

FROM MY SPACE TO OUR SPACE:



CREATING  
CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

**THE BFC:**

**BOLD FUTURES CONVERSATION**

**MN Safe and Healthy Learners Conference**

**January 16, 2008**

*... WE ONLY NEED ENOUGH COURAGE TO INVITE FRIENDS INTO A CONVERSATION. LARGE AND SUCCESSFUL CHANGE EFFORTS START WITH CONVERSATIONS AMONG FRIENDS, NOT WITH THOSE IN POWER... CHANGE BEGINS FROM DEEP INSIDE A SYSTEM, WHEN A FEW PEOPLE NOTICE SOMETHING THEY WILL NO LONGER TOLERATE, OR RESPOND TO A DREAM OF WHAT'S POSSIBLE. WE JUST HAVE TO FIND A FEW OTHERS WHO CARE ABOUT THE SAME THING. TOGETHER WE WILL FIGURE OUT WHAT OUR FIRST STEP IS, THEN THE NEXT, THEN THE NEXT. GRADUALLY, WE BECOME LARGE AND POWERFUL. WE DON'T HAVE TO START WITH POWER, ONLY WITH PASSION.*

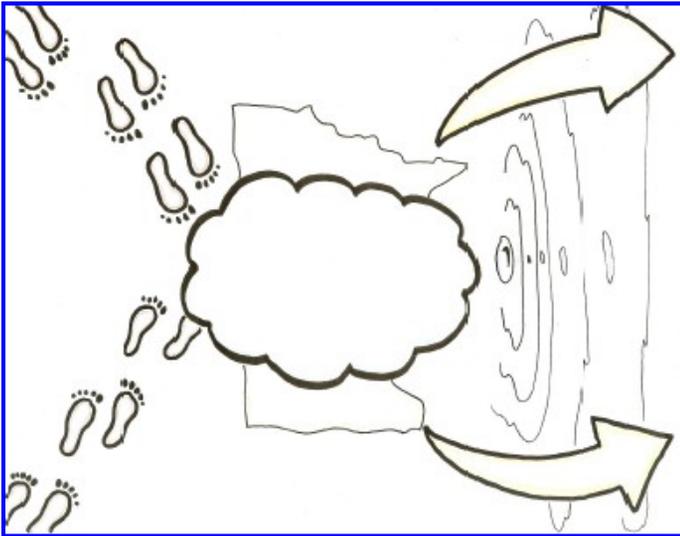
-MARGARET WHEATLEY, *TURNING TO ONE ANOTHER:  
SIMPLE CONVERSATIONS TO RESTORE HOPE TO THE FUTURE*

## BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

The 2008 Safe and Healthy Learners Conference Planning Committee set out to create a conference experience that was different: one that led to real action, maximized the cross-sector potential of attendees, got people talking and dreaming about working together in new ways. They wanted to expand the diverse voices beyond the conference to educate policy makers and encourage continued conversations.

With those ends in mind, they designed the Bold Futures Conversation (BFC), a large group experience of reflection and action around the conference theme *From My Space to Our Space: Creating Connected Communities*. The experience included an opportunity to think collectively and creatively around the possibilities for “Our Space” and generate ideas on how to get there. Consensus was not the goal; rather, participants were asked to cross pollinate ideas and capture those that held energy.

LARGE TABLE GRAPHIC



## THE PROCESS

Participants were seated at tables with a large table graphic in the center of the table (see box). A series of questions were asked and participants recorded answers on the graphic.

Round One: *Envision an environment where “Our Space” exists beyond your wildest expectations – where young people are connected and fully supported into adulthood. What would that look like, feel like, and be like?*

Round Two: *Carry your conversation with you to a new table. Continue to build a vision and wild expectations of “Our Space” – environments where young people are connected and fully supported into adulthood. What common threads are emerging? What differences are important? Record answers on large table graphic.*

Round Three: *If success was completely guaranteed, what bold steps would be taken to create that environment? What individual and collective action is needed to get there? What is there energy around? Record answers on large table graphic.*

Round Four: *Select several of the biggest and/or boldest ideas that generated buzz and energy. Now what could we do collectively as a state to create, support, value that vision? Take those ideas and put them on flip charts in the corner of the room.*

Round Five: *What questions posed or conversations begun today could ripple out in ways that create new possibilities for the future of our state? Record answers on large table graphic.*

