level of arrogance to believe they are untouchable, they're wrong. "If we're waiting, we're in trouble," said David Roberts, Chief Innovation Officer for the Indiana Economic Development Corporation.⁵ "Change is happening, and if we simply hunker down, the odds of succeeding through the Renaissance are low," shares Roberts.

Technology is undoubtedly powering the Renaissance, and the levels of agility, learning, and adaptation required to embrace the digital world are overwhelming. As Adam Robinson of Cerasis points out, "Understanding the digital world is like learning a new language, and the nostalgia of the days of past manufacturing are a language that is quickly going out of style."⁶ It is imperative that we become keenly aware, maybe even obsess a bit, about digital transformation. Simultaneously, we should recognize the intersection that this transformation has with our workforce readiness and talent attraction initiatives in and around Fort Wayne. I believe that many often worry that automation is eliminating jobs. John Sampson, former President and CEO of the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, shares "According to analysis by the Chicago Federal Reserve, automation is not reducing manufacturing jobs. Rather, it is driving a change in the characterization of the manufacturing workforce." Sampson continues, "Automation is not the threat. It is a competitive solution. The real threat to us is reluctance and delay in embracing technology and in speedy transition to prepare our workforce with essential skills necessary to compete in a ruthless global marketplace. The strength and legacy of our region in manufacturing is at risk by rapidly emerging technologies which

⁵ David Roberts, Chief Innovation Officer, Indiana Economic Development Corporation

⁶ Cerasis, a GlobalTranz Company; *The Manufacturing Renaissance: This Ain't Your Granddaddy's Manufacturing Industry*, Adam Robinson

demand a skilled workforce. We must confront this head-on as we have done many times before.”⁷

David Roberts of the IEDC agrees. “There will be a moment when certain jobs aren’t coming back, but different jobs are being created,” Roberts says. “The really good jobs in the 4.0 renaissance will likely pay more and will call for digitally upskilled workers who are capable of delivering higher quality and a higher quantity of product.” As a city and a region striving to become a nationally recognized economy, nothing could have a more positive impact or alternatively, a negative blow to our job and wage growth than supporting the success of our manufacturing sector. I will say it again — our awareness of what is happening is key. Moreover, our ability to foster an environment where change brings us energy, technology brings us competitiveness, and where first-class education brings us economic prosperity has never been more pressing.

I’ve wrestled with how, exactly, businesses and individual leaders in our community can support this mindset of change for the 1,457 small and large manufacturers who are working to expand their productivity and impact. Jim Schellinger, Indiana’s former Secretary of Commerce, reminded me why the support of manufacturing is critical to the future of Indiana. “These (manufacturers) are our customers,” Schellinger said.⁸ “We’re talking about hundreds of thousands of jobs. These businesses, both large and small, have shown their loyalty to Indiana. They are investing millions to recreate themselves with technology that will propel us in the global economy. They aren’t investing to eliminate; they’re investing to double or triple their production. We owe it to them to take care of them,” Schellinger adds. Two specific ways come to mind for ways we can directly take care of these transformative manufacturing businesses. The first is to support high-tech initiatives. We may need to support the start-up

⁷ John Sampson, Former President and CEO of the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership

⁸ Jim Schellinger, Former Indiana Secretary of Commerce

community in ways that we haven't before. It may mean investing in an entrepreneur who might have the answer for how a manufacturer reinvents its operation. Perhaps it will mean an investment in venture capital funds which are specifically tied to direct local impact through tech start-ups. In any case, if we haven't been paying attention to the success of innovation and entrepreneurship in the Northeast Indiana region, the time is now. High-tech startups will likely yield one of the leading sources of net new job growth in the Fort Wayne market.

The second way that businesses and individuals can directly influence the success of the Manufacturing Renaissance is through continuous and intentional support of our workforce development initiatives that directly amplify manufacturing and tech jobs. We are blessed with numerous institutions, organizations and academies who are reinventing themselves for the digital economy. Investment of time and money, the promotion of internships, and strategic partnerships in workforce development can and will make a difference to our strength and resilience.

Without question, the pandemic, civil unrest and economic recession of this year have collectively disrupted our nation in ways we have not seen before. Still, 2020 has also brought out the very best in Indiana's manufacturing sector. Many local manufacturers creatively maneuvered their production lines to support the needs of the American public by producing personal protective equipment, hand sanitizer and ventilators. We have witnessed what agility and skill can yield in times of crisis, and it has likely given us a glimpse of what can and will be for our future in advanced manufacturing. Many suggest that the most innovative and agile companies will drive our economy, especially in manufacturing. Those who get stuck in a rhythm will not enable growth and become assets who, over time, shift to liabilities. In the fiercely competitive 4.0 manufacturing economy, the states and regions who are embracing the technology and digital transformation will outcompete those who are unwilling to change. It is my hope that our region, anchored by the steady momentum of Fort Wayne and

its surrounding communities, will become keenly aware of the looming detriment to our local economy and our quality of life if the right people and the right organizations fail to take notice.

Julia Pollak, labor economist at ZipRecruiter, projected that three of the nation's top ten cities at the greatest risk of job loss in a manufacturing downturn are in Indiana.⁹ Something that keeps me up at night (and I hope it keeps you up at night, too) is the death of Fort Wayne by way of vulnerable manufacturers losing their operating models and their businesses. We have 1,457 manufacturers to encourage, influence, and support. We have countless more companies who are waiting to make Fort Wayne their next home. I urge you, as an individual citizen, an influencer or a business owner to act.

⁹ Julia Pollak, ZipRecruiter blog; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, State and Area Current Employment Statistics, Sept 2019; "10 Cities at Greatest Risk of Job Loss in a Manufacturing Downturn."

4. CIVILITY

By Susan Mendenhall

These powerful words were spoken by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during his 1963 speech at the Scottish Rite in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

“We’re through with gradualism, tokenism, see-how-far-you’ve-come-ism. We’re through with we’ve-done-more-for-your-people-than-anyone-elseism. Gradualism has proved to be merely escapism. We can’t wait any longer. Now is the time. Now is the time to get rid of segregation. Now is the time to make the American dream a reality...

“I’m still convinced that if the Negro succumbs to the temptation to use violence in the struggle for freedom, generations yet unborn will suffer the consequences. [Non-violence] should not be dismissed as a weak method. It works on the conscience. It enables us to stand before our most bitter opponents and meet their physical force with soul force...

“We have learned to stand up against the evil system and still not hate in the process. We have discovered that love works miracles. We can say to our opponents we will

match your capacity to inflict suffering by our capacity to endure suffering. We will wear you down by our capacity to suffer and one day we will win our freedom and win you in the process and our victory will be a doubled victory...

“We will develop a divine discontent about discrimination in all its forms, even the subtle form in Indiana... way down South in Fort Wayne...”

“We Shall Overcome! In the successful conclusion of our non-violent revolution... We will speed the day when all men will join hands and sing, free at last.”¹

Although the speech cannot be found in its entirety, Todd Maxwell Pelfrey, Executive Director of the History Center, compiled these excerpts from local news sources at the request of the Fort Wayne Public Art Commission when the Fort Wayne Common Council charged the Commission to create an artwork to commemorate the speech. This charge came in February 2020 — just weeks before the winds of change would blow over America once again during a turbulent year marked by a global pandemic, a polarizing presidential election, the Black Lives Matter movement on the heels of the Me Too movement, and the continued rise of white supremacist militias and wild conspiracy groups.

Over the summer of 2020, the nation lost two of its most revered crusaders for the full participation of people of color and women in economic and civic life. Representative John Lewis (1940-2020) encouraged “necessary trouble” through peaceful protest during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and later became known as the “Conscious of the Congress” during his 33-year service. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg (1933–2020) spent much of her legal career as an advocate for gender equality. When appointed to the Supreme Court in 1993, she became known for her dissents in numerous cases that reflected a

¹ King, Jr., Rev. Dr. Martin Luther. 1963 speech at the Scottish Rite in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Speech excerpts compiled by Todd Maxwell Pelfrey, Fort Wayne-Allen County Historical Society. 2020.

liberal view of the law as well as for her close friendship with the late conservative Justice Antonin Scalia. One of Ginsberg's famous musings was, "You can disagree without being disagreeable."

The lives and legacies of Dr. King, Congressman Lewis, and Justice Ginsberg are notable because of their ability to advance major changes to our nation's power structure while adhering to a code of civility. Although they understood that there are moral absolutes, they also knew that they could not influence complex policy decisions and ingrained cultural attitudes with binary thinking or an uncivil approach.

Merriam-Webster defines civility as a) civilized conduct, especially courtesy, politeness; b) a polite act or expression; or c) training in the humanities.² According to the Institute for Civility in Government,

"Civility is claiming and caring for one's identity, needs, and beliefs without degrading someone else's in the process. Civility is about more than just politeness, although politeness is a necessary first step. It is about disagreeing without disrespect, seeking common ground as a starting point for dialogue about differences, listening past one's preconceptions, and teaching others to do the same. Civility is the hard work of staying present even with those with whom we have deep-rooted and fierce disagreements. It is political in the sense that it is a necessary prerequisite for civic action. But it is political, too, in the sense that it is about negotiating interpersonal power such that everyone's voice is heard, and nobody is ignored."³

As the culture wars simmered throughout the summer of 2020, we were reminded that Fort Wayne is not comfortably

² Merriam-Webster Dictionary. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/civility>

³ The Institute for Civility in Government. <https://www.instituteforcivility.org/who-we-are/what-is-civility/>

situated in flyover country and therefore untouched by conflicts found in bigger coastal cities. There is deep-rooted conflict present here, just like anywhere else. In 1963, Dr. King pointed out that the nation's struggle against racial discrimination was as present in Fort Wayne as it was in the South. In June 2020, this fact became glaringly evident once again when an Allen County Councilman called local Black Lives Matter protesters “uneducated” voters who “unfortunately breed” during a council meeting — a comment that earned national media attention and his swift resignation.⁴ In his article published later that summer in *Politico Magazine* titled, “When the Culture Wars Hit Fort Wayne,” Charlie Savage described the factually incorrect and partisan resolution by City Council to annually celebrate “General ‘Mad’ Anthony Wayne Day,” spurring local discussions about how to both celebrate the heroes of American history and westward expansion while honoring Native Americans who fought against the conquest of their homelands and genocide of their peoples.⁵

The assignment for FORTHCOMING is to envision effective placemaking and community development in the next 20 years. Given the divided world in which we live, civility will prove to be a prerequisite for fully engaging Fort Wayne's residents in the development of our city and navigating difficult decisions about the prioritization of our resources and investment. Intolerance and incivility at all levels will derail our efforts for prosperity and growth.

In his seminal book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, social scientist Robert Putnam contrasts

⁴ Gong, Dave. The Journal Gazette. “Brown comments on voters bring rebuke.” June 19, 2020. <https://www.journalgazette.net/news/local/20200619/brown-comments-on-voters-bring-rebuke>

⁵ Savage, Charlie. Politico. “When the Culture Wars Hit Fort Wayne.” July 31, 2020. <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/07/31/culture-wars-fort-wayne-373011>

“bonding” and “bridging” forms of civil society and social capital.⁶ Bonding activities reinforce feelings of solidarity, resilience, and unity among like-minded people such as churches, political parties, labor unions, business networks, social clubs, and social media. During times of crisis and uncertainty, humans naturally seek out bonding activities. There is, after all, a feeling of safety in numbers. While bonding activities play an important and often healthy role in our community and nation, tipping the scale too far in this direction can lead to division and unrest.

In order to build a more durably ‘civil’ community in Fort Wayne, Indiana over the next 20 years, we will need to prioritize bridging activities that create trust, foster understanding, and strengthen social networks between and among different, diverse groups of people.

1. The Ballot Box — By 2040, Fort Wayne’s civic leadership should reflect the demographics of its citizens.

Our community must continue to develop, elect, and appoint leaders who represent groups that have been underrepresented in the past. In 2020, AVOW (Advancing Voices of Women) led a nonpartisan Women’s Campaign Institute to encourage and train women to run for office and serve on boards and commissions, helping more than 20 women achieve primary election victories. Members of Fort Wayne City Council prepared a list of Black candidates who are willing and qualified to serve on boards and commissions. United Front was initiated to provide training in racial equity and inclusion for local businesses and nonprofits, and influential nonprofits like Greater Fort Wayne, Inc., embraced the need for qualified, representative leadership and began to confront the barriers that prevent some from service. Going forward, we

⁶ Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2001).

must reinforce and sustain the important work of these and other efforts until such barriers no longer exist.

2. The Town Square — By 2040, Fort Wayne should have robust public and private financial systems in place to ensure the equitable design, maintenance, renovation, and programming of spaces and places that connect people to the public life of the community.

Well-designed public spaces encourage people to gather together in times of strife and protest as well as in times of leisure and celebration. Today, these places include (but are not limited to) the Allen County Courthouse Green, Promenade Park, Headwaters Park, Freimann Square and the cultural facilities in Arts Campus Fort Wayne, the Landing, the Embassy Theatre, Grand Wayne Center, Allen County Public Library, and Parkview Field. By 2040, the new Electric Works project will have joined this list of gathering places and aged by 19 years. Too often, we allow our treasured public spaces to get tired. The line item for maintaining public spaces is easily cut when funding is limited. Instead of reinvesting and revitalizing aging spaces, we dedicate dollars and energy toward new, exciting projects and places. Going forward we will need to refocus on keeping these places well-manicured, well-maintained, and fully programmed to optimize their service to the community.

3. The Arts — By 2040, Fort Wayne should have solid public and private financial systems in place to ensure the long-term sustainability and growth of arts, culture, and humanities organizations.

Arts organizations — and the creatives that work for them and are supported by them — gather people together for shared experiences. They transport audiences to different eras, places, lifestyles, or perspectives. They stimulate dialogue about our most complex social challenges. In 2020, our community's growing

network of muralists proactively responded to the Black Lives Matter movement with visual messages of solidarity, peace, and hope. As a result, amid a national protest, Fort Wayne's downtown storefronts stood vibrant and proud amid protests in stark contrast to the boarded-up windows in Indianapolis, Louisville, and other cities. Like parks and trails, arts and cultural programming is a public good and cannot exist for all residents simply by charging admission. During the pandemic, the superpower of arts and culture organizations to bring people together was met with the kryptonite of social distancing. Following the pandemic, these organizations will need support: targeted, intentional reinvestment, and reliable sources of revenue so they can rebuild their people, programs, facilities, and audiences and support the community's recovery.

4. The News Stand — By 2040, Fort Wayne residents will continue to need high quality local journalism.

Thomas Jefferson said, "Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost." The financial frailty of local media organizations, and perhaps more specifically, the continued reduction of competent, committed journalists who examine and report on local issues and decisions made by people in power, should be of great concern to all Fort Wayne residents. Local media organizations are adapting their traditional delivery models of print, radio, and television to a digital age in which more Fort Wayne residents are consuming news on-demand through their phones and tablets, alongside the 24-hour cycle of national news and entertainment options. Fort Wayne's private citizens will need to support local media organizations while they innovate and expand delivery methods, so that we do not limit or lose access to high quality local journalism.

5. The Classroom — By 2040, Fort Wayne’s schools will need to continue to prepare students for civic life.

The majority of funding and curriculum decisions for public schools is largely determined by the State of Indiana, not by local decision makers. However, decisions by the state to reduce class time and resources devoted to bridging activities like field trips, art and music, civics, journalism, student government, and others reduce students’ opportunities to explore and understand the world around them on their own terms. Participation in extracurricular activities gives students an opportunity to build the soft skills of diplomacy, teamwork, and civility that prepare them to be engaged, effective citizens. Although these soft skills are more difficult to quantitatively evaluate than standardized reading and math scores, they are equally important for a durably “civil” society and functioning democracy.

Founded at the confluence of three rivers, Fort Wayne — or Kekionga, as it was named by the Miami people — has long been a gathering place for diverse peoples. As such, our great city’s history is defined as much by its conflicts as it is by its triumphs. Without a doubt, Fort Wayne’s leaders and residents will experience conflicts large and small over the next 20 years. We will all be better equipped to face them if we nurture a culture of civility today.

5. CONNECTION

By Dan Baisden

When we invest in a place — either our home, a business, or a neighborhood — we do so at the risk of betting on the strength of that community's economic and social fabric. This investment is a bet on a community's ability to use capital to attract more resources, recognize opportunities, and produce value, so our investment will remain sound. While these are admirable attributes a place can provide, it requires the attention, cohesion, and collective determination of the community to ensure that the existing fabric can absorb more capital. The old saying "if you build it, they will come" from Kevin Costner and a 1989 box office hit is an oversimplification of how community development works. A place can either be thriving and vibrant or empty and grey. When communities improve the ability to use capital effectively, to transform their surroundings, they build physically and emotionally better places — more street life, stronger neighborhoods, and an increased sense of belonging. It is how we are connected to a place that determines the outcome, and that connection has become more important than ever after the year that was 2020. One may ask, why is connection so critical to the future of Fort Wayne? A connection is forming social and strategic ligaments that bind

neighborhoods together, allowing capital to be effectively transformed and strengthening the community fabric. It requires more than an initiative or two; you simply cannot obtain this by building a new school or repaving a street. While physical investments help, connection requires social awareness and cooperation between residents, leaders, and businesses who work together, share information, take collective action, form networks, and invest in their place. In a diverging world in ideology and thought, a connection may be the most crucial investment we can make.

Social Capital and Connection

The basic idea of social capital is that networks, where they exist, provide value, and it is in the connection among individuals where reciprocity and trust in one another arise. In his magnum opus, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of the American Community*, Robert Putnam addresses the idea of social capital and its role in community building. He notes, "What really matters from social capital and civic engagement is not merely nominal membership, but active and involved membership."¹ Putnam's ideas regarding the fraying of connections have garnered some criticism, but it remains hard to argue that social capital is irrelevant to a community's strength. He identifies multiple ways in which neighborhoods can build upon existing social capital, including the idea that problems are easier to solve when there is less opposition and more connection between neighbors, which results in safer streets and improved social environments. Besides, our awareness of how we are connected to one another improves our social and democratic institutions' quality. He finally posits that social capital is responsible for our health and well-being because social

¹ Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 58.

connection requires human contact. As social creatures, happiness is expressed both psychologically and biologically.

In the must-read book entitled *Why the Garden Club Couldn't Save Youngstown*, author Sean Safford, who builds his thesis on Putnam's findings, shares that connections born through social capital are critical to helping a community navigate change and uncertainty. As we all have discovered in 2020, certainty is never a given. Safford shares that when both Youngstown and Allentown faced economic upheaval in the 1970s and 80s, the city's social networks were the critical component to revitalization. In Youngstown, stakeholders from various businesses not related to the steel industry and neighborhood groups were not invited to the table to steer the community through loss. The constituency that held many pieces together began to fall apart by creating their own visions of what could become. In Allentown, social capital played center stage as old social and economic power structures collapsed, and alternative organizations arose to bridge the gaps and create a more diversely organized community. In his conclusion, Safford argues that the first responsibility of those in power in any crisis is to address basic survival first. Subsequently, attention must turn to sociological questions such as how identities and interests will sort themselves out. Policies should target strengthening the bridging of networks and reducing conflict.² While this essay is not comparing Fort Wayne to Youngstown, it is crucial to recognize the role social capital plays in the revival of a city's growth and, more importantly, her sustainability over time.

The Importance of Social Connection

At the outset of quarantine, when the world changed in a matter of days and many Americans found new ways of working and educating, there was sudden importance placed on connections and

² Sean Stafford. *Why the Garden Club Couldn't Save Youngstown: The Transformation of the Rust Belt* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 147.

place. While not all families could work remotely, many had to ask where there were ample places for their children to play while going to school online. Was the street to the park safe, and were there friendly neighbors who had children the same age? Self-isolation required new technologies to be introduced in the home. Many extended lunch breaks between Zoom meetings were spent exploring the streets and alleys of the neighborhood that often were relegated to the landscape of their rearview mirror. For a short while, Fort Wayne residents gathered at the end of their driveways with their grill cooking hot dogs and burgers for neighbors or sitting on the front porch keeping an eye on the neighborhood as spring turned into summer. In late March, the city promoted a nightly event that citizens could enjoy from their front yard by inviting everyone to wave to their neighbors, a story that made national news within twenty-four hours.³ In the blink of an eye, there was greater importance placed on the neighborhood and existing connections. Social interactions and familiar neighborhood landmarks became sources of comfort and security for residents. Forrest and Kearns argue that "the neighborhood itself becomes an extension of the home for social purposes and hence extremely important in identity terms."⁴ Instead of separating home and office, they molded into one, and the neighborhoods we all lived in became characters in our daily Instagram story updates, assuring friends and family we were fine in the new normal.

When a connection is not apparent, dire consequences in the form of isolation can cause health concerns, a topic that has been taken for granted until recently. Dr. Vivek Murthy, the Surgeon General of the United States, recently published several years' worth of work highlighting research showing that isolation is not a

³ Elassar, Alaa. "An Indiana City Is Asking Its Residents to Go Outside Nightly and Wave to Their Neighbors." CNN. Cable News Network, March 28, 2020. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/28/us/fort-wayne-wave-neighbors-coronavirus-wellness-trnd/index.html>.

