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Celebrating UNP's 20th Anniversary

By Bruce Neumann

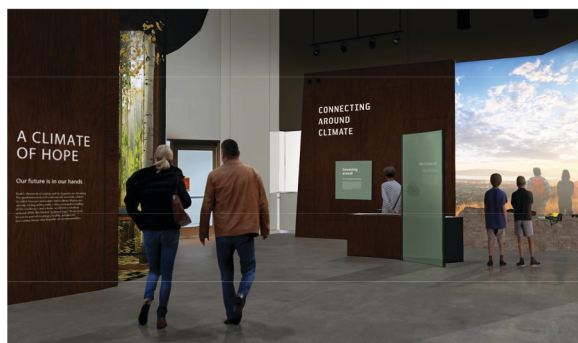
University Neighborhood Partners (UNP) is celebrating 20 years of working with west side residents to access higher education. UNP convenes asset based, mutually beneficial partnerships consisting of three pillars; residents, higher ed, and local organizations. These pillars build upon strengths of each partner to create non-profit organizations, offer English or citizenship classes, create leadership experiences, and more. After 20 years of convening partnerships we want to celebrate the rich societal impact of local people working together to create a robust and diverse community.

UNP staff and partners will celebrate at the Utah Cultural Celebration Center (UCCC) in West Valley City. The theme for this event is *the river*. The Jordan River is a treasured asset in Salt Lake City. Along the Jordan River is the parkway trail where an oasis of native fauna and flora can be found. There are 60 mixed-use miles following the river from Utah Lake to the Great Salt Lake where historical and recreational landmarks can be enjoyed. UNP's offices are near the Jordan River, and the UCCC itself is located on the banks of the Jordan River.

Creating a Climate of Hope

New partnership engages west side residents in learning about climate change

By Lynne Zummo, Lisa Thompson, and Wisam Khudhair



UNP, the Natural History Museum of Utah (NHMU), and Hartland Community 4 Youth and Families (HC4YF) have launched a community-engaged research project to study how people learn about climate change in *A Climate of Hope*, a new exhibit opening at NHMU in November. The project is funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation that supports the work of all three partners.

In a departure from many climate change exhibits, *A Climate of Hope* tells the story of how we can build a thriving future in a world with a changing climate. With a clear-eyed view of the challenges we face, this solutions-focused exhibit highlights Utahns across the state implementing climate solutions that will improve our lives and helps visitors explore how they can take effective action in their communities.

By studying learning in *A Climate of Hope*—which offers a counternarrative to educational experiences that scare, polarize, and/or exclude—our partnership

will work towards dismantling the current “spiral of silence” around climate change to help people think, feel, and talk productively about the issue. Other important goals include strengthening ties between westside families and NHMU and building research-based knowledge about how people with a diversity of lived experiences learn about the changing climate.

Gilberto Rejón Magana (Coach Juan) the Founder Coach and Executive Director of HC4YF is hoping, the *A Climate of Hope* project will educate the Westside community about climate change issues.

“My community doesn't have a clear answer or information about what climate change is, so by bringing this project to my community and getting them involved and being part of it, I think would understand the important stuff and would work for a better outcome”

To ensure west side residents have an opportunity to engage with the exhibit, HC4YF will organize several field trips to NHMU each year. The grant will fund transportation and lunch for all field trip participants as well as gift cards to compensate adult participants for their time.

In addition, UNP and HC4YF are taking the lead on recruiting members of a west side community board, who will be hired to shape the research and revisions to the exhibit. The board will also create and launch a pilot project aimed at climate justice advocacy among West Side residents.

Engaging Parents for Student Success

By Erick Garcia



It is well known that Parent Engagement can lead to student success. For administrators it is a goal, for teachers it is valuable assistance, and for many first-generation parents it is a complete mystery.

