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THE WAR ON POVERTY

**50 years of social action:
Was it worth the cost?**

More than 60 people gathered at the Logsdon Community Center on September 16, 2014, to discuss the effectiveness of the 50 year old "War on Poverty".

REPORT ON THE COMMUNITY FORUM

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THE **WAR** ON POVERTY

**50 years of social
action: Was it
worth the cost?**



REPORT ON THE COMMUNITY FORUM

More than 60 people gathered at the Logsdon Community Center to discuss the effectiveness of the 50 year old “War on Poverty”. President Lyndon Johnson proposed this bold social initiative during his State of the Union address on January 8, 1964, delivered just seven weeks following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. The national poverty rate was close to 20 percent at that time, 30 percent for seniors. By 1973, poverty in America dropped to 11 percent, its lowest level. Poverty in adult Americans has remained between 11 and 15 percent ever since.

While not a scientific sample, participants reflected a valuable cross section of citizens: social workers, educators, a banker, accountant, community activists, a lawyer, college administrators, a farmer, ministers, a scientist and more. The forum lasted approximately three hours. All were welcomed at this public meeting.

Participants received an issue brief/discussion guide. The moderator, Rodney Berry, reviewed War on Poverty programs, including

- Social Security expansion
- Food Stamps
- Community Action
- Job Corp
- VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America)
- Federal support for elementary and secondary education
- Head Start and more

He shared trends, state and national comparisons, and a news feature from a PBS program on the topic.

Following this background and introduction, participants discussed three options facing our nation as they assessed the track record of the War on Poverty programs:

OPTION 1

**It is time to de-fund the
War on Poverty programs.**

OPTION 2

**Only continue the programs and
services that are most important,
efficient and affordable.**

OPTION 3

**War on Poverty programs work,
and should be expanded.**

Option 1: It is time to de-fund the War on Poverty programs.

Notable points from group discussions:

- This view was not shared by many participants.
- Some participants felt strongly that War on Poverty programs – and similar programs that have been adopted since then – have not been effective:
 - The programs should be defunded because the programs are abused.
 - Unemployment compensation, in particular, is abused.
 - The programs are not accountable.
 - It hurts the economy when people abuse the system.
 - It is easier and more financially beneficial to not work and live off the government.

Option 2: Only continue the programs and services that are most important, efficient and affordable.

Notable points from group discussions:

- How do we gauge which programs are the most important?
- Without these programs, there is no doubt that the poverty rate would be much worse.
- The programs must be working or poverty would have increased.
- Program efficiencies and value should be revisited often.
- These programs boost the economy.
- We should change the perception of the War on Poverty programs.
- Private funding should not supplement public programs.
- Programs should be continued when cost-effective.
- Administrators should be prepared for influx or decrease in participation.
- Should there be a time limit to cut off services for families who use benefits often but don't make an effort to improve their conditions?
- We should raise expectations of beneficiaries.

Option 3: These War on Poverty programs work and should be expanded.

Notable points from group discussions:

- Programs that have positive outcomes and make an impact should be expanded.
- We have a larger population than we did in 1964; that strengthens the case for expansion.
- We are dealing with changing demographics and structure of this country.
- We must change our immigration policies.
- Generational issues must be addressed.
- Programs must be evaluated.
- We must revisit, refocus and re-prioritize.



Open Forum Remarks

Once they heard the remarks from the discussion tables, participants were invited to share other thoughts:

- The need for these kinds of social programs is obvious.
- Poverty will not be reduced or ended through a forum. However, few problems are solved until we first talk about our problems.
- How can we attract the poor to become involved in these forums?
- Where would we be without these programs? Poverty would be out of control in America if we didn't have these kinds of programs.
- We need to support these programs.
- There are so many regulations and requirements with all the programs. The poor literally have to "shop around" to find out what they are eligible for.
- Agencies that work with the poor need to keep doing so...lots of work to be done.
- Poverty in Owensboro is not as much concentrated by race.
- We should break everything apart—look at all the programs—see what is working, what is not, and start over.
- If we did take away all welfare, we would run primarily off transitional programming.

- We need reform across the board.
- Programs for the poor should not be de-funded.
- Congress is disconnected and people are not voting anymore.
- Education is vital and financial literacy is key. Financial literacy should be present in high school curricula.

“Government should step out of the way and our community should take care of its own.”

Tom Anderson

- We must build partnerships with community stakeholders.
- Is it time for a new community needs assessment?
- Poverty among elderly is substantially lower due to the War on Poverty.
- Reward organizations and funding sources that are working.
- Government should step out of the way and our community should take care of its own.
- If we expand programs we can include more people.
- Poverty of 1964 is different than today’s poverty. We have something called the working poor today. It is sometimes very difficult for someone working full time to stay out of poverty.

