



Overview
What Does Project Ujima Do?
How Does Project Ujima Help the Community?

I. Promotes and Facilitates Civil Discourse – going from talk to action

- A. Teaches and uses a deliberative dialogue process in community discussions and action planning.
- B. Acknowledges that diverse perspectives are needed in order for citizens to fully understand challenges in the community and decide on “doable” actions to successfully impact those challenges.

II. Community Leadership Training

- A. Twice each year, offers a two-day workshop on how to moderate a deliberative dialogue process, free and open to the public. (This year 27 new people completed the moderator training. Since Project Ujima began in 2011, over 125 people have completed the training.)
- B. Offers regular opportunities for those trained to gain more experience in leading groups from talk to action.
- C. Provides an inclusive means through which people can volunteer and collaborate on needed programs and services in the community.
- D. Provides opportunities for residents to take on leadership roles through the ever-evolving Project Ujima Governing Body, which meets monthly to make decisions collectively on the direction and focus of the Project.

III. Unique Programming

- A. African-American Read-in: Exposes our community to African American Literature, poetry, spoken word and engaging related dialogue and activities.
- B. Wellness Circles: Provides programming that includes both physical fitness activities and wellness education, in partnership with fitness and wellness service providers.
- C. Cashflow: Takes an engaging approach to exposing and raising financial literacy skills by using a board game called “Cashflow”. (A tournament is scheduled for Fall 2015, with many organized opportunities to practice playing the game leading up to the tournament.)
- D. Kerr Park Restoration: Renewal by an intergenerational team of community members of a beautiful highly used Community Park that had fallen into disrepair and misuse over the years. (Last year, this group was awarded a Keep Akron Beautiful Award. This year, Home Depot donated a beautiful community bench. Flowers are blooming, the grounds are improving and it is once again, being used for positive community gatherings and use.)

IV. Community Broker

Over the years, Project Ujima has increasingly played the role of securing volunteers for targeted organizations and/or institutions in the community and collaborating with them to further shape services to meet community needs. Below are examples of the "broker" work undertaken this past year:

A. Mentors for Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) - *A Project Ujima taskforce first identified the need for mentors as being critical in helping more middle school students qualify for the plethora of college readiness programs offered at the high school level. The taskforce then researched and invited to the table an organization in the community (BBBS) that already offers a quality mentoring program. The Taskforce and BBBS collaboratively shaped the mentoring program, which over the two years since its inception has served 24 seventh and eighth grade Buchtel students and is a BBBS pilot after-school mentoring program for middle school students. 18 adult mentors have been recruited by Project Ujima.*

B. Tutors for Akron Public Schools (APS) - *The need for reading tutors was presented by a participant in a Project Ujima community discussion circle, in light of recent legislation requiring Ohio third graders to pass the reading portion of the Ohio Achievement Assessment in order to be promoted to fourth grade. A taskforce was formed, and elementary CLC principals were interviewed by Project Ujima to determine where the most pressing needs were and how many tutors were needed. Project Ujima partnered with APS AkronReads program, and tutors for both Helen Arnold CLC and Crouse CLC were recruited and participated in the screening and orientation process provided by AkronReads. (Schumacher CLC was not in need of tutors due to a tutoring partnership with Kent State University.)*

C. Peace Circles - *Project Ujima was invited by the Peace, Justice and Equality Committee of the Summit County Juvenile Court to collaborate, along with other community activists and organizations, in developing and implementing a Restorative Justice/Peace Circle initiative—a diversionary program for youth offenders. Project Ujima recommended volunteers to go through the training to become Peace Circle Keepers (i.e., circle facilitators) and volunteers to serve as community representatives to participate in the Peace Circles. Volunteers for the training were recommended from a pool of people who went through Project Ujima moderator training. Many of the community volunteers who currently participate in the Peace Circles held in the Buchtel Community are from Project Ujima as well. (Juvenile offenses in the Buchtel community are among the highest in the county.)*

D. Project-based Learning Judges - *Buchtel CLC faculty routinely call upon Project Ujima to serve as "Judges" from the community to evaluate Project-based Learning presentations from middle and high school students.*

E. Schumacher CLC Learning Garden – Schumacher CLC faculty asked if Project Ujima would collaborate with them on coordinating a teaching garden for the school. A faculty member joined the Project Ujima Wellness Circle Taskforce, which works with the school and students to help build, maintain and harvest the Teaching Garden – an initiative now in its second year.

F. Connecting Opportunities

1. Staff persons from organizations in the community, such as Summit County Public Health and Community Legal Aid Services--looking to build relationships of trust in the community--have joined Project Ujima Taskforces.
2. The Wellness Circle health education component has afforded Children’s Hospital, Minority Behavioral Health, The Mustard Seed Market, and others the opportunity to help educate our community on such topics as Infant Mortality, Sickle Cell Trait, Childhood Asthma, Anxiety, and Healthy Eating.
3. Through the physical education component, we have exposed our community to local providers of Yoga, Zumba, Line-Dancing, Tai Chi, and Kickboxing.
4. A weekly e-mail goes out to a database of over 900 people, highlighting Project Ujima meetings, programs, events and volunteer opportunities, in addition to some community-at-large events relevant to the Buchtel community.