Last spring, Latinos In Action (LIA) and University Neighborhood Partners hosted a parent engagement class called *Padres Comprometidos*. The class, which was held once a week over 10 weeks, was taught in English and Spanish. It was hosted at Hunter High School in West Valley City. The main objective of the class was to teach parents about how to be active participants in their child's education. Before understanding the education system, the parents developed a foundation by learning about effective communication with teenagers, and how to promote positive behaviors. The later sessions then teach parents about what it takes to be

Partnership Platform

Focus on Partnerships

college ready and how they can support their children. Parents who took the class felt that they had more confidence in approaching a teacher and in talking with their student about their educational goals and values.

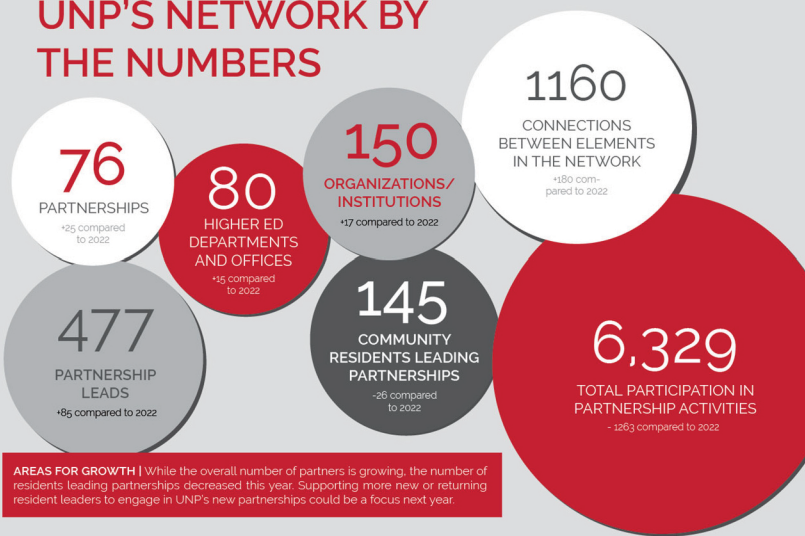
This was a pilot program to gauge interest and our turnout was amazing! Over 60 parents graduated from our first class! Parent engagement is essential to student prosperity: through this LIA course, these parents have begun to set the stage for that future success.

UNP's Evaluation Highlights

By Jennifer Mayer-Glenn

UNP does not run programs led by staff. It is a convener and catalyst for a growing network of partners and partnerships. Evaluating such a network is complicated. Decision making is decentralized, with each partnership developing its own goals. The impacts we care about have multiple causes, and often cannot be defined ahead of time. A network like this is a living system. It cannot be planned and controlled. It can only emerge. Below are highlights from UNP's 2022-2023 network evaluation.

UNP'S NETWORK BY THE NUMBERS



AREAS FOR GROWTH | While the overall number of partners is growing, the number of residents leading partnerships decreased this year. Supporting more new or returning resident leaders to engage in UNP's new partnerships could be a focus next year.

THE NEW AMERICAN ACADEMIC NETWORK

NAAN connects individuals from immigrant and refugee backgrounds with higher education, creating pathways for them to return to school and/or employment in their chosen fields. Many new arrivals resettle with education and training from their countries of origin; however, but without the necessary credentials to enter higher education or a professional level of employment.

38 participants, representing 14 countries of origin responded to this year's NAAN survey. Highlights from the data are included here.

"THE NAAN PROGRAM HAS HELPED ME SO MUCH...THIS PROGRAM ALWAYS PROVIDES USEFUL INFORMATION AND AMAZING OPPORTUNITIES."
- NAAN Participant

CONFIDENCE AND HOPE

UNP partnerships enhance the individual capacity of residents and other partners to lead.

84%

of partners and participants say that after their involvement they are now more capable of reaching their goals.

88%

of partners and participants say that after their involvement they are now more hopeful it is possible to change things for the better.



Carlos Palestina is a Rose Park resident. Last year, Carlos enrolled in the Fundamentals course with Westside Leadership Institute, where he developed a community podcasting project. This year he returned as one of the instructors for the class. He is busy turning his project into a nonprofit organization, and has taken a position with Salt Lake City running the **My Brother's Keeper Initiative**, which works to create a city where boys and young men of color can thrive.

Get social with us!



UNP Community Partnerships Course

Register Now!

