

# ASPIRATIONS TO ACTIONS

May 24, 2017

In September 2016, 120 cross-sector community leaders came together for a Public Innovators Lab, an expansion of [The Patterson Foundation's Aspirations to Action Initiative](#). During this 2.5-day experience, presented by The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, participants learned the fundamentals of Harwood's Turn Outward practice - an orientation and set of practical skills that help you use the community -- not your conference room -- as your reference point for choices and judgments. The goal of this effort is to equip leaders with a common approach to change that will help them more effectively share possibilities to strengthen the community. Leadership from the library systems in Sarasota and Manatee counties who participated in the Lab are receiving Harwood coaching support over 18 months to apply the practice to their community work.

## KNOW OUR COMMUNITY

Since September, two core groups, the Sarasota and Manatee County Public Library Systems have begun using the practice to strengthen how they do their work and make choices that will lead to greater results. Their main focus has been on developing a deeper knowledge of the community, using Harwood conversation tools to engage members of the community in a deeper way. Unlike public forums or large town halls, these are small, informal, "kitchen-table style" conversations of 8-12 people from all walks of life. They focus on uncovering people's shared aspirations for the community, the challenges they see in getting there and what progress might look like.

## SRQ LIBRARY TEAM



## SPOTLIGHT ON COMMUNITIES THAT ARE TURNING OUTWARD



The [Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading](#) (SCGLR) Team is embracing the concept of Turning Outward as we build a community-wide movement in Manatee and Sarasota counties to help all children, especially those from low-income families, succeed in school by ensuring they read on grade level by the end of third grade.



The [Sarasota County Library](#) team continues to grow in its application of the Harwood practice. How? By holding Community Conversations with a variety of community members, learning to theme the conversations, beginning to share the knowledge gained among themselves, and taking advantage of impromptu opportunities to "stand on the table" to share with others. The team shared much of their progress at an April 7 Innovations Space meeting that was attended by over 80 practicing public innovators. A presentation by Sarabeth Kalajian highlighted their team's work, sharing stories that demonstrated the learning and progress of the team.

The work continues, with the core team meeting frequently to share learning through Innovations Space conversations, discussing case studies to identify new practice opportunities, developing plans for additional Community Conversations to add to their knowledge base, and looking for opportunities to share the public knowledge more broadly with the community. A Community Conversation is scheduled for the Jacaranda Library on May 30 and a follow-up conversation is in the works at Children's First.

**Next Steps in Sarasota:** Sarabeth Kalajian and Ann Hardy are taking the next critical step in supporting the libraries in employing the Harwood practice. They will spend three mornings in June visiting the various libraries to discuss how to best support their work, share learnings from other libraries and lab participants, share and discuss public knowledge obtained thus far and how to apply it, and gather reflections and insights. Implementing a practice such as Harwood across multiple sites in a large system can be a challenge. This approach will be helpful in employing the practice throughout the system.

#### **Welcoming New Library Managers:**

The Sarasota County Library System is adding new managers at two locations in North Port,

meeting with members of the community and listening to their aspirations while sharing our knowledge about each of the five solution areas of the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading -- School Readiness, Attendance, Summer Learning, Parent Engagement, and Health -- has led to meaningful partnerships and rewarding projects. As a result, new connections are made that benefit our children.

Lack of dental care access for children is a health issue, with complexity that calls for action from many sectors. Exploring possibilities takes on a rhythm that is unique in both Sarasota and Manatee regions. Beth Duda, the Director of SCGLR with [The Patterson Foundation](#), is meeting regularly with John Annis, Senior Vice-President for Community Investment at the Community Foundation of Sarasota County and lead partner in the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading's (CGLR) work in Sarasota County -- where lack of dental care for students has been a topic of great concern.

