

Community School Community Conversations

2020-21 Report

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY SCHOOL?

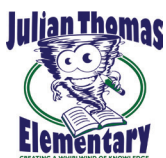
A community school is a way to put the school at the center of the community, making it a hub for services and programs. In collaboration with Racine Unified School District, United Way of Racine County implemented the community school model for Racine County with the LIFT (Link and Inspire for Tomorrow) strategy. Through LIFT, Racine County community schools intentionally create an infrastructure that forges strong relationships to align resources and expertise to move the needle on key indicators related to young people's success.

WHAT ARE COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS?

Community Conversations provide the space for teachers, staff, students, parents and community members to share their knowledge and thoughts on where the Julian Thomas community is and where we should be headed. Participation and feedback allow us to work together to develop strategies and mobilize resources to support Julian Thomas students and families. Together, we heard from nearly 30 teachers and staff at Julian Thomas, 35 parents or guardians and 50 students.

WHAT'S NEXT?

United Way of Racine County is expanding services at Julian Thomas through the Full-Service Community School grant through the Department of Education. This grant enables increases in staffing and infrastructure at both Julian Thomas and Knapp community schools. In the 2021-22 school year, Julian Thomas students and families can look forward to individual and family counseling through a school-based mental health clinic, a free HSED (High School Equivalency Diploma) program for adults, on-site education programs for parents and adults in the Julian Thomas neighborhood, family empowerment programs and expanded afterschool opportunities. Please reach out to Community School Coordinator Leigh Ann Martinez (lmartinez@unitedwayracine.org) with questions and comments.



Findings

Aspirations

- Offer more activities for students and families during school year
- Offer more community resources, such as GED classes
- Create childcare services for younger children
- Create enriched learning opportunities and tutoring for students
- Increase staffing resources such as special education support
- Increase budget to offer elective courses

Challenges

- Students transfer schools frequently
- Chronic absenteeism
- Hard to engage parents due to time and transportation constraints
- Lack of trust due to past events from the district and school level
- Hard to support mental health needs of students
- Technology issues prevalent for students

Possible solutions

- Engage more community partners and organizations
- Address mental health needs for students and families
- Provide extra tutoring programs
- Create space that houses resources for those in need
- Create a food pantry with healthy food for students
- Offer mentoring programs