By Kimberly Schmit



In January, we will again be offering the UNP Community Partnerships Course. The 8-week experience will bring together a group of local professionals who are interested in supporting their institutions and organizations in partnering with communities in more equitable and sustainable ways. Through facilitation and teaching, participants will collectively workshop their engagement ideas, leading to the completion of a concrete

community partnership plan for their organization.

Past participants include staff from Salt Lake City's Office of the Mayor, Office of Engagement and My Brothers Keeper, as well as Utah Transit Authority, Natural History Museum, the U's Office of Sustainability, and members of the Utah Community Advocate Network. Parts of the course were also recently taught in a variety of local, national and

international venues; including during a workshop in Bangkok, Thailand for Jesuit Refugee Service's Asia Pacific staff.

When asked "What did you find most useful about this course?," one participant responded, "I appreciated learning ways to use community partnerships as an asset in advancing strategic goals, mission statements and core values. I learned about how to keep these ideas in the forefront of agendas and power structures. I also learned about ways to work around institutional barriers where I work in order to support partnerships and communities."

Classes are at Sorenson Unity Center on Mondays (1/29, 2/12, 2/26, 3/4, 3/18, 4/1, 4/15, 4/29) from 3-5 p.m.

Cost: \$300 p/p, \$250p/p for teams of 4+. Scholarships available. Register by Dec 1 by contacting Kimberly at k.schmit@partners.utah.edu

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Kimberly Schmit



Kimberly is the Director of Community Praxis, but has held many titles since joining UNP in 2004, while earning her master's in Education, Culture & Society at the U. Her undergraduate degree is in modern dance, which she studied growing up in Utah, Missouri, North Dakota, and Chicago. For many years, she was a dancer, choreographer, and dance administrator. Eventually, she found herself wanting to create more system access for marginalized communities and she moved into the field of alternative education.

When she joined UNP she worked with residents to start the Hartland Partnership Center. Since, she has filled many roles, always working to understand the processes needed to create equitable partnerships that are rooted in authentic relationships and lead to system change.

Kimberly lives in SLC with her partner and daughter. She loves wandering the Wasatch Mountains, trying to keep up with her little family of rock climbers.

Community Corner Snapshots of wonderful west side businesses and restaurants

Clever Cucumber

"Bringing purpose, healing, creativity, and connection to all neighbors of the West Salt Lake community through accessible and equitable art experiences."

That is the mission statement at Clever Cucumber, a free community fine art workshop located in the Westpointe neighborhood of Salt Lake City. They offer free art classes, open studio time, art supply swaps, and some community projects. They recently completed the kiosk project described on the back (and featured on the front image) of this newsletter. Another community project

currently underway is to install free art shop cabinets at various places in Salt Lake City's west side neighborhoods. Anyone can go to the shop to access some supplies or to donate some for others to use. You might even see one soon at one of the UNP offices. Visit their website to learn more at clevercucumber.com





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THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH



Newsletter Suggestions

What would you like to see in UNP newsletters and blogs?

Is there a UNP Partnership that you would like to know more about? Perhaps an area business that you'd like recognized?

Send your thoughts to unp@partners.utah.edu

UNP COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS COURSE



UNP Instructors

Kimberly Schmit (Facilitator)
Dr. Teresa Molina (Guest Teacher)
Tek Neopany (Teaching Assistant)

Time

3 - 5 p.m.

Dates

Mondays
1/29, 2/12, 2/26, 3/4, 3/18, 4/1, 4/15, 4/29

Location

Sorenson Unity Center
1383 S 900 W, Salt Lake City, UT 84104

Cost

\$300/person, \$250/person for teams of 4 or more (teams encouraged to apply)*scholarships available

Contact by December 1st to Register

k.schmit@partners.utah.edu

Front feature image is a snapshot from a mosaic glass butterfly sculpture on top of a three sided kiosk that was created by Clever Cucumber with community volunteers. The kiosk serves as a community message board. This project was supported by Salt Lake City's Love Your Block grant and by Rosepark Custom Woodworking. You can see the full project next to the Lion's Pavilion at Riverside Park.

Newsletter design/editing by Jewel Morgan.