⁴ Ray Forrest and Ade Kearns, "Social Cohesion, Social Capital and the Neighbourhood." *Urban Studies* 38, no. 12 (2001): 2125–43.

part of our human experience. Murthy notes, "humans have survived as a species, not because we have physical advantages like size, strength, or speed, but because of our ability to connect in social groups, exchange ideas, coordinate goals, and share emotions." When this connection does not exist, increased isolation creates adverse effects on an individual's health, well-being, and the greater community. One study found that loneliness can be as damaging to a person's health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day, a problem that is especially relevant in our communities that are aging.⁵ A 2018 study from AARP of adults 45 and over found that the top predictor of loneliness is the size and diversity of an individual's social network.⁶ That same year, UK Prime Minister Teresa May created the first cross-governmental strategy to tackle the impacts of loneliness, citing that general practitioners in the nation are seeing between one and five people a day suffering from such, "which is linked to a range of damaging health impacts, like heart disease, strokes and Alzheimer's disease." Research has found that improved social capital in an individual's life is created through positive relationships, including: a sense of community, which is a crucial assessment positively associated with individual well-being;⁷ perceived social cohesion for young families with children;⁸ increased trust and participation through bridging social capital,⁹ and frequent interaction with neighbors, which are

⁵ The "Loneliness Epidemic." Official web site of the U.S. Health Resources & Services Administration, January 10, 2019. <https://www.hrsa.gov/enews/past-issues/2019/january-17/loneliness-epidemic>.

⁶ Dahl, Stacia. "Neighborhood Connections Key to Countering Social Isolation." *Montana*, September 26, 2018. <https://states.aarp.org/montana/neighborhood-connections-key-to-countering-social-isolation>.

⁷ Farrell, Susan J., Tim Aubry, and Daniel Coulombe. "Neighborhoods and Neighbors: Do They Contribute to Personal Well-Being?" *Journal of Community Psychology* 32, no. 1 (2003): 9–25.

⁸ Freiler, Christa. Rep. Why Strong Neighbourhoods Matter: Implications for Policy and Practice. Toronto, ON, 2004.

⁹ Oshio, Takashi. "Which Is More Relevant for Perceived Happiness, Individual-Level or Area-Level Social Capital? A Multilevel Mediation Analysis."

associated with higher assessments of personal well-being.¹⁰ While these may seem overly simplistic, the benefits of neighborhood connections as a tool to combat loneliness is critical to improved life chances for residents.

Connection is Possible

The good news is that there are a few solutions to ensure residents of Fort Wayne can have access to create the connections desired. One of the most notable is the creation of "Third Places," a phrase coined by sociologist Ray Oldenberg. A third place is a physical location where people spend time between home (first place) and work (second place). These are places where people connect, exchange ideas, build relationships, and have a good time. Some have referred to third places as the "living room of society." Sociologist Eric Klinenberg, who wrote *Heat Wave* and *Palaces for the People*, agrees with the importance of such places for the health and vitality of a community and goes on to re-define much of this as "social infrastructure." These places include libraries, schools, playgrounds, parks, pools, sidewalks, plazas, community gardens, and other public spaces that bring people together. Social infrastructure or third places themselves are not social capital, but they are the physical infrastructure (buildings and public spaces) necessary to assist social capital in developing. By investing in and ensuring third places are accessible to all residents, we can strengthen social networks, critical to building healthy neighborhoods, and strong connections for a sustainable Fort Wayne.

Another possible solution to ensuring connection continues to thrive is through research and understanding. Fort Wayne is in

Journal of Happiness Studies 18, no. 3 (2016): 765–83. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-016-9752-y>.

¹⁰ Farrell Powdthavee, Nattavudh. "Putting a Price Tag on Friends, Relatives, and Neighbours: Using Surveys of Life Satisfaction to Value Social Relationships." *The Journal of Socio-Economics* 37, no. 4 (2008): 1459–80.

a great position to foster the social well-being of neighborhoods and residents through the continued use of planning, policy, and community development. Taking the time and effort to map the city's social and human capital and measure how they are connected to one another can be critical to ensuring the fabric can absorb new capital, build assets, and make changes easier to navigate. With the knowledge that social capital can be crucial to public health and well-being, building such a research strategy could be an essential way to help the community thrive and address past harms, while building a more equitable, resilient Fort Wayne. We cannot expect residents to form social capital until we understand where connections in the community exist. Only then, when people can attune to and feel the connection, are they more inclined to participate in actions that help improve their surroundings. This inclination can manifest through volunteering, neighborhood pride, and being engaged through civic dialogue and debate. Social connection is known to increase neighborhood safety, provide support, and strengthen resilience.¹¹ Investing in ways to build connections throughout Fort Wayne's many neighborhoods may be the most critical strategy we can employ to strengthen those neighborhoods and improve the lives of residents.

¹¹ Marmot, M. and Wilkinson, R. (2005). *Social Determinants of Health*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

6. DELIGHT

By Ellen Cutter

My favorite way to experience a community is to walk it, and for no other reason than it brings me great joy. It centers me. As I've had kids, advanced in my career, and gotten older, my life has become more structured, scheduled, and experienced through technology. As my feet wander, my mind wanders, too. What is it about great neighborhoods and public spaces that make us want to stay? Why do they make us happy and draw us in?

I believe that great neighborhoods and public spaces must strike the right balance along two continuums. First, there must be vibrancy and opportunities for social connection, but also a sense of personal privacy and intimacy. Second, they must provide a level of efficiency and utility, but also support investments that might otherwise be dismissed as frivolous or unneeded.

At the intersection of public spaces, frivolousness, and intimacy — for me — is great joy and delight. Here are some examples:

- *The sunscreen dispensers at Promenade Park:* I have never in my life seen one of these, and as I slathered sunblock on my daughters last summer, I mumbled a word of thanks to whoever figured out how to keep those in the budget.

- *Alleyway and sidewalk patios*: Some of my most cherished memories in Fort Wayne are sitting outside with my husband, at a neighborhood joint, catching up over a cup of coffee or a beer.
- *Walking to work*: I'm alone with my thoughts, within a public space, and transporting myself much slower than a car would otherwise transport me. It's my favorite indulgence.
- *Fort Wayne Rocks*: It's silly. There's a Facebook page where people can post photos of found hand-painted rocks that have been hidden around the city. To find a painted rock is such an unexpected surprise, you snap a photo, and then you let it go and wait for someone else to find it.
- *Public art*: It's not only beautiful, but it makes us feel and think and imagine and consider possibilities.
- *Little Free Libraries*: Whenever I see one, I stop to look what's available. Our public libraries do an amazing job. Little Free Libraries are like pop-up book clubs, usually with offbeat reads.

I am an urban planner and researcher by trade, and it took me nearly two decades to understand the magic in the dynamic between what is public, frivolous, and intimate.

When considering what our community should strive to be 20 years in the future, how often do we consider how our neighborhoods and public spaces could make us happier, more delighted?

We are starting to trust that instinct more as a city, and I hope it grows in the coming years.

Happy now?

The Gallup-Sharecare Well-Being Index scores and ranks 186 communities across the nation according to five elements of well-

being. Over the last decade, the national Well-Being Index score declined from 66.5 to 61.2. In short, we are finding it more difficult to manage our health, money, and relationships. Fort Wayne ranked 153 (of 186 communities) with a score of 60.3, and our community's ranking in the five elements of well-being are outlined below.

- *Financial*: managing your economic life to reduce stress and increase security (#108)
- *Purpose*: liking what you do each day and being motivated to achieve your goals (#120)
- *Physical*: having good health and enough energy to get things done daily (#134)
- *Social*: having supportive relationships and love in your life (#184)
- *Community*: liking where you live, feeling safe, and having pride in your community (#141)

Our public, community life has a tremendous impact on personal well-being. Things like being able to bike or kayak or ice skate; having somewhere to get a cup of coffee with a friend; lighting and appropriate density and relationships with neighbors that make us feel safe; liking and having pride in your neighborhood and your city. So many small considerations can have an incremental impact on our well-being, either in a positive or negative way. How can our public investment make a difference in the private lives of our friends and neighbors? It is with this backdrop in mind that I'd suggest: how our public spaces take shape in Fort Wayne could play a role in making us happier. Certainly, it's something to consider.

Managing Public Spaces

In "The Tragedy of the Commons," economist Garret Hardin underscores that there are a whole set of societal issues for which there are no technical solutions.¹ When so much of our economy today is based on "disrupting" everything — dating, dog-walking, banking, vacuuming, you name it — with technical solutions, it is a welcomed reminder of the role our individual and collective humanity plays in society. The article was published in 1968, and he was talking about nuclear warfare. Very cheerful.

Hardin goes on to consider how people (rather than technology) must manage the challenges of "the commons." He writes that "the logic of the commons has been understood for a long time, perhaps since the invention of private property in real estate." Once land was made private, it also (by definition) made scarcer the public realm. Hardin discusses the challenges of managing the commons, as scarcity and competition can eventually lead to degradation of public spaces.

Economists suggest that we are too self-interested to hold one another accountable. When it is everyone in the commons' responsibility to (let's say) throw away your own garbage, throwing away garbage can quickly become no one's responsibility. Public spaces can be difficult to manage and chaotic, because they are populated with people. In this regard, it becomes awfully tempting to look to technical solutions to apply some control the public realm. At what point does control sterilize the commons and erode the joy we take from it? There are a host of measurements we can track to assess community goods and services. Sometimes nothing can replace a good old-fashioned gut check: does this feel right for our community?

¹ Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," *Science* 162, no.385 (1968):1243-1248.

Sidewalk Labs

Take Google's Sidewalk Labs, a technology company that is "reimaging cities to improve quality of life."² In the fall of 2017, Sidewalk Labs won an RFP issued by Waterfront Toronto, a local nonprofit that manages the ownership and redevelopment of 800 acres of Port property on behalf of numerous government partners. The property is nestled between downtown and the lakefront, cut off by a major expressway, and largely undeveloped.

Sidewalk Lab's initial development proposal was for a 12-acre mixed-use neighborhood named Quayside, promising to be "the world's first neighborhood built from the internet up."³ The proposal noted that, "With heightened ability to measure the neighborhood comes better ways to manage it. Sidewalk expects Quayside to become the most measurable community in the world."⁴ Feedback from residents noted that the development did not look or feel like the rest of Toronto, and Sidewalk was not necessarily concerned with Quayside fitting into the larger city, but rather conceptualized this as the beginning of a city within itself. As the project evolved, concepts were floated exceeding 100 acres. Quayside would be sleek and modern, featuring a sustainable micro-grid, multi-story buildings with terraces, heated streets and sidewalks to melt the snow, and signaling technology to prioritize pedestrians and bikers over vehicular traffic (including driverless cars). Further, thousands of jobs were promised, a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (over typical development) by 98%, and 40% of residential units below market rate.⁵ How could they deliver this?

² "Sidewalk Labs," Sidewalk Labs, accessed October 22, 2020, <https://www.sidewalklabs.com/>.

³ Google, "Sidewalk Labs Request for Proposals No. 2017-13," n.d., <http://www.passivehousecanada.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/TO-Sidewalk-Labs-Vision-Sections-of-RFP-Submission-sm.pdf>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ "Home," Sidewalk Toronto, June 10, 2020, <https://www.sidewalktoronto.ca/>.

Bloomberg reported, “Normally, Waterfront Toronto has spearheaded master plans for the Port Lands area, procuring developers and partners to fulfill the visions it has drawn, ostensibly in the public interest. But in fall 2017, Sidewalk Labs and Waterfront Toronto formed a joint entity called Sidewalk Toronto, which is now responsible for leading the planning, funding, and development of the site.” This caused many to wonder: in doing so, what did Waterfront Toronto potentially give away?⁶

Public private partnerships are common and usually necessary to jumpstart investment in a struggling area. Local government will invest in infrastructure or phase-in property taxes over time. These are traditional incentives. Sidewalk Toronto is the first instance I can recall where, as part of a public private partnership, data-gathering was potentially brokered as part of the deal. As it turns out, building a neighborhood from the internet up reaps a goldmine of data that can be mined — not only to optimize services — but also sold to third parties (or back to the government itself) or used to influence personal use and decision-making in public spaces.

The residents of Toronto decided they preferred the messiness and inconveniences brought by a public sphere, over technology solutions and privacy infringement. Earlier this year, Toronto pulled the plug on the Sidewalk Toronto’s redevelopment plan for Quayside.

Open Access

Again, great neighborhoods and public spaces must strike a balance along two spectrums: (1) vibrancy and social connection versus privacy and intimacy, and (2) efficiency and utility versus the “extras” and the “frivolous.” And, in hashing out the friction points that can arise in the public realm, people-led solutions matter.

⁶ Laura Bliss, “How Smart Should a City Be? Toronto is Finding Out,” Bloomberg, September 7, 2018. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-09-07/what-s-behind-the-backlash-over-sidewalk-labs-smart-city>

We will not know what will add delight and happiness to the day-to-day lives of Fort Wayne's residents unless we ask and unless we listen. Efforts to reinvest in the city should be led with a people-first approach. I am so encouraged by the work I've seen the community produce in this regard over the last few years. It must be continued and amplified.

Delight in the Future

Our community life has a tremendous impact on personal well-being. As the Gallup research shows, this is an area of opportunity for Fort Wayne to improve and doing so would pay dividends for our friends and neighbors.

Fort Wayne is experiencing growth that it has not seen in decades, it is now a top growing metro area in the Midwest. It is growing faster than Columbus, Omaha, or Minneapolis-St. Paul. We will be in a fortunate position to reinvest in and reshape our public spaces. Certainly, those investments are evident today. In addition to more traditional aspects of planning like traffic and stormwater management, we have the opportunity to attend to the connection between public spaces and personal happiness.

What does this look like? It means taking seriously the concern of Southeast Fort Wayne residents over the lack of coffee shops, restaurants, or places to host weddings or baby showers. It means painting piano keys to stripe a crosswalk, as was done to celebrate the heritage of the Packard Park neighborhood. It means finding a way to build out bike and sidewalks lanes, even when it would be cheaper not to.

As Fort Wayne looks forward to the next 20 years, we should continue to put people at the forefront of planning and empower neighborhoods to make changes and advocate for what will their residents happy. They know best.

7. EMPATHY

By Uzma Mirza

Today, we live in a social mosaic¹ of communities with diverse religious traditions and cultures within the palette of the Environment. In a world with increasing national and global conflict, it is vital that a strong bonding essence is woven in the interstitial spaces of a city's mosaic — a pattern of diverse communities which includes the Environment — the health of which is critical to avoid a city's decay. This bonding essence is the ingredient of empathy² — and its reinforcing characteristics —

¹ The New Oxford American Dictionary, ed. Angus, Stevenson and Christine A. Lindberg, 3rd edition. (Oxford University Press, 2018), s.v. “Mosaic” – (n) “A combination of diverse elements forming a more or less whole...a variegated pattern; (v) combine (distinct or disparate elements) to form a picture or pattern.” (A metaphor to exemplify a social construct of communities in a city through observation and notions of multi-culturalism as seen in the fabric of cities).

² The New Oxford American Dictionary, ed. Angus, Stevenson and Christine A. Lindberg, 3rd edition. (Oxford University Press, 2018), s.v. “Empathy” - (n) the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. ‘Empathy’ as compassion and mercy practiced under all Prophetic traditions of the Abrahamic faiths. In the author’s Muslim tradition, empathy is a common thread in the 99 attributes of God particularly the six Divine attributes: AlRahman (The Compassionate), ArRahim (The Merciful), ALLatif (The Gentle), ash Shakur (The Thankful), AlHalim (The Mild) and AsSabur (The Patient). Complimented by the notions of empathy by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. Wikipedia: Empathy is the capacity to place

which is the thread that can sustain the diversity of a city. This ingredient has never been more needed than today, as we see the rise in systemic racism,³ in cultural and religious intolerance, and the exponential rise of our carbon footprint because of unsustainable human activity. This rise is inducing climate change, natural habitat loss, and the rise of zoonotic diseases and inevitably threatening humankind's very existence.⁴

Today, most cities reflect a global mosaic which should be an inclusive and heterogenous microcosm in a city — not a homogeneous singularity. Empathy has reinforcing ingredients that can strengthen — and think outside of the box — the bonds amongst diverse communities. Likewise, the notion of moral imagination⁵ — the culture practices and religion that shape a community in a city — is a form of empathy. It recognizes the complexity and heterogeneity of a community's spaces, giving value and tapping the capacity of all human beings. In business practice, moral imagination is the ability to be simultaneously ethical and successful by thinking out-of-the-box.⁶ So, can humans look beyond the monetary value of someone in their decision making and see the effect of their decision on personal growth? Likewise, the city must see the value of all its diverse communities.

Furthermore, if cultivated, empathy can stimulate characteristics of generosity, equity, balance of the mean, and inclusivity amongst interstitial spaces amongst different races (and

oneself in another's position and feel what they are feeling. Definitions of empathy encompass a broad range of emotional states.

³ Heather, McGhee, interview on her book *The Sum of Us*, by CBS This Morning (Black History Month), *The Economics of Racism*, February 15, 2021.

⁴ Catherine, Hayhoe, interview by CNN/Fareed Zakaria, "Climate Weirding" (She is the co-director of Texas Tech University Climate Center and has been named a UN champion of the Earth), February 21, 2021.

⁵ "Empathy" - a form of moral imagination and the fifth element of "Emotional Intelligence" as defined by Daniel Goleman, an American psychologist who defined five elements critical for a good leader.

⁶ Drumwright, Minette E., and Patrick E. Murphy. 2004. "How Advertising Practitioners View Ethics: Moral Muteness, Moral Myopia, and Moral Imagination." *Journal of Advertising* 33 (2): 7-24.

genders) and within a community; dismantle fear of the “other”⁷; dissolve discrimination, racial tensions and bigotry; and contribute to the reduction of our carbon footprint⁸ in environmental practice to sustain earth — a city’s home.

Also, empathy should be integral to city planning and charitable or philanthropic development, by including voices from diverse community traditions on boards or as consultants. This use of empathy can strengthen the interstitial spaces foreseeing potential decay of a community. If a disease or problem in a city is not addressed — i.e., poverty, systemic racism, inequities — we will see financial stress and a rise in inequity in accessibility of educational and technological skills available to citizens in a city. Let’s recall how in physics “every action has an opposite and equal reaction” or in theology “do unto others what you would want done unto yourself.”

Moreover, empathy entails generosity and can enable a city to maintain a balance between extremes of excess and deficiency in exercising human abilities about wealth, in giving and taking. Aristotle has said that a generous person — and by extension the city — can result, because a generous person will give correctly in accord with their means with pleasure and acquire wealth from the right sources.⁹ However, such a condition can derail if markets that erode the health, safety, and morals of a city are supported, markets that are not a public good.

Furthermore, empathy can evoke the awareness of the shared historical interconnectedness amongst diverse traditions, in giving, taking and reciprocating of wealth from market economies to

⁷ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978)

⁸ According to WHO, a carbon footprint is a measure of the impact your activities have on the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) produced through the burning of fossil fuels and is expressed as a weight of CO₂ emissions produced in tonnes. Carbon footprint calculators from WWF, TerraPass (includes calculator for companies and events) or the UN. The carbon footprint is a critical way to understand the impact of a human behavior on global warming.

⁹ ARISTOTLE: NICHOMACHEAN ETHICS, Book IV Generosity, Trans. 2nd edition, Terence Irwin (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1999)

philanthropic action. This use of empathy recognizes a community's duty of care and inclusivity in the maintenance, justice, and future of their city. Moreover, the notion of philanthropy being commonality amongst diverse communities — entailing moral action of the mean (balance) - can further enrich a city's wealth distribution, often called “the social history of the moral imagination.”¹⁰ In the Muslim tradition, the notion of giving means purification of oneself and one's wealth entailing constant gratitude to God and empathy for others, since all creation are “gifts” from God. The three main instruments of giving are *Sadaqah* (voluntary charity), including a smile, removing a harm in someone's way, or planting a tree; *Zakat* (compulsory charity); and *Sadaqah Jariah* or a *Waqf* (trust) is a perpetual charity through the development of a sustainable project, sustaining community or raising a virtuous child, where blessings continue after death. Intrinsic to the Muslim tradition, giving is an opportunity rooted in thankfulness and the practice of the receiver's right that was taken away by a giver's capacity to give wealth. Hence, an equal transaction ensues and reciprocates in manifold ways — and the social capital of community is reinforced. Similarly — in a way — Marcel Mauss observed reciprocation with tribal communities.¹¹ In the Jewish tradition giving is called *Tzedakah*, which means justice or equity where giving is to the poor fueled by fairness and justice, in order to fix a social imbalance, which is emphasized by the ancient Jewish concept to “repair the world” or *tikkun olam*.¹² Also, capacity to have empathy for another and be generous is deeply rooted in the Christian tradition in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Furthermore, all Abrahamic prophets and philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato and others, emphasized the strength of empathy in mercy, compassion, and generosity as quintessential

¹⁰ Robert L. Payton and Michael P. Moody. *Understanding Philanthropy. Its Meaning and Mission*. (Indiana University Press, 2008)

¹¹ Marcel, Mauss, *The Gift*, (London/New York: Routledge Classics, 2002)

¹² Wangari, Maathai. *Replenishing the Earth*. (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2010)

ingredients that unites people. I am reminded of the Covenants or peace treaties made by the Prophet Muhammad (pubh) for peaceful co-existence with Christian¹³ and Jewish communities in the world, over 1,400 years ago.¹⁴ Moreover, is not the Constitution of America like a covenant between a nation and its people — for the people — under God We Trust?

