

Legacy *Matters*



Photo Credit: Stuart Walls

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VCF Board Chair Alan Tyma, addresses the audience at the launch of the 2016 Valley Community Index.



Understanding the Valley Region

A COMMUNITY OF WELL-BEING

Since the release of the 2016 Valley Community Index a year ago, organizations agree that they are more aware of the Valley region's overall wellbeing.

As the Index shows, many factors determine personal wellbeing and happiness: community life and social support, health outcomes, employment, and basic needs. These factors can be further impacted by access to education, high-quality healthcare, public places, and the conditions related to a place of residence.

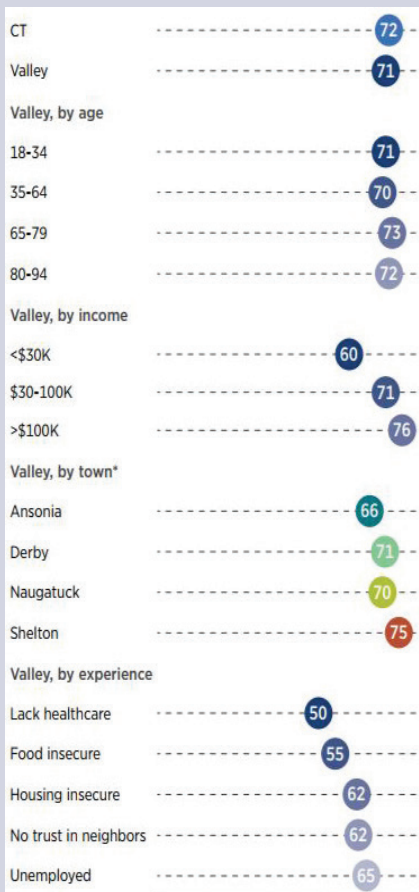
"Local data informs the public about the needs in the community," says Karen Spargo, former Director of Health at the Naugatuck Valley Health District (NVHD). "The 2016 Valley Community Index provides comparative data so we can benchmark our strengths, identify where we are compared to other communities and highlight areas where we can improve. Just because the Valley is comparable to national, state, or other local communities does not necessarily mean that there is not room to do more."

Spargo believes that the NVHD will be able to address the needs of the community more efficiently thanks, in part, to the 2016 Valley Community Index.

"Communities are always evolving," Spargo says. "The Valley is currently undergoing substantial changes demographically, which is shifting many of our indicators. The report identifies what is significant now. As the systematic collection of data over time continues, trends can be noted and addressed as necessary."

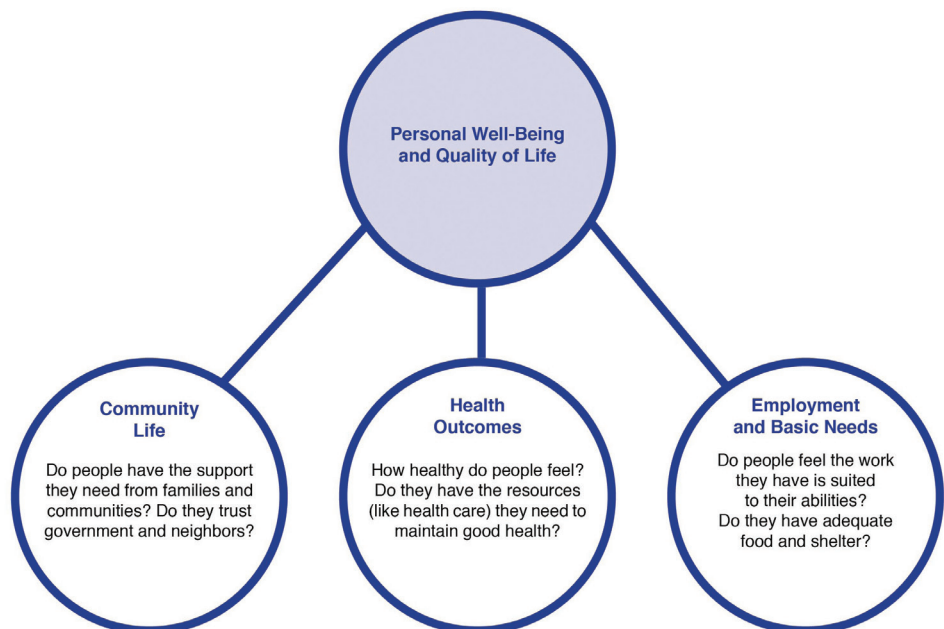
The report was instrumental in creating a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), jointly led by Griffin Hospital and NVHD. The plan consists of fostering initiatives that improve the health of the community, which can be measured and reflected on in future reports.

