



# COMMUNITY VOICES 2008

Wayne County, Indiana



# Letter of Introduction

It's tempting to say that this report concludes the Community Voices 2008 assessment process. To the contrary, this assessment is really the beginning of the process of planned change and improvements. It is our hope that this report will be one of the catalysts of that change.

We hope you will find within this assessment tangible, achievable actions and events that would give people joy and make Wayne County an even better place to live. To get the process started, we have included some ideas for next steps.

- Use the assessment as an intersection for collaboration. One of the hallmarks of this project is that it represents the collaborative efforts of community organizations as opposed to a single organization—as is traditionally the case. Many of the suggestions contained within this report point to ideas that will require collaboration.
- Use this assessment in conjunction with other assessments. Do they say the same thing? Reid Hospital and the Richmond Parks Department have recent assessment data. Compare the results of this assessment with those—are there similarities? Where do they have common themes and where do they show contradictions. Combining assessment sources will strengthen support for new ideas and provide convergent evidence for taking action.
- Compare ideas and suggestions in this assessment to actual events and programs. It may be that many of the suggestions here are in some way covered by ongoing programs. Look to see what is 'left over'—what is not covered—where there might be gaps.
- Consider marketing as a key issue. If programs and resources do exist and people are unaware of them, it may be that they are not marketed appropriately. Marketing is the other half of the equation in getting people to take advantage of the resources that already exist.
- Incorporate this assessment as part of a strategic plan. All of previously mentioned ideas call out for a deliberate and intentional use of this assessment information. A strategic plan incorporates not only this information but also shows how it will be used and to what ends. It is the map that guides organizations as they move to achieve their goals and vision.



Area 9 Agency



City of Richmond



Richmond Community Schools



United Way of Whitewater Valley



Wayne County Vision



Wayne County, Indiana



Wayne County Foundation

## *Special thanks*

to Diana L. D. Punzo, Ph.D. of Earlham College and her team for dedicating their time to the collection and analysis of the data within. Much of the commentary comes from Dr. Punzo and the collective wisdom of the partner organizations. We are grateful for their dedication to our community.

Front cover images:

Courthouse image: Courtesy of Waynet.org

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# Table of Contents

Letter of Introduction from supporting organizations.....	Page 2
Economic Vitality.....	Page 4
Chart: Things I would like to see in an ideal Wayne County	
Chart: Personal and Community Outlook	
Community Assets.....	Page 5
Chart: Overall Satisfaction	
Education.....	Page 6
Chart: Heartburn issues for the county	
Education & Youth.....	Page 7
Chart: Children’s Physical Wellness	
Chart: Attitudes about Pre-School	
Pressing Community Needs.....	Page 8
Chart: Pressing Community Needs	
Sources for Learning about Community events, issues and services.....	Page 9
Chart: Effectiveness of Marketing	
Elder Care.....	Page 10
Chart: What type of elder care do your loved one’s receive	
Chart: Percentage who have elderly persons in the county	
Chart: How often do you provide elder care	
Desired elder care support system.....	Page 11
Chart: Elderly care-giving responsibility	
Chart: Types of Elder care-giving assistance	

## How the information was gathered?

The Community Voices Questionnaire, completed in the summer of 2007, highlights prevalent themes and provides an outline of important community issues. It also provides numerical information that can serve as benchmarks for tracking attitudes and satisfaction levels.

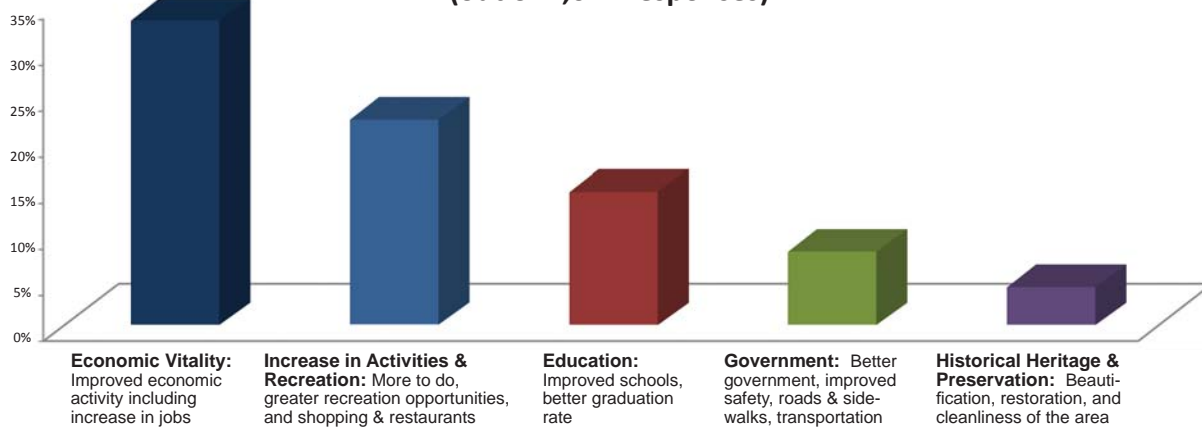
Responses from focus group discussions, held in early 2008, were content analyzed for reoccurring themes and were ultimately classified into categories. This summary strikes a balance between condensing the responses into a manageable amount of information while at the same time preserving the diversity and richness of the responses.

