

## **TEAM GUILFORD**

**Data from 21 Community Conversations, 1 on-line survey, and two paper surveys**

**Total Number of respondents: approximately 300**

**November 2007 – February 2008**

### **IDEAS FOR ACTION – ORGANIZED**

#### **Supporting Youth**

- ◆ More Activities:
  - Teen Center
  - Youth Center
  - Bowling Alley
  - Bowling alley
  - Arts Barn
  - Something like the Madison Arts Barn
  - Movie Theatre
  - Movie Theater
  - Movie theater
  - Swimming pool
  - Follow up on the coffee house idea for teens... why did it stop?
  - A place to congregate
  - Concert Hall
  - Creating positive experiences for our students in the community
  - Community run activities at night
  - Recreation for young people
  - Have activities for teens that are profound and proactive rather than just "hang-outs"
  - Teens involved in "Green Town" activities
  - Coffee House – poetry, music, partially supported by the town.
  - Community center with Pool and other activities
  - Arcade/hangout place for teens
  - Pizza place/ Pool Hall/ Ping Pong
  - Wider range of activities for kids; as many different things to capture all or as many kids as we can.
  - Dances at Community Center
  - After school program run by volunteers
  - Need activities for kids not involved in sports or clubs
  - Pull kids away from drugs and alcohol
  - Free gym time
  - Drug / alcohol free activities for youth
  - More after school programs
  - Open dialogue between youths and adults
  - Things in Community Center
  - Open Gym more often
  - Build sidewalks to connect kids and other people together
  - Drug Free Hangout for kids
  - Activities closer to center of town – ease of accessibility – shuttle buses
  - a late bus

- present Goose Lane facility could be a kids place, graduation could be held there, ball courts, exercise, dance....
- another good location would be 66 High Street
- would need transportation to go to and from the place
- ice rink
- have kids help plan it
- Snack Bar at Adams
- ◆ Promoting understanding between youth and adults
  - Team up volunteer adults with senior citizens and more youth
  - Improve community understanding of adolescent development
  - Youth programs on GCTV to hear their views
  - Let youth participate in task forces.
  - Need to get better interactions between adults & kids
    - a safe place for adult / kid interaction
  - oral historians or other neighborhood related projects where youth & seniors work together (community Foundation & Adams project)
  - projects to unite youth and adults like habitat for humanity
  - link PF fellowship to community
  - Community run activities at night
  - Town activities
  - More town activities
  - A forum for a mix of all ages...need to hear concerns from kids through seniors
  - More community involvement with working with our youth
  - Intergenerational activities and conversations with elementary students
- ◆ Parent Support
  - Need to look at parent issues
  - Parent orientation for children about community resources/ how to handle issues
  - Break parent isolation (i.e. adult education)
  - Parent survey/conversations about evaluating school year/ education
  - Educate parents on resources available to them especially as relates to internet activity
  - Mentoring programs for parents
  - Make parents accountable for children's actions
  - Support for parents who need help being parents
  - Parent Education (mandatory) Classes
  - Teach parents. Parenting skills
  - Mentoring program for parents
  - Help parents confront social issues
  - Empower parents (take burden off schools)
    - Mommy mentoring – WFLC
    - Sharing frustrations/stresses/feelings around parenting... infants through college!
    - Connect parents
    - Have programs for parents alongside programs for kids – same location/time
    - Sharing, clearinghouse