Pierrette Kelly works in the Health solution area for SCGLR. While turning outward, Pierrette connected with the Sarasota County Health Department. During her conversation, she learned that the Department of Health had an aspiration of bringing a portable dental sealant program to Title 1 schools in Sarasota County. They had all the details of the plan in place and had figured out a way for the program to be self-sustaining through Medicaid Funding. Pierrette spoke to them on a day when they were disappointed to learn they had not received a federal grant to purchase the initial equipment and supplies needed to make that program possible.

Around the same time, Beth was the featured speaker at a Rotary Club of Sarasota meeting, sharing the work of SCGLR with the members. Following the meeting, Beth learned that The Rotary Club of Sarasota Foundation had funds ready as they began to explore the idea of building a dental clinic at one elementary school in Sarasota.

With the knowledge gathered from all of these meetings, [SCGLR](#) quickly convened a meeting with [The Health Department of Sarasota County](#), [The Community Foundation of Sarasota County](#), and [The Rotary Club of Sarasota](#). By aligning aspirations, and combining funding sources, a

Holly Anderson (North Pottery Library) and Susan Totter (Shannon Staub Library). These new managers are in addition to several that have assumed manager roles in recent months, Brock Peoples (Selby Library) and Stacey Ogea (Jacaranda Library). Understanding and employing the Harwood practice is a great way for new leaders to begin, building on the work already under way within the library system and setting the stage for truly engaging, outwardly, with the community. To prepare these new leaders, Sarabeth and Ann are hopeful that the new managers can attend the Harwood virtual lab that will take place in June.

Turning Outward is resulting in new strategies, plans, and programs.

### MANATEE LIBRARY TEAM



[Manatee County Neighborhood Services](#) and [Library System](#), which consists of six libraries throughout Manatee County, have been embedding the Harwood Practice into their culture through a strategic approach. This has been represented in their action plan and through their work in developing a long-range plan. The Manatee team of public innovators, which is fondly referred to as "Marvelous Manatee," has literally been in all corners of the county listening and engaging their community members through Community Conversations and ASK exercises - - an exercise to gather aspirations and can be one or more questions -- with the intention of turning outward, learning the aspirations for the community, and creating a public knowledge summary.

The Harwood Institute defines being turned outward as follows: *Turning Outward means using the community, not your conference room, as the main reference point for decisions - from the strategies you and your partners pursue, the partners you choose, how you start and then grow your efforts over time, and even how you structure and run your internal organization.*

The Harwood practice believes when we talk with

### SARASOTA AGAINST VIOLENCE (SAVE)



[Sarasota Against ViolenceE](#) (SAVE) continues their work in addressing the impact of violence on middle school students, families, and the community. Recognizing solutions are multifaceted and are best addressed with community involvement, this initiative has applied Harwood principles since its beginnings in 2015.

The SAVE executive committee consisting of parents, city and county commissioners, law enforcement, Goodwill Newtown, Sarasota Housing Authority, United Way Suncoast-Sarasota, Sarasota Coalition on Substance Abuse (SCoSA), the Booker Middle School (BMS) Principal and school district, and other volunteers ensures the focus goes beyond the parameters of the grant. Examples are linkages with programs that focus on



- Manatee's Ava Ehde was selected 2017 Florida Librarian of the Year by the Florida Library Association. Bravo, Ava for this much deserved recognition!

- On April 7th, A2A sponsored an Innovation Space. Almost 120 people gathered at The Francis Connect for a few hours to reconnect with friends and colleagues who participated in the September Harwood Lab. It was an opportunity to learn, share, participate, and innovate.

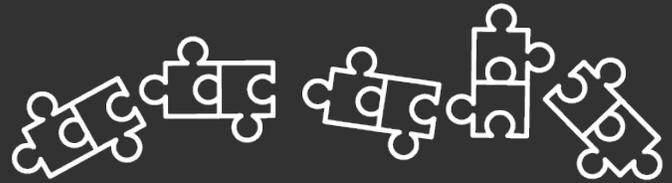


- [Congratulations Sarabeth Kalajian, named Amazing Suncoast Woman!](#)

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