Data Analysis & Results Presentation - The numerical data were entered into a computer statistical program, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and analyzed. Non-numerical data were coded by two researchers into established categories representing prominent themes. The results are presented item by item in the order they appeared in the questionnaire. The bulk of the results are either percentages of responses (or of participants) or average responses for each item.

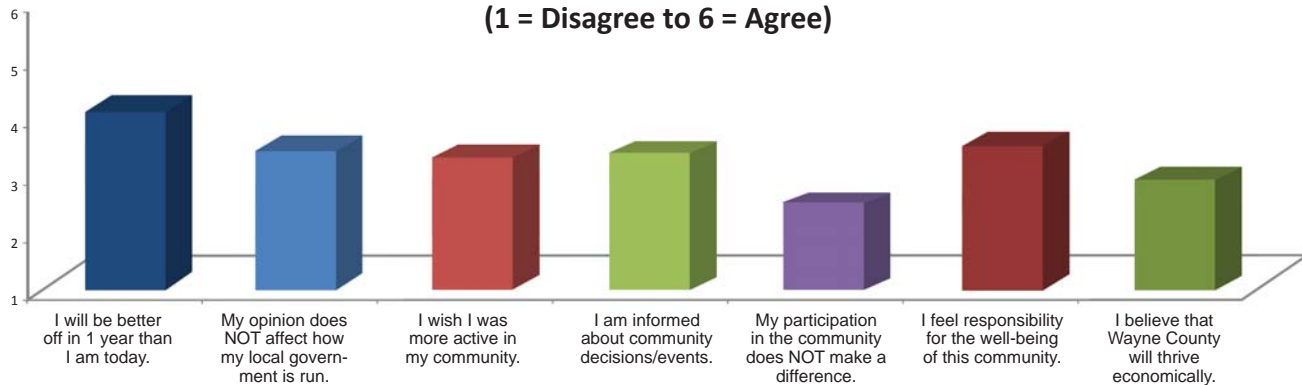
## Can I have access to the raw data?

This document is a summary of the entire community survey. For access to the entire collection of raw data, and complete description and documentation of methodology please contact the United Way of Whitewater Valley at 765-962-2700.

## Top 5 Responses to 'Things you would like to see in Ideal Wayne County' (out of 1,621 responses)



## Questions regarding personal and community outlook: (1 = Disagree to 6 = Agree)



## ECONOMIC VITALITY

Achieving economic vitality was clearly the leading area of focus in county satisfaction among those participating in the Community Voices Assessment. Focus group participants described their vision of economic vitality in Wayne County in five general categories.

### Excellence in education:

In almost every focus group, participants said having a top notch educational system was crucial to economic vitality. Education is discussed in greater detail on pages 6 & 7.

### More activity and activities:

Many responses implied greater numbers of people in the county and also more people “out and about” during the day. Participants also communicated a vision of there being more things to do. Not only would there be more people and more activity, but several participants said that people would look happier too.

### Young people returning to the area or not leaving in the first place:

Retaining younger residents due to well paying and sustained employment was seen as a key aspect of the county’s economic vitality. It was also discussed that the ability to have “good jobs” rests on the fact that young people are well educated and thus attractive to prospective businesses.