The Environment is an integral part of the interstitial spaces of a city's mosaic, financial growth, stability, and a city's home palette and is deserving of empathy for its ecosystems and wildlife, as stewards not as conquerors. This use of empathy will evoke the wisdom to recognize the duty of care required in order to reduce our giant carbon footprint and use natural resources with balance, preserve natural habitats and share the Environment as wealth and a gift with future generations, see renewable energies as viable sources of power, and discern the dangers and benefits in the proximity to wildlife habitats to prevent the rise in zoonotic diseases, i.e. COVID-19. However, a city that continues in unsustainable human activity that exploits and destroys its natural habitat and its biodiversity for wealth accumulation becomes vulnerable to decay and abuse and will embrace any market that will give it financial stability; it is a city whose duty of care is value in profit — not the value of a city's people, diverse traditions, and its Environment. If a city does not resound a duty of care, why should others? In Japanese tradition, *Mottainai* (“do not waste”) applies to objects, resources, and time, and means gratitude for the blessing of what has been given by God and the responsibility of using resources wisely.¹⁵ In the Muslim tradition, “And do not waste, for God does not love the wasteful.”¹⁶

¹³ John A. Morrow, *The Covenants of the Prophet Mubammad with the Christians of the World for peaceful existence*. (USA: Angelico Press/Sophia Perinnis, 2013).

¹⁴ “Covenants of Co-existence.” International Museum of Muslim Cultures. 201 E Pascagoula Street, Jackson, MS 39201 USA. June 28, 2019-April 2021 (Online: <https://muslimmuseum.org/covenants-coexistence>).

¹⁵ Wangari, Maathai, *Replenishing the Earth* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2010)

¹⁶ Quran, trans. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 6:141 (Maryland: Amana Publications, 2002)

Likewise, for me as a Muslim woman, two Names of God resound the essence of empathy. They are the Merciful (*al Rahman*) and the Compassionate (*al Rahim*),¹⁷ where both words have the same root word ‘to be merciful’ and a common root stem R-H-M, which is the triconsonantal root word indicating mercy. In addition, the origin of the root word for mercy and compassion is the Arabic word for womb (*Rahme*), implicitly and explicitly expressing that love of the Creator for humankind and all creation is greater than the unconditional love of a mother for her child and a source of protection like a womb protects the child. Hence, the essence of empathy can foster growth in people and will be the water to the fires we make. Empathy, this essential ingredient that is common to diverse traditions, can strengthen the bonds amongst diverse communities and remind us of our duty of care to the natural world of the environment.

Finally, the survival of the city should not be a Darwinian “survival of the fittest,” but the maintenance of its mosaics’ strength with the essence of empathy amongst its diverse communities and their traditions, which includes the Environment. The ingredients of empathy have always been components of the democratic process and American society. This fact was noticed by the sociologist, historian, and political scientist Alexis de Tocqueville in the 1830’s in his *Democracy in America*.¹⁸ Essentially, if the interstitial spaces of a city espouse the essence of empathy in all its interstitial relationships and transactions, it can become a beacon of light and hope¹⁹ upon a permeable hill that resplendently shines bright for the nation — to be, or not to be, is the question.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Robert L Payton and Michael P Moody. *Understanding Philanthropy. Its Meaning and Mission*. (Indiana University Press, 2008)

¹⁹ The New Testament. Trans. out of original Greek, by His Majesty’s Special Command. (London, UK: Printed by G.E. Eyre and W. Spottiswoode, Printer’s to the Queen’s most excellent Majesty, M.DCCC.LII. 1853). Mathew 5:14

8. GUMPTION

By Courtney Tritch

The Fort Wayne community lacks gumption. And we know it.

While Fort Wayne has made impressive strides in the last decade, changes have been largely structural. Fort Wayne is willing to change its buildings — although even that took time — but we are unwilling to examine how our culture is holding us back. We talk a good game about the need for talent and population growth, but lip service without courage and intentionality will not move the needle.

Some may remember Jim Clifton, the chairman of the Gallup organization who the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership brought to Fort Wayne in 2013 to challenge our community leaders and to speak about his book, *The Coming Jobs War*. Clifton's focus was on creating good jobs, but he also emphasized what cities need to do to attract those jobs — and the talent they require. He was very clear that not all cities will win the “jobs war.”

To win, we need to have the gumption to make some striking changes. I believe there are three core factors that must be met to ensure a strong and vibrant future for Fort Wayne.

- *Practice what we preach:* the courage to not just say we are welcoming but to openly engage and support diversity of all types in our community.
- *Hold leaders accountable:* When no measurable progress is being made, we must have the courage to call it out.
- *Leapfrog the competition:* If we simply copy our competitors, Fort Wayne will be perpetually 10 years behind. We must have the courage to stop playing Midwest checkers and start playing global three-dimensional chess.

Practice What We Preach

Six years ago, I was sitting in a meeting with community leaders who insisted we were welcoming and that people just did not understand. Indiana was in the middle of a firestorm created by the controversial Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), a bill that allowed business owners to discriminate on the basis of religion and largely targeted the LGBTQ community. As someone who was tasked with promoting Northeast Indiana at the time, I was assured that we just needed “better marketing” to explain that we are indeed welcoming to all. I said, “I agree wholeheartedly!” and pulled back my blazer to reveal a shirt featuring the state of Indiana covered in the LGBTQ rainbow flag that said, “You are welcome here.” A mere three hours later behind closed doors, I was told to never wear that shirt again. The cultural subtext was clear. We are, in fact, not willing to practice what we preach. (If you are moved by statistics versus stories, also note that the Human Rights Campaign gives Fort Wayne a lowly score of 40 out of 100 in its Municipal Equality Index.¹)

And our issues go far beyond LGBTQ rights.

¹ <https://www.hrc.org/resources/municipalities/fort-wayne>

Indiana ranks sixth in the nation for the highest gender pay gap (26% gap as of 2019²). Women make up half of the college-educated workforce in the country. We need that talent, and yet we do not have the gumption to actually make our community more welcoming to them.

What our leaders have failed to recognize is Jim Clifton's warning about the war for jobs — and talent: "Human rights, stem cell research, gay rights, women in the global workplace — what will matter about these issues will be how they affect job growth more than how they affect family, political, and religious values."³

According to US Census data, roughly 1 in 4 people living in Fort Wayne are non-White.⁴ Now evaluate boards of directors, community leaders, economic development organizations, and more. Do you see one in four leaders of color? Study after study shows that diverse leadership creates better problem-solving ability, more innovation, and an improved bottom line. And yet we are hesitant to even say it, much less develop a plan to address it. If we continue to only address buildings and not culture, we will be the victims of our own lack of vision. Because, as the National Bureau of Economic Research data shows, diversity spurs economic development and homogeneity slows it down.⁵

How do we avoid hitting the economic development ceiling of homogeneity?

Hold Leaders Accountable

If you have been active in the community development or nonprofit world in Fort Wayne, you are probably already aware that there is a finite cast of characters that shuffle from organization to

² <https://www.cnn.com/2019/05/02/zipia-this-map-shows-which-states-have-the-biggest-gender-pay-gaps.html>

³ Jim Clifton, *The Coming Jobs War*, p3-4

⁴ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fortwaynecityindiana>

⁵ "Cultural Diversity, Geographical Isolation and the Origin of the Wealth of Nations" by the National Bureau of Economic Research, <https://www.nber.org/papers/w17640>

organization like a boringly predictable game of musical chairs. They are mostly white. Mostly men. Mostly Boomers. Many are ineffective. Many resist diversity. And many are nice, which makes it hard to say out loud: *This is not working!*

We must resist the temptation to succumb to Hoosier nice here. When leaders are ineffective, champion mediocrity, and, in general, want a trophy just for showing up, we must be willing to call this out. Several years ago, there was a debate about installing a community leader — who we all knew to be ineffectual — in a new position. I was the only one willing to speak out. Needless to say, no one cared what a young 30-something woman thought, and I was dismissed. Later that day, an incredibly prominent leader whose name everyone knows whispered to me that he felt the exact same way. I was furious because had he spoken up, people would have listened. Several years of progress were lost as a result of lack of gumption.

I hesitate to provide this next example because I believed wholeheartedly in what we were trying to achieve when I worked at the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership. However, it is the most concrete example I can use to illustrate this point. In 2012, through the Partnership’s Vision 2020 initiative, we declared we were going after the “Big Goal” — increasing educational attainment (people with certificates and degrees) in the region to 60 percent by the year 2025.⁶ Data showed that we were at 35 percent and if we did nothing, we would be at 43 percent in 2025. Leaders acknowledged this issue and its effect on our economic competitiveness, and hundreds of thousands — if not millions — of dollars were pumped into this goal. Now, nine years later, our attainment stands at 38 percent.⁷ Even with all that investment, we may not even reach the baseline of where we thought we would be if we did nothing. While undoubtedly some small, feel-good programs resulted from this, it is not moving the needle and needs

⁶ https://assets.neindiana.com/resources/2016_BigGoalSnapshot_Web.pdf

⁷ <https://neindiana.com/the-partnership/regional-vision/vision-2030/vision-2020/regional-priorities/the-big-goal>

to be re-evaluated. I say that not to be mean — I actually find it incredibly depressing — but to plead with our leadership to stop championing mediocrity and be willing to do more than keep up.

If we want to profoundly move the needle on important issues like educational attainment and economic competitiveness, we must stop championing mediocrity and be willing to do more than just keep up. When the right people are not at the table, we need to speak up. When the wrong decision is being made, we need to speak up. And when progress is not being made, we need to hold our leaders accountable. Unfortunately, I have many friends and colleagues who dared to call this out, and they either got excommunicated or chose to walk away from community involvement because they got tired of screaming into the void.

When I ran for U.S. Congress, a very prominent community leader said to me something akin to “Holy cow, where did you find all those talented people on your leadership team? I’ve never seen them involved in other things.” The truth is, we have an abundance of talent here, but we only recycle the same few people, not realizing the community we could build if we were willing to expand our vision.

We must think bigger. We must be more strategic. We must have the gumption to leapfrog the competition.

Leapfrog the Competition

For years, I have heard people joke about how Fort Wayne is perpetually 10 years behind. There is an inability to see where other communities have faltered and leapfrog their bad decisions. That lack of strategy often results in us making the same mistakes. It is not enough to chase new ideas others have already implemented. We must examine new concepts strategically and not just imitate, but learn, adjust, and make an even better idea — thus leapfrogging the competition.

Parkview Field is a great example of where strategic thinking can take us. It has been ranked as the No. 1 Ballpark Experience in

Minor League Baseball by *Stadium Journey*⁸ multiple times because of concentrated efforts in creating unique experiences there. And, as a result, national recognition and millions of dollars of downtown investment followed.

Effective branding is not about mimicking your competitors. It is about evaluating competitors and determining where there are gaps or opportunities that can be capitalized on to increase market share — or in the case of community development, increase talent share. For example, other mid-sized communities have developed their rivers, so we did, too. I worked hard in my years in economic development to help make that happen, and I am ecstatic about our beautiful Promenade Park. But many cities have beautiful riverfront parks. In my work as a national marketing consultant, I am often asked to evaluate unique value propositions (UVPs) for my clients. Using that lens, I wonder how we will take the riverfront idea and strategically work to make it unique for our city? Will we make it the most architecturally interesting riverfront in the country? Or the most environmentally sustainable riverfront in the country? What is our UVP?

If we really want to grow our population and our talent pool — if you really want your kids to live here — we need to change our strategy, and that will take gumption. Gumption to get beyond conservative thinking. Gumption to embrace the multiculturalism that comes with being a growing city. I have been told that I am more progressive than Fort Wayne. But here is the thing: the talent we are trying to attract is more progressive also.

Millennials and Gen Z are the most inclusive generations ever. They are also the most racially and ethnically diverse generations. Even along party lines this is true. Almost half of Gen Z Republicans think Blacks are treated less fairly than Whites. More than half of Gen Z Republicans think the government should be more active in helping citizens. A whopping 84 percent of Millennials and Gen Z say that same-sex marriage is good for

⁸ <https://www.parkviewfield.com/ballpark/main/>

society or that it does not make a difference. One in three Gen Zers know someone who uses gender neutral pronouns. Over 60 percent say increasing racial and ethnic diversity is good for society.⁹

In my marketing career, I have spent a lot of time studying what Millennials and now Gen Z want. They want unique, authentic experiences with purpose. That is the whole ballgame. If we cannot master that, we will lose Clifton's coming jobs war. We have spent a lot of time believing if we just market how cheap we are, we will succeed. The market does not want cheap. The market wants value.

We must decide if we have the gumption to change our culture, hold our leaders accountable, and leapfrog the competition. We cannot let partisanship, religion, or the way things have always been done get in our way. At the end of the day, there are three things that create change: crises, chance, or choice. Crises happen to us. Chance happens to us. But choice takes gumption.

My Hope for the Future

Choice takes gumption, but it also takes vision. And hope. After twelve years of stories like the ones I shared above, my hope is waning for real change. I, and many of my talented counterparts, have mostly given up. We still live here, but we are using our talents in other states, nationally, and even internationally. But I know a tiny grain of hope still resides in each of us. If it did not reside in me, I would not have taken the time to write this.

“Increasing hope isn't easy, but it can be done. And it has to be done locally, on a citywide basis rather than on a national one,” Jim Clifton, *The Coming Jobs War*.¹⁰ “...[S]o go the local tribal [community] leaders, so goes the soul of the city...”¹¹

⁹ <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2019/01/17/generation-z-looks-a-lot-like-millennials-on-key-social-and-political-issues/>

¹⁰ Jim Clifton, *The Coming Jobs War*, p134

¹¹ Jim Clifton, *The Coming Jobs War*, p71

I care deeply about the soul of our city.

That is why I was completely transparent in sharing my thoughts and experiences with you in this essay. It took gumption. My hope is that you have the gumption to do something about it. The future of Fort Wayne depends on it.

9. HOMOGENIZATION

By Alex Hall

I grew up working in locally-owned restaurants. I've travelled across the world, lived in several countries, and absorbed multiple foreign cultures. My perspective on Fort Wayne is largely based on the juxtaposition of what I have seen outside of this city and my experience programming artwork in Downtown Fort Wayne. In this essay I do not intend to belittle any of the progress we have made, but it is important to evaluate ourselves and accept that there is always room for growth. Fort Wayne is coined as “the City that saved itself.”¹ That statement was made in reference to its residents having literally stopped flood water from overtaking the city. In truth, we are the City that sandbagged itself — though, *the City that saved itself* does have a nicer ring. Today the phrase is often used metaphorically to tout our innovation, our growth, and how we have manifested anew when other Rust Belt communities have faltered and died. For the last few decades we have looked to successful cities and recycled their good ideas, but perhaps that is our key mistake. Shifting one's shape into that of a successful

¹ <http://historycenterfw.blogspot.com/2013/03/the-city-that-saved-itself-twice.html#:~:text=Fort%20Wayne%20has%20been%20called,Fort%20Wayne%20has%20ever%20seen>

neighbor will never bring us into the lead. We have done an outstanding job keeping afloat without doing anything truly original that significantly separates us from other mid-sized cities trying to save themselves, and it is that homogenization which threatens our continued growth and stifles our potential. Homogeneous growth has innumerable causes, and I cannot begin to define the entire lattice; however, I can say that Fort Wayne needs to stop borrowing templates from others. We need to invest in our own ideas. We must make decisions based on quality of life and not the investor's dollar, and we need to become comfortable with risk.

Risk

We are a community afraid of risk. We neglect to accept change unless we have seen the project, idea or concept executed successfully in another community — and our acceptance increases exponentially when the idea was successful in a community similar to ours in size and demographics.

My love of public art is deeply rooted in street art culture and the organic way creatives can saturate public spaces, redefine neighborhoods, and, often inadvertently, improve quality of place or gentrify. Street art and graffiti is meant to challenge the viewer, give a voice to the disenfranchised, or even shock the audience. Today, in Fort Wayne, I facilitate large-scale public art installations, and I balance my appreciation for street art culture against the kind of artwork Fort Wayne is prepared to accept. When grasping at how to define our refusal to accept risk, I think of how we go about selecting “safe” artwork. I cannot help but feel that it is this mentality which muffles our ability to move ahead in the race. Fort Wayne needs to accept challenging, untested ideas or we are destined to remain the same as every other survivor along the Rust Belt.

Outside Consultants

Perhaps because we prefer to invest in safe concepts, we tend to rely on outside consultants, who guide us through implementing secondhand projects. We accept the word of a consultant over the passion and knowledge of a local voice, or we require an outside consultant to validate a local voice. There are visionaries here in our community who are stymied in their ability to implement truly significant and impactful projects because we cannot accept homegrown innovation. It is exhausting to know that we are effectively defeating the fervor and drive of those who chose to stay, and we are defeating them in a manner that deflates their enthusiasm for this place and encourages them to invest their talent in other communities.

A good example is The Deck, which has been in existence for 15 years. The very city that later razed buildings and incentivized outside investors to program the riverfront, once had a mentality that The Deck posed a health hazard. A locally-owned restaurant overcame the odds to survive along the river — we need to question why we did not accept their vision.

Art This Way was a volunteer-run program for three years. It was not until the release of Gehl's *Public Realm Action Plan*,² which expressed great approval of the Art This Way program, that the city formally accepted strategic leveraging of public art. The release of that study catapulted the Art This Way program forward. The city added lighting to the murals, and *The Porch Off Calhoun*³ arrived a short time later. Studies like the *Public Realm Action Plan* are important, and they do give us necessary perspectives, but my concern is that it took an expensive study written by an outside firm for our community to truly embrace the power of public art. Since 2015, the FWDID had been discussing a seating zone in the lot beside Pint N Slice — and Art This Way has been installing murals

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http://www.fwcommunitydevelopment.org/images/community_planning/Fort_Wayne_Public_Realm_Action_Plan_2-compressed.pdf

³ <https://downtownfortwayne.com/calhoun-porch/>

since 2016 — but it took support from an outside voice to give credence to the ideas and to bring investment to these concepts. It worries me that there are locals who have the capacity to catapult us, and all it will take is a million-dollar study validating their dream for us to embrace it.

There is value and necessity in accepting both local ideas and concepts from outside consultants. I would like us to strive to see the potential in the local dreamer. It should not take an expensive consultant to tell us when we should endorse a local who is already working towards a better quality of life for our community.

Investors

Outside investment is vital to our growth and survival, but we have erred in incentivizing outside companies to the detriment of our local businesses. If the local company built their own establishment and grew their business without incentives or breaks, it is not quite the same as recruiting a national chain and coddling them as they establish themselves in our city. The Deck brought activation to the river when it was not en vogue. We need to examine the methods by which we will incentivize their national chain competitors to establish themselves along the same waterways.

In that same vein, we are guilty of catering too often to outside investor influence. Outside investors are profiting from our city's growth and progress; however, it is a mistake to believe that they have our quality of life in mind when they make business decisions. They do not live in our community, and they are only considering their bottom line when they use their influence to change policy in Fort Wayne. I would like to see our community make more decisions based on what will improve our city rather than what will make an investor more likely to build another mixed-use space.

In this essay I intend to evaluate what we could change, but my aim is not to disparage our many accomplishments. It would be foolish to argue against tried and trusted mechanisms of change and growth; however, we need to strike a balance between what we

borrow and what we foster at home. Fort Wayne can become a community ready to welcome change and embrace projects — even projects untested by our competitors. We can curb the trend of homogenization and embrace the ameliorative principles of innovation and growth. Fort Wayne has the capacity to be anything. If we choose not to sandbag ourselves, if we hold back the flood of investors who are not invested in our community's best interest, if we learn to respect our innovators, and if we accept that all of this takes a certain amount of risk, this will determine what shape we take in the next twenty years. We could be the city that saved itself, again.

10. INCLUSIVITY

By Irene Paxia

Do you remember the last time you received a gift you did not need — maybe a copy of a book you already had or a toy for your kids they already had? For a while in Fort Wayne there was a clear distinction between an inside group of community development “shakers” (administrators, influencers, and decision makers) and the “outside” — loosely referred to as the public. The public was seldom involved in shaping community projects other than, perhaps, complaining about shortcomings of our community (“there is nobody downtown in the weekends”) or expressing not-in-my-backyard ideas (“our neighborhood does not want public housing”). The public could not (and would not) penetrate the glass wall of citizens square.¹

Community development at times can be like a gift you did not ask for. There is a chance that programs or projects may simply not be what residents need. In order to improve the potential misalignment, residents need to participate in the planning process. Here below I will list some ways in which participation has already

¹ This is a generalization on my part, based on my observations during my work as Community Development Specialist.

(and can be) improved in the Fort Wayne of tomorrow based on my interaction with immigrants and refugees in Allen County:

1. Be an inclusive leader² — make inclusivity a strategy during all phases from project ideation to implementation and do it genuinely. The model used in the past of public meetings scheduled in a government-building basement on a day and time only known to those who happened to browse an internet page is not sufficient to check off the public participation box. This new model requires:
 - a) using inclusive messaging both externally and internally
 - b) asking the team to check for inclusivity when approving steps
 - c) leading by example, by engaging a variety of interest and special needs groups

2. Improve the format, frequency, and type of interaction with public. This requires:
 - a) thinking outside of the box and adjusting language from high context to low context, depending on the audience
 - b) having a language access plan
 - c) inviting, hosting, and offering conversations
 - d) using professional language interpreters
 - e) identifying ‘anchors’ in the community, individuals who have a reach in special groups, such as refugees and immigrants
 - f) leaving the office
 - g) listening well.