Measuring Differences in Personal Well-being in the Valley



Wellbeing Survey data ranges from 0-100. Survey estimates for the towns of Beacon Falls, Oxford and Seymour are not listed due to smaller sample sizes and higher margins of error for estimates for those towns. More information about wellbeing of the Valley can be found on page 5 of the Community Index available at www.valleyfoundation.org.

Measuring Well-Being



Smart Investment Using Local Data to Create Impact



The Community Index Advisory Council, comprised of Valley community leaders, service providers and funders, convene to discuss the Valley Community Index.

The CHIP's Primary Focus Areas include:

1. Creation of Behavioral Health/Substance Abuse Community Action Team
2. Chronic Disease Management
3. Opiate/Addiction Prevention & Treatment
4. Childhood Obesity Prevention
5. Early Detection of Lung Cancer & Smoking Cessation
6. Asthma Prevention & Self Management

Another group working with the Community Index is the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG). While the staff found the Community Index useful, especially from an economic development perspective, they found that serving on the Advisory Council was very educational.

"The report itself is well-written and informative, serving on the Advisory Council was a great way to learn about the needs of the Valley region's residents and the ambitions of the organizations that closely serve them," says Joanna Rogalski, NVCOG Regional Planner. "Statistical data is important, but the personal anecdotes and experiences shared by members of the Advisory Council helped our

staff better understand the past and current challenges of the residents we all serve."

According to Rogalski, the Community Index helped NVCOG staff who have not previously worked with the lower Valley municipalities better understand the strengths and challenges of Valley residents. The organization plans to reference data points featured in the Index in its 2018 Regional Plan of Conservation and Development Update.



Photo Credit: Valley Independent Sentinel

Ken Roberts, Director of Communications at Griffin Hospital, leads a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) presentation.

"Understanding a person's experience of place is a building block of good planning practice, which is ultimately about improving peoples' quality of life through decisions on land

use and transportation," Rogalski says. "This report, which focuses on Valley residents' day-to-day needs, preferences and values, has helped our staff better understand residents' experiences in the seven-town Valley region. We hope to build upon this report's call to improve the quality of life of Valley residents through more locally-grounded decision making."

In the report's introduction, Sharon Closius, VCF President and CEO, initially stated that the Index would be used to convene community conversations, foster engagement, align current efforts and investments and collaborate on strategic endeavors to build, sustain and enhance the quality of life in the Valley." As Closius proudly adds, "One year later and the Index is doing just that."

Overall, the report has made those serving the Valley community much more aware of the changing needs and opportunities, and what steps can be taken to work collaboratively in making a lasting impact. Closius says it is VCF's commitment moving forward to update the Community Index every three years with new local data so trends can be analyzed.

Partner Spotlight

Griffin Hospital

As the hub of the Valley's healthcare system, Griffin Hospital's leadership realized long ago that there are many spokes that reach out to where, from a population health and wellness standpoint, the rubber meets the road.

The hospital has a long and proud history of helping organize and coordinate community health needs, and providing support for the Valley's most vulnerable residents.

Supporting the 2016 Valley Community Index as the lead sponsor, Griffin Hospital played a major part in bringing this report to life and will use it as a tool to improve the health of the Valley moving forward.

"Having a consistent source of local data across the various categories featured in the report (Education, Health, Economics, Early Childhood, etc.) is invaluable," says Patrick Charmel, Griffin Hospital President & CEO. "When combined with demographic trends, this means we can plan, as a community, to meet current and future needs of the Valley. This common ground will eliminate the need to debate the merits of varying data sources before moving forward with actionable items."