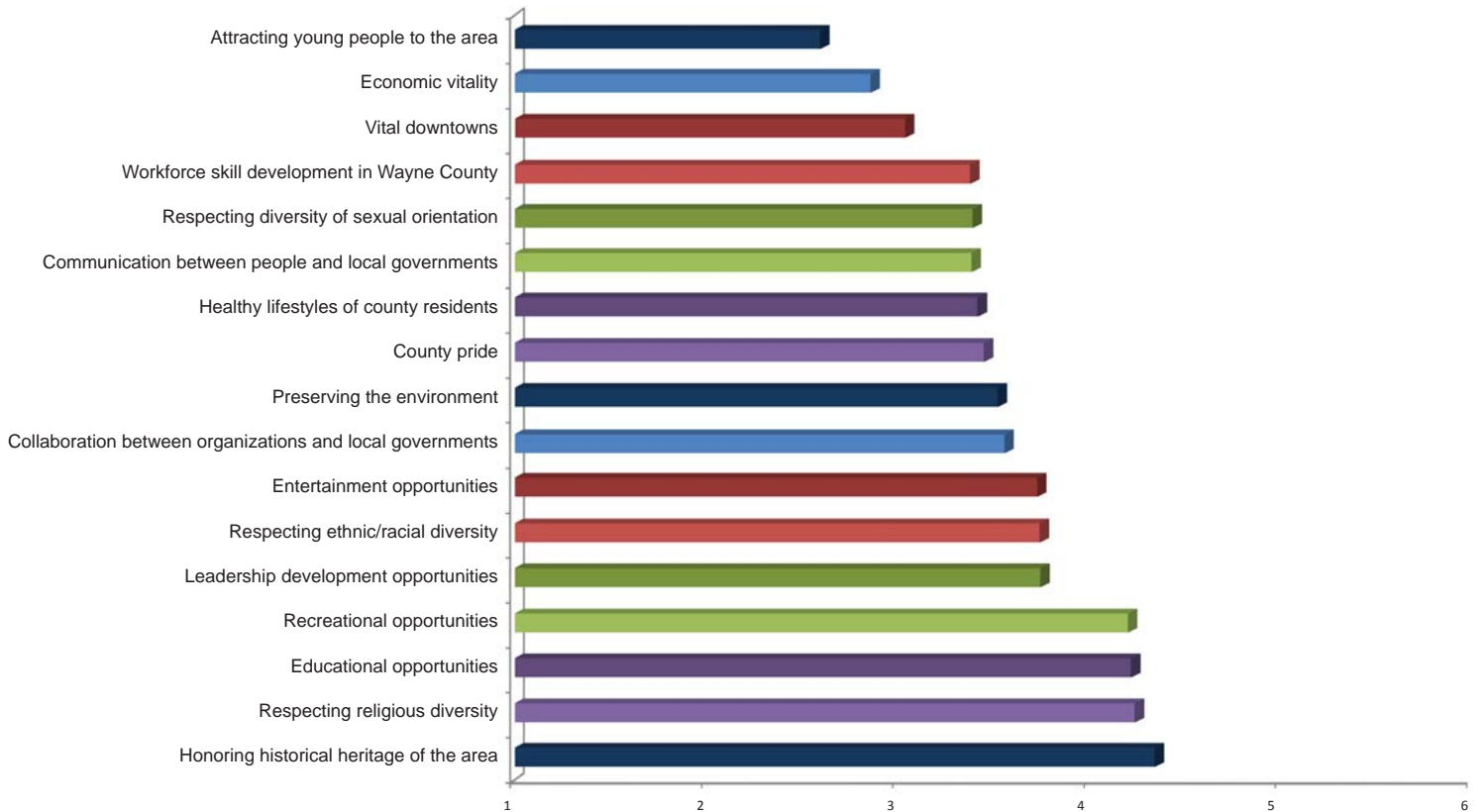
### Signs that Wayne County is flourishing:

These include clean, fixed up housing, many shopping and dining options, and a flourishing artistic community. Having less crime in the community was also seen as an indicator of a flourishing Wayne County.

### Having a community with significant vitality:

Community vitality was seen by many participants as going hand in hand with economic vitality. Focus group participants discussed a clear image of people gathered that exudes energy, regardless of the event, activity or place. It was the energy that comes from groups of people enjoying themselves that lays the cornerstone of recreational vitality. People mentioned the importance of “family oriented events” where there is something for adults as well as children. Participants also want to make sure that sports and physical wellness facilities and programming were available.