- Parent liaisons – PACs, SACs, parent assistance counselors
- Blog for parents
- E-bulletin board for Town activities/events
- ◆ Drugs
  - Get at root causes of addiction issues. Doesn't matter – just address it.
  - Multi-discipline education in schools to addiction
  - Student to student interactions with recovering people (youth)
  - A forum to share information about real issues
  - Police catch people doing drugs/alcohol on the Green
  - Police should walk sometimes. Walk on the Green
  - Policeman at each school
  - DARE for the Seventh Grade
  - Better education about substance use
- ◆ Continue to provide a strong support system for town youth by the whole community
- ◆ Expand the Mentoring Program
- ◆ Create opportunities year round for families to be together (free)
- ◆ Bringing education to the community
- ◆ More exposure to our students of options available to them
- ◆ Bring the community into the school and the school into the community
- ◆ Celebrate our students publicly
- ◆ Cop on the Green 24/7
- ◆ Get Kids more involved in town
- ◆ More social services on weekends like Meal on Wheels so teens could get involved
- ◆ Increase volunteer hour graduation requirement
- ◆ Sports organizations – need to work together better, collaborate not compete for kids and kids specializing at younger ages. Sharing kids in different sports at certain times of year, deal with facility issues
- ◆ Reach out to different sports orgs. In a problem solving session
- ◆ Common set of expectations for all youth activities – anyone who is working with kids would know them.
- ◆ We should ALL be responsible and keep commitments
- ◆ Mentoring program with social services (mentor / client) companion
- ◆ Confidential means to get help
- ◆ A safe place for kids for all kinds; not just athletes, musicians...
- ◆ Develop common philosophy among all groups of kids
  - ◆ - youth activity group
- ◆ Increase mandatory community service hours for high school students
- ◆ Year round school
- ◆ Address issues at GHS "middle group"... not the top and not the bottom, they are left out
- ◆ Relieve schools of burdens they should not deal with
- ◆ An open gym to allow for "pick up" games... every gym is booked with "programmed" groups
- ◆ Late buses
- ◆ Make the party scene (substance use/abuse) less attractive
- ◆ More space for youth
- ◆ Examine how space/time is apportioned (less for the youngest, more for the older kids)

- ◆ Do we value our youth?
- ◆ Establishment of a Task Force to increase awareness of the issues and resources to work with those issues
- ◆ Spend time with children and older folks
- ◆ Increase available options for non-college-bound children
- ◆ We could adopt stricter rules to stop peer pressure, harassment, bullying

### **School Improvements**

- ◆ Physical
  - Pass bonding to build new schools and a half dozen fields
  - New schools – physical
  - Repairs to schools
  - Inform town/elderly of low funding and need for a new high schools can vote and raise money to do it
  - New middle school and high school.
  - Invest \$ to modernize the schools – High School
  - Building addition to Baldwin for 5-8 grades
  - Investment and commitment to long-range plan for school facility
  - School facilities.
  - People need to attend meetings and become proactive. We need to get people to support the plan.
  - Public needs to be educated about what the schools are like.
- ◆ Programs/Curriculum/Services
  - More support services in the schools
  - Social Development Curriculum supported by the public, Board of Selectmen, Board of Education, and Law Enforcement
  - Improve health education curriculum
  - Ask people what they would like to see in school curriculum
  - Visit schools in urban areas – have sister schools
  - Put schools to use for after-school activities
  - Intergenerational mentoring in schools
  - Consistent values program starting at elementary school
  - More ELL and social workers in the schools
  - Low class size in schools
  - Every class has a para
  - Math-support teachers
  - Reading-support teacher in each school
  - Use of retired teachers hired to help students and staff
  - Social work, reading, math, psychologist based on school population
  - Job-sharing for teachers to encourage new teachers
  - All-day kindergarten
  - Reinstigate “Transition” (Kindergarten to First Grade) in the schools
  - Equitable support services for elementary
  - Find a way to provide remedial after-school and summer school
- ◆ Connect parents to other residents without children to help improve schools

- ◆ School facilities capital plan – include schools as “community centers”
- ◆ Take back schools from curing social ills
  - Create a clear vision and stick to it
  - Do not take on problems that pull it away from the vision
- ◆ Staff-Student process
  - STUDENT VOICE AT GHS!
  - Open minded school administration
  - More interaction and mutual understanding between faculty and staff
  - Young teachers
- ◆ Vote for Board of Ed. Candidates who pledge to fix the schools
- ◆ Realistic research-based school start times: later for high school and earlier for elementary
- ◆ Re-districting
- ◆ Have parents switch grade levels when chaperoning school dances