- We need to meet the needs of all children.
- We need to develop a culture of thrift
- There has been a disengagement of citizens in our country. Citizens need to get involved!
- Our goal should be to facilitate and enable the broader community to grow within Maslow’s hierarchy of needs toward self-actualization.
- People in rural areas have different types of needs.

“Poverty of 1964 is different than today’s poverty. We have something called the working poor today. It is sometimes very difficult for someone working full time to stay out of poverty.”

Keith Sanders

- There is a ripple effect: Poverty leads to domestic violence, child abuse, mental health crime and more.
- Income inequality drives poverty.
- Tax reform is needed.
- Earned Income Tax Credit works.
- Education about poverty needs to start at the top and include every elected official.

Summary

THE WAR ON POVERTY

Participants generally agreed that the War on Poverty was a bold, necessary social initiative of its time.

There was also common support for routine cost-benefit assessments of such programs.

Addressing poverty in an effective way requires comprehensive strategies: from early childhood education to financial literacy, parenting to job training, domestic violence awareness/prevention to substance abuse treatment and much more.

2014 Kids Count County Data Book

How does Daviess County compare?



Since 1990, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has published the *KIDS COUNT County Data Book* to track the well-being of children across the country by state and counties. The Kentucky Youth Advocates partners with the Casey Foundation to distribute and promote the annual results.

Daviess County

OVERALL RANK
18

16 KEY INDICATORS OF CHILD WELL-BEING BY DOMAIN

ECONOMIC SECURITY DOMAIN RANK 23	Children in poverty 2008-12 22%	Children living in high-poverty areas 2008-12 24%	Median family income among households with children 2008-12 \$54,200	High rental cost burden 2014 47%
EDUCATION DOMAIN RANK 20	Kindergarteners not ready to learn SY 2013/14 47%	Fourth graders not proficient in reading SY 2012/13 47%	Eighth graders not proficient in math SY 2012/13 46%	High school students not graduating on time SY 2012/13 9%
HEALTH DOMAIN RANK 24	Smoking during pregnancy 2010-12 20.3%	Low-birthweight babies 2010-12 7.9%	Children and young adults without health insurance 2008-12 12%	Teen births per 1,000 ages 15-19 2010-12 49.8
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY DOMAIN RANK 47	Births to mothers without a high school degree 2010-12 13.7%	Children in single-parent families 2008-12 32%	Children in out-of-home care per 1,000 ages 0-17 2011-13 30.1	Youth incarcerated in the juvenile justice system per 1,000 ages 10-17 2011-13 44.6

2014 KIDS COUNT COUNTY DATA BOOK

KENTUCKY YOUTH ADVOCATES
KYKYOUTH.ORG

16 KEY INDICATORS OF CHILD WELL-BEING BY DOMAIN

KENTUCKY	Children in poverty 2008-12 26%	Children living in high-poverty areas 2008-12 41%	Median family income among households with children 2008-12 \$52,500	High rental cost burden 2014 51%
EDUCATION	Kindergarteners not ready to learn SY 2013/14 51%	Fourth graders not proficient in reading SY 2012/13 51%	Eighth graders not proficient in math SY 2012/13 55%	High school students not graduating on time SY 2012/13 14%
HEALTH	Smoking during pregnancy 2010-12 22.6%	Low-birthweight babies 2010-12 8.9%	Children and young adults without health insurance 2008-12 13%	Teen births per 1,000 ages 15-19 2010-12 43.1
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY	Births to mothers without a high school degree 2010-12 18.0%	Children in single-parent families 2008-12 31%	Children in out-of-home care per 1,000 ages 0-17 2011-13 35.3	Youth incarcerated in the juvenile justice system per 1,000 ages 10-17 2011-13 45.1