### How satisfied are you with... (1=Not Satisfied At All 6=Very Satisfied)

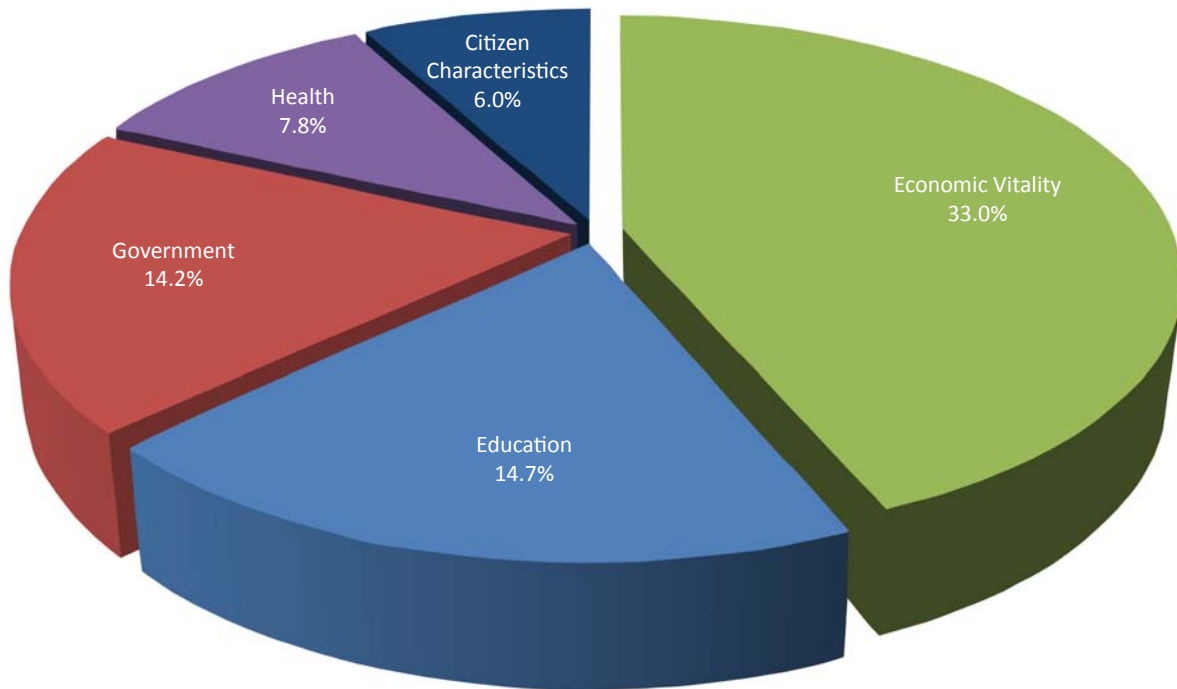


## COMMUNITY ASSETS

When asked “What are the strengths in our community that are already in place that we should take advantage of?” participants were readily able to answer the question. In addition, **promotion and advertising** were mentioned across several focus groups and had the same theme – **we need to tell others (and ourselves) about the good aspects of the area.**

- Established educational programs that encourage and further the learning capabilities of our youth.
- Effective organizations – Social service organizations serving the youth and families in our county.
- Involved businesses – organizations that become involved, and encourage their employees to become involved in the community.
- Newspaper – recognition of volunteerism.
- Active community members who are already making “revolutionary” changes.
- Higher education opportunities through post secondary institutions as well as specific skill training opportunities.
- The arts – various types and styles.
- College students – through their involvement and volunteerism in the county.
- Historical heritage – a strength of the area.
- Psychological attributes of the community-accepting with genuine people; willing to help out.
- Opportunities to become involved – opportunities are there if people (a) know about them and (b) are willing to pursue them.
- Community discussion – the community is talking about the issue.
- Attributes of the schools – school spirit, good/great teachers.
- Low Crime in the community.

## Top 5 Responses to 'Heartburn Issues for the County' (Out of 2,118 responses)



**Economic Vitality:**  
Improved economic activity including increase in jobs

**Education:**  
Improved schools, better graduation rate

**Government:** Better government, improved safety, roads & sidewalks, transportation

**Health:** Improve healthcare, drug and alcohol issues

**Citizen Characteristics & Relationship:**  
Complaints and concerns regarding how individual citizens treat one another and act in society; improved community outlook and community pride

## EDUCATION

When asked to define “good education” the answers were incredibly diverse. It clearly means a lot of different things to different people. Still, there were commonalities in how people answered the question.

### Having a “Good Education” means having:

- A degree and graduating
- More than a formal education
- Basic skills such as reading and writing
- Understanding technology and being able to use it
- Cognitive skills such as critical thinking
- Exposure to the arts
- Exposure to diverse peoples (race, culture, class)
- Life skills such as being able to budget money, communicate well and solve daily problems.

### Having a “Good Education” Involves:

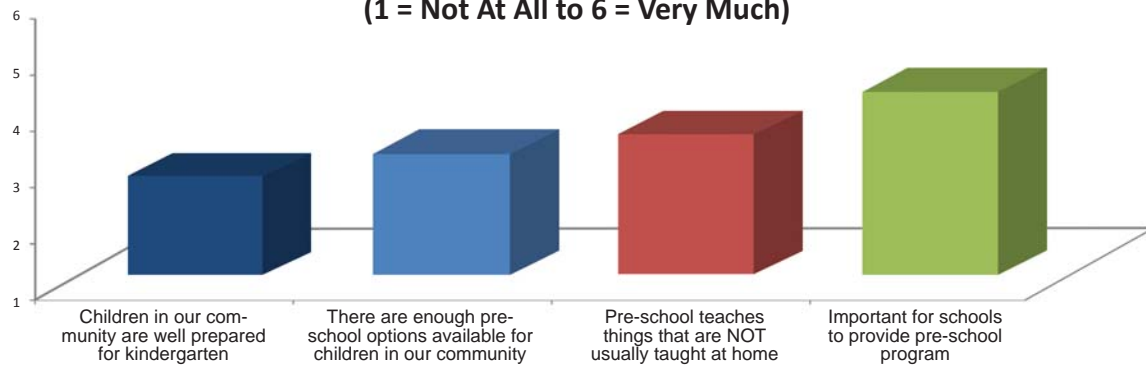
- Family – it starts at home and it involves parents supporting/helping their children, insuring that children have adequate sleep, food, and are on time for school, and valuing school.
- School – specific issues such as adequate funding, well run schools, good teachers - including teachers who appear and act in a professional manner and good curriculum.
- Community – the community can provide good role models; a lot can be learned from being around others in the community, promoting education in the work environment and sharing of information among families.
- Individuals – they should take responsibility for their own education and value their education.