### **Improving town governance and citizen engagement**

- ◆ Increasing citizen voice and participation
  - We should continue the community conversations.
  - More town meetings
  - Holding on-going open forums focusing on the positive rather than the negative, i.e. a forum on public health identifying resources Opportunities for more open conversation
  - More dialogue between seniors and teens
  - Hook into a group, promote collaboration... look to the forum in April for ideas for action – how do we help make this a success?
  - Need to help more people find a voice
  - Increase involvement and participation
  - Formation of a Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) to help problem solve, disseminate information, address issues
  - Keep the conversation and dialogue going
  - Be willing to discuss change
  - We can sit down and discuss issues. Is the fabric of the community of Guilford coming apart?
  - Inclusion of people who work, but do not live, in Guilford
  - Public opinion more readily heard
  - Public forum every six months for every public official for accountability, with good communication to people to be heard at forum
  - Form a true collaborative with a challenge to form action plans with good leadership
  - Inclusiveness and awareness in activities, conversations that exist in the community
  - More visibility to the political process
  - Having a voice / being heard about Route 1
  - Mini-organizations, study circles, social networks
  - Initiative should be bigger than and outlast the leadership.
  - Meetings or meet with individuals to learn about the problems
  - Meetings or meet people individually in order to be aware of problems
- ◆ Stop talking about it so much – going around same issues year after year

- ◆ Start taking action – active changes should begin to take place, move forward with the information
- ◆ Petitions on issues
- ◆ Better /redefined petition process. Round II of charter revision
- ◆ Rethink our form of government
- ◆ Work on problems from many angles ... together
- ◆ Get more adults on same page
- ◆ Find ways to get schools, parents, services, police, etc., working together
- ◆ Involve the merchants in the values of this community.
- ◆ Revise town charter to de-politicize conversations
- ◆ Connections (groups for various populations)
- ◆ Matching people who have expertise with people who need it

### **Better Communication**

- ◆ Use of media
  - Open, free forum to GCTV
  - Better use of GCTV
  - Get GCTV on satellite/internet
  - GCTV web site
  - Education through media
  - Guilford should "sell" itself in the media
  - Educate on how town government works, town facts regularly on GCTV
  - More diversity of newspaper coverage
  - Better use of newspaper (local ownership)
  - Better communication/ better use of technology
  - Newspaper taking better editorial positions
  - Better use of the web and newspapers to show meetings and happenings.
  - Broaden website and public tv
  - Find ways to hold the media/communication vehicles to a higher standard of communication – that we value as a town
  - A dynamic community bulletin board would be a great asset.
  - Positive columns in the newspaper
  - Good Morning, Guilford
  - Newspapers print more on service organizations
  - Speak-Out column – anonymity allowed people to speak in inappropriate ways
  - Perhaps a central calendar page in the newspaper would work well.
- ◆ Town Government more transparent – process made clearer to citizens
  - The Town Government set up a better mechanism for letting the community-at-large know what is going on
  - Focus more education on how local government works
  - Centralizing information
  - Ample lead time is needed for meetings and events.
  - Varying ways to reach all people
  - Information regarding schools should be disseminated to preschool parents.
  - Each district could have a representative responsible for publishing what's happening in their part of the town.
  - Correspondence between town leaders and residents
- ◆ More PR on traffic driving rules
- ◆ Being more transparent in where the money goes
- ◆ Guilford Chamber can help funnel info

- ◆ Communicate more effectively
- ◆ Citizen voice on P&Z/Development issues
  - Educate residents on how P&Z work as well as other commissions & boards
  - Groups of people on the same issue is more effective than individuals – so a Team Guilford initiative has a better chance of success
  - Team Guilford members join these commissions
  - Reach P&Z with Team Guilford information and thoughts on growth and development
- ◆ Revisit zoning – wetlands implications, “50’s” zoning
  - Have a mechanism for zoning to keep the town attractive
- ◆ Public transportation
  - Improve transportation for seniors
- ◆ Green Town concepts – support developers to interact with businesses like Sun Search etc.
- ◆ Make the methodology for tax assessment more apparent.
- ◆ Swimming pool and ice rink
- ◆ Increased communication among different agencies involved in town development
- ◆ More ways to get around Rt. 1 – new streets & “cut-throughs”
- ◆ Curb the growth
- ◆ Fix walking paths and pave sidewalks
- ◆ Create our own Hammonasset