In addition, Griffin Hospital's staff also participated in the planning stages, providing input into data collection and overall structure of the index, as well as leadership in the development of the Community Health in the Valley section. This section details Valley residents' causes of death, chronic diseases, mental health, and access to care. It is believed that many of



Photo Courtesy: Griffin Hospital

Griffin Hospital

these statistics will improve with a continued approach to prevention and wellness initiatives, something Griffin Hospital has been addressing for some time.

The Affordable Care Act requires nonprofits hospitals, like Griffin, to perform a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and to adopt a Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which is an implementation strategy designed to meet the health needs of the community. The most recent Naugatuck Valley CHIP, shared by the Naugatuck Valley Health District and Griffin Hospital, was developed out of the Community Health in the Valley section in the 2016 Valley Community Index, which served as the organizations' 2016-2018 CHNA.

The CHNA, in turn, served as the launch pad for the next CHIP, which lays out a strategy to categorically address the six focus areas, and

includes an overview of the baseline data, short- and long-term indicators, objectives, and strategies to address community needs.

"Griffin is at the forefront of population health management among hospitals, so we have been an early adopter of efforts to effect change in social determinants of health to improve overall health outcomes," Charmel says. "In addition to providing specific insights into many areas traditionally associated with social determinants of health, such as housing, education, and other socio-economic factors, the Index synthesizes this information across a broad spectrum of factors affecting well-being. The result is a very compelling picture of just how interdependent we all are, as individuals, municipalities, and organizations in the Valley. Only by working together can we maximize positive impact to change our community for the better in the years to come."

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FOR GOOD FOR EVER FOR THE VALLEY

Community Investment

Laying the Foundation for Community Impact

It's been nearly one year since the Valley Community Foundation (VCF) and its community partner Griffin Hospital launched the 2016 Valley Community Index.

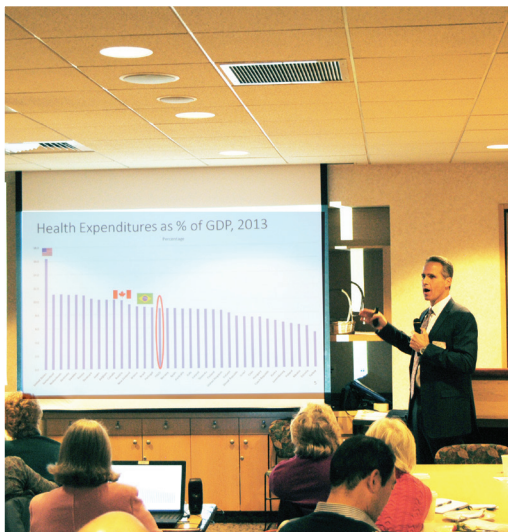
Filled with comprehensive data about the needs and opportunities in the region, the Index has done anything but gather dust on shelves in the Valley.

"We've seen Index data references in grants to VCF across the board all year long," says VCF Program Officer Valerie Knight-Di Gangi. "Nonprofits tackling such complex issues as food insecurity and the dangers of lead exposure in young children have used the data to strengthen their requests for funding support."

Index use has gone well beyond inclusion in grant applications. In June, representatives from VCF, the Valley United Way, and TEAM, Inc. attended a collective impact forum in Boston to gain additional knowledge about how data-driven collaboration efforts can have the most impact. "It was really eye opening for me to see groups from both the private and public sector coming together to tackle issues similar to what we are facing in the Valley," says Lynne Bassett Perry, VCF's Vice Chair who attended the forum. "The contacts we have made and the tools we have gathered will help us use the Index data to concentrate on areas where we can collectively make a difference."

Another example of the Index in action is how it is being used throughout the community. The Valley Council for Health and Human Services (VCHHS), a group of more than 50 Valley nonprofit agencies, has been incorporating information from the Index into their strategic planning process.

"The Index has provided us with comprehensive data to use as benchmarks for our work going forward," says VCHHS Chair Patricia Tarasovic. "Over the years, VCHHS has developed and supported numerous initiatives through successful collaborations among its member agencies and community partners in the areas of early childhood, elderly, environment, health and food insecurity. We are using the information in the Index to identify areas we can focus on next in order to have the greatest impact on the community."