### Having a “Good Education” results in:

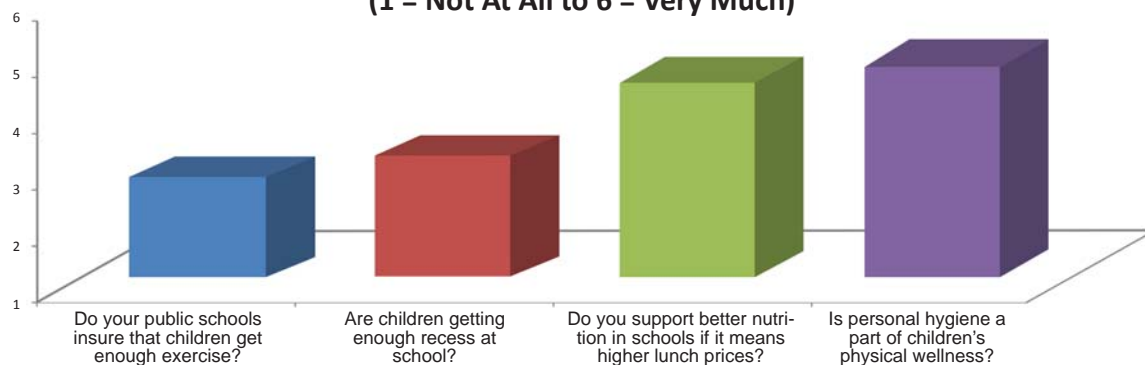
- Better opportunities for the future (e.g. advancing to college, better jobs and financial success, allowing a person to continue to learn)
- Competent, capable, contributing citizens and leaders

Participants also recognized the importance of adult education and the need for opportunities for adults to keep learning such as continuing schooling, reading groups and hands-on trade opportunities.

### Attitudes about Pre-school: (1 = Not At All to 6 = Very Much)



### Children's Physical Wellness: To what extent . . . (1 = Not At All to 6 = Very Much)



## EDUCATION: THE END RESULT

Participants envisioned the end result as education being a community-held value. As one individual described it, a **"Total county effort"**.

### THE TOTAL COUNTY EFFORT SHOULD INVOLVE:

#### Parents and families

- Provide programmatic support for parents as they work with their children.
- Support parents to provide basic needs to youth.

#### Community members

- Provide programming that involves community members and students such as study buddies and mentors.
- Role models were an important need articulated by many focus group participants.

#### Business/corporate community

- Provide funding for educational efforts as well as use their workforce as volunteers for educational efforts – again, reinforcing the idea of "role modeling".
- Businesses could be accountable for helping the education of children.

#### Prominent people

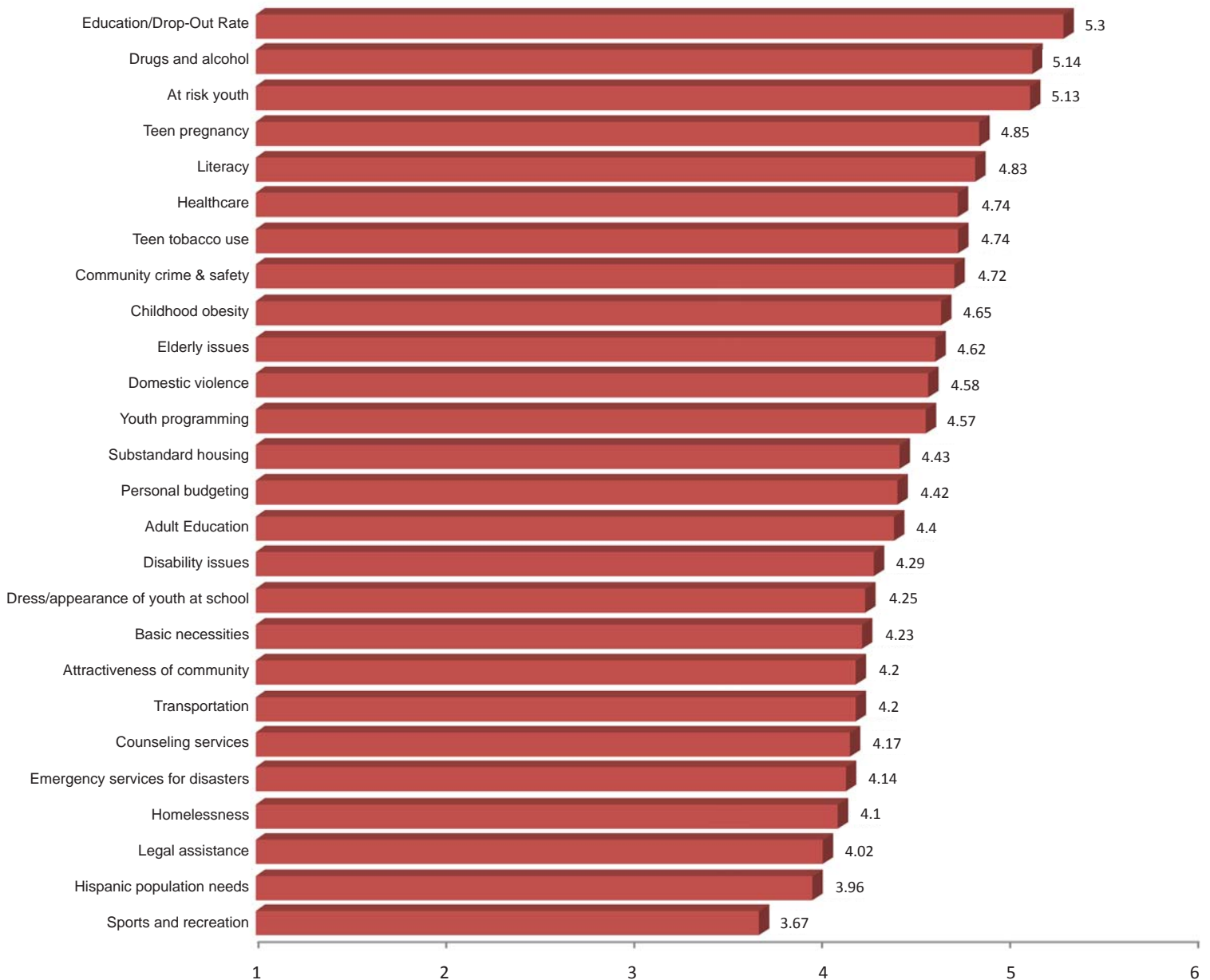
- Other prominent people such as community leaders, ministers, and peers need to become involved in strengthening the fabric of educational efforts in the county.

# PRESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Participants were asked rate community issues based on how pressing they were.

While participants expressed concern for all the issues listed, clearly, some were of more concern than others.

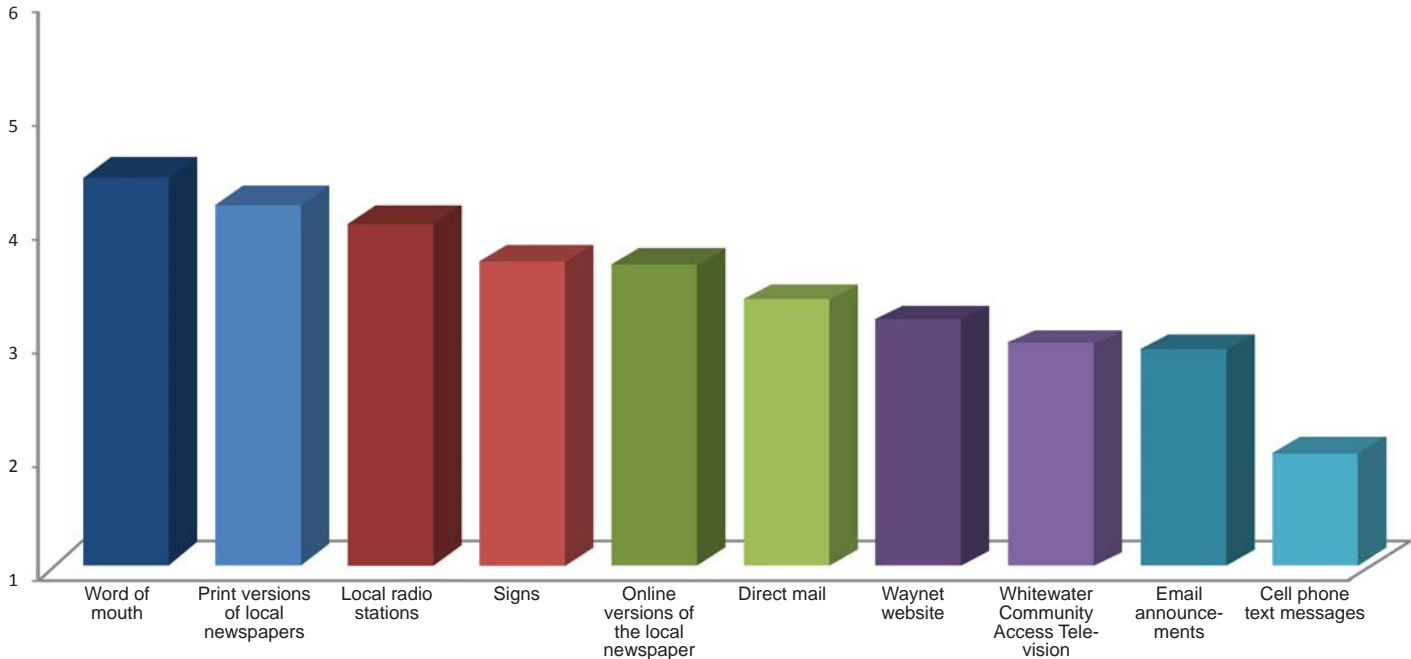
(1= not very pressing to 6 = very pressing)



As noted at the outset, many of the suggestions contained within this report point to issues and ideas that will require collaboration. As you can see in the chart above, the pressing needs of our community range from education, to healthcare to even basic necessities - all of which affect the every day lives of the families and individuals in our community. We need to recognize that no single organization can resolve these issues alone. While each individual organization has their own focus and mission, we all carry the same underlying goal of making Wayne County an even better place to live.