² Edwin P. Hollander defines inclusive leadership this way: “Inclusive Leadership is about relationships that can accomplish things for mutual benefits. Reaching leadership at this next level means ‘doing things with people, rather than to people’, which is the essence of inclusion.”

3. Seek to represent the diversity of residents — having diversity within community development professional teams has several benefits I have been able to observe:
 - a) strengthens trust between developers and residents and helps immigrants and refugees feel connected to their communities
 - b) informs and diversifies community development from within
 - c) creates natural anchors and helps professionals find connections to groups such as Latinex, and others

4. Participation is year-round. It is much harder to develop relations under a specific deadline. This reason is why community developers should create mechanisms for feedback and participation throughout the year. For example:
 - a) create community advisory boards around specific issues and groups (immigrants and refugees are often eager to come together)
 - b) make your team presence known in special events
 - c) value relation and seek it genuinely

By writing this, I am expressing my hope that community development be not only the result of following the loudest voice, but also the result of the implementation of inclusive informed ideas.

11. INNOVATION

By David Buuck

I want Fort Wayne to be known as an innovation center for the entire world. Instead of simply being known as having one of the lowest costs of living in the country,¹ or being in the Top 10 in the nation for number of fast-food restaurants,² what if we could get to the point where the world looks at our Midwest community as a driver of progress? I believe the way to get there is by embracing that innovation is the product of effort, failure, creativity, and iteration.

Here's the issue: I believe most people understand this process incorrectly. Due to our consumeristic society, we're tempted to skip the hard work and failure required to innovate and go right to being creative. Most people believe that creativity leads innovation, but I would argue that putting in effort is the first step.

"Everybody wants to save the Earth; nobody wants to help Mom do the dishes."

¹ Niche.com 2020

² Hochman 2019

We want Fort Wayne to be better than what it is today, but where do we start? The answer is almost too easy: effort, or rather, work has to lead. Chuck Surack didn't start in an office building. He was a 1-man show working out of a van. You've got to be willing to haul the bricks, edit the video, and clean the toilet. That work is the foundation for everything down the road. Unfortunately, the effort stage is overlooked and underappreciated by much of the world. Even by ourselves. It's usually not until much later that we can appreciate the learning that took place in the effort stage.

Failure is a natural result of trying anything new as there is a learning curve to every skillset. As our favorite science teacher always said, "Take chances, make mistakes, get messy!"³ Unfortunately, we tend to take failure, or any undesirable result, and internalize it. Instead of the failure being a standalone result of an experiment, or simply just part of a greater process, failure, and the fear of it, becomes part of our who we are. "I'm not good enough." "This idea stinks." "Why do I even try?" We might not try something new, because we don't want to fail. Let me be clear, if we want innovation, failure (the ability to sharpen our skills) must be accepted, and even welcomed, as part of the process. You are more than the sum of your failed attempts. Don't stop there.

We need to acknowledge that embracing failure requires a position of privilege. This position is usually regarding one's race, gender, or socioeconomic status. The only way to change this is if those in current positions of power, those with control or access to capital, are willing to accept a higher level of risk to support new ideas to spur on the culture of innovation.

Additionally, failure is not acceptable in all lines of work. Some professions simply cannot offer the luxury of failure in day-to-day operations. Brain surgeons, CPAs, and attorneys don't have a lot of space for "Well, that didn't work out too well. Let's try again next time!" If a job requires precise performance and isn't

³ Frizzle 1994

fundamentally going through the innovative process, failure cannot, and should not, be embraced.

We've put in the work. We've made mistakes. Now is the fun part. Now is the time to imagine how things could be better.

"If you're starting something new and people don't call you crazy, then you're probably not thinking big enough."⁴

Constructive creativity requires context and that context can only be given by putting in the effort and failing. Our experience with missteps early in the process of innovation prepares us for this key stage.

But the majority of "new ideas" aren't going to be perfect Day 1. We have to iterate, and reiterate, and reiterate (similar to rewriting this essay six times). We must be willing to recognize and embrace that the first draft is trash — it's always trash. The first draft is necessary to get the process started. We have to be willing to scrap the first idea when we are brought new information from the seventh person we've discussed the idea with because everything has changed (again). To see a new idea through, it must pass through the fires of iteration to see if it really is as strong as we thought.

Finally, innovation has occurred. Something special has been born. For all those who are creators, you know this feeling. This feeling is what draws you back to your craft. Something exists that has never existed before. And we start all over again. Because even the best, most innovative ideas have room for improvement. While this process is likely best understood on an individual level, let's overlay it on the collective.

Fort Wayne, we need to do the dishes. If we want this place to be a more welcoming community, volunteer with Amani Family Services to support new immigrants coming to our city. If we want to attract and retain small, new, quality ventures, Start Fort Wayne

⁴ Rottenberg 2017

and Greater Fort Wayne, Inc. deserve our attention. If you believe that people are called to be the hands of Christ in supporting those overlooked among us, get involved with Neighborlink on their mission to do just that. Starting here, and spending a good chunk of time in this stage of innovation, is absolutely necessary if we hope to generate ideas that will better our community over the next 20 years.

It was presumptuous of me, but a few years ago, I added onto the famous quote by Gandhi: *“Be the change you want to see in the world... because no one else is going to do the work.”*

I wish there was an easy fix to all the problems in the world. I wish our dreams could be the currency to provide affordable housing to all people, to offer the needed support for all those with mental illness, or provide world class services to those with intellectual disabilities. They’re not. But our hands are. Fort Wayne is to the point in our collective iteration that we need to take on more risk to welcome the innovation that the future needs. Friends, let’s get to work and do the dishes.

Here are a few places to get you started:

- *Amani Family Services*: “We partner with immigrant and refugee families and the community to promote safety, encourage personal growth, and foster a spirit of belonging.”
- *Neighborlink*: “Practical, neighbor-to-neighbor expressions of God’s love.”
- *Habitat for Humanity*: “Seeking to put God’s love into action, Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities, and hope.”
- *Bridge of Grace*: “We endeavor to empower our neighbors to build on their God-given spiritual, academic, physical, and emotional strengths to transform our community.”
- *Carriage House*: “A certified ‘Clubhouse Model’ program with the singular mission of assisting people in their recovery

from mental illness and reintegration into the community.”

- *SCAN*: “Protects children, prepares parents, strengthens families, and educates our community to Stop Child Abuse and Neglect.”

12. LEGITIMACY

By Heather Schoegler

What would our community look like if we only lent legitimacy to the ideas, people, places, and things that contribute to the future we hope to experience? According to Merriam-Webster, the definition of legitimize is to make it legitimate. YourDictionary.com defines legitimize as making it acceptable, permissible, or correct. “It” in the case of legitimizing as a model for community development could be a person, place, thing, idea, or anything that has an effect on the future of a community.

For many citizens, the days pass and are filled with the busyness of life. There’s nothing inherently wrong with that. For many, life offers a variety of seasons where focus may shift from career, to parenting, back to career, and eventually to retirement and beyond. However, throughout those seasons, there may be times when a citizen is more keenly aware of the community around them and the symbiotic relationship between their personal impact on the community and the community’s impact on himself or herself. It is here, in the times of awareness, where the opportunity lies.

If we can address how we extend legitimacy during these times, we increase the chance of living in a community we all want

to call home in twenty years. Additionally, by increasing our awareness of these times, we have a chance to increase the frequency of such moments thereby increasing our chances at a thriving, vibrant community that not only retains our friends and neighbors but also attracts others to our community. The power of that collaborative potential is something we in Northeast Indiana haven't yet fully experienced.

So who has the authority to offer legitimacy? Everyone! In fact, the influence someone has doesn't come solely because he or she is in a position of power. In fact, being legitimate is important to a person or organization's success and the ability to influence others. (Tyler, 2006)

We all extend legitimacy every day whether it's deliberate or not. Consider the simple act of your morning coffee. Do you brew a cup at home? If yes, you're extending legitimacy to a particular style of brewing, roast, and even brand of beans. Maybe you visit a coffee shop each morning. Is it a local shop or a major national chain? These choices, deliberate or unconscious, are extensions of legitimacy. Yes — you have legitimacy. It's an inherent aspect of being a human being. How you choose to share it is how we each decide how we will take part in developing our community.

Not extending legitimacy is unacceptable for citizens who want to live in a community built for the future. Communities lacking citizens who intentionally legitimize others and their ideas do not thrive in the future. To succeed as a community, we must all take on the role of legitimizing our desired future.

Legitimizing is the act of a leader. Not every citizen has a position of leadership, and yet every person can lead. By leveraging and extending legitimacy, you lead. Our community needs more leaders. We don't need leaders who stay home or keep their ideas to themselves. We need leaders who show up, stand up, and speak up. Regardless of position, we can all give voice to those who may not have found theirs yet or those who don't know how to use it, who to share it with, or where to go to have their voice heard. If you have a voice already, be inquisitive about the sounds around

you that need to be legitimized and amplified. Two is greater than one. And two can quickly grow to many.

At TEDxFort Wayne in 2012, I first shared the concept of “legitimize” and posed the potential of Fort Wayne’s Power of 2. Our community is uniquely positioned to legitimize others and their ideas. Here, it isn’t six degrees to [fill in the blank], it’s two or less. Attendees to TEDxFort Wayne were given a list of over one hundred citizens who were willing to serve as connections, willing to hear their ideas, and willing to legitimize them for simply showing the initiative to attend an event focused on reimagining our community. That extension and endorsement does not happen in every city. So how do we harness this opportunity and capitalize on one of our greatest resources?

First, we must be aware of what we are currently offering legitimacy to. Who and what are you legitimizing?

Stop. Take a moment to consider this really. What are you endorsing and giving life to through the minutes in your hours and your days. What are you sharing, liking, or retweeting? When you consider the valuable investment that is your time, thought, and energy, how does it align with your vision and goals for the future? Is that investment going to deliver the ROI you desire for yourself?

Take it one step further. Step beyond yourself and consider how what you’re legitimizing is changing or shaping the trajectory of our community. Are you part of where we’re going or part of why we’re not going to get there? There is room in the future for all of us, for you. Your voice is important. The legitimacy you offer is critical to our community’s success now and in the future.

Northeast Indiana can point to the positive outcomes when a few people gather and legitimize an idea and one another. One example is Parkview Field. More than a baseball stadium, this project is a mixed-use development in downtown Fort Wayne that wasn’t initially a homerun (pun intended) in the minds of many. Despite the opposition, the project moved forward because enough people gave it legitimacy; they spoke at City Council meetings, wrote letters to the editor, talked to their friends and

neighbors, and even bought season tickets. Today, we point to it as a shining example of what we can do together and why we must dream bigger.

Perhaps a lesser-known example is the Parkview Healing Arts program. Because one community member, Dan Swartz, knew the potential and opportunity of the Fort Wayne Dance Collective, he legitimized Alison Gerardot and connected her and me. As a result of that meeting, I further extended legitimacy to the concept and connected it to financial resources I knew were available for that specific purpose, and Parkview's leadership gave it legitimacy after understanding the benefits for co-workers and patients. That was eight years ago. Today, professional artists and their art continue to be legitimized as they are paid to deliver art in a hospital setting. A simple step of connection has touched hundreds if not thousands of lives at a time when they need hope the most.

Our community is rich with examples of a person or idea being legitimized. This collection of essays is another example, and the authors and ideas throughout are even more. What we must do to continue our momentum is recognize its power and leverage it as we shape our community for the future. Remember, we are already giving legitimacy through our time and energy whether or not we are intentional about it.

If you're committing to the concept of "legitimize," it's important to be cognizant of the words you use. Growing up, my mom instilled in us a belief that our words have power. We don't dare speak something out loud for fear it would have existence. In the same way, our words legitimize thoughts and even actions. A transplant to Fort Wayne, Christophe Dessaigne uses his words with intention when asked where he's from. He proudly claims, "The best city in the Midwest — Fort Wayne!" What an endorsement! And those he is engaged with extend Christophe's personal legitimacy to our community because legitimacy is a psychological property of a social arrangement that leads others to believe that it is appropriate, proper, and just. (Tyler, 2006) To the contrary, our words can have the opposite effect. A local retailer

sells a shirt that says, “Fort Wayne. It’s not that bad.” Unacceptable. We must think and say better of and for our community. We cannot legitimize the opposite course for our future.

A model for community development should be to only legitimize our positive attributes and to speak life about our people and places. In her *Scientific American* article, “Why Words Matter: What Cognitive Science Says About Prohibiting Certain Terms,” Dina Fine Maron shares, “There are two outcomes that happen when we don’t name or talk about something. Things that are named are the ones most likely to be thought about and to be visible in our consciousness. The kinds of things we tend to think about are the ones that are named. Also, what isn’t named can’t be counted. And what can’t be counted can’t be acted upon.” (Maron, 2017)

Let’s be intentional and legitimize one another and our best ideas on purpose so that we can act on them.

If this concept seems too altruistic or generous, consider it from a selfish lens. When you give an endorsement, it reflects on your personal brand as well as the person, thing, or idea you’re extending it to. If you’ve ever given a gift, shared an encouraging word, written a thank you note, or performed a random act of kindness, you know the “helper’s high” felt afterward. *Psychology Today* outlines the neurochemical reactions that create this feeling and states oxytocin is released when two people are kind together, thereby strengthening the bonds between the two individuals expressing kindness to one another. (Sreenivasan, Ph.D. & Weinberger, Ph.D., 2017) Can you imagine living in a community full of happy, kind people? That’s the power when we legitimize others.

Legitimizing others at a time when our country feels divided may seem like an insurmountable challenge. If it does, start with the concept at a local level or even hyperlocal level. Simply, can we at least legitimize the lives of our neighbors? Your neighbors — my neighbors — are the people who, like you and I, choose to call Fort

Wayne and Northeast Indiana home. We all have that in common and therefore have a common connection and value.

Let's legitimize one another. Let's legitimize our neighbor's individual goals, unique skills, talents and gifts, and our vision for the future. I believe when we do, we will find even more things in common. And when we find those points of commonality, let's legitimize those ideas. Let's bring them to life. That is where the power of our future and our connection will be found.

As a first step in legitimacy, I recognize your effort to read this essay and the others presented here, and therefore legitimize you to be a citizen leader who has a role in shaping our community's future.

We can write this future for our community together if we are willing to bring forward our best — individually and collectively — and give our best the legitimacy it deserves. We can do it and our community deserves it.

Recommended Resources

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13. MORTALITY

By Leslie Friedel

“Each of us is merely a small instrument; all of us,
after accomplishing our mission, will disappear.”

- Mother Teresa

Early in my social work career I had the opportunity, perhaps responsibility, to sit down with a gentleman with advanced kidney disease and discuss the remaining days of his life. This conversation was one I have faced several more times in my career, but this one stood out. It stood out because I was asking this gentleman to decide if on Tuesday, he would attend dialysis. This moment was not just deciding if he would choose dialysis or choose to play euchre instead; it was deciding life or death. I discussed with this man that he was no longer healthy enough to make his twice weekly trip to the dialysis center. If Wednesday came and he did not have his dialysis, he would begin the process of dying. On Friday, my friend died.

As I sat and had this conversation, I cried. I cried because I knew what decision he was making and how quickly he had to make it. He was choosing to die or continue a life in which he had no

joy. He was choosing a life of pain, discomfort, and restlessness. Ultimately, he concluded that his life was over. In just three days following the decision, his life would end. If faced with the same choice with my own mortality, would I choose to die in just three days? Would I think I had done enough in this life? Several years later, this conversation still haunts me, and I still wonder, have I given enough? Have I accomplished my mission?

Mission by definition is “a preestablished and often self-imposed objective or purpose.” As a non-profit CEO, I often think of mission on a macro scale focusing on what our organization’s purpose is and how it meets the needs of individuals in our community. I contemplate the words of our mission statement to ensure that everything the organization is doing is “mission-centric” or “mission focused.” Rarely do I contemplate this question in my own personal life. If given three days or three months left to live, what will I personally want to accomplish? What can I offer to my community with the hope to leave it just a little bit brighter?

No one likely thinks of my work, focused on end of life care and grief, and immediately thinks of brightness or joy, but I would disagree. There is something beautiful in death. There is something beautiful in having the time to face your own mortality. I have seen it. I have seen it in the faces of those who have an overwhelming peace about their death. I spoke with one gentleman in the last year who shared about how life is good amid a terminal diagnosis. He shared with me the value of learning he was on limited time and how being intentional with that time was important. He asked me to share his journey with those who were caring for him. He wanted to make an impact by sharing how much others meant to him. I have a suspicion if I would have asked him his life’s mission, he would have not seen himself as making an life-long impact on me, an entire organization, an entire community, but, in his final months, he did.

There is one major difference between these individual’s stories. One did not have the time to make intentional decisions

about his impending mortality, while the other man had time to consider what he wanted his mission to be. He was able to use his words to describe how his journey toward the end of his life would go. While he was able to focus on the quality of the time he had left in life, he also had time to decide what kind of medical treatment he was willing to endure. Advance directives and advance care planning are incredibly important. They allow for each person to state their wishes about the end of life while facing a life-limiting illness.

Advance care planning is a process of communication between individuals, families, and healthcare professionals to understand, discuss and plan future healthcare decisions if an individual loses capacity.¹ Whether someone is facing an acute illness, a long-term chronic illness or a terminal illness, advance care planning can help alleviate unnecessary suffering, improve quality of life, and provide better understanding of the decision-making challenges facing the individual and his or her caregivers. An advance care plan can be used at any stage of life and should be updated as circumstances change.²

According to a study by the Conversation Project (2013), 82 percent of all people feel it is important to put their wishes in writing; however, only 23 percent of people have done it.³ Locally Aging and In-Home Services provides information for Honoring Choices which is a statewide initiative to advocate for Advanced Care planning. Advanced care planning focuses on four major

¹ Elizabeth Weathers et al., “Advance Care Planning: A Systematic Review of Randomised Controlled Trials Conducted with Older Adults,” *Maturitas* (Elsevier, June 23, 2016), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0378512216301487>.

² “Advance Care Planning: Ensuring Your Wishes Are Known and Honored If You Are Unable to Speak for Yourself.” *Advanced Care Planning Critical Issue Brief*. Accessed November 15, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/advanced-care-planning-critical-issue-brief.pdf>.

³ Aging & In-Home Services of NE Indiana. “Advanced Care Planning - A Guide to Communicating Your Preferences for Care When You Can No Longer Speak for Yourself.” *Understanding Advanced Care Planning*, 2018. https://agingih.org/uploads/page/Understanding_Advance_Care_Planning_2018_1.pdf.

areas, advanced directives, living will, power of attorney, and healthcare representatives.

“Advance directive” is a term that refers to your spoken and written instructions about your future medical care and treatment. By stating your health care choices in an advance directive, you help your family and physician understand your wishes about your medical care. Indiana law pays special attention to advance directives. Advance directives are normally one or more documents that list your health care instructions. An advance directive may name a person of your choice to make health care choices for you when you cannot make the choices for yourself. If you want, you may use an advance directive to prevent certain people from making health care decisions on your behalf.⁴

A Living Will is written, legal instructions regarding your preferences for medical care if you are unable to make decisions for yourself.⁵ In Indiana, a living will form should be completed before you need it because it becomes active when an individual has a incurable injury, disease or illness; death will occur in a short time; and the use of life prolonging procedures would only serve to prolong life. A Living Will addresses which life-prolonging procedure will be acceptable to an individual, such as, artificial hydration and nutrition.

A Power of Attorney is a document that authorizes another person to act on your behalf in specified matters such as financial decisions, health care decisions, or both.

Health Care Representative is the person you appoint to receive health care information and make health care decisions for you when you are unable to do so. This may be done through

⁴ ISDH: Advance Directives Resource Center. Accessed November 15, 2020. <https://www.in.gov/isdh/25880.htm>.

⁵ “Your Guide to Living Wills and Other Advance Directives.” Mayo Clinic. Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, August 22, 2020. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/in-depth/living-wills/art-20046303>.

several documents including Advance Directive and Power of Attorney.

Throughout my career, in working with seniors and working with those that have a life-limiting illness I have seen families torn apart by making decisions for a loved one. I have also seen families focused on the time they have with their loved one because healthcare decisions were made, and they felt the peace of honoring their loved ones wishes. Having a plan in writing is extremely important.

In the next 20 years I believe that the future of healthcare is a home-based model. That if they spend the time to be intentional about their future, people will choose to remain in the place they call home. Working in hospice, I have been able to see the difference in those who choose to die peacefully in their home without being hooked up to monitors and equipment. Hospice has been doing this model of care since it became a Medicare approved benefit in 1986 and is based on the premise that individuals and their caregivers make the choice of keeping an individual in their home with a focus on comfort care.

Advocacy for holistic healthcare for our seniors is extremely crucial. In 2017 there were approximately 368,000 people living in Allen County. Of those 368,000 people, 13.5 percent were over the age of 65.⁶ In Fort Wayne, primary housing options for those who do not have the assistance or resources available to them for in home care is focused on assisted livings and long-term care facilities. Of those 23 percent of individuals who put their wishes in writing, my hope is that acceptable medical care and housing options made the list. There are many different models that allow individuals to remain in their home, but currently those options can

⁶ Polis Center at IUPUI (Polis) and the Indiana University Richard M. Fairbanks School of Public Health (FSPH). "2019 Community Health Needs Assessment Parkview Health, System-Wide." 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment, 2019. <https://www.parkview.com/media/file/Final%208%20System-wide%20Regional%20Parkview%202019%20CHNA%20Report%20Final%20updated%2012-19.pdf2>.

be costly. My hope for the future is that our seniors have options to live and continue to be an active part of our communities.

