On the table
your voice matters!

2018 Report Highlights

Northern Chautauqua

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

United Way

CHAUTAUQUA OPPORTUNITIES, INC.
Every voice matters

English philosopher Jeremy Bentham said “It is vain to talk of the interest of the community, without understanding what is the interest of the individual.” While there are numerous studies and reports centered on initiatives to improve our quality of life in northern Chautauqua County, there has often been something lacking - the voices of community members. **On the table** aimed to provide that voice.

When we came across the model for engaging community members through casual but meaningful conversations - the type you have around your kitchen table with neighbors, family and friends - we were intrigued. How do individuals in our community see northern Chautauqua County? What are their priorities? What are their hopes and concerns for the future?

Over the course of one week from April 29 - May 5, 2018, individuals of all ages, genders, ethnicities and economic backgrounds gathered in small groups to “break bread.” They had frank discussions of our community’s problems and brainstormed solutions. They discussed their aspirations and priorities. Participants were asked to complete a survey so we could understand their conversation, important issues, big ideas and what matters most to them.

Highlights of the ideas and themes that emerged from **On the table** are presented in this report. This data will help inform funders, donors, and businesses about more proactive investment opportunities. Our hope is it will also be a source of inspiration to continue the conversation about how each of us can impact the future of our own community and to spur action. As individuals, we can work together to make northern Chautauqua County a better place to live for us all.
Northern Chautauqua On the table engaged participants from all walks of life, representing diverse ages, ethnicities, interests, levels of civic engagement and more. Following On the table, participants were asked to complete a survey about the big ideas, themes and priorities that were discussed in their gatherings. *

The information within this report represents the responses from 271 participants who completed the post-conversation survey.
**The Conversation**

*On The Table* conversations allowed community members across northern Chautauqua County to share ideas on what is important to them and how to make the community stronger. Sixty percent of participants - both adults and youth - said they participated in *On The Table* to discuss and address important issues facing the community. Another top reason was to learn from and listen to others.

The conversations themselves covered a wide range of topics. Participants identified and evaluated issues facing the community, and also discussed their potential roles in addressing these.

**On a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), how do you rate northern Chautauqua County as a place to live?**

- **7-10**: 70.50% (Adult) 17.50% (Youth)
- **4-6**: 63.50% (Adult) 24.00% (Youth)
- **0-3**: 19.00% (Adult) 5.50% (Youth)

57.8% of respondents, regardless of age, give the community a rating of 7 or above.

**Looking ahead 5 years, are you more or less concerned about the future of the community?**

- **More hopeful**: 58% (Adult) 25% (Youth)
- **Neutral**: 49% (Adult) 22% (Youth)
- **More concerned**: 20% (Adult) 25% (Youth)

Adults respondents are more hopeful of the future of the community than youth respondents.

**How do you feel about your individual ability to influence the future of the community?**

- **Large influence**: 30% (Adult) 22% (Youth)
- **Moderate influence**: 44% (Adult) 39% (Youth)
- **Small influence**: 28% (Adult) 23% (Youth)
- **No influence**: 11% (Adult) 3% (Youth)

71.0% of respondents, regardless of age, feel they can have a moderate or large influence on the community.
During the On the Table conversations, participants shared what mattered to them. They identified and considered ways to maintain what is strong about our community. The post-conversation survey asked participants to identify their level of satisfaction with eleven (11) key aspects of the community, as well as to identify their priorities for making northern Chautauqua County a better place to live.

### Adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most satisfied with</th>
<th>Least satisfied with</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Safety</td>
<td>Job Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Educational Opportunities</td>
<td>Health Care Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air &amp; Water Quality</td>
<td>Local Government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most satisfied with</th>
<th>Least satisfied with</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Activities</td>
<td>Local Educational Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Government</td>
<td>Health Care Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care</td>
<td>Local Government</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

39% - 20% - 41%

Adults were split on the issue of Recreational Activities. Thirty-nine percent were either very or somewhat dissatisfied with recreational activities while 41% were either somewhat or very satisfied. The remaining 20% were neutral.

35% - 30% - 35%

Youth were split on the issue of Job Opportunities. Thirty-five percent were either very or somewhat dissatisfied with job opportunities in the community while 35% were either somewhat or very satisfied. The remaining 30% were neutral.