# MARKETING

## Effectiveness of sources in learning about community issues, services and events... (1= Not at all 6=Very Much)



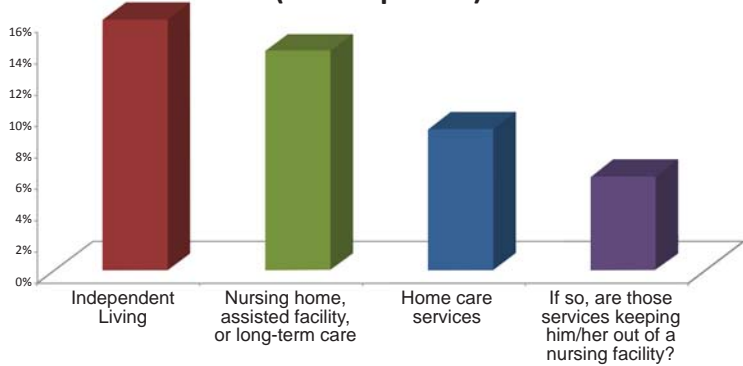
## GET THE WORD OUT

When asking participants how they learn about issues, services and events, their answers covered a wide range of sources. Surprisingly, word of mouth came out as the number one response. What could have contributed to this result? A simple answer could be that word of mouth is a compilation of other sources. An individual may see a sign, hear the radio, read an e-mail or read the paper - and then share that information with a friend. Clearly, we are better informed when we are connected with others.

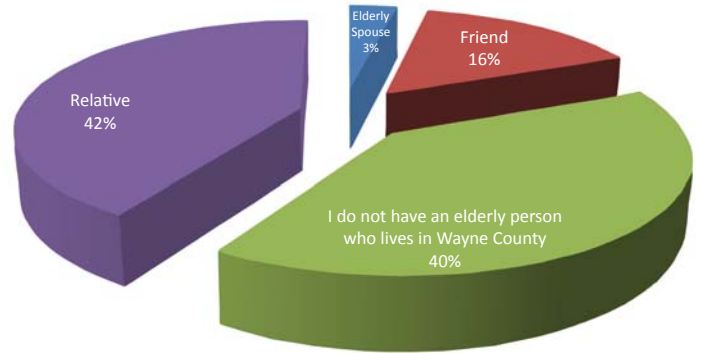
An interesting note is that e-mail and text messaging, touted as major forms of communication, are the lowest sources our community reports receiving information from. However, this could be reflective as to how many organizations utilize these tools.

Are there things we can learn here about how we market services, events and programs in our community? We know that individuals who care about a topic will share it. We heard from participants in our focus groups that **promotion and advertising** are needed and we're also reminded that **we need to tell others (and ourselves) about the good aspects of the area**. Regardless of what source, or combination of sources we use, the important message here is to get the word out.

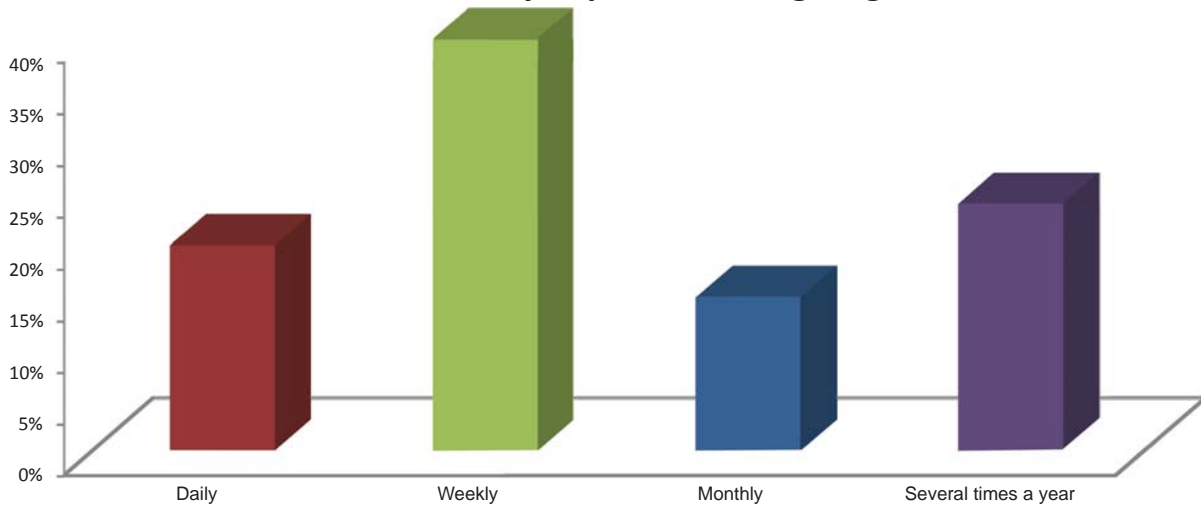
**Type of care provided  
(347 responses)**