When someone gets a terminal diagnosis, their world stops spinning in that moment. Death consumes them and overwhelms them. Decisions become harder. Almost immediately the spouse, partner, family member or friend becomes the caregiver, support person, medical liaison, and advocate. These times are overwhelming. Advanced Care Planning ahead of these life-changing conversations can help guide navigating through these difficult decisions and conversations.

Planning and knowing what you are facing as you near death allows you to do focus on your mission in life. Knowing exactly how you see spending this time leaves less time focused on making hard decisions and more time spent on how you want to leave this world. And in these moments of clarity, the journey becomes more peaceful.

14. NESTING

By Zachary Benedict

Decisions surrounding community development can be complicated. It's easy to get overwhelmed by the seemingly endless amounts of metrics that can dominate these discussions, not to mention the political undertones that often loom over such conversations. And while objective data is critical in defining effective policies, it can sometimes obscure the root issues impacting the success of many neighborhoods.

If we are serious about creating efficient and equitable communities, we will need to embrace a more nuanced appreciation for the human condition – a collection of instincts, ambitions, and insecurities that are less interested in increasing median household incomes and more concerned (whether we know it or not) with cultivating a sense of belonging. Now these things aren't mutually exclusive. In fact, in many ways research shows us that they are intimately connected, requiring those committed to establishing strategies for inclusive placemaking to realize how these first principles have allowed our communities to evolve, sustain, and endure throughout history.

Recently, I read *The Meaning of Human Existence* by biologist and naturalist Edward O. Wilson. It's an approachable and relevant

look at how humanity has evolved over time and where it might be headed in the future. And while the content is interesting and well-written, with topics ranging from the enlightenment to extraterrestrials, as I read it, I couldn't resist considering questions I'm certain the book wasn't intended to fully address. Specifically, I was intrigued by the brief reference to the idea of *eusociality*.

According to Wilson, scientists have found that “the biological origin of advanced social behavior in humans was similar to that occurring elsewhere in the animal kingdom. Using comparative studies of thousands of animal species, from insects to mammals, we've concluded that the most complex societies have arisen through eusociality – meaning, roughly, the ‘true’ social condition.”¹ He continues that such a phenomenon is exceptionally rare, having only arisen in 19 documented cases within a collection of insects, rodents, and marine crustaceans. However, he argues that humans are, in fact, the 20th occurrence of such a condition.

“In all of the eusocial species analyzed to date,” Wilson argues, “the final step before eusociality is the construction of a protected nest, from which foraging trips are launched and within which the young are raised to maturity.”² For our ancestors, this final step began over two million years ago with a growing preference for a diet that was increasingly reliant on meat. For a group to harvest “such a high-energy, widely dispersed source of food, it did not pay to roam about as a loosely organized pack of adults and young in the manner of present-day chimpanzees and bonobos. It was more efficient to occupy a campsite (thus, a nest) and send out hunters who could bring home meat, both killed and scavenged, to share with others. In exchange, the hunters received protection of the campsite and their own young offspring kept there.”³

This was a pivotal moment. The sovereignty of the individual was slowly becoming reliant on the success of the group. And this

¹ Edward O. Wilson, *The Meaning of Human Existence* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2014), 18-19.

² Wilson, *The Meaning of Human Existence*, 20.

³ *Ibid*, 21.

group mentality immediately began to illustrate the undeniable value of cooperation, prioritizing personal relationships that resulted in the shared success of the group, offering mutual benefit to all its members. As Wilson (among others) pointed out, “within groups, selfish individuals beat altruistic individuals, but groups of altruists beat groups of individuals”⁴ – making the concept of reciprocity (i.e., you scratch my back, and I’ll scratch yours) a key ingredient in understanding humanity. Over time, this behavior has manifested itself into an instinctive need for humans to belong to a group – for safety, resources, and belonging.⁵

While these first humans had distinct group structures that were recognized by their collective membership, they were also fundamentally defined by their connection to their campsite – to their nest. It was an identity characterized by the behavior and territory of the group – one that deemed everything outside its perceived boundaries as a potential threat. Wilson writes eloquently about the benefits these group dynamics have provided our species over thousands of years, but it’s a narrative that begs the question: How has the predominance of a virtual economy and social media redefined how we identify with our respective groups? How has the dissolving boundaries of our physical nests, traded away for a more virtual existence, changed how we look at the world and our groups? And what impact has it had on the shape and condition of our nests?

In many ways, our brains’ ability to evolve hasn’t kept pace with the structural changes that have defined our communities over the last several decades. Too much has changed in too short of a period of time (especially in evolutionary terms). For example, as Wilson notes, “our distant ancestors regularly faced injury or death while hunting for food too close to the edge of a ravine, or when they stepped carelessly on a venomous snake, or stumbled upon a raiding party of an enemy tribe.” This explains why many of us have

⁴ Ibid, 29.

⁵ For more on the evolutionary utility of reciprocity see Matt Ridley, *The Origin of Virtue: Human Instincts and the Evolution of Cooperation* (London: Penguin Books, 1996).

instinctive fears of heights, snakes, or strangers. However, in contrast, “automobiles, knives, guns, and the excessive consumption of dietary salt and sugar are among the leading causes of present-day mortality. Yet no inborn propensities to avoid them have evolved. The likely reason is the lack of time for evolution to have hardwired them into our brains.”⁶

In our minds, group identity is still an active strategy to obtain security and success. We also still heavily rely on our natural fears to protect us from danger. But how well do these competing instincts suit the modern world? What benefit does the eusocial condition provide without the presence of a physical nest for our groups to share, manage, and care for? What happens when new threats arrive that our brains haven’t yet had the time to evolve a sensitivity to? I’m not sure. But it feels as though these very questions are playing out in the anxiety and stress permeating our society today.

As Wilson concludes, “The problem holding everything up thus far is that *Homo sapiens* are an innately dysfunctional species. We are hampered by the Paleolithic Curse: genetic adaptations that worked very well for millions of years of hunter-gatherer existence but are increasingly a hindrance in a globally urban and technoscientific society. We seem unable to stabilize either economic policies or the means of governance higher than the level of a village.”⁷ And even then, our villages seem to be dissolving. We have become detached from our nests, whether through the consequences of their careless development or the political discourse that surrounds their management. We feel helpless in influencing their operation, so we look for our group identity elsewhere. And for many of us, those identities are cultivated virtually.

It’s a strange dichotomy. While an alarming number of us know intimate details about our favorite celebrities and feel a

⁶ Wilson, *The Meaning of Human Existence*, 141.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 176.

personal connection to them and their successes, few of us have ever sat down for any length of time and listened to the personal journey of our child's schoolteacher – the very person we have entrusted to educate and mentor our children day after day. Then we wonder why our school board meetings have become so divisive.

We find solace in maintaining casual relationships with strangers in social media chat groups and news blogs that share our world views, but we can't name the people who live on our own street – the ones who, if we needed help, could actually offer support. Then we question why we feel so detached from the cultural trajectory of our own communities.

Through decades of technological innovations and increased social mobility, we find ourselves simultaneously the most connected *and* the loneliest civilization in our planet's history. And that feeling of isolation that many of us have comes from our realization that the world is a vast and exciting place. Yet we sit alone, painfully disconnected from our immediate surroundings.⁸ This growing sense of detachment within our communities is unsustainable and, in many ways, is a direct result of our inability to develop neighborhoods that prioritize the interpersonal connections we desperately crave.

It's critical to acknowledge that our social structures are evolving faster than we are. It's also beneficial to remember that our brains are preconditioned to value group identity and reciprocal cooperation. However, without a nest these identities can quickly become superficial. For us to remain a functioning eusocial species, we will need to develop strategies that actively work to reconcile our evolved habits within the framework of a modern nest.

If we look at the purpose of the nest as a platform for localized support and connectivity, it's easy to imagine a different approach to community development. We can start by thinking less about

⁸ For more on the epidemic of loneliness see Noreena Hertz, *The Lonely Century: Coming Together in a World that's Pulling Apart* (London: Sceptre, 2020).

creating great neighborhoods and focusing more on ways to cultivate great neighbors – people who share an interest in actively participating in the operation of a localized group dedicated to the success and happiness of each of its members. These connections, these reciprocal relationships, are critical to our success and they are sustained by the nests we create for ourselves.

Take for example, the impact placemaking can have on cancer. Women who have close personal relationships are four times more likely to survive breast cancer than those with sparser connections.⁹ This fact alone should inspire us to rethink the structure of the modern neighborhood. If something as simple as regular physical interaction with family and friends can play such a large role in improving our health and well-being, how quickly can we redefine the systems that govern our neighborhoods in ways that these relationships are encouraged and incentivized? What will it take? And who will provide the necessary leadership to execute these changes?

One way to approach this is by defining a top-down strategy that seeks to create the perfect nest. But such strategies are almost always unsuccessful. Communities aren't meant to be perfect. In fact, the most successful neighborhoods are the ones that leverage their imperfections as part of their charm. The goal isn't to create a nest for people. It's to create a platform that encourages the act of nesting – one that invites and expects individuals to participate in the stewardship of the nest itself. It's a responsibility that comes from those willing to make an emotional investment in their physical surroundings, not only because they want to belong to the group – but because they know their quality of life is largely dependent on the success and happiness of their neighbors.

We often hear this act of nesting used to explain a mother anxiously preparing her home in preparation of a new baby. It describes an instinct to manipulate the village to improve its ability

⁹ For more on the correlation between physical relationships and well-being see Susan Pinker, *The Village Effect: How Face-to-Face Contact Can Make Us Healthier and Happier* (Toronto: Random House, 2014)

to support new villagers in hopes of providing them the optimal conditions to thrive. What would community development look like if we were that concerned with our shared nests? If we felt so committed to our neighborhoods that we embraced the urge to frantically work to shape their structure to ensure others were successful? To make sure new members felt valued? That others felt appreciated and supported? The result would be transformational.

We need to belong to a group. Our brains won't let us think otherwise. But we also must appreciate the need for our group identity to embrace the localized geography of the places in which we live. To be successful moving forward, more of us will need to prioritize an affiliation with our zip codes over our political party. It's an opportunity that will require trusted and effective leadership at the local level – a methodology that acknowledges the importance of our oldest cognitive instincts and their ability to shape the effectiveness of our communities.

It won't be easy.

Our resiliency will be defined by our ability to understand how we can transcribe the recent societal advances of modern living onto the physical structure of the neighborhood and admire it as a place that we can share and operate together. This is our true social condition. It's epitomized by the bond between the village and its villagers, a shared connection to a physical place where we feel most comfortable, where we feel most secure, and where we feel most valued.

Without that connection, we are lost.

15. RISK

By Alison Gerardot

I've never been a particularly risky person. Not in the traditional sense anyways. I've never ridden the Magnum at Cedar Pointe, I hate snorkeling after seeing a barracuda while in the Keys, and you'll never catch me sky diving. Ever.

However, while I might not take traditional risks, my personal drive to take action — despite fear I may have — leads me to do many things that many others wouldn't.

Someone recently told me that they could never do what I do. "I could never get people to give money. To ask people for money, like you do. I will never have that skill. That's a whole new level of bravery." I've never thought about it like that before. Brave. As if fundraising is on par with being a firefighter or miner. I don't consider it a risk when I call people and talk to them, or even, heaven forbid, talk about money because —

It's about relationships. And it's about trust.

Risk is defined as a situation involving exposure to danger. There are two key elements to risk: the probability of an incident and the incident's impact.

So when I talk to someone about his or her philanthropy or about money, the talk is the incident. How the donor reacts is the impact of the incident. However, I can mitigate my risk in having

these types of conversation by building relationships and establishing trust. The approach that I can use to help my risk mitigation is things like asking good questions, listening and being vulnerable enough to share my own personal stories when appropriate. Along with assessing my risk, however, at the end of the day, I also have to take action. People ultimately need to be asked. Action is what creates the impact.

So, risk doesn't look so much like risk when you've set yourself up for success.

I find myself often frustrated with our community at our unwillingness to take risk. Or maybe it's not our collective desire to take risk, but our inaction to make it happen. To pull the trigger. I understand that parts of this unwillingness have been shaped by our history.

I read somewhere once that at one time, Fort Wayne was considered a Silicon Valley of the Midwest. Fort Wayne has this enticing history of innovation, thoughtfulness, creativity, and risk. Clearly this city had gumption to want to be the best. It attracted innovators from across the country to relocate, to make this city stronger. When many of the big companies, like Harvester, left in the mid to late 20th century, Fort Wayne really kind of fell into what I would liken to be a sort of depression. Wolf & Dessauer, which at that point was L.S. Ayres, closed its retail location, and downtown became boarded up. White flight was a real thing, and the suburbs exploded with expansion. Fear became so rampant you could taste it. I remember, as a kid, April Tinsley's kidnapping near her home, followed by a string of other child kidnappings that made us all stay close to home. The horrific murder of the Osborne family disturbed the near downtown 'suburbs' along with several other incidents in the Eighties, and Fort Wayne became a dark, difficult place to be. There was real fear that Fort Wayne wasn't safe anymore. It became dangerous (or so we were told). I imagine that many other cities have had to go through similar experiences throughout their existence. And it took the city thirty years to start to get its growth back. To want to move toward that innovation.

The result of risk might be failure. But the real result of risk is innovation.

How do we make this happen? How do we push ourselves, as a collective, out of comfort, through fear to ultimate greatness? What does it look like to take risk as a city?

1. It looks like putting people who are not from the establishment in positions of power.

It takes risk to share power with people who don't look like you, and even more so, people who don't think like you. It takes risk to allow people who don't share your same values or who live different lifestyles to the tables where decisions are made. Because it means that you might not have all the answers or that your values and beliefs may be challenged.

Who is the establishment?

The establishment looks like the majority culture of those who are in power. In Fort Wayne, they are almost always white. They are upper class. They are usually male. And most are above the age of 50.

What are positions of power?

These positions are held by people who populate our government and elected positions. They lead our major economic development institutions. They populate most of our nonprofit and private sector boards of directors. They are the individuals who, when you ask an executive director, "Who are the people you would like on your board?" They will all almost inadvertently answer the same three people. And if they don't, it's because one of those three has already served on their board. We reuse members of the establishment like plastic Tupperware. And I don't mean this disparagingly. Some Tupperware, like good, seasoned, board members, will continue to help you for years. But just because something has been around a long time, doesn't mean you should keep it forever.

People who are part of the establishment are not bad.

I acknowledge that I am already on the fringe of being the establishment. Just by being asked to write this essay. And so is everyone else who has been asked to be part of this group. By being considered a “leader,” your identity becomes wrapped up in the establishment, and that stings a little bit because my ego tells me that I don’t want to be part of the establishment. I still want to do things against the grain. But at some point, I have to let my community be bigger than my ego.

What’s the risk if we don’t?

The risk is losing talent. The risk is living in a vacuum of thought and ideas. Of not having innovation. Of thinking that the best new idea out there is building more capital, rather than an innovation that will help our city’s people. Which leads me to...

2. Risk looks like investing more in your people than your places.

As the former President and CEO of Neighborhood Centers, Inc. in Houston, Texas, Angela Blanchard has made a living focused on people through her career in redevelopment. She has a couple of great talks on YouTube, but the one that has impacted me the most was a panel discussion she was part of for Kresge Foundation in 2016 on ‘Inequality in America’s Cities.’¹ Two thirds of the way through, the panelists begin discussing what it means to be a “hot city” and what Angela has to say about it I continue to go back to:

“What we really have to look at is ‘what is a great city?’ Is it a fine collection of fancy public transportation options? Is it a wonderful collection of museums and architecture and the latest and greatest of innovation and laboratories? Or is a city in fact a place where a person can come with opportunity and investment, grow and become something greater than they started in life? So this, in my mind, a city is about the people and when you make the

¹ The Kresge Foundation, “Inequalities in America’s Cities: A Panel Discussion,” YouTube Video, 1:08:04, October 20, 2016, <https://youtu.be/0IELyNyDI-4>

place more precious than the people, you get a very hot city ... any time you start figuring out how we might redevelop a city but not invest in the people then you're going to end up in the same dead end. Because ultimately it's about the people."

What's the risk?

The risk is never advancing your city and providing equity for all people. The risk is not meeting the true needs of all of your citizens. It's the people in your city who design infrastructure, who develop solutions for philanthropy and who nurture entrepreneurial ecosystems. It's the people and all of their differences that make a city unique and creates its personality that then draws others to it. However, you have to listen to those people. You have to put what those people suggest into action. Support people first. As Ms. Blanchard says: "We go where we're invited, we do what we are asked to do by the people living in the neighborhood. So if you're building anything, you're building on the aspirations of the people in that neighborhood. That's sustainable. That gives life and energy."

3. It looks like turning awareness into action.

Earlier I referenced that along with assessing my risk in fundraising, I also have to take action. That action is what creates the impact.

How do we as a community move through our inaction? According to *Psychology Today*: Fear is an obvious cause of inaction. Fear of failure, fear of being different or out-of-step, fear of rejection or even fear of success.²

I only have one keychain on my set of keys and it's a gold metal circle, imprinted with the words "Fear is a Liar." I have to consistently remind myself that fear is just the emotion that I have attached to any given situation. And if I've assessed and mitigated

² Dr. William R. Klemm, "What Keeps Us From Action? If You Can Do It, Should Do It, and Want to Do It, What Are You Waiting For?" *Psychology Today*, September 30, 2019, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/memory-medic/201909/what-keeps-us-action>.

as much risk as possible, then I have to push through fear to the impact on the other side.

To make the greatest impact, we have to take action in large and small ways. Sometimes, the risk will be to focus on a project for our community that isn't big and bold and sexy. Those things that we take action on might not be physical infrastructure. They may not even be things we will see the results of in our lifetime. They may look like changing policies.

And this kind of action, this kind of work, is hard.

This kind of work takes years. It takes patience. It takes resilience. And it takes really listening and bringing others along with you for the ride. However, in order to take action and make impact within a community you have to push through fear, which leads me to...

4. Risk looks like being okay with failure.

No one *likes* to fail. However, to innovate means you cannot be afraid to fail. And Fort Wayne has a fairly recent history of making sure that failure is off the table by using failure as a threat. In the mid-00's, the idea of moving the Wizard's ballpark downtown became one of the most hot-button topics for our community. The majority of the city was against the project; however, the Mayor and the champions for the project at that time pushed forward. By sheer will, determination and hard work, they made one of the best minor league baseball stadiums in the country and spurred instant revitalization for Downtown Fort Wayne. Eleven years later, you would be hard pressed to find anyone who does not love that ballpark and the feelings it evokes.

But at the time — people threw the “F” word around as a threat to the community. And thank goodness that those people who made Parkview Field happen acknowledged the risk of taking six city blocks in the center of downtown and turning it into a baseball stadium, and not only that, but they strove to make something that is best in class.

Currently, Fort Wayne enjoys being comfortably good. Donations often love to be “last dollars in” — just in case it doesn’t work out. Leadership loves to say — “well, I’ll join in if” But what if there were no conditions and precursors to success? Risk is inherently that. A risk that you might fail. However, that’s how we learn. It’s how we grow. And that’s how this city becomes a place that attracts others who also want to take risks. And learn. And grow beyond good, to being something brilliant.

What’s at stake, Fort Wayne, if you don’t start to take more risks? We risk being left behind. I believe that this city is on the edge of greatness. Our net migration numbers each year continue in the positive trend. We are beginning to have conversations about diversity, equity and inclusion and supporting our community’s entrepreneurs. After years of discussion, we are tentatively moving forward on projects such as Electric Works that is designed to celebrate innovation alongside history. Each of these things moves us toward greatness. But none of them come without risk.

With great risk can come great reward.

16. SACRIFICE

By Sharon Tubbs

There is a certain necessary ingredient that stirs social change, that causes a movement to transform lives, mindsets, and even laws. But it's so subtle – almost secretive – that we often miss it when fighting against injustice. We consider the result, but not what really stirred it in the first place.

This ingredient, for instance, thrived in the story about integrating Fort Wayne Community Schools. It was the late 1960s, and African Americans boycotted the public system, sending their children instead to makeshift “freedom schools.” Success would not come easily, or quickly. Nothing worthwhile does. Advocates sacrificed paychecks. Community leaders, pastors, parents, and white and Black officials donated hours, days, and years to meetings and public forums. State officials investigated and reviewed progress. Some people opposed the effort, not thinking integration was worth it. But those who believed persisted. They gave themselves to the fight. By the 1980s, I rode buses across the Maumee River train tracks from my home on the Southeast side to integrated schools on the North side.

Do you see it?

How about this: Decades after school integration, protests rang out again in the summer of 2020 on the courthouse lawn downtown. The police killing of a Black man more than five hundred miles away in Minneapolis, Minn., ignited a show of dissent here. George Floyd's death emerged as a symbol of systemic racism, of America's "knee on the neck" of African Americans throughout our country's history, including in Fort Wayne.

Long after the protests died, leaders joined in meeting rooms, by phone or Zoom. They talked about diversity, equity, and inclusion in government and private businesses. They discussed negative interactions between law enforcement and People of Color. Many still meet, pondering ways to combat racism. They give of their time, effort, their money for something much greater than themselves.

See it now?