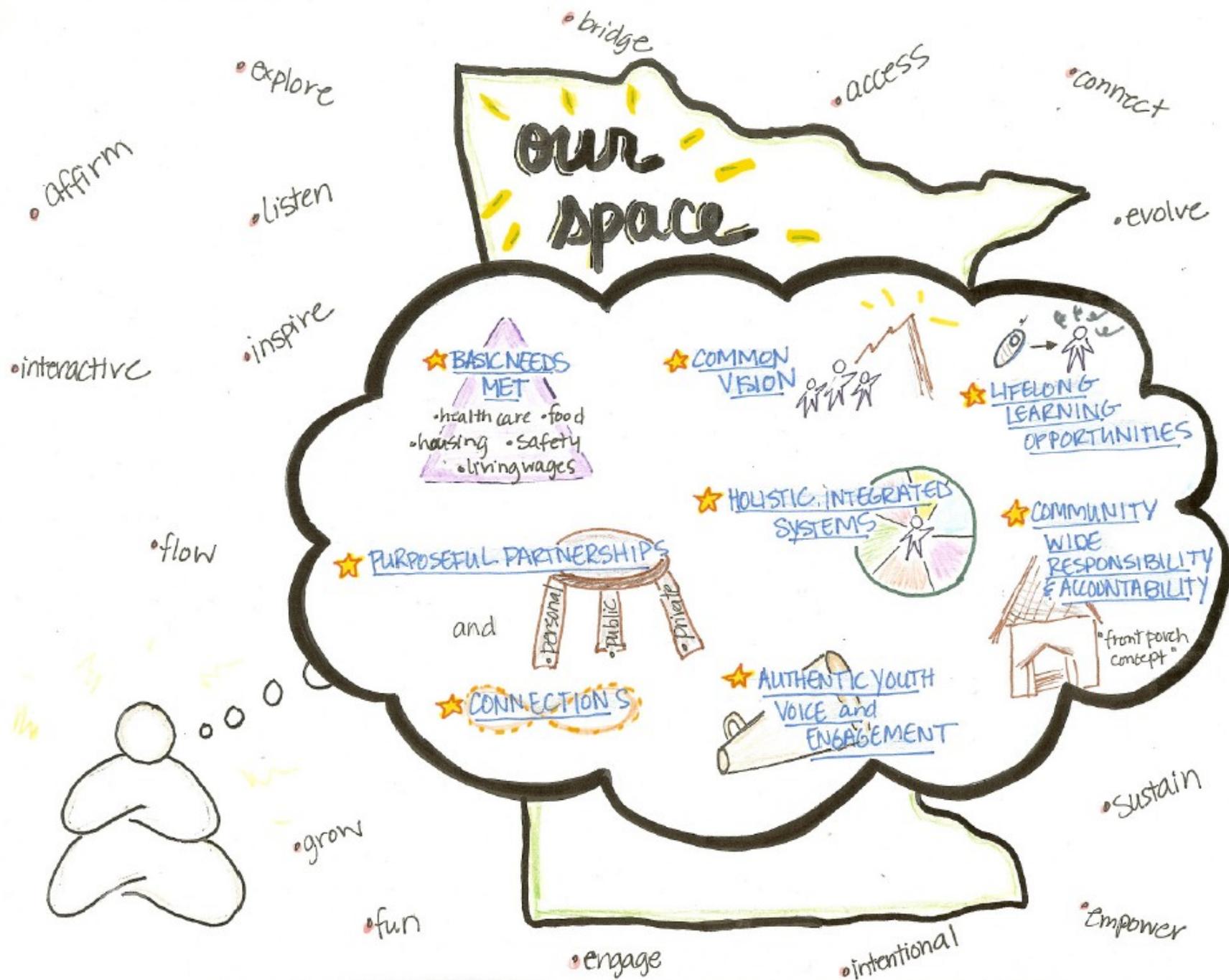
## THE PRODUCT

This report is a summary of 30 large table graphics representing over 250 voices from young people and adults from community based organizations, state agencies, and educational institutions. It is being distributed to help inform future conversations around creating connected communities that fully support young people into adulthood. The report, the BFC PowerPoint, and the BFC graphics can be found on the conference website (<http://www.togevents.com/sah/>). These tools are provided to inform community members and policy makers, as well as to support community-hosted BFCs.



## Voices

- Believe in abundance—abundant resources, unconditional love, and the energy of youth.
- Stop dividing youth and adults — we are all humans! Let's identify and focus on our humanness.
- Correct misperceptions and celebrate the positives.
- Accept youth where they are and be comfortable with youth in their own skin.
- Nothing about me... without me: Youth Voice!
- Be open to many definitions of success.
- Recognize youth as stakeholders!
- Support humans from birth to death—all ethnicities, all cultures.
- Diversity is not a topic...it's a reality.
- Adulthood is a process...not a magic age.