**Percentage who have an Elderly person living in Wayne County**



**How often do you provide care-giving?**



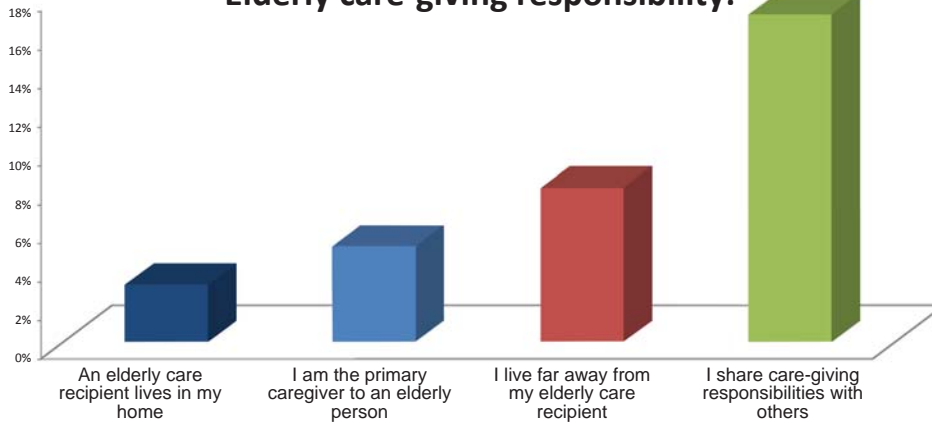
## ELDER CARE

When a caregiver is facing something significant and they want information, they most often refer to the following sources:

- Internet
- Asking people they know (e.g. friends, family, colleagues)
- Books/library
- Professionals (e.g. doctors)
- Self-help groups
- Radio & Newspaper

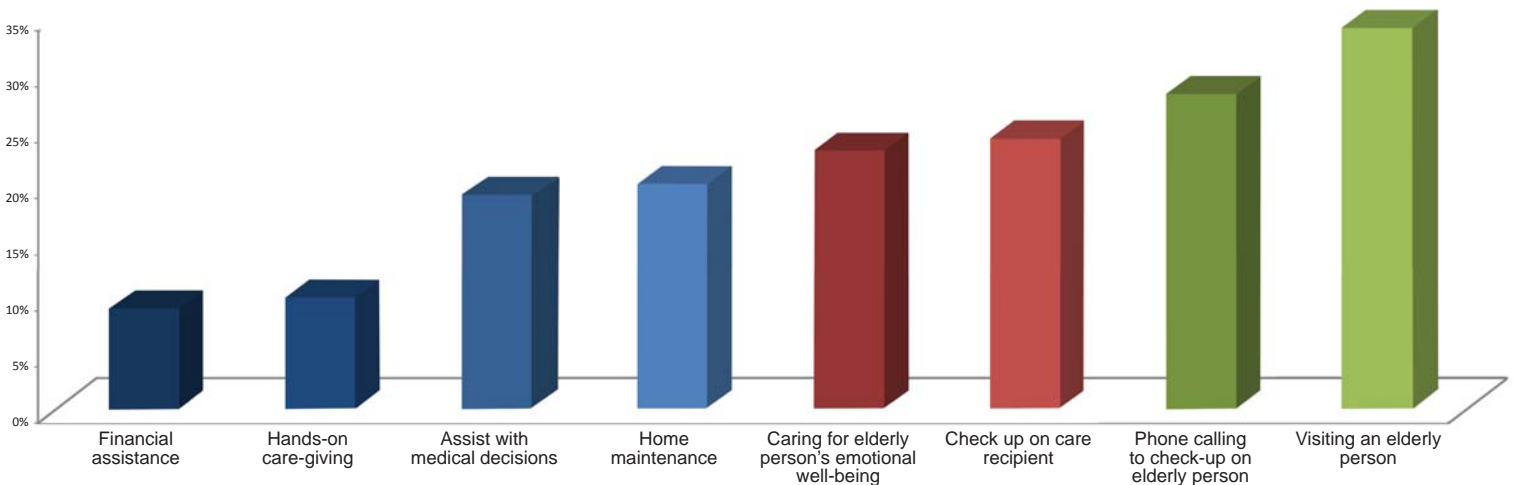
Participants indicated that they begin searching for information on elderly issues when there is a change. The change may be a specific event such as a medical diagnosis or crisis, or it may be a more gradual change in daily functioning.

### Elderly care-giving responsibility:



### Types of Elderly care-giving assistance:

Respondents could check multiple answers to this item. Thus, the percentage exceeds 100%.



When participants were asked about desired content for a support program focused on caring for the elderly they expressed interest in the following:

- Provide resources of information on medical, transportation, exercise, and legal issues.
- Education on the aging process.
- Provide information for dealing with emotions and emotional issues involved with care giving such as establishing boundaries for oneself, handling issues of patience and criticism, and time management.
- Teach how to communicate with an elderly individual and among family members.
- Provide emotional support for caregivers; provide respite care.
- Offer a meal system or resources for a meal delivery system.
- Market and create awareness of these programs to the public.



If you have additional questions, comments or would like more information please contact the United Way of Whitewater Valley at 765-962-2700. Community Voices is an assessment of our community, by our community. We would like you to be a part of that process and welcome your input.