Sacrifice. It is arguably the most crucial element of social change. A community may have the money, the moral ideology, the religious schema, and the network of helpful nonprofits and foundations—as in many ways we do in Fort Wayne. Yet, when players on different sides of the issue lack the zest of sacrifice, communities remain flat, stagnant, and, for some groups, just plain bitter.

More than a donation

The importance of true sacrifice dawned on me some time ago during a heated exchange with another leader. By day, she helped find ways to serve those in need. So, I was surprised when she initiated a debate about the pitfalls of federal health care reform, newly-minted at the time. Some in the middle class paid higher insurance premiums, she said. Some had to switch doctors, others faced high deductibles.

I agreed that the legislation should be improved. Still, it must not be dismantled, I said. What about the poor people she'd been fighting for, the ones who now had a path to be insured? What

about those with pre-existing conditions who could now get the treatment they needed?

To be clear, I believed she really enjoyed helping people—she just didn't want to sacrifice for them. She didn't want their liberation to affect her personal life. Speaking up for a poor man's needs in a meeting or on a panel was fine. But adjusting one's own health insurance so unknown people could have it, too – that was a bridge too far.

Herein lies the essence of sacrifice, which should not be confused with giving or donating, by the way. Sacrifice begins with empathy, rather than basic sympathy. People who sacrifice seek to relate to others by understanding their situations. They move past the statistics and see stories, imagining what led to the homeless man's perch in the park. They put themselves in his shoes, realizing a turn of life events might very well have put them there. Givers, however, toss extra change into his cup and feel good about themselves, checking off the requirements of their moral or religious mandates. Giving is a good thing, but it stops at convenience – at what is easily spared. Giving becomes sacrifice only when it also becomes inconvenient or uncomfortable.

The difference explains how someone who argues for health care access at work can oppose the very reform that brings it to pass. It reveals how white parents who know the social benefits of integration might still protest when the plan requires their kids to switch schools, too. It's why people who say they believe in racial equality tire of ongoing discussions and social media posts that point out the disparities among us. These conversations make them uncomfortable, step on their toes, challenge their perceptions, and threaten the privilege they enjoy.

I, too, wish we could stop this ongoing dialogue about social oppression and racism. I wish we could stop giving of our time, effort, money, and political will so everyone can have equitable opportunities to thrive. But injustice persists. We must keep talking because the voice of equity for all remains just a whisper against the roar of privilege for some.

The invisible heirloom

The fixes for injustice are complex and far-reaching. Laws must be enacted or repealed, programs created, and dialogues convened across races. The scope seems overwhelming. Consider that People of Color are disproportionately imprisoned and have lower incomes, higher unemployment rates, and shorter life expectancies. We have a greater chance of having to battle diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease. Implicit bias leads to inferior medical treatment for African Americans. We are hardest hit by disasters like the COVID-19 pandemic. African Americans and Latinos were more likely to be hospitalized and to die from the virus than our white brothers and sisters.

These results linger from slavery, Jim Crow, and ongoing structural racism in America. Obviously, more opportunities do exist for advancement today because of the protests and marches our ancestors organized. Still, the effects didn't fall away with the signing of a bill or a vote in Congress.

Racism baked itself into the making of America, politically, economically, and socially. Slavery, of course, was an economic boon for the South. But even after emancipation and the Civil Rights Act, segregation and the social hierarchy that came with it endured. Housing segregation, for example, did not evolve solely from "de facto," or private practices, such as white flight, redlining by banks, and prejudiced real estate agents. In *The Color of Law*, author Richard Rothstein contends that segregation has been so sweeping and long-lasting in America because it was "de jure," or rather established by law and public policy. He goes on to detail how our government created and maintained segregation through laws at local, state, and federal levels.¹

"By failing to recognize that we now live with the severe enduring effects of de jure segregation, we avoid confronting our constitutional obligation to reverse it," Rothstein says. "If I am

¹ Rothstein, Richard, 2017. *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*. Liveright, New York.

right that we continue to have de jure segregation, then desegregation is not just a desirable policy; it is a constitutional as well as a moral obligation that we are required to fulfill. ‘Let bygones be bygones’ is not a legitimate approach if we wish to call ourselves a constitutional democracy.”²

In other words, Rothstein reasons that our government carved the pathway to the segregation dividing us today. As an American people, then, we can’t simply distance ourselves from this truth because most of us weren’t alive when the seeds were planted. Righting these and other wrongs requires us all to move toward a mindset of equity, which isn’t possible without sacrifice. What exactly is equity? This contrast between equity and equality by the Annie E. Casey Foundation explains it well:

“Equity involves trying to understand and give people what they need to enjoy full, healthy lives. Equality, in contrast, aims to ensure that everyone gets the same things in order to enjoy full, healthy lives. Like equity, equality aims to promote fairness and justice, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same things.”³

Sacrifice is essential to equity, because equity calls for society to make up for the sins of its past. People of Color in America who have experienced discrimination and oppression for generations work harder to get to the same place as white Americans. Equity calls for the white majority to acknowledge this, to realize they inherited privilege like an invisible family heirloom—a treasured bequest that they now must sacrifice for the good of us all.

Sacrifice from all, for all

At my childhood home on Fort Wayne’s Southeast side, we were surrounded by other African American families who migrated from the southern states during the Great Black Migration, from about

² Ibid, pp. xi-xii.

³ Annie E. Casey Foundation. Aug. 4, 2020. “Equity vs. Equality and Other Racial Justice Definitions.” <https://www.aecf.org/blog/racial-justice-definitions/>.

1915 to 1970. The Southeast was where Black families from Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas settled, as white neighbors fled to the suburbs.

Since I was a child, local leaders have talked about revitalizing the Southeast, boosting employment opportunities and offering necessary resources for people who live there. But these talks often seem to fall in the shadows of economically expedient projects in other sectors. We've seen Parkview Field and the Riverfront refashioned. Today, another southeast strategy inches forward with input from City Councilmembers, architects, and residents. Meanwhile, city officials now talk about collaborations that will soon bring a new grocery store to the Southeast. The people want I talk – improved infrastructure, resources, and aesthetics. They want grocery stores with fresh produce, sit-down restaurants, and banking institutions, all of which are scarce here compared to other parts of Fort Wayne. Considering the city's support for other areas, the question is not *can* we revitalize the Southeast, but *will* we? How much is Fort Wayne willing to sacrifice to make things right?

Sacrifice for social change must come from all sides of the issue. Remember, people who fought for civil rights suffered jail time and beatings. Some made the ultimate sacrifice, dying during freedom rides, lunch counter sit-ins, and stands for righteousness. They were Black Baptists, but also white Catholics and Quakers. They were African Americans, yes, but also white landowners, politicians, and entertainers. Frank Sinatra, for one, refused to stay at hotels that didn't allow Black guests. His anti-racist stance helped integrate Las Vegas. I can see him risking gigs, his own financial gain, for inclusion's sake.

During the 2020 racial justice protests, I stood on the Allen County Courthouse lawn a few days after George Floyd died. A panoply of cultures surrounded me, African Americans, Latinos, Asians, and white Americans, too—as many whites as there were Blacks. I did not see the mayhem alluded to in the days prior. None of us had to be here. We'd gathered here for peaceful protest, to

support one another, and to hear speakers add their experience to the tome of racial injustice.

The unity intrigued me most. I hadn't imagined so many white protesters. The young ones walked fast, energized with mission, their voices bellowed. Others were graying, their demeanor calm, taking it all in while, I suppose, reminiscing of similar scenes long ago. A man and woman in a flowy hippie-style dress stood with young children at their hips. They clustered together and listened to the speakers, as if on a homeschool field trip in real-life education. Signs throughout the crowd preached to the choir and called out the opposition:

“Stop disguising racism as nationalism.”

“I refuse to silently go back to the 1950s!”

“All lives don't matter until Black lives matter.”

“White Silence is Violence.”

Some people passed out free food. Volunteers promoted voter registration. And I felt the hope of a community where everyone could be included and valued, where true equity might evolve, someday. My optimism did not result from the rhythmic chants, the speeches, or even the demands posed to government leaders. My hope came because I saw people of all skin colors gathered together, willing to offer a personal sacrifice on the altar of change.

17. SEEK

By Matt Kelley

“I love the unknown,” Eef Barzelay, in front of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic orchestra, sang to eleven-hundred people at the Auer Performance Hall on (I)PFW’s campus on the near-northeast side of Fort Wayne, IN. It was July 8, 2011.

Mr. Barzelay is the songwriter and leader of the band Clem Snide, from Nashville, Tennessee. He continued singing,

“They asked him, ‘Hey, where is this bus going?’
He said, ‘Well, I’m really not sure.’
‘Then how will you know where to get off?’
And he said, ‘The place with the most allure.
Because I love the unknown,
I love the unknown,’
He said he loves the unknown...”

The concert was called *Fortissimo: A Symphonic Collision of the Precise and the Unbound*, and featured Clem Snide along with Fort Wayne-based bands Metavari and The Orange Opera performing their original compositions with the orchestra. To upend expectations

from the downbeat, the Philharmonic opened the evening with a dissonant avant-garde piece.

The audience ranged in age from high school kids to septuagenarians, some in hard-worn band t-shirts, others in neckties.

Stephen Thompson, producer for NPR Music, attended the concert. He asked me backstage, “What’s the conceit of this city, this event? I might expect to experience something like this in San Francisco or Toronto, Seattle or New York, but here? What’s happening in Fort Wayne — and what are you all seeking to become?”



Writing in the autumn of 2020, I’m very aware that our community — like each and every community around the globe — has endured a pandemic-sized disruption in its trajectory.

Fort Wayne had been a city on the rise for the entirety of this century; plans well made in the 1990s came to life over the last two decades, and our flywheel took hold. By the second half of the 2010s, it often felt like we were stacking trophies on trophies, decisively winning with each new development and initiative.

Today, our goals are a bit more fundamental. As the late North Carolina State coach Jim Valvano said, we must simply survive — and advance.

Hold your finger to the wind, and you’ll feel a collective desire for things to “get back to normal” — and for our community to get back on its winning streak.

And yet, as we imagine our post-pandemic future — six or twelve months, three, five, even twenty years from now — we should examine how we can make those days and years ahead better, more vital, more full with understanding and a heightened emotional wellbeing for each and every one of our residents.

Things were, overall, pretty good. But “good” exists as a word to describe things that are not bad and not great.

What if things were great?

As a community, we are often set in our ways and safe in our silos.

The pandemic has given us the opportunity to reset and see things anew. To not retreat to “normal life” again, but to reimagine it and reinvent it.

My question is: what if we come out of this even 10 percent more curious in the way we invest our most important resources — our time and our hearts?

That’s just five weekends a year where we do something we’ve rarely — or never — done before: experiencing an event, visiting a community, or immersing ourselves in a happening we’ve never fully understood or felt comfortable at.

What if every single citizen did that?



Pre-pandemic, some friends and I would travel to participate in an event called a Tough Mudder. Tough Mudders are basically ten or twelve-mile trail runs, with a couple dozen physical obstacles interspersed. There’s a lot of mud, along with trenches, walls, ramps and ravines to traverse. It’s decently tough — and marvelously fun.

At the start of each event, there’s a rally led by Mudder Nation hype man, Sean Corvelle, whose invigorating speech culminates with him asking, “When is the *last time* you did something for the *first time*?” The crowd erupts.

It’s a question we should ask ourselves in Fort Wayne.

Sure, I tell myself I have a bias for adventure. But when I dig deep, I see how I’ve swaddled myself in the things—the foods, the

places, the sounds, the experiences—I already know I do or will like.

Will a “return to normal” mean a “return to the routine?” Despite living in an incredibly diverse community and region — eleven counties, nearly 800,000 people, dozens of languages, and thousands of unique experiences, we so often stick to what we know. (And then we wonder why we feel stuck.)

To illustrate this point: yesterday, I saw a video of my friend, hip-hop artist J. Tubbs, and his friends, at the roller rink on the south side of Fort Wayne, doing synchronized skating that just blew my mind. I told him how impressed I was; he invited me to join them next time.

Will I? Probably not.

I fear I won’t be good at it; I fear for the embarrassment I’ll feel over lacking the balance, the effortlessness, the groove that Jamaris and his friends have. Heck, I fear that Tubbs’ friends might not like me.

These limiting beliefs, as they’re known, keep us in our comfort zones. Maybe I’ll just go mountain biking at Franke Park, alone, instead. After all, I already know I like that.

The comfort zone is a place where we minimize stress and risk. But we also minimize growth.

Curiosity pushes us to seek out new experiences. Limiting beliefs — which are deep in our wiring — pull us back.

What if we said, “Yes, I’ll try it” — just ten percent more often than we do now? (How about 15, or 20 percent?)

Because here’s the thing. Getting curious, seeking new experiences, it’s actually *good for us*. The science demonstrates as much.

Writing in *Scientific American*, Luke Smillie says that in becoming a person who regularly takes calculated risks, challenges yourself, and tries new things, you’ll cultivate *openness to experience*, one of what’s known in psychology as the “Big Five” personality traits. Openness to experience — which is characterized by qualities like intellectual curiosity, imagination, and a cognitive

exploration that drives one to see the possibilities in every situation — has been shown to be the best predictor of creative achievement.

What’s more, as reported by the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley, curious people are happier. Research has shown curiosity to be linked to greater levels of positive emotions, psychological well-being and satisfaction with life, and lesser levels of anxiety.

Curiosity expands our empathy. When we are curious about others and actually seek to talk to people outside of our usual social circle, we become better able to understand those with lives, experiences, and worldviews different than our own.

Limiting beliefs and fears take the commune — the sharing of thoughts, ideas and feelings — out of community.

Fort Wayne, a city on the rise, often sticks to itself.

Imagine two decades of curiosity and the benefits that would bring to our city, to the businesses and organizations where we work, study and worship, to the personal and family lives of those we love, and to ourselves.

Pretty cool. But how do we get there?

Here are some ideas.

Write down your daily and weekly routines. Study these lists; are there things you do that just pass the time, or things that maybe you wish you did a little less of?

Similarly, write down your limiting beliefs. Examine the control they have, the impact they make on your life — the way they keep you in your comfort zone. (If I could rewrite my life, I would attempt to overcome my limiting beliefs and fears decades before I finally tried to.)

Make a “Seek List” of things you’ve never, or rarely, done.

Feel free to start small: dining at a restaurant you’ve never been to, volunteering at a community event you think is targeted to someone other than you, attending a Sunday service on the other side of town.

Cross something off your list every couple weeks — but, also, keep adding to it.

You'll feel a bit of anxiety or fear trying something new; you'll also find your mind likes to exaggerate the potential danger. The more you do, the less crippling those feelings become. Instead, they're a minor nuisance between you and some new experience.

As your list grows, write the ideas on small pieces of paper and put them in a jar.

On the outside of the jar, write down this line from Dr. Seuss: "If you never did, you should. These things are fun, and fun is good."

Shake the jar and pull out an idea on Monday morning; make a plan to do it by the following week.

Find a partner to do all of this with, maybe a handful. Encourage and challenge each other: "This weekend, your jar or mine?"

In 2019, I was invited to speak at a CreativeMornings Fort Wayne event on the topic of "flow." (If you've never been to a CMFW event, add it to your Seek Jar.) As I was researching flow, I came across Mihaly Csikszentmihaly, who says that flow is "the ideal state of learning — when you lose yourself entirely in an activity." It happens when you're so engaged in what you're doing that you lose track of time.

Csikszentmihaly says that happiness is found in these moments of profound engagement: "The best moments in our lives are not the passive, receptive, relaxing times; the best moments usually occur if a person's body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile."

Well, isn't that the truth?

Spoiler alert: you won't love, or even like, everything you try. That's okay.

As we learn more about our likes and dislikes, we come to know ourselves better — both who we are today and how we hope

to grow tomorrow. It's a strange — and liberating — feeling to realize you don't know yourself as well as you thought you did.

Your life can change when curiosity overcomes fear and you discover a love for something you had no idea would ever capture your imagination.

Imagine Fort Wayne putting its best foot forward, walking into a new experience.

Isn't that the kind of place you'd love to call home? The kind of place where you'd love to learn and grow?

For some communities, the more success they have, the less likely they are to take risks. That success causes them to become locked on what has worked so far and close their minds.

As you consider Fort Wayne in twenty years, are our minds closed — or open?

The owl of Minerva flies only at dusk, as the saying goes. We gain wisdom through hindsight — through our experiences.

Let's make sure we have a lot of 'em.

I'm calling J. Tubbs.



Over the last decade, Eef Barzelay has performed in Fort Wayne at least once a year. By some stretch, ours is the smallest market he plays.

He told me, "There's a sense of appreciation in Fort Wayne. In other cities, it can feel like you're taken for granted, but here, people pay close attention to the nuance of everything I'm seeking to communicate. As a creative person, that encouragement, that exchange, is irreplaceable."

At Fortissimo, Barzelay sang the final verse and chorus of the evening's final song:

"The doctor asked him what he was afraid of;
just what was he running from?"

And he said, 'It's not the fear of success, nor of closeness,

but of going through life feeling numb.
That's why I love the unknown,
I love the unknown,
He said he loves the unknown..."

Might we all seek to love the same.

Recommended Resources:

Clem Snide, "I Love the Unknown" from the album 'Your Favorite Music'

8 Ways to Create Flow According to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi:

<https://positivepsychology.com/mihaly-csikszentmihalyi-father-of-flow/>

Openness to Experience: The Gates of the Mind:

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/openness-to-experience-the-gates-of-the-mind>

Curiosity and Exploration: Facilitating Positive Subjective Experiences and Personal Growth Opportunities:

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/s15327752jpa8203_05

Joe Henry on the On Being with Krista Tippett podcast:

<https://onbeing.org/programs/joe-henry-welcoming-flies-at-the-picnic/> Also, every record he's ever made or produced.

18. SHADOWS

By Andrew Hoffman

My shadow startles me sometimes. There have been moments — especially when I’m deep in a podcast or listening to music on a run through my neighborhood at night — when suddenly I’m aware of my shadow. In that moment, I begin to wonder if it’s only my shadow or someone there behind me. Other times — such as when I’ve been walking alone downtown or on a wooded trail during the day — I have a different sense that someone follows close behind me. Usually, it’s because of the sounds I’m hearing, but when I turn around, there is nothing to be found outside of the thoughts inside my head. I hope I’m not the only one who feels this way. I’d like to think that others can empathize with this mind game of the unknown, of the “what ifs” and “worst case scenarios” that trigger my fight or flight mechanism.

I find this same startled sensation when I contemplate the shadows of my internal world. This inner contemplation is a familiar place in my professional, personal, and spiritual lives that all seem to merge into one. After all, I’m on the doorstep of my forties, the director of a growing neighborhood development organization, a father of three wonderful and maturing children, I’ve been married to the love of my life for more than a decade,

and I am a man on a spiritual journey to figure out what it truly means to follow Jesus while embracing the Christian faith ... among about twenty other things that occupy my mental space at any given time. To be contemplative in any one of those areas for more than ten minutes is usually enough to paralyze some people with indecision, denial, and avoidance of the horrifying unknowns that lie in the shadow of one's self. After all, one thing is certain. If we spend any amount of time in this deeply contemplative space, it often leads to a startling awareness: we all have issues, troubles, doubts, questions, and brokenness inside ourselves. The difficult part is realizing that we're not quite sure where they came from, why they are there, or what we're supposed to do with them.

If someone were to ask you how well you know yourself, what would you say? If you're anything like me, you would probably have a pretty good idea about your desires, values, beliefs, and opinions. You could articulate a code of personal conduct that points to your desired level of "good" as it relates to the type of person you want to be. For the most part, you put in plenty of effort to being kind and generous, making moral and ethical decisions, making healthy and productive decisions, and striving to maintain healthy relationships with the ones you love, the acquaintances and co-workers you share time with, and the strangers you meet in passing. But have you ever snapped at someone for no reason? Made a selfish decision that hurt someone? Intentionally stood someone up without giving them a call? Crossed the street a block earlier than anticipated to avoid the person coming the other way? Dejectedly asked yourself, "Why did I even do that?"

I'm becoming more aware of little outbursts such as these in my own life, weaknesses that run contrary to the way I try to live my life and how I want others to view and know me. My kids are ten and seven right now, which makes me feel like I have lots of regrettable outbursts. As I become more aware of them, I spend more time in contemplation of their origins. I'm learning that I have blind spots deep within the shadow of my personality. Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung describes the areas of our personality that we

choose to reject and repress as our “shadow self.” Author and theologian Richard Rohr states, “Our shadow self is any part of ourselves or our institutions that we try to hide or deny because it seems socially unacceptable.”¹

I’m sure many people who are reading this are wonderful humans. Maybe you like yourself just the way you are. Therefore, you are struggling to track with this concept or you’re wondering what shadow selves have to do with community development and the future of our city. The disconnect may be that you’re not yet aware of the parts of your personality that are being rejected. However, this unawareness does not mean that they are not coming out of you. A common way our shadow presents itself is through the scapegoat mechanism. Historian Rene Girard demonstrated use of this mechanism to be a foundational principle for the formation of most social groups and cultures, and he found that humankind typically blames anything else except for itself when something goes wrong.² Truly, we’re all rather efficient and successful at suppressing the shadows of our internal world. But why? Because they can be taboo, difficult to talk about, and scary to think they even exist within us. If such darkness begins to surface, we quickly push it back inside due to fear or simply because it startled us — just as our physical shadow startles us in a darkened alley, on a forest trail, or on a nighttime run.

