







-  [Home](#)
-  [NonProfit Library](#)
-  [TRAINING](#)
-  [PRODUCTS](#)
-  [About Us](#)
-  [Contact Us](#)

Click [Here](#) to
Subscribe to Our
FREE eNewsletter

First Name Last Name

Organization e-MAIL


Message

Specify Plain Text
Format HTML

 **SUBMIT**

[Our Privacy Policy](#)

 [CLICK to See
Our Latest
eNewsletter](#)

 Email this Article to
a Friend [▶ CLICK](#)

7 Things Schools and Hospitals Can Do to Make Their Communities Amazing Places to Live

by *Hildy Gottlieb*

Copyright ReSolve, Inc. 2007©

There are no more important issues for the future of our communities than education and health. And because we have been spending more and more time with leaders in both fields over the past few years, we have observed some interesting trends, at least among the people who bring us in to talk about their communities (a self-selected sample, if ever there were one!).

In healthcare, these are individuals who are tired of talking about community sickness in the guise of community health; folks who are tired of aiming all their efforts at creating non-sickness, instead of talking about what health would really look like.

In schools, these are folks who are tired of talking about drop-out rates and gang violence. They want to move forward to talk about changing the face of education in our communities, in our country.

In both healthcare and education, knowing that we typically get what we aim for, these are individuals who are tired of aiming their most creative discussions at a negative best case scenario: Ending what they do NOT like about their communities. These are individuals who want to begin aiming instead at beginning and creating something amazing.

Both schools and hospitals tend to get so bogged down in the day to day. How can our school districts (and where applicable, individual charter and/or private schools) look up from the morass, to aim at creating a community that is educated, brilliant, wise? How can hospitals, who (like it or not) have become the critical centerpiece in community health discussions, aim our communities at being healthy, resilient places to live?

We hope these 7 ideas get you thinking. Because we are creating the future, whether you are thinking about that or not!

★ 1) Holding Ourselves Accountable for the Community's Future

Is your board creating a future you would want to be held accountable for? You are creating the future whether you hold yourselves accountable for it or not. And you will be held responsible for the consequences your actions and decisions cause, in the short term and the long term. All that is true, whether you want to think about it or not.

So then, what future do you want to hold yourselves accountable for creating? When your community looks back in ten years and twenty years and fifty years, what do you want to be held responsible for?

★ 2) Planning for the Future You Want to Create

Is your board planning for the future you want for your community? If you hold yourselves accountable for the future you are creating, that will require aiming for that future more consciously as you plan. What do you want the future to look like for the community you serve? How can you plan to make that vision of the future a reality?

★ 3) Are You Measuring Success or Lack of Failure?

What are you measuring when you measure “success?” Are you measuring something incredible, something horrible, or something irrelevant? If your board is leading a hospital, are you measuring lack of sickness? Or are you working to determine what indicators might show real community health and strength?

If your board is leading a school or school district, are you measuring test scores, or are you measuring learning? Are you measuring knowledge and wisdom, and trying to determine what indicators might show that? Or are you looking at negative indicators such as drop-out rates?

And here’s a riddle: If you are uncertain how to measure those things right now, do you want to create a future where you continue not knowing how to measure what is most important to your community? Or do you want to stake a claim in determining those indicators, and starting to measure them?

★ 4) Community Engagement

Are you engaging the community in building their own health and their own knowledge and learning? Or are you making decisions for them? How much less stress would there be if we engaged folks in big issues before making decisions, rather than taking the heat after making the decision for them (and often having to reverse that decision)?

Community problems and issues deserve community discussion. Not a gathering of the likely suspects - the city council and other big wigs. And not a public hearing where you will listen obligatorily as citizens voice their opinions.

Engaged discussion encourages you to ask yourselves, for every issue of importance, “Whose future (and present) will this affect? How can we engage them in creating that future for themselves?”

Remember: Strong leaders do not make decisions FOR people; they make decisions WITH people. And that is especially true if you want to create an amazing future for your community.

★ 5) Walking the Talk / Doing Your Work with Integrity

When we focus on creating the future of our communities, and we consider engaging the community in that discussion in a very real way, we begin to recognize the importance of behaving well together - doing our work in a way the community can not help but admire. This is not about whatever the final decision or action is. It is about the actions you take to get there. It is about walking the talk.

And the more controversial the subject matter, the more it will matter that you do the work on that subject with integrity, inclusion, respect.

Can your community always say, “I may not agree with their decision, but the decision was made in as fair and inclusive a way as I have ever seen.” That is more likely to happen if the community can say, “We created that decision together,” rather than, “They acted like they were listening, but did what they wanted to do anyway.”

Doing our work in a way that forces us to rationalize our behaviors squanders our resources, and it squanders our potential. And those actions themselves are going to be creating the future - is that the kind of future you want to create?

★ 6) Building Upon the Community’s Strengths

When you build programs, are you starting from zero and building from the ground up? Or are you building those programs upon a core of shared community resources, at every possible point? Are you engaging your community’s physical resources, its human resources, your own mission’s resources, the resources of the for profit and government and nonprofit sectors?

When people get involved by sharing what they have, they feel ownership of the very issues you grapple with every day. And the effort becomes stronger just from that shared infrastructure.

★ 7) Building a Culture of Possibility

The first and last things that stand between any of us and a better place to live is the belief that such a future is possible. If we do not believe it is possible, we will not aim for it. And when we fail to aim, we are almost guaranteed to not get there.

A better future for our communities is possible, simply because it is not impossible. While the past is gone, and there is little about today we can influence, the future is where all our power lies.

Our communities' schools and hospitals are making decisions every day that will help create that future. The choice is ours.

Engage the community in creating an incredible future!



Community Engagement
Step-by-Step
ACTION KIT
by Hildy Gottlieb

ORDER NOW

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN INSTITUTE



Was this Article Helpful?
Subscribe to Our **FREE** eNewsletter

First Name	Last Name	Organization	e-MAIL
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Message <input type="text"/>		Format <input type="radio"/> Text <input type="radio"/> HTML	
			SUBMIT



[CLICK](#)

**TO DOWNLOAD A
PRINTER FRIENDLY PDF
OF THIS ARTICLE:**

[CLICK HERE](#)

[\[Home \]](#) • [\[NonProfit Library \]](#) • [\[TRAINING \]](#) • [\[PRODUCTS \]](#) • [\[About Us \]](#) • [\[Contact Us \]](#)

Website Design by Dimitri Petropolis
Copyright © 2000–2007 ReSolve, Inc. All Rights Reserved