### **Breakdowns in Services**

- ◆ Improve collaboration among services
  - Connecting services
  - Task force to bring all services together to work collaboratively, to figure out how we can best serve the community.
  - Facilitate collaboration among social services consistently
- ◆ Centralize information about services
  - On-line, central phone number, master list
  - A quick reference list with services and phone numbers
- ◆ Transportation (public – for low income families)
- ◆ People to advocate for clients who need services
  - public advocates
  - pro- active
- ◆ Forums for professional development with focus on specific issue/topic but open to broad cross-section of the community
- ◆ Make A Difference day
- ◆ Drop-in center
- ◆ Community book-reading
- ◆ Safe homes
- ◆ Social worker-Parks and Rec link to find engagement for the marginalized and disenfranchised youth who congregate on the green or indulge in “rolling parties” along the back roads
- ◆ Services to 24-65 age group
- ◆ Facilitate ability for people to volunteer their skills

- ◆ Available services for working parents
- ◆ More interfaith action groups
- ◆ Medical transportation for minimal fees
- ◆ Need a dental clinic

### **Citizen behavior and attitudes**

- ◆ Discipline
- ◆ Community support for enforcement of rules and codes of conduct
- ◆ Establishment of norms and support for those enforcing them and equitable enforcement of rules and laws
- ◆ More awareness of and respect towards others
- ◆ We should focus on the town's strengths and showcase them.
- ◆ Address misconceptions by balancing negative press with positive press
- ◆ Take more risks (All factions of the community)
- ◆ Fine people abusing litter (follow-thru).
- ◆ Share in the responsibility of values. Parenting programs
- ◆ Explain about etiquette.
- ◆ Teach (kids) about litter.
- ◆ Review and update the original Guilford covenant

### **Diversity**

- ◆ Create a committee to work on this issue, tie into youth & elderly. An interconnected committee including Social Service Agencies
- ◆ We should have programs to get kids to other places and other cultures
- ◆ We should have a foreign exchange program for all kids
- ◆ We could do a two week exchange with city kids- one week in school, and one week of trips , museums, etc.

### **Substance Abuse/Addiction – general**

- ◆ – looked at as public health issues
  - Information and education
- ◆ Confidential means to get help
- ◆ Get at root causes of addiction issues. Doesn't matter – just address it.

### **Isolated Seniors**

- ◆ Start and Adopt-a-Grandparent program for seniors
- ◆ Help people who are Shut In wit youth community service

### **Green Town**

- ◆ Green Town concepts – support developers to interact with businesses like Sun Search etc.
- ◆ Teens involved in "Green Town" activities
- ◆ A "green footprint" of all projects
- ◆ Clean up/more trash recycle.

### **Affordable Housing**

- ◆ Develop affordable housing distributed around the town (not in one place)
- ◆ Get town to build more senior housing
- ◆ Explore business partnerships to facilitate community buy-in

### **Town Development**

- ◆ Bike paths/sidewalks
- ◆ Make Shops on the Green more affordable
- ◆ Organize volunteers to clean Jacobs Beach
- ◆ Guilford needs more places that could offer jobs
- ◆ T-shirts, bumper stickers, signs and banners proclaiming Guilford's positive attributes would make it appear more positive
- ◆ Increase park and rec budget to beautify town fields, green and other public lands
- ◆ Forums for professional development with focus on specific issue/topic but open to broad cross-section of the community
- ◆ Make A Difference day
- ◆ Drop-in center
- ◆ Community book-reading
- ◆ Safe homes
- ◆ Invite more industry to carry some of the tax burden, or market Guilford more as a tourist destination to bring in outside money

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

- ◆ Sometimes having a "process in place" limits response to an issue
- ◆ It's important to remember that our issues are not unique to Guilford
- ◆ In Connecticut, the concept of "town" is important
- ◆ How can we sponsor people to the Guilford Art Center?
- ◆ Address the "adults behaving badly" in town
- ◆ Community attractions
- ◆ Keep historical background
- ◆ Intergenerational complex to keep the populations we are losing
- ◆ Public transportation for everyone, i.e. trolley system.
- ◆ "read a book" as a town or other short term projects to bring population together
- ◆ Use United Way of New Haven as a model
- ◆ More fire hydrants
- ◆ We should have more community traditions like the town I moved from. There was a Halloween parade at night, and all the kids Trick or Treated at 4:00 in the afternoon.
- ◆ Advocating for issues
- ◆ Target people who are outlying
- ◆ Be aware of timing with solutions
- ◆ Don't worry about money.