

"Anything you want to do here can happen here."

Kate Magruder

NEXT MEETINGS

See Meeting Wizard

DISCLAIMER: The summary represents the essence of the discussion and does not come close to expressing all the great ideas, statements and hopes. If I didn't include your comments please accept my apology.

Preface: On January 16, 2009 a group of citizens came together to discuss how to engage local youth to help create a sustainable, self-sufficient future for Mendocino County.

Participants: Zach Schat, Jendi Coursey, Cliff Paulin, Kate Magruder, Grace Magruder, Ben Provan, Estelle Clifton, Susan Strom, John Azzorro and Rick Le Burkien

Co-Chairs: Jendi Coursey and Cliff Paulin

Goals

Determine what is possible, what we can create together, what areas we want to explore and what the next steps should be.

Agenda

- Introductions
- Why are you here?
- MendoFutures Brief: Who we are, what we do, where we'd like to go
- Discuss the possibilities
- Agree upon a direction
- Next meeting and agenda

Why Are You Here

Common threads...

- The desire to be part of an organization built on high principles.
- Commitment to help create economic sustainability in Mendocino County
- The desire to take an active role in creating the future of Mendocino County
- The desire to create a better, more prosperous future for our children

- Commitment to “walk the talk” of creating a sustainable environment; focusing on ecology, renewable energy, conservation to provide a higher quality of life

MendoFutures: Who Are We, What Do We Do – Steve Z. began by reviewing MendoFutures Vision Statement and Operating Principles.

Vision Statement

We are a community of people, resources and unique beauty. We produce economic vitality that is highly visible, is good for people and is good for the ecology.

- A healthy community that engages in the ecological, economic and equity issues of our community (E3). Locally sustainable and renewable.
- A community that has a shared identity and sense of ownership for its activities and its commitment to creating a future together.
- A place that mobilizes and focuses its resources toward its future through sustainable practices.
- A place that knows how to work together. A place that has an “infrastructure” of effective community engagement and communication processes. A community that values diversity, opinions and culture.
- A community that values education as a way of building awareness and connections to our diversity, our resources and possibilities. We teach the old ways in new ways.

Operating principles:

- Our strategies simultaneously address the changing economic, environmental and equity (social) needs of our community.
- We utilize a way of communicating through our differences that is based on strong relationships, shared values and operating on common ground.
- We build on and support what already works in Mendocino County and reinforce by telling stories of success.
- We put the interests of community first. When necessary, we will suspend our personal interests and biases for the emergence of the greater good.
- We make decisions from the perspective of our long term vision and plan.
- We utilize our relationships to proactively engage and connect people with divergent ideas.
- We build a strong internal coalition through ‘glue people’ to move forward Mendocino issues in the county and state.

Discussion

We want to address challenges more like corporations. They can turn on a dime. “Our biggest mistake will be thinking we can do a little vs. a lot. A good portion of the discussion focused on each person’s passion and its relationship to the outcome of the day.

Cliff launched the discussion by asking, “How do we get more young people involved; how do you make what we’re doing and want to achieve be attractive to a younger generation? Are we addressing issues that are important to young people and how do we brand that? In MendoFutures terms, how do we teach the old ways in new ways?”

Jendi followed up with the fact that it will be necessary to tangibly address what many citizens talk about but do not necessarily have any solutions for: the underground marijuana economy. Many young people are pulled into that economy by the lure of big dollars.

Mendocino County high schools now require students to volunteer. Our group needs to develop a way to inspire them, use this volunteer initiative to hook them to build passion. Then build upon one success at a time. Small steps. We can become mentors to young people.

Ben is interested in finding ways to go beyond what is currently happening with food production. How do we go beyond what we’re doing now? (e.g. reinventing what it is to become a food producer followed by creating a model for young people to implement.) We want to create an environment that attracts new business, training, educating and employing and we need to center this on our youth.

Grace: We can provide an opportunity for young people to learn about what’s going on in Mendocino County: the issues, concerns, challenges and solutions. We need to somehow develop a connection and process where youth can enter into the flow easily and hit the ground running seamlessly.

Zach: Young people in their teens and even early 20s are self-indulgent. Money is a primary motivating factor. In order to attract this target audience we have to be sensitive to their behavioral characteristics. E.g. desire for positive strokes, they want to feel good about what they’re doing and how they’re doing; they want to be appreciated, acknowledged, recognized and valued. Maybe Schats Bakery can better utilize or maximize its space for young people to congregate and learn.

Cliff: Whatever we do we must look at underlying motivators. We want to empower youth to succeed. E.g. Write and publish environmental, ecological, energy types of articles on facebook.

Carre - It is essential that we are sensitive to where the young people are and how best to reach them.

Young people are really into helping themselves. They aren't necessarily community players when it comes to what motivates them. We want to translate their passion into what they can achieve and recognize what they can achieve and reward them.

Steve - Fine that early adaptor youth and mobilize them. Get a couple of young minds involved just in our internal MendoFutures technology needs and build momentum around that solution. The early adapters will attract the next group.

John: Maybe we could build a program that teaches or coaches more of a transition to the real world of life. Something that cultivates or sets the stage for them becoming effective and productive citizens.

Ben – Young people just need to know the essentials for succeeding. We need a program that not only teaches them about environmental, ecological, energy and food we need to provide how to write a check, how to go on a date, how to be respectful, and generally how to work in the real world.

Jendi: I like the approach of defining goals and working back from them to determine next steps rather than focusing on immediate solutions to current problems. Let's identify the areas where we all can easily collaborate (e.g. Mustard Seed is working on countywide mental health services).

Estelle: My journey of learning and gaining values began on a farm. I was connected to the land. We may want to focus more on tradition vs. the newest way. When it is all said and done it comes down to tradition and actually MendoFuture's Principles. It is about learning a work ethic.

Carre – young people could not only graduate with a High School diploma but also with a Certificate of Competency in a particular skill.

What Are You Passionate About?

Steve Z. led the group in a discussion re: what each of us is passionate about in re: to direction.

Ben –Empowering youth to be the people they want to be and live the life they want to live.

Carre-Building a mentoring program and identifying and opportunities that our MendoFutures's members may have.

Jendi – I want something tangible developed (e.g. some type of camp experience that would position and teach our principles along with real world, life skills).

Estelle-I'd like to see a camp that results in the community providing internships for the graduates. We would need to make sure these business participants experienced excellent incentives.

Rick – Design the program after Future Farmers of America, Vocational Industrial Clubs of America, Distributive Education Clubs of America or Health Occupations Clubs of America. These are all both high school and post-secondary programs that integrate interpersonal communications, leadership, teamwork, problem solving, decision making, work ethic and how to be a productive and effective contributor to society. The students also graduate with their H.S. diploma plus certification in a particular skill related to real life and MendoFuture's vision.

Ben – My passion would be building a “Tools for Life” A camp where youth begins to explore the real world possibilities that empowers them and sets the tone for a more successful and productive life. And, yes, I could recruit five people to participate.

Target Market

- 14 to 21 year olds including community college students. Cliff will identify facilitators who specialize in motivating youth to action.

Next Steps

- Identify who else needs to be involved. E.g. Burt Mosier , CEO, Ukiah Chamber of Commerce, Benj Thomas, City Council, Antonio Lopez, S. Valley High School
- Ben/Grace will research similar situations and present their findings.
- Identify and invite members of this target market to next meeting

Focus

- Empowering young people
- Infrastructure for businesses internship
- HS program – Rick will present existing models