Jack E Othon lists a number of ways our shadow selves present themselves. She is quick to point out that while it may be challenging to see them in ourself, they are easily identifiable in others. This should be an indication that we have some personal work to do.³

¹ Richard Rohr, “Shadow Work.” The Center for Action and Contemplation Blog. September 8, 2019. <https://cac.org/shadow-work-weekly-summary-2019-09-14/>

² Baillie, Gil, *Violence Unveiled: Humanity at the Crossroads*. The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1995.

³ Jack E Othon, “Carl Jung and the Shadow: The Ultimate Guide to the Human Dark Side.” Highexistence.com, November 2017. <https://highexistence.com/carl-jung-shadow-guide-unconscious/>

1. A tendency to harshly judge others, especially if that judgment comes by impulse.
2. Pointing out one's own insecurities as flaws in others.
3. A quick temper with people in subordinate positions of power.
4. Frequently playing the "victim" in every situation.
5. A willingness to step on others to achieve one's own end.
6. Unacknowledged biases and prejudices.
7. A messiah complex.

I believe that becoming more aware of our shadow selves is a vital first step in our vision-casting for our city, neighborhoods, and the greater Fort Wayne community as a whole. I would argue that the only sustainable pathway to true community development is the pathway that begins with personal, spiritual, and professional development of our leaders at large. "The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. This act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge," wrote Carl Jung.⁴ Our neighborhoods and communities are comprised of people with varying personalities and even shadow selves. Despite my best efforts to control someone else's behavior, I can only make progress on improving and enhancing my own. I imagine this reality is true for you as well. But there is good news: if we can all become a little less afraid of our shadows, embrace them as part of our true selves, and learn how to use them for good, then I believe

⁴ Jung, Carl, *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*. Princeton University Press, 1979.

our communities, work places, and neighborhoods will reap the benefits of a healthier “us within them.” We are the only ones responsible for ourselves. Let us simply begin there.

While vastly important on a personal level, I believe this concept has other value that applies to our topic at hand. Let’s return to Jack E Othon’s list of how the shadow presents itself. Instead of using it on ourselves, we can also apply it to our city, our neighborhoods and subdivisions where we live, or in the communities — such as our workplaces — where we spend the bulk of our time. Do you begin to see how those places also have a shadow side? As I’ve spent the last fifteen years interacting with neighbors in need and immersed in the complexities of vulnerable neighborhoods, I’ve become more aware of how a physical place can have a shadow side unique to itself. If outside forces press too hard, authority figures reject it, or injustice and inequality are commonplace, the shadow side comes floating to the surface. In Fort Wayne, we have deeply-rooted shadows from our history that play out on a macro size across our entire city and a micro size as small as a few blocks. We need vision, humility, and a broader number of leaders from all levels and spectrums who are willing to do the hard work — the deep, internal, personal work — in their own lives first. This is a necessary step if we want to lead others into the visionary, forward-thinking work as we focus on creating an environment where progress can be made in our city at large. Can you imagine what might improve if we could create more environments that empower people to become more comfortable with their individual and collective vulnerabilities? It’s only when we can express our vulnerabilities that we can begin inviting or allowing others to help move us toward health and wholeness.

We need not be afraid of our shadow side. Instead, let us learn to acknowledge it, give it space to breathe, and empower its aspects that are beneficial. Growth and transformation will only come through the struggle of dealing with our conflicts, criticisms, poor choices, and the contradictions between what we were taught and what we are learning. “The shadow in and of itself is not the

problem. The source of our disease and violence is separation from parts of ourselves, from each other, and from God. Mature religion is meant to re-ligio or re-ligament what our egos and survival instincts have put asunder, namely a fundamental wholeness at the heart of everything,” said Robert A. Johnson.⁵ What society and culture push us toward is a false self where finding and embracing the neutral and mundane characteristics of our personalities becomes our focus for fitting in and co-existing within the communities we share most of our lives with. We have learned to hide all of the bad — and sometimes even the great — aspects of our lives because we’ve learned that there is no place for them in our personality-muted worlds.

Finding and embracing our true identities is the foundational cornerstone of a transformative future. When we begin to accept our True Self — the self that pushes past the shame brought on by our brokenness through confession and grace — then we can begin to form a more solid foundation for true development. This is vital because it allows us to gain confidence and to think more empathetically and cooperatively with one another due to the expansion of our worldviews. Our fears diminish, the comfort we have in our brokenness settles in, and the knowledge that our stories can help another person’s journey increases. Conversation is essential to this process. Community engagement tools, such as asset-based mapping and placemaking research, are two methods I use to facilitate the dialogue needed to begin the identity-defining process. I’ve found the more intimate and safe an environment is, the deeper the dive into the discovery journey may be. We must also recognize that the path any person or place takes toward transformation usually requires proximity, relationship, accountability, hard work, and a whole lot of trust. If you can get people engaged in this process, you can get them actively moving in the necessary direction.

⁵ Johnson, Robert A., “Owning Your Own Shadow: Understanding the Dark Side of the Psyche.” Harper San Francisco, 1991.

In our shadows lie our struggles. In our shadows lie our greatest hopes. If we could take the time to gather, listen, confess, document, and identify the unknowns of these shadows — first within ourselves and then within our communities — I believe we can then become the world-class city we all aspire to be. However, if we do that work and do it well, I also believe that our definition of success, as it relates to becoming a “world class” city, will get redefined along the way. But is that such a bad thing?

“People who accept themselves accept others. People who hate themselves hate others. Only Divine Light gives us permission, freedom, and courage to go all the way down into our depths and meet our shadow,” said Richard Rohr.⁶

⁶ Richard Rohr, “Shadow Work.” The Center for Action and Contemplation Blog. September 9, 2019. <https://cac.org/becoming-who-you-are-2019-09-09/>

19. SPECIFICITY

By Jacob Benedict

In a discussion several years ago, the author Malcolm Gladwell laid out his formula for what makes something interesting: It has to be both surprising (i.e., unconventional) and specific. Most ideas and conversations fail one or both hurdles, as they should – it is no small task to outline a specific, unconventional thought that is also correct.

I am in awe of the progress our region has made since I moved back to the area in late 2008. Progress has been both tangible — downtown development, increased activity and collaboration, etc. — and intangible — a sense of pride and anticipation that has steadily grown over the past decade. But this progress also raises the bar: What can we do over the next decade to accelerate the positive momentum in our region? My proposal is that a specific, unconventional goal might be a useful component of our region's next stage of community development.

Several years ago, I was visiting with the management team of a successful, diversified holding company that owns and operates manufacturing businesses across multiple industries. As we sat down to review the organization's performance, they started as they always do – with an in-depth review of employee safety statistics

across their subsidiaries. Safety statistics rarely surface during my discussions with industrial executives, and if they do they are usually treated as a footnote in a company presentation. But at this organization, safety statistics receive an unusually large amount of care and attention. Why? The management team explained: “First, it is important to keep our people safe and to let our team members know that we care about their safety. Second, if our subsidiary management teams can’t execute the daily steps required to keep employees safe, then that is a signal that they won’t be successful in their other endeavors, which may be harder to measure on a real-time basis.”

This organization’s focus on safety was both surprising and specific. It was also built around the differentiation between objectives and key results (as championed by Intel’s Andy Grove and explained in *Measure What Matters* by John Doerr). The organization’s goals around safety included not only expectations for what kinds of end results should be produced but also specific, daily objectives driven down throughout the organization. In other words, the organization outlined both where they wanted to go and how they intended to get there.

Consider a potential example. The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged conventional thinking on the relationship between working and living. New economy workers and their employers have been surprised to find productivity levels avoid deterioration despite work-from-home arrangements. Young families are re-examining their choice of locale with a newfound flexibility and focus on health and well-being. At the same time, the pandemic has accelerated the recognition that some cities and states have failed to build a sustainable financial model. This reality may cause both employers and employees to reconsider their home base. Indiana’s solid financial health, central location and strong infrastructure position it as a potential beneficiary. It is easy to over-predict the potential shifts in employer and employee behavior, but it seems that at the least our region can look for some additional tailwinds.

At the same time, many would agree that the economy will become increasingly driven by intellectual capital in the future. Even our domestic industrial base, which may see a renaissance as companies re-shore part of their supply chain to mitigate against the kinds of risks seen during the past two years (trade wars, a pandemic, etc.), will become more automated. Job growth will continue to be dominated by fields such as programming and information security. The economy of the future will be built around automating what are now human processes, and this work will pervade nearly every industry. Or as the venture capitalist Marc Andreessen said, “software is eating the world.” If this is true, then a region that offers the combination of a positive, low-friction business environment and a healthy and intelligent workforce will position itself to be a leader in the new economy.

What if we adopted, as a community, a goal of teaching programming as a second language to every elementary student in our public school systems? The key result would be clear and measurable: X% of high school students are able to pass a base-level programming proficiency examination. The objectives around this effort would be specific and widespread, with all stakeholders buying into the vision and agreeing to pull their weight by tackling specific tasks and expectations. Of course our community already has efforts around STEM education. But an effort like the one proposed here would tackle the problem from a supply perspective instead of a demand perspective. Instead of just linking educational programs to current regional demand for labor, our community would focus on enhancing our supply of highly trained labor for prospective employers. Instead of local employers working to develop local talent, the hope would be that external employers would relocate to tap into our local talent. In other words, “build it and they will come.”

If a project like this became a community-wide initiative, you can imagine the signal value this might have to stakeholders both within and outside of our region. Northeast Indiana would not only be a low-cost, hospitable environment for employers, but

would signal their belief in the importance of a high-quality workforce by adopting a regional goal to equip every student with programming abilities.

This is just an example. I am not an expert in programming, education or workforce training. Maybe there is another goal better suited to our community and our needs. But my point is this: I think it is worth considering the adoption of (a) specific and (b) unconventional goal to add to our current community development efforts. That goal would include expectations for both key results (the specific metrics we hope to achieve over time) and the specific objectives that we expect each stakeholder in the community to tackle. Then, if we fall short we can examine whether we failed because (a) we simply didn't meet our objectives or (b) the objectives that we set were poorly designed to achieve the key results that we desired.

The goal chosen doesn't have to be as complicated or as difficult as teaching children to program. Indeed, maybe an easier or simpler goal would be a better bogey (perhaps something focused on the health of our labor force). I remember once hearing a retired cancer researcher reflect on his career by observing, "You know, as successful as I was as a researcher, I probably would have done more good in the world by spending all of my time simply convincing people not to smoke." Our region has the potential to do amazing things in the next twenty years. There will be many challenges to achieving our potential. But a simple, audacious, specific, unconventional, "all-in" goal could help signal the kind of region that we hope to be, generate excitement and enthusiasm throughout our community as we tackle a tangible goal and serve as an important component of a broader community development agenda.

20. VOICES

By Curtis L. Crisler

Today, many don't exist unless there's video. Today, many disbelieve your life experiences because your life experiences look nothing like theirs. Today, it's difficult to have a voice when trust is greatly fractured. Yet, voice matters.

As a professor, I harp on voice because voice establishes who you are — your character and style. Also, voice does more — voice replicates the innate and raw manifestation of intuition with risks. It's here, in the “intuition and risks” of life experiences, where you conquer, or resist, your need to succeed. It's said many don't succeed because they are scared to achieve success. I hear this a lot in communities of color. All people, especially POC can understand success comes from choices. What is important is you must feel validated in your community for you to visualize your place in it, to understand you have choices. That's not true when life seems to go against you. Nevertheless, it swings back to voice and how you use it, to accomplish who you'll become, to create more choices to choose from, in and outside your social-economic and cultural environments.

Put yourself in positions to create choices. Of course, help from advocates is needed. We can never be successful on our own.

Give yourself permission to take effective risks because your voice garners more opportunities to possibilities. Many people find careers in the university. Although — the university is not for everyone. I tell that to my students. I didn't think I was college material either.

Once I realized I had a voice, I used my voice to succeed and to fail better. I shared my voice with the university. You may not desire a university experience. That's fine. There are plenty of plumbers, doctors, accountants, morticians, entrepreneurs, and engineers who make way more money than I do, and they enjoy their jobs. They enjoy what they do and why they do it. They acquire a workplace, trucks, employees they train, marketing, when all they were probably thinking about was, "Hey, I want to be a plumber like my dad." It could be due to her father working constantly, the family always taken care of, and the daughter realizing she loves working with her hands. Who knows. You may say, "I don't want to be a plumber." Realize this! I don't care who it is, or whomever they are in the world, you will more than likely find everyone needs access to toilets, sinks, bathtubs, and showers be they queens, presidents, or the billions of people who work hard every day. If plumbing is your thing, you could be doing plumbing residentially, in a school district, a hospital, or your city county building. If you're good, they will all want you. Look at the possible client/revenue stream there. Don't think trade/vocational schools, entrepreneurial ventures with banks/CUs or local community groups, start-ups, etc. won't vie to present you with marvelous opportunities? They will! Still, *you must do the hard work to get the things you want*. Life is not fair! Life is messy! No one gives you anything! If you want to be a YouTube Influencer, you bust your ass, work hard to get your channel, and have people subscribe. All the above takes hard work but making opportunities to work is what makes you successful. *What do you want to do? Why do you want to do it? How do you do it? What are you doing to get you to where you want to go? What are you doing when you don't know what you want to do?* These are thoughts incubating in your brain. At some point, you must act.

You must use your voice in a way that satiates who you'll become. In all honesty, I'm still becoming. It's ongoing. I'm not done with who, what, why, how I am. This is lifelong.

One choice-altering moment was moving from Gary to Fort Wayne to attend IIT Technical Institute after being recruited for Architectural Engineering to obtain an Associate Degree. I had one roommate. Two other friends moved to Fort Wayne, too. One didn't like the experience, so he left. That's how I ended up with two roommates. Eric came to live with us. My two roommates attended IIT for Electrical Engineering. At the time we left Gary, the mills were closing or cutting back. It was Reaganomics, and minimum wage was \$3.35 an hour. People told us to leave, move, find jobs, find places that will give us choices. And work hard.

I was seventeen. One night, while cooking dinner, there was an excessive knock on our door. Eric answered. I was in the kitchen, listening, as Eric and Carlton talked to whomever it was at the door. I remember coming into the living room. The front door was open. Eric was on the stoop, outside the door. Carlton was by the threshold of the door, inside. I walked closer, knife in hand. Beyond my roommates were a couple of white, teenaged girls and four, white, teenaged guys. I came closer to the door with the knife. I heard the conversation. The lead guy regaled us with a narrative where the two girls were verbally accosted by some black men in a car. The lead guy was incensed. He wanted to know was it us that had accosted the girls with verbal threats, and he demanded an answer. I was perplexed, as I'm sure my roommates were, too. One of the girls said it wasn't us. It didn't look like us. We told them the same. To this day, I remember holding the kitchen knife's handle harder. I remember we hadn't talked smack. I think it's because we were amazed, probably thinking, *these dudes came to our house and knocked on the door for a fight? This didn't happen in Gary.* Eric was on the porch; he was the tallest. Carlton was on the stoop. I was inside

the threshold of the door with the knife, hidden from the guys' view, behind Carlton. The white guys had bats. The lead, white guy apologized for coming to our house, for being disrespectful. Eric said, "It's cool. We understand — would probably do the same thing." They went back into the night. We placed them in a room in our minds, like a prayer. We talked it out all night.

"Man, I had a knife in my hand. For real though!"

"I know. For real!" said Carlton.

"How are you gone come to someone's house, knock on the door, be disrespectful, and NOT get your ass whooped?!" Eric said.

It was so crazy to us. We didn't back down. We were incrementally moving into position in case something popped off. We were young, black men on our own. We only had each other. It all could have gone wrong. A choice to not bust out, full of bravado — this choice was grace. This choice didn't land me in jail, and I didn't kill or harm anyone. I went on to receive my associates degree in Architectural Engineering. That was great, but it meant nothing since IIT Technical Institute wasn't an accredited school. Another butt-kicking lesson that would haunt my finances for years.

A second choice-altering moment occurred when I was coming home from work at my third-shift gig at IIT/ACD. We made SINCGAR radios for the government. It was a good, clean, hourly, union job that helped me pay off those school loans. I was driving east to a stoplight at West Rudisill and Hanna Street. I closed my eyes for what seemed like a blink. I went through the red light on Rudisill, and a car coming north on Hanna hit me on the passenger side of my Somerset. My car spun and hit a woman in her car. I was then facing west, like her. Thank goodness no one got killed. Thank goodness no one got seriously hurt. My car was totaled. At the hospital, I saw the woman's husband holding their little son. I asked him was she all right. He was kind. He said she was shaken up. He put his free hand on me. My heart could've fell to my feet. I watched him and his child greet her. I closed my eyes, thanked my higher power I didn't take a mother away from her son

or a wife away from her husband. The next day I discovered my fault with it all. My mother asked, “What are you giving up?” I was rocked! I had been overextending myself, looking to achieve some American dream, wanting perfection as a worker, student, son, boyfriend, and community leader, but failing. I was concerned. My mother was concerned. My girlfriend was concerned. I worked a full-time and part-time gig. I attended college. I sang in two choirs and a gospel group (Music and Gentlemen). I was a member of Concerned African American Men (CAAM), Big Brothers Big Sisters, Mastering the Possibilities, the Black Collegiate Caucus, President of the Forensics Club, and a few other organizations. I thought about all the middle and high schoolers I talked to about attending college. I thought about the woman I could’ve killed, and her family. I thought about the driver and his passenger as their eyes must’ve come out of their sockets when I went through the red light. Like the blinding sun, my mother’s question reverberated inside my mind. With Mama’s nudge, I made the choice to focus on finishing undergrad. I’d fully focus on my education, and afterwards, I’d focus more on facilitating my community. This choice solidified my voice. It helped me to say NO when I used to say YES to everything. I’m imperfect, and, still, I have responsibility on an even larger scale because the choices I make can be the difference between life and death. This choice moved me to want to attend graduate school after receiving my B.A. and minor.

The last choice-altering moment occurred when one of my professors at IPFW had SIUC send me scholarship applications. Unfortunately, I missed the deadline for the scholarships, but SIUC was searching for GAs. To better prepare for my jaunt to becoming a poet, I left Fort Wayne. As much as I wanted to continue my education, as a GA, an inner fear growled, *You’re from the ghetto! You can’t do it! You aren’t graduate material!* The self-doubt was debilitating. My engagement — terminated. I quit my job of thirteen years. I attended the funeral of a family member (a murder-suicide), before reaching Carbondale. I was in a dark place — dislocated from my

soul and body — from my loves, family, the friends my life made music with. That time was musicless, as if someone had snatched the dance out my body. I had given up everything to go to grad school. I was thirty-six years old and starting from the beginning, again. Again, the consequences were dire. All I knew was that I didn't give up everything for nothing. I finally took the advice I gave all my friends who left to partake in their dreams. I stepped out on the belief that I had something to share with the world. With that, I attended my first semester of grad school. That was 9/11.

Fear's a child wanting what it wants. My choices helped me quell fear. My voice was paramount in the above examples. Had I not made those choices or taken advantage of those opportunities, I wouldn't be writing this today.

Own and hone your voice, and you'll have many chances to address choices. Your choices will enhance opportunities those who are voiceless never own. Instead of being stuck with fear, be stuck in choices that'll move you into your successes. People suggested I be an engineer or state trooper. *Why would I be a poet?* I'm a Dreamist — a dreamer and a realist. I wanted to be a poet. Today, I am.

AFTERWORD

By Tim Pape

We long for security. Yet, we seek ever to explore. We are born to create. Yet, we fight to preserve. We strive single-handedly to chart our own courses. But, we join together in families, neighborhoods, and communities to support one another and transform our worlds. We are driven to be fully alive, and at the same time, to wholly belong.

We are living, breathing dichotomies. When we govern our passions, infuse them with intellect, and collaborate, we build a world that holds all human knowledge in a phone in our pocket. When our fear governs, we threaten our own survival.

This journey of humankind began as we emerged from the oceans, made land and set forth to create art, scientific study, justice, philosophy and democracy.

It is remarkable, considering that we evolved largely governed by our old brains to fear, to be wary of strangers and to resist the unknown. Instinct pushes us first to fall back and defend.

Was it not a fear of change, a response to a perceived threat, that propelled the actions of some at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021?

Yet, our massive new brains motivate us to think critically and to embrace risk, strive and seek to discover and create more, the different, the new.

While the physics of a constantly expanding universe make change inevitable, the human species specifically, intentionally and often thoughtfully chooses to imagine and fashion its own future.

In spite of our flight or fight impulse, we brave the unknown. We search for the foundations of our existence through the study of molecular biology and quantum mechanics, drilling into the most fundamental elements of matter, while simultaneously investigating the cosmos in search of our beginning, and the very start of time. Inevitably, we push up, out and beyond.

This duality of humankind, the eternal battle of our old and new brains, pulses through our community today, as it has throughout human history.

Some are wary of what's next, but still excited by the changes they see and what might be. The push-pull of human nature prompts us to build walls while also bulldozing frontiers. It is the stimulus that fosters group stability and strength, while lionizing individualism. It's what mobilized college students with aspirations to connect the world and shake the foundations of the world's oldest democracy.

Our stunningly brave authors, with raw openness and trust, from their singular perspectives, confront this human duality. Amidst their inspired ideas, laments and calls for action, they challenge us to seize the future. They summon our human will to search, learn and develop our community to enrich both individual opportunity and the collective good.