## BIG BOLD STEPS

### Actions for the Future



#### Create community-wide responsibility and accountability

- Create communities that value children and foster mutual trust between youth and adults
- Convene BLCs – Big, Loud, Loving, and Lively Conversations
- Prioritize parenting and child rearing and share accountability for safety within community



#### Authentically engage youth and provide opportunities for youth voice

- Routinely engage youth at institutional levels (education, juvenile justice, health, legislative) and ensure youth representation with voting rights on decision making bodies (school board, city council, city planning commissions, county boards, non-profit boards)
- Encourage youth to initiate community change
- Create a focus on youth issues by lowering the voting age
- Train youth to use their power; train adults to step back and share power
- Train, recruit and pay for youth to attend conferences and other events
- Have youth regularly testify at legislature
- Initiate city-wide supports for youth – youth websites, Youth Engagement office



#### Remove barriers to access

- Create equal access to program availability and transportation
- Provide free high speed state-wide internet access
- Resolve liability issues
- Pass the Dream Act



#### Build youth policy upon a common vision

- Create a common state vision grounded in youth outcomes and reflecting community values
- Identify priorities from the bottom up, redefine success and support it on every level
- Fully fund birth through early childhood through childhood through transition to adulthood
- Implement policy and law changes impacting the rights of young people for health, housing, voting, etc.
- Identify an entity to “hold” the work of interactive, facilitated, community responsive, organically grown, web-based statewide communication around healthy youth



#### Build holistic, integrated systems that support life long learning

- Develop a “systems” approach to youth at the state and community level (“system” of resources, people, funding)
- Infuse/integrate school into community – for greater learning outside the four walls of a school building
- Infuse/integrate community into schools – take down school walls and become Family Learning Centers



#### Redefine “learning” and restructure the education system

- Create multiple pathways to learning and embrace “mutual learning”
- K-12 pedagogy shift: experiential learning activities; innovative programs connecting pop culture with values and skills; service learning
- Explore examples like Finland, Sweden, Germany
- No state testing or No Child Left Behind



#### Meet the basic needs of community

- Pass legislation that supports quality health care for all
- Address disparities: establish a higher minimum wage, end poverty
- Replace correctional facilities with cozy homes



### Build purposeful connections

- City sponsored social networking sites
- Ensure meaningful long term connections for every youth with a pro-social adult
- Create and require summer job shadow and apprenticeship programs
- Implement mixed-income neighborhoods and ban TV, internet, etc. to spend more time getting to know neighbors
- Engage and identify the roles of males in educational settings



### Build purposeful partnerships

- Community wide collaborations with clear roles, multi-sector commitments, no duplication
- Require businesses to have a volunteer component or give tax breaks for volunteering



### Generate more resources

- Through partnerships and collaboration
- By service mapping
- To support universal quality day care; paid incentives for kids to go to and stay in school; tuition free college



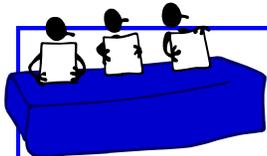
### Create welcoming environments

- Require youth and adults to learn about all cultures and incorporate their needs in society and education settings
- Allow curiosity for both adults and kids, give youth time to be listened to
- Engage in restorative process
- Acknowledge and stop "isms"



## CONTINUED CONVERSATIONS

- How can funding become non-political?
- How do we make this practical? What does it look like?
- How do we include young people in this process?
- How do we get all groups united?
- How do we get past the barriers?
- Could youth "take-on" Minnesota Student Survey results by having conversations, giving context, moving to action?
- **WHAT WILL YOU DO???**



### BFC RESPONDER PANEL: NOW WHATs?

#### Laura LaCroix Dalluhn, Youth Community Connections

YCC will bring information to the planning of the Governor's Afterschool Summit and to local, community and statewide leaders; increase opportunities by connecting local and state resources, policies and programs; educate others about how afterschool and community learning opportunities support child and youth development; and continue to support the Minnesota Youth Advisory Council.

#### David Moreno, Prior Lake-Savage High School Student

I will collaborate with the other youth groups that I'm working with and bring the information back to my groups.

#### Jeri Boisvert, MN Department of Public Safety

We commit to continued collaborative conversations and actions in the field of youth development; looking deeper at the student survey data to improve the lives of girls in the juvenile justice system; to explore opportunities to better integrate youth in the juvenile justice system into the youth development conversation; and to develop a strategy to address the needs of children who witness domestic violence.

#### Anne Ganey, Mankato YMCA

We will work with the new Talent Initiative of our community's economic development organization to involve youth in defining and building local culture; we will address the risks girls are facing in the community; and I will reengage at the policy level as a voice from outside the TC metro area.

#### Paul Snyder, Konopka Institute, U of MN

The Konopka Institute will involve more pre-college youth voices in University youth-related initiatives and decision-making; continue to advocate throughout the University for more mutual learning; convene young people to address MSS data, particularly young women; and more fully explore how Konopka and the University can take bold innovative steps to partner with youth and community to address the needs of incarcerated young women.

#### Marjorie Grevious, Twin Cities United Way

United Way's commitment to this process is to increase access and participation to quality out-of-school time programs for young people that truly engage and interest them.