V. Consultation

This year, at the request of numerous organizations/institutions in the Akron Community, Project Ujima has begun a consulting branch of our work. These opportunities have allowed us to help frame community forums that provide for all voices to be heard, facilitate an environment of equality and respect, via our discussion circle format and ground rules, and help individuals and groups think beyond talk to individual and collective action. These events have provided our Moderators-in-Training with opportunities to hone their facilitation skills and earn a small stipend, and at the same time, provide facilitators who can often relate better to the participants in the community forums. This year we consulted on a fee for services basis to the following organizations:

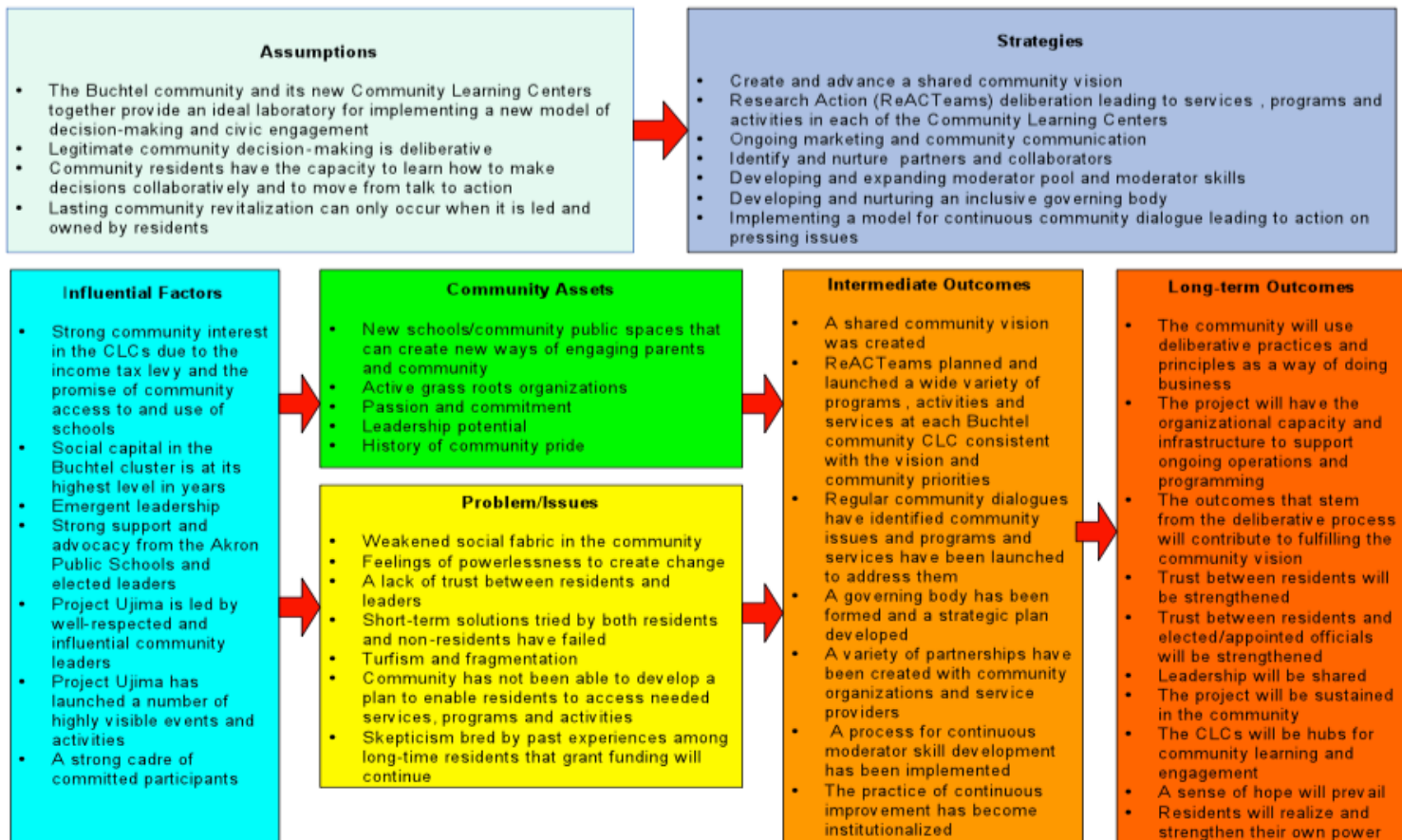
1. Akron Summit Community Action “Youth Community Forum – Framing a Vision for Our Future”
2. Summit County Health Department “Health in All Policies Community Health Forum”
3. The Minority Health Roundtable – Healthy Connections Network “Is Gun Violence a Public Health Crisis? A Community Discussion Circle”

In addition we provided in-kind consulting services to the Bridges Out of Poverty Circles group, which was having difficulty moving from talk to action.

A Word About Funding

Project Ujima is developing a diverse funding portfolio, of grants, individual donations and fees for contractual services. We are fortunate that in Spring of 2014, the Knight Foundation offered Project Ujima a \$75,000 matching challenge grant. Project Ujima must raise a total of \$75,000 in new funding by October 31, 2015 to qualify for the full amount of this one-time-only matching grant. We received an initial infusion of \$25,000 of the challenge grant and after raising \$25,000 more, we received the second \$25,000 infusion, now we must raise \$50,000 more through individual donations and grants to qualify for a release by Knight Foundation of the remaining \$25,000 challenge grant.

Project Ujima Logic Model: Theory of Change





PROJECT UJIMA

Collective Work & Responsibility

The word Ujima (“oo-JEE-mah”), a Ki Swahili word means: “ To build and maintain our community together and make our brother’s and sister’s problems our problems and to solve them together.”

The Buchtel Community Vision Statement Created on October 13, 2011, at the Project Ujima Kick-off

We envision a community that values diversity and maintains high standards in a safe and nurturing environment that builds independence and economic self-sufficiency, while educating our community in the knowledge of self and promoting a healthy quality of life for all throughout the life cycle.

There are many ways to join the work, family and fun of Project Ujima!

PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING US – We Need You - Our COMMUNITY NEEDS YOU!!!

Call Crystal Jones at 330-434-7988 or email CLJ@projectujima-inc.org to learn more & help find your place of service!

***“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’”
- Martin Luther King, Jr.***