In this anthology our authors' premise is that we want more for ourselves, and, by intentional thought, design and action, we can make our lives and our place — our Fort Wayne — better. Thus, they call forth that boundless spirit of all humankind that rejects limitations, convention and, at least to some degree, tradition. They envisage that we can, working individually but collectively, forge a Fort Wayne of more unity and individuality,

more liberty and justice, more art and science, more opportunity and independence.

Forthcoming, at its root, presents a moral choice. Will we truly see one another, confront our own preferences and biases, respect our vast initial differences and engage one another? Will we work to define a new portfolio of common, inclusive objectives and then find ways to pull together to realize them? Will we harness the good, redirect the bad, and fuse our innate duality to the positive? And always, will we pledge to keep most present the dignity in each of us?

In a country whose DNA is rich with don't tread on me, our scribes leave us with a demanding and audacious mandate. Working together does not readily marry with our vaunted rugged individualism. Still, stopping to see ourselves in the other, seeing their dignity always, is our highest purpose and the path to our best future.

To achieve this, we must commit to building trust; and relationships are the foundation of all trust. Each author demands of us, in their own way, to overcome our innate defensive nature, and to, instead, lead with open minds, caring hearts and generous spirits. Our dedication to a Fort Wayne that is a place of pride and opportunity for all arises from a collective commitment to see, know and hear one another.

We evolved through the ages. That glowing spark in each of us is the stardust from which we burst. And so, we must dream without boundaries and work together fearlessly for the betterment of all. It is what makes us unstoppable.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dan Baisden is the City of Fort Wayne Administrator of Neighborhood Planning and Activation. Growing up in the 'Rust Belt' of Eastern Ohio, he first discovered his passion for community development after reading Jane Jacobs *Life and Death of Great American Cities* as a sophomore in high school. After graduation, he moved across the country leading and managing radio stations for nearly fifteen years before relocating to Fort Wayne in the early 2010's. He changed careers, obtaining degrees in Urban Planning and Urban Sociology from Arizona State University and soon will have his graduate degree in Community Development from Pennsylvania State University. After moving to Fort Wayne, he was named an *Edison Research 30 Under 30*, a *Fort Wayne Business 40 Under 40*, serves as the chair of Congress of the New Urbanism Midwest Chapter and is a board member for Northeast Indiana Public Radio. Dan has completed multiple research projects on urban neighborhoods and the sociology of communities in decline. He is passionate about building vibrant, healthy and resilient neighborhoods and communities across the Midwest.

Jacob Benedict is an Investment Manager at the University of Notre Dame. Prior to joining Notre Dame, he was a partner at AMI Investment Management, located in Kendallville, Indiana. He has been involved with numerous non-profit organizations in the Fort Wayne area, including the Notre Dame Club of Fort Wayne, Friends of the Lincoln Collection, THRIVE Noble County, the University of St. Francis, St. Martin's Healthcare Clinic and the Women's Care Center. He has a strong interest in economics and development. Jacob is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and Purdue University.

Zachary R. Benedict is an architect and urbanist focused on the connection between people and places. As one of the managing Principals at MKM architecture + design, a Fort Wayne-based studio consistently recognized as one of the nation's "Top Healthcare Firms" by *Modern Healthcare Magazine*, he manages numerous projects ranging from senior living facilities to public libraries. With an extensive background in urban sociology, he is considered one of the leading voices in the "Lifetemp Community" movement, focusing on the socio-economic benefits of age-friendly neighborhoods. Through these efforts he has lectured internationally on various

topics – discussions whose primary focus is to encourage communities to reevaluate the importance of inclusive civic space. In 2015 the American Institute of Architects (AIA) awarded him with a national *Young Architect Award* in recognition of his work. Additionally, Ball State University's College of Architecture and Planning Alumni Society recognized him with the *Alumni Award of Outstanding Achievement*. He is the youngest individual to ever receive this award.

David Buuck was born in Fort Wayne and never thought he'd return after college. The Great Recession dictated otherwise and Buuck came home with his wife, Amy, and their young daughter in 2011. However, from then on, Fort Wayne pride has been brewing ever since. In Indiana, if you have a child with a developmental disability like autism, Down syndrome, or many other diagnoses, you must turn 80 years old or pass away before your child can receive the needed funding for a 24/7 residential solution. Something new needed to be created. In 2015, Buuck started CASS Housing (CASS), a privately funded nonprofit organization creating customized housing and support solutions for adults with developmental disabilities to proactively address this problem. David, Amy, and their three children live in Fort Wayne.

Curtis L. Crisler was born and raised in Gary, Indiana. He received a BA in English, with a minor in Theatre, from Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW, now PFW), and he received his MFA from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Crisler has five full-length poetry books, two YA books, and five poetry chapbooks. Crisler's awarded fellowships and residencies come from the City of Asylum/Pittsburgh (COA/P), Cave Canem, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts (VCCA), Soul Mountain (Connecticut), a guest resident at Hamline University (Minnesota), a guest resident at Words on the Go (Indiana), and Writer-in-Residence (Writers @ The Carr Program) sponsored by Poets & Writers, INC (Michigan). Crisler's grants and awards come from a Library Scholars Grant Award, a RHINO Founder's Award, Indiana Arts Commission Grants, Eric Hoffer Awards, the Sterling Plumpff First Voices Poetry Award, and he was nominated for the Eliot Rosewater Award and a Jessie Redmon Fauset Book Award. Crisler's poetry has been adapted to theatrical productions in New York and Chicago, and he's been anthologized in various publications, as well as a variety of magazines and journals. He was commissioned for William Morris (a glass artist) by the Fort Wayne Museum of Art (FWMoA). He's been a Contributing Poetry Editor for Aquarius Press and a Poetry Editor for Human Equity through Art (HEArt). Crisler's work exhibits what he calls an urban Midwestern sensibility (uMs). What uMs exemplifies is "the community and creativity of the varied relationships of descendants from the first through second waves of the southern migration, exploring their connections to place/environment, history, family, and self." Also, he created the poetry form the sonastic and the Indiana Chitlin Circuit (a small circuit bringing writers to Ft. Wayne). Crisler is Professor of English at Purdue University Fort Wayne.

Ellen Cutter joined Greater Fort Wayne Inc. in October 2016. As vice president of economic development, she manages business retention, business attraction, downtown development, airport development, and workforce development activities. A Chicago-area native, Ellen is a graduate of Loyola University Chicago, and she earned her Master of City and Regional Planning from Georgia Tech, with a focus on economic development and land use. She is an AICP-certified urban planner. She previously served for three years as director of the Community Research Institute at Purdue University Fort Wayne. During that time, she collaborated with GFW Inc. on the Northeast Indiana Target Industries report and as the project manager of the “Road to One Million Plan” for the IEDC Regional Cities program, which secured \$42 million for quality of place projects. Prior to working locally, Ellen served as principal and director of research for Market Street Services, a community and economic development consulting firm based in Atlanta. Her eight-year tenure included strategic planning and technical assistance in more than 20 states and dozens of communities ranging from Des Moines, Iowa, to Austin, Texas, and the State of West Virginia. Ellen serves on the board for the Fort Wayne Museum of Art and is a member of St. Mary’s Catholic Church, Williams Woodland Park Neighborhood Association, and American Planning Association. She and her husband, Weston, have three daughters.

Leslie Friedel is a long-term resident of northeast Indiana. She currently serves as the CEO of Visiting Nurse in Fort Wayne, IN. Leslie holds a master’s degree in Social Work from Indiana University. She is a licensed health facility administrator and a licensed social worker. Leslie’s career has been focused on healthcare and nonprofit work. She has an extensive background in working with the seniors in our community. Leslie is passionate about leadership development and serving others.

Alison Gerardot is the Chief Impact Officer at the Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne and has been at the Foundation in various roles since February 2017. She is responsible for developing and implementing strategies for growth and the Community Foundation’s vision for the county and helping elevate philanthropy throughout the community. In 2020, Alison Gerardot helped to launch the first Women’s Fund of Greater Fort Wayne held at the Community Foundation. Alison has her BA in English from IPFW and her Certificate in Fundraising Management from the IU School of Philanthropy. Alison has an extensive nonprofit background, through social work, arts nonprofit administration and education and came to the Community Foundation after serving as the Director of Programming and Events for Riverfront Fort Wayne. Through her work at Riverfront, she had the honor of producing community impacting events such as the “Faces of the Fort” community art project and Middle Waves Music Festival. In 2016, she was honored as a *Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly* “Forty Under 40” recipient and in 2019 became a Leadership Fort Wayne graduate. In 2020, Alison was named one of *Fort Wayne Magazine’s* “People of the Year” for her work in establishing the Women’s Fund. Alison currently volunteers on the board of Project Ballet, the Downtown Improvement District and helps at her children’s school. Alison currently lives in Fort

Wayne with her wonderful husband, two kids, and adorable dog Theo! She loves visiting the farmer's market on Saturday morning during the summers and spending the rest of her free time with friends and family.

Kristin Giant Kristin is obsessed with changing the culture around productive failure in the philanthropic sector, specifically as it pertains to white leaders' advocacy for racial justice. She is currently a grant-maker, a grant-seeker, a board member, a corporate attorney, and an impact investing consultant and is working to disrupt power-dynamics in each of those roles. She's fueled by rage, black coffee, and the ardent desire to find better ways. She's a mom to two boys and a mental health advocate -- wearing her multiple diagnoses (depression, anxiety, ADHD) as badges of honor, even as she navigates the uphill climb of visibility and acceptance of mental illness in corporate and nonprofit cultures.

Kara (Hackett) Metzler is the Managing Editor of *Input Fort Wayne*, a weekly online magazine in Northeast Indiana that uses solutions-based, narrative journalism to connect residents to some of their community's most visionary people, businesses, and organizations. Kara is fascinated by what's next for Fort Wayne and how it relates to other places around the world. After earning her bachelor's degree in Professional Writing from Taylor University and working briefly in New York City and Indianapolis, she moved back to her hometown where she has discovered interesting people, projects, and innovations—and has been writing about them ever since. Her work has appeared in *The Journal Gazette*, *Living Fort Wayne*, *Glo Magazine*, FoxNews.com, and *The Huffington Post*.

Alex Hall is an Indiana University, Bloomington graduate and an artist whose artworks can be found in private and public collections throughout the United States. She has a BA in Political Science and a BA in Slavic Languages and Literature with a certificate from the Russian and Eastern European Institute. Since 2014 she has worked as a professional painter, muralist, illustrator, and public art consultant--leveraging public art to improve quality of place and drive economic development. In 2016 she developed Art This Way, a public art program which implements large scale public art in Downtown Fort Wayne, IN. She manages the program for the Fort Wayne Downtown Improvement District. She consults for the Fort Wayne Public Art Commission. Beyond her work in Fort Wayne, she was the developer and public art consultant for Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne and the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership's Make It Your Own Mural Fest, the NewAllen Alliance's rural mural projects, and the Liv Co Walls mural festival in New York. Hall lives with her dog, Clemens, in downtown Fort Wayne, IN.

Patti Hays is CEO of AWS Foundation, a public foundation whose mission is to build a more inclusive Northeast Indiana for people of all abilities. Patti's strength is being able to see the big picture while still focusing on the details needed to realize success. She is as much at ease meeting with community leaders as spending time with individuals, their families, and caregivers to learn more about their dreams and the

much-needed support to make those dreams come true. Born in Youngstown, Ohio and raised in Pittsburgh, she has lived and worked in cities like Charleston, SC and New Orleans, LA before returning to the Midwest and calling Fort Wayne home. With undergraduate and graduate degrees in Nursing, her work history spans education, direct patient care, hospital administration, and strategic consulting. Two of her three children live outside of Indiana but are Hoosiers at heart, with degrees from Ball State, Purdue, IU and IPFW. Patti is a passionate advocate for the region serving on various boards throughout the years representing issues of health, the arts, and regional development. She is co-founder of Advancing Voices of Women and, along with the other co-founders, was named *Journal Gazette* Citizen of the Year in 2018. When free time is available, she and her husband usually spend it with books and suitcases in hand visiting grandchildren and encouraging them to come back home to Indiana.

Andrew Hoffman believes that social innovation & the power of entrepreneurship can transform communities. These beliefs began to take shape with NeighborLink in 2005 as a volunteer and then as the Executive Director for the next 13 years. Andrew saw more than 10,000 tangible home repair projects completed, established the NeighborLink Network, and created Neighboring Productions during his tenure at NeighborLink. Andrew began a new season in his professional life in 2021 that combines his strengths as a strategic communicator with his passion for empowering others at Sinapis, which is headquartered in Indianapolis. Andrew is a graduate of Huntington University and Taylor University's MBA program, enjoyed family life in a historic South Central Fort Wayne neighborhood for 14 years, and strives each day to become a better neighbor.

Matt Kelley is father of three children and principal at One Lucky Guitar, Inc. (OLG), a boutique creative agency he founded in Fort Wayne in 2000. OLG's mission is "We communicate brand soul." The eleven-person company achieves this through brand consulting, marketing and advertising, experiential events, digital strategy, video storytelling and more. Beyond OLG, Matt and team have turned part of their downtown studio into The B-Side, an intimate 'listening room' venue that hosts touring musicians, readings and events. He is co-founder of Middle Waves Music Festival, Down the Line (Embassy Theatre) and The Good Ones Clothing Company, and a past board member at Downtown Improvement District, NEIRP Regional Opportunities Council and The Phil. Matt plays mandolin and writes songs with The Legendary Trainhoppers, an Americana band.

Kristin Marcuccilli is a strategic, customer-focused, results-driven, team builder. As Chief Operating Officer at STAR Financial Bank, she oversees Information Technology, Information Security, Business Analysis & Project Management, Bank Operations, and Facilities & Construction across STAR's branch network. Marcuccilli serves her community as a board member for the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo, Indiana State Chamber of Commerce, and Indiana Technology & Innovation Association. She also serves on the Board of Directors and as Entrepreneurship Committee vice chair

for the Indiana Economic Development Corporation. In 2018, she was honored as a *Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly* “Forty Under 40” award recipient and was also recognized nationally as a *BankBeat Rising Star in Banking*. In 2019, she joined the University of Notre Dame’s newest advisory council, supporting the IDEA Center’s work toward commercialization and entrepreneurial activities. Marcuccilli earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Notre Dame, an MBA from Indiana University, and is a graduate of the American Bankers Association Stonier Graduate School of Banking.

Susan Mendenhall is an advocate for the vibrancy of Greater Fort Wayne and the role that philanthropy plays as a catalyst for community development. She brings fifteen years of experience in nonprofit leadership, strategic visioning and planning, fundraising, grant-making, and program development. Susan currently serves the community as President of Arts United. She is a member of the Greater Fort Wayne, Inc. Board of Directors, the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership’s Regional Opportunities Council, the Fort Wayne Public Art Commission, and Quest Club. In 2018, Susan was recognized as a *Person of the Year* by Fort Wayne Magazine. In 2015, she was honored with a *Forty Under 40* award by Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly. Susan holds an M.A. in Philanthropic Studies from the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy and a B.S. in Public and Nonprofit Management from the Indiana University School of Public and Environmental Affairs. She lives in Fort Wayne with her husband, Derek, an engineer at Fort Wayne Metals, and daughters Claire and Heidi.

Tim Pape is a partner at Carson and practices in Family Law and Business Litigation. Being a native of Fort Wayne, he has a deep commitment to this community and this firm. He has spent all 25 years of his practice at Carson and believes fully that when individuals come together and work cooperatively, whether that be at a firm or within a community, growth is realized. Tim’s passion for collaborating for change is shown in his unparalleled contribution to this region. Tim has accrued a substantial knowledge of state and local government while serving as a city councilman which attracts corporate and individual clients alike. Within family law, his pro bono cases coupled with his high dollar asset division cases ensure that he assists individuals of all economic levels.

Irene Paxia is the founder and principal of Petra Solutions, a consulting firm that helps companies improve their cross-cultural, fundraising, and business strategies. Irene launched Petra Solutions in 2020, leveraging 15 years of experience in the areas of immigration, fundraising, and government planning. Irene sees a need for companies to know how to engage multicultural audiences. Her studies include an MBA at Indiana University, and a Laurea Triennale in International Diplomatic Relations at Università di Bologna (Italy), besides certifications in Fund Raising Management (CFRM) and Project Management. Depicted recently in a Faces-of-the-Fort mural on Anthony Blvd. (Fort Wayne) in recognition of her work with refugees, Irene has dedicated herself to positive change in all her past positions as CEO at

Amani Family Services, Community Development Specialist at City of Fort Wayne, Lecturer at Purdue Fort Wayne, and Program Director at American Red Cross. She speaks several languages, and having been raised in Italy, she knows firsthand the experience of immigration.

Heather Schoegler serves as Parkview Health's Director of Strategic Educational Partnerships. Her work for over 15 years has been centered in healthcare strategy and communication where she focuses on solving challenges through design thinking and research. She has earned a M.S. in Organizational Leadership, B.A. in Media and Public Communications, as well as completed graduate courses in Public Health. Heather is an active community volunteer currently serving on the boards of the Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne (Chairwoman); Fort Wayne Museum of Art (Secretary); Junior Achievement of Northeast Indiana; and NeighborLink Fort Wayne. Her work and community service have been recognized with IPFW's *Outstanding Young Alumni Award*; an *Athena Award* nominee; a *Future 40 Award*; a *40 Under 40 Award*; and various industry awards. She is a graduate of both Leadership Fort Wayne and YLNI's Leadership Institute.

Courtney Tritch is a Senior Strategist at Carnegie. She has more than 20 years of experience in public speaking, community development, advocacy, and marketing, and she has led nationally-recognized marketing campaigns. Courtney also speaks locally and nationally on topics ranging from economic development marketing strategies to the importance of diversity and inclusion in today's competitive communities. She inspired a district-wide movement with a run for U.S. Congress in 2018 where her team broke record after record: doubling voter turnout in the primary; achieving the highest primary win percentage of any female congressional candidate in the country; and finishing the race as #1 in the country for highest percentage of in-district donations. Passionate about equality and diversity, she founded Progressive Social Hour to facilitate tough community conversations and was a featured speaker at TEDx Fort Wayne on the importance of diversity and inclusion in community and economic development. She is an *Athena Award* nominee and a 2011 recipient of *Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly's* "Forty Under 40" Award. In addition to graduating Phi Beta Kappa from Indiana University, Courtney holds her marketing strategy certificate from Cornell University and graduated from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute for Organization Management Program.

Sharon Tubbs is an inspirational speaker, a nonprofit director, and an author. She has conducted workshops about living a purposeful life, reaching your full potential, and faith. By day, she is the director of HealthVisions Midwest of Fort Wayne where she leads a team of Community Health Workers with a passion for serving underserved residents in the community. The nonprofit agency uses health education, interpretation, advocacy, and special events to equip and empower people to live healthier lives. Sharon is also a certified Community Health Worker and has a master's degree in human services counseling from Liberty University. Her bachelor's degree in journalism from Indiana University served her well in her previous career as a

newspaper reporter and editor. She is a Fort Wayne native but spent the bulk of her adult life in Florida, before moving back to the Summit City several years ago.

Mirza Uzma is a registered and licensed Architect, owner of a (MWBE) small Minority-Woman-owned architectural consultancy and carries over two decades of experience in various genres of built-environments, in the profit and nonprofit sectors. She is LEED AP certified (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) with the USGBC and initiates green building, and a co-founder of the Green Initiatives with ISNA. She is a board member of the nonprofit Hoosier Interfaith Power and Light. She is a founder of the nonprofit, Pen and Inkpot Foundation, which focus is the stewardship of the environment, arts and education. She speaks and writes on the environment, faith, bridge building, and her spiritual art. She has been selected for Museum solo & group exhibits nationally and locally - as the Museum of Art in Fort Wayne and WomanMade gallery in Chicago. She is the architect of a Mosque recently completed in Cleveland, with the inclusivity of women, the environment and the disabled, in mind. She is an artist, author and a published artist featured in various publications, and books. She received a five-year bachelor's degree in Architecture from Carleton University, Ottawa, CA with high distinction, and a Masters in Philanthropy from Indiana University. She is an avid gardener, bird observer and cyclist. She resides and globally practices in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Early 2020 sparked what would become a world on fire. Many of us felt isolated, relegated to experiencing the world through endless virtual meetings, curbside services, and clumsy remote work arrangements as we lost over 850,000 of our neighbors to a global pandemic. All the while, as we were confined to our homes, it seemed as though we witnessed a waning of the American spirit through our televisions. From the death of George Floyd to the invasion of the United States Capitol, we found ourselves forced to assess our behavior – as a nation, as a community, and as an individual.

It's important that we take a moment to reflect on what we have learned about our communities and ourselves. To begin that process, this project assembled a group of leaders (economists, artists, architects, urban planners, entrepreneurs, social workers, etc.) to explore what ideas they consider to be misunderstood or underappreciated when envisioning the future of Fort Wayne, Indiana. The result was this collection of essays – **20 ideas from 20 voices, outlining 20 ideas that should shape community development for the next 20 years.** The only goal was to cultivate a discussion – one that attempts to understand who we are and where we're going. In that small way – ***it's a love letter to Fort Wayne.***

MKM architecture + design is an award-winning design firm focused on enhancing the health and well-being of communities throughout the Midwest. Consistently recognized as one of the top healthcare firms in the country, its focus is to identify, discuss, and conceptualize innovative strategies that positively impact the social determinants of health.

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