Patrick Charmel, Griffin Hospital President & CEO, addresses members of the Valley's interfaith community.

Griffin Hospital is working with the Naugatuck Valley Health District (NVHD) and VCF to host a community conversation this fall about ways to improve community health in the Valley. "This Index has served as an aerial view from which we can zoom in on the challenges we face, the issues we hope to address, and the many opportunities we have to leverage our resources in the future to effect change," says Patrick Charmel, President and CEO of Griffin Hospital. "We are pleased to continue our partnership with NVHD, VCF, and our community to help us continue to make the Valley the healthiest it can possibly be."

The VCF Board has recognized the importance of building an informed community and investing in the Community Index initiative from the very beginning. "We are thrilled with the applications of the Index thus far," says VCF President and CEO Sharon Closius. "VCF truly understands the value of having accessible, high-quality data, and we look forward to exploring additional ways for the Index to be utilized in months and years ahead."

Sponsored Events

The following events are supported with unrestricted funds by VCF this season:

September

Shelton Exchange Club Golf Tournament

The Shelton Exchange Club Foundation to sponsor the Annual Golf Tournament in honor of James A. Goodman on September 25th at Brownson Country Club in Shelton

October

Seymour Pink 5K

Seymour Pink's 6th Annual 5K will run October 7th on River Street and surrounding streets in Seymour.

Griffin Hospital Gala

The Griffin Gala will be held at Aria in Prospect on October 13th.

Master's Table Annual Fundraiser

Master's Table to sponsor its second annual fundraiser, "At the Hop" on October 14th at the Church of the Assumption Hall in Ansonia.

November

Teen Theatre Workshop

Center Stage Theatre's Teen Musical Theatre Workshop heads to the stage this fall.

Needs & Opportunities Grants

There is still time to apply for a Needs & Opportunities Grant. These grants range between \$250-\$10,000 and support nonprofits and organizations serving the Valley community. The Needs and Opportunities grants are designed to promptly address the needs of our nonprofits through a simplified application process. If you have questions about applying for a Needs and Opportunities Grant, please contact Valerie Knight-DiGangi at vdigangi@valleyfoundation.org.

Good News About the Valley

Valley Interfaith Council forms in Response to 2016 Valley Community Index Data

For many people of different backgrounds, ethnicities, and income levels, faith is what often brings communities together. At a time when municipalities, congregations, and nonprofits are struggling more than ever before, bringing people together and sharing knowledge of the needs within the community has never been so important.

After the release of the 2016 Valley Community Index, available at www.valleyfoundation.org, the Valley Community Foundation (VCF) worked with the Valley Parish Nurses of Griffin Hospital, to convene members of various faith communities to inform them about the major issues facing the Valley as outlined in the index. Local community partners including: Pat Charmel, President and CEO of Griffin Hospital, David Morgan, President & CEO of TEAM, Inc., Sharon Closius, VCF's President & CEO, Susan Agamy, Executive Director of Spooner House, and Daun Barrett, Parish Nursing Director participated in a panel discussion focusing on community health, changing demographics, and the quality of life in the Valley region.

As a result of this meeting, both the religious leaders and community partners expressed the benefit of reviving an interfaith group to service the Valley. In early 2017, the

Valley Interfaith Council was formed with members committed to learning about the issue areas that may affect their congregants, and how they may assist in addressing the needs and opportunities in the Valley.

VCF and the Valley United Way will work together to support this work by hiring a part-time coordinator who will assist the Council with planning and administration. VCF will provide financial support for the work and the Valley United Way will serve as the fiscal agent and provide space for the coordinator.



Photo Credit: Fred Ortolano

Valley Interfaith Council members to meet to discuss the aging population in the region.

An executive committee comprised of faith based leaders throughout the five core Valley towns and Beacon Falls and Naugatuck was recently formed. The Council meets every other month and is always welcoming new members. The meetings consist of a presentation on an issue area (such as food insecurity, elder care, and volunteerism), council business, and fellowship.

Members of the Valley Interfaith Council hope to increase their knowledge of important issue areas and be a stronger resource for their congregations and the community they serve. For more information about the Valley Interfaith Council, or how your faith community can become involved, please visit www.valleyunitedway.org.