18 | 2014 KIDS COUNT COUNTY DATA BOOK

FIGURE 3

National Trends in 16 Key Indicators of Child Well-Being by Domain

ECONOMIC WELL-BEING	Children in poverty 2012 23% 16,397,000 CHILDREN WORSENERD 2005 19% 2012 23%	Children whose parents lack secure employment 2012 31% 23,101,000 CHILDREN WORSENERD 2008 27% 2012 31%	Children living in households with a high housing cost burden 2012 38% 27,761,000 CHILDREN WORSENERD 2005 37% 2012 38%	Teens not in school and not working 2012 8% 1,404,000 TEENS UNCHANGED 2008 8% 2012 8%
EDUCATION	Children not attending preschool 2010-12 54% 4,307,000 CHILDREN IMPROVED 2005-07 56% 2010-12 54%	Fourth graders not proficient in reading 2013 66% N.A. IMPROVED 2005 70% 2013 66%	Eighth graders not proficient in math 2013 66% N.A. IMPROVED 2005 72% 2013 66%	High school students not graduating on time 2011/12 19% N.A. IMPROVED 2005/06 27% 2011/12 19%
HEALTH	Low-birthweight babies 2012 8.0% 315,709 BABIES IMPROVED 2005 8.2% 2012 8.0%	Children without health insurance 2012 7% 5,264,000 CHILDREN IMPROVED 2008 10% 2012 7%	Child and teen deaths per 100,000 2010 26 20,482 DEATHS IMPROVED 2005 32 2010 26	Teens who abuse alcohol or drugs 2010-12 6% 1,618,000 TEENS IMPROVED 2005-06 8% 2010-12 6%
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY	Children in single-parent families 2012 35% 24,725,000 CHILDREN WORSENERD 2005 32% 2012 35%	Children in families where the household head lacks a high school diploma 2012 15% 10,887,000 CHILDREN IMPROVED 2005 16% 2012 15%	Children living in high-poverty areas 2008-12 13% 9,362,000 CHILDREN WORSENERD 2000 9% 2008-12 13%	Teen births per 1,000 2012 29 305,388 BIRTHS IMPROVED 2005 40 2012 29

N.A. NOT AVAILABLE

STATE TRENDS IN CHILD WELL-BEING

The Annie E. Casey Foundation | www.aecf.org

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Owensboro Public Schools Summer Literacy Camp yields impressive results

The first year of implementation of the Owensboro Reads summer literacy camp funded by the Public Life Foundation of Owensboro showed positive results in combating the “summer slide” in reading that plagues many students over the summer months. Of the 60 students served through the five week camp, 95 percent (all but three students) made exceptional or expected progress in reading as a result of the camp.



The camp, called Camp Superpower, targeted entering second grade students reading below grade level or showing signs of struggling in their reading progress. Students spent 30 minutes per day with a reading specialist

and remaining time of the half-day camp with cognitive coaches on a combination of literacy-oriented projects and summer fun activities.

Of the 60 students served by the five week camp, 95 percent (all but three students) made exceptional or expected progress in reading as a result of the camp.

The summer slide is a widely documented phenomenon based on research conducted by groups such as Scholastic and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Reading skill losses during the summer months – which are cumulative – lead to wider gaps as students get older. By the time a student reaches middle school, summer reading loss has accumulated to a two-year lag in reading achievement.

A sample of four second grade classrooms in the Owensboro Public Schools showed that about one-third of the students showed regression on reading assessments administered at the end of summer vacation compared to the same assessment administered at the end of first grade. The sample included 14 students from Camp Superpower, all of which

either maintained their pre-summer reading levels or made reading gains as a result of the camp.

Of the 60 students attending the camp, 47 percent made expected progress and 47 percent made exceptional progress on the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) administered to them at the beginning of second grade compared to the same assessment administered at the end of first grade.

Students spent 30 minutes per day with a reading specialist and remaining time of the half-day camp with cognitive coaches on a combination of literacy-oriented projects and summer fun activities.



Camp Superpower is a partnership between the Public Life Foundation of Owensboro and the Owensboro Public Schools as part of the district’s comprehensive literacy effort, “Owensboro Reads.” Students and instructors included representation from all five OPS elementary schools. The Public Life Foundation of Owensboro will provide funds to support the camp the next two summers.

For additional information, please contact Dr. Nick Brake, Superintendent, (270) 686-1000 or email: Nick.Brake@owensboro.kyschools.us.

Special initiatives give distinction to local school districts

Owensboro and Daviess County schools are gaining increasing distinction through special initiatives that focus on what students need for careers and workplaces of the future.

Creative program development, modeling from successes elsewhere, accelerated learning, and more options for college and career tracks are among the cutting edge resources available to educators, students and parents.