When asked to identify the top priorities for the community, adults and youth had many of the same ideas. Adults also identified Youth Services and Downtown Revitalization as top priorities. Youth also identified Affordable Housing and Parks & Recreation Areas as top priorities.
We know that big ideas can spring from small conversations and that people invest in what they help create. Perhaps the most important aspect of the *On The Table* conversations were the ideas to solve problems and take advantage of opportunities within our community. These are some of the ideas generated from the conversations.

**Ideas**

centralized community calendar  
maritime museum  
civilian conservation corps  
information centers at libraries  
neighborhood challenges  
encourage small businesses  
promote Habitat for Humanity  
sailboat parade  
community gardens  
lightshow on NRG facility  
community center  
moms’ group  
mobilize action plans  

**canoe & kayak**  
**public transportation**  
**shopping mall**  
**block parties**  
**breweries**  
**art gallery**  
**mobile food market**  
**after-school programs**  
**walking-tours**  
**community grant writer**  
**public pool**  
**main street window beautification**  
**carpool system**  
**boat rentals**  
**food processing opportunities**  
**bookstore**  
**trolley-for-events**  
**promote cider crafting**  
**signature events**  
**complete streets**  
**maps of gardens**  
**uber rentals**  
**hobby shop**  
**walkable public gardens**  
**barn dances**  
**drug clinic**  
**floating stage**  
**county olympics**  
YMCA  
county day at fairgrounds  
solar splash event  

**welcome wagon**  
**destination for tall ships**  
**paintball & laser tag**  
**historical home-tours**  
**youth senior engagement**  
**communities working together on events**  
**continued community discussions**  
**cooking classes**  
**multi-use sports facility**  
SUNY  
concerts on the water  
waterfountain in the lake
So what’s next? The On The Table conversations brought many things to light. A key factor are the opportunities that still exist for leadership, growth and change across northern Chautauqua County. Your role is to take action! There are many ways you can influence the future of our community.

- Keep the conversation going
- Attend local municipal meetings
- Investigate available resources
- Volunteer with a local nonprofit
- Help a neighbor - reach out!

How likely are you to take specific actions or next steps regarding an issue or solution discussed?

32% are very likely

49% are somewhat likely

Resources

5 Initiatives Revamping Urban Spaces
www.goodnet.org/articles/5-initiatives-revamping-urban-spaces

5 Ways Arts Projects Can Improve Struggling Communities
www.pps.org/reference/artsprojects/

5 Ways to Get to Know Your Neighbors
www.zillow.com/blog/get-to-know-neighbors-182407/

15 Ways to Make Your Neighborhood Better
www.houzz.com/ideabooks/12798308/list/15-ways-to-make-your-neighborhood-better

16 Ways to Make Your Neighborhood Safer, Greener & Fun
www.onthecommons.org/magazine/16-ways-make-your-neighborhood-safer-greener-and-more-fun

23 Easy Things You Can Do to Improve Your Building and Your Community
www.pps.org/reference/23things/

25 more ways to make your neighborhood a community
www.sunset.com/food-wine/25-more-ways-to-make-your-neighborhood-a-community

25 Most Amazing Community Arts Projects

60 Ways to Better Your Community
www.signupgenius.com/nonprofit/community-service-project-ideas.cfm

101 small ways you can improve your city
www.curbed.com/2016/9/22/13019420/urban-design-community-building-placemaking

Inspirational Community Development Ideas
www.useful-community-development.org/community-development-ideas.html

National Neighborhood Day
www.neighborhoodday.org/ideas/

Neighborhood Pride: 10 Ideas To Boost Block Spirit
www.good.is/articles/neighborhood-pride-ten-ideas-to-boost-block-spirit

Sustainable Community Projects
www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/mayor/initiatives/sustainability/toolkit/project.cfm
Thank you to all who participated in the On the Table conversations! Your input is critical to the future of the northern Chautauqua County community.

On the Table was funded by the Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation with funds designated by the board or directors. NCCF is a tax-exempt community corporation created by and for the people of northern Chautauqua County. NCCF provides a simple, powerful and highly personal approach to giving. It is the mission of the Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation to enrich the area in which we live and work.

This summary report was compiled from the results of a survey conducted among On the Table participants. A full report of the survey may be obtained by contacting the Northern Chautauqua Community Foundation at 716-366-4892.

A special thank you to the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation for establishing the On the Table movement and for making it available to communities across the nation.