Owensboro Innovation Academy

- Grades nine through 12
- Location to be determined
- Small, stand-alone high school (based on New Tech model – www.newtechnetwork.org)
- Beginning Fall 2015: 100 students; goal in four years: 400
- Hands-on, project-based learning
- Emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)
- College readiness, courses aligned with Owensboro Community and Technical College (OCTC) courses
- Owensboro Public Schools (OPS) leads the program; surrounding school districts collaborate

Community Campus

- Grades nine through 12
- Partnership among area high schools and OCTC
- Collaboration with surrounding school districts
- 233 students from four school districts currently enrolled
- College ready entrance score required before completing high school (ACT or Compass)
- College credit beginning at grade nine
- Two workforce aligned academies planned for 2015:
 - Life Science (at OCTC)
 - Engineering (Apollo)
- Students attend OCTC or Apollo for programs then return to their home high schools
- Beginning in 2015 the Owensboro Innovation Academy will also focus on a Life Science career pathway and an Engineering pathway along with others

Early College Academy

- Grades 11-12
- Eight completed 2014 program
- Located at OCTC
- Significant time spent away from high school
- Can complete an OCTC associate's degree and high school diploma simultaneously
- Hancock County Public Schools and Owensboro Public Schools collaborate

Gateway Academy

- Grades nine through 12
- Seventy completed 2014 program
- Located at Seven Hills School and OCTC Downtown
- Alternative school
- Students placed or selected
- Students earn a competency-based diploma
- Options upon completion: OCTC courses, technical programs, career pathways, work-based internships
- Exclusively an OPS project (Note: DCPS has its own alternative school: Beacon Central)

Summer Reading Program

- Second grade
- Located at Foust Elementary School
- Limited to 80 participants
- Sixty completed 2014 program
- Personalized instruction by trained staff
- Field trips
- Exclusively an OPS project
- Other literacy initiatives in development

Advanced Placement Program

- Grades nine through 12
- Located at all local high schools
- Unlimited participation
- Courses aligned to national curriculum
- Students can earn college credit based on AP test scores
- Approximately 1,000 students in the region completed

AP courses (841 in DCPS) in 2014. However only about half received the AP credit. Some students took more than one test so the 1000 number represents tests taken not number of students

- All surrounding high schools offer AP curriculum

Discover College

- Grades 11-12
- Students can get a head start on college, often at a reduced cost
- Located at OCTC campuses
- Must have a minimum college-ready score on ACT or Compass scores
- Offered to students from Daviess, Breckinridge, McLean, Hancock and Ohio Counties
- Students may earn college credit by:
 - Dual enrollment: Complete classes at OCTC campuses (est. 325 students enrolled)
 - Concurrent enrollment: Complete classes at their high school (est. 500 students enrolled)

Career Pathways

- Grades nine through 12
- Goal: 200 participants
- Location to be determined
- All regional high schools offer some but not all of these pathways:
 - Aviation
 - Business
 - Project Lead the Way
 - Engineering
 - Health Sciences
 - Industrial Electric
 - Financial Services
 - Early Childhood Education
 - Masonry
 - Construction and Trades – Gateway Technical Program

OCTC launches Hager Civic Engagement Scholars program

The Owensboro Community and Technical College (OCTC) gives a select group of its students an opportunity to participate in a prestigious learning experience.

The endowed program, the Hager Civic Engagement Scholars Program, was established by Marjorie and John Hager, former owners of the *Messenger-Inquirer* and founders of the Public Life Foundation of Owensboro, among other family charities.

Tori Norris, executive director of the program, is designing events, recruiting students and promoting the program for the Spring 2015 semester.

Students have already been admitted into the Hager Scholars

program for the fall semester. During the first semester – the Fall of 2014 – Hager Scholars were active in

- PTK (Phi Theta Kappa Honors Society)
- campus events connected with Constitution Day
- campus tours, and
- a college assembly where they were introduced to the faculty

To qualify, students must be currently enrolled at OCTC, have earned a minimum of 30 credit hours, and meet certain grade point and ACT score requirements.

Students with an interest in the Hager Scholars Program should contact Tori Norris at tori.norris@kctcs.edu or (270) 315-1609.

Wendell H. Ford Center cultivating leaders

Emerge Owensboro NeXT



Through a collaborative effort involving the Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Owensboro Economic Development Corporation, and the Wendell Ford Government Education Center, young leaders in our community have a unique opportunity to participate in the Emerge Owensboro NeXT program.

EmergeNeXT will identify and cultivate young leaders who will learn about community issues, meet and familiarize themselves with notable local and state leaders, engage in independent and critical thinking, and more.

In 2014-2015, 20 students are participating in four sessions and earning points toward graduation. They will take part in group projects, attend community events, and interview community leaders. They write an essay and create a video to “sell themselves” as a leader.

Wendell H. Ford Statesmanship Academy

The Ford Statesmanship Academy stresses the importance of compromise and civil discourse in public affairs. The Academy is open to students of diverse backgrounds and focuses on developing leadership potential.

Students (juniors and seniors) participate in six all-day sessions, including two Saturdays in which they learn about statesmanship and leadership as it pertains to vital issues of our time. This year, 28 juniors are focusing on state issues while next year seniors will learn about national issues and leaders. Participants can also earn college credit by taking Leadership 200 through Western Kentucky University-Owensboro as part of the Statesmanship program.



Difference in a Day

The Wendell H. Ford Public Service and Statesmanship Boot Camp is a day-long, learning intensive program for future leaders. The program focuses on our local community, life-long learning, creative problem solving, civic engagement, and service above self.

The “Boot Camp” features facilitated group discussions to examine a challenge facing Owensboro. Participants review the facts, identify options, pros and cons, and potential common ground for action.

For more information, contact Bruce Kunze, Executive Director: fordgovcenter@gmail.com or 270.929.3425.

Owensboro Area World Affairs Council connects citizens, students with the world



Since 2005, the Owensboro Area World Affairs Council (OAWAC) has presented more than 70 programs on global issues. Locations of these free evening lectures have rotated among Brescia University, Kentucky Wesleyan College, Owensboro Community and Technical College, Green River Area Development District and Settle Memorial Methodist Church.



Leonard Pitts



Robert Samuelson



Stephen Cohen

- **John Stempel**, University of Kentucky's Patterson School of Diplomacy
- **Dr. John H. Petersen**, Western Kentucky University political science professor and chief international officer



John Stempel

Speakers include:

- **Leonard Pitts**, national syndicated columnist
- **Robert Samuelson**, national syndicated columnist who specializes on economic issues
- **Stephen Cohen**, Russian scholar
- **Lloyd Gardner**, Rutgers University historian, on the war in Iraq
- **Gary Scott Smith**, Grove City College, on faith and the American presidency
- **Daniel Mahoney**, Assumption College, on Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and modern Russia
- **Sumit Ganghuly**, Indiana University, on the rise of India

OAWAC has also presented regional scholars:

- **Brian Strow**, Western Kentucky University economist on the World Trade Organization
- **Zackery Heern**, Murray State University professor on the Arab Spring
- **Robert Dion**, University of Evansville historian on the 2012 election

Programs have also featured:



Tamara Quinn

- **Ugur Kenan Ipek**, Turkish Embassy counselor
- **Kenneth Stammerman**, former Middle East diplomat
- **Tamara Quinn**, founder, Women's Alliance for a Democratic Iraq
- **Ashis Brahma**, humanitarian worker on the crisis in Darfur
- **Philip Hurley, M.D.**, local physician on relief work in Haiti
- **Bruno Ortiz**, Peruvian filmmaker
- **Tsering Phuntsok**, Buddhist monk
- **Cathy Bailey**, former U.S. ambassador to Russia
- **Morton Holbrook III**, former U.S. diplomat and Owensboro resident
- **Mishy Harman**, Israeli radio host
- **Daniela Ruzickova**, Czech social worker
- **James McLeod**, University of Evansville historian on the lasting impact of the First World War.
- **Dr. Solieman Kiasatpour**, Western Kentucky University political scientist on ISIS.

Membership for individuals is \$25 per year; \$40 for families.

- Email: goawac@gmail.com
- Facebook page maintained by Angela Ash.
- Current officers are: Marc Maltby, President; Matt Alschbach, Vice President; Angela Ash, Secretary, and Al Wallace, Treasurer. All are faculty at OCTC.

The council was conceived by John Hager, the Public Life Foundation's founder and benefactor.

"OAWAC has been blessed with a dedicated group of volunteers serving on our Board of Directors. They are committed to our purpose of advancing global understanding. We are grateful for the community's continuing support and look forward to presenting more thought-provoking programs."



Marc Maltby, OAWAC President
Owensboro Community and Technical College

Junior Achievement of West Kentucky and the Regional Alliance for Education earn Soft Skills designation



To assist area students in achieving one of the goals for the Soft Skills Certification initiative, Junior Achievement partnered with local schools to implement the JA Success Skills program, which provides work-readiness curriculum delivered by local business professionals in area high school classrooms.

The final report of the partnership that JA established with local high schools:

Daviness County 2013-2014	
Receiving the JA Success Skills Program:	698 students in 27 classrooms
Apollo High School	117 students
Daviness County High School	348 students
Owensboro High School	217 students
Trinity High School	16 students

In addition, the program attracted students from Hancock County (97 students), McLean County (86 students), Ohio County (103 students).

Dan Douglas, Executive Director, Junior Achievement of West Kentucky