

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Trauma and resilience summit held in Battle Creek

BATTLE CREEK, MI – More than 100 human service providers converged at a summit in Battle Creek on Friday, May 31 to explore strategies for creating a safer, healthier and more equitable community.

Titled “From Awareness to Action: Promising Practices in Addressing Trauma and Building Resilience,” the summit drew workers in numerous fields — educators, nurses, childcare workers, pediatricians, cops, business owners, and a judge — to learn about and talk about creating a trauma-informed community.

The summit was a collaborative project of BC Pulse and the United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region, which held a sister summit about 30 miles away at the Bernhard Center at Western Michigan University.

Laura Porter, the co-founder of Washington-based ACE Interface, delivered the keynote in Kalamazoo, which the Battle Creek assembly watched via live stream at New Harvest Christian Center, which donated the local venue. Porter is regarded internationally as a leader in the application of ACE Study concepts that have led to dramatic improvements in public health.

Kathy Szenda Wilson, the co- executive director of BC Pulse and a principal organizer of the Battle Creek summit, told participants that the day was a call to action. “The challenge is aligning our systems with this knowledge,” said Szenda Wilson. “And that’s not an easy lift. But it’s doable. This research has helped us understand so much more about the impact early life experiences have on every one of us.”

Battle Creek panelists and participants engaged in often emotional dialogue about their efforts to apply the science.

Tim Reese, a retired Battle Creek Public Schools educator and the co-founder of RISE — Re-Integration to Support and Empower — hosted an interactive “talk show.” His guests included RISE co-founder Damon Brown, pediatrician Kelli Collins, elementary principal Stacy Helmboldt, and social innovation strategist Nicole Parker.

Michael McCullough, the co-chair of BC Pulse’s Healthy and Developmentally On Track Action Team and ACEs presenter, moderated a panel discussion of 15 community leaders who shared insights about their efforts to use ACE science in their organizations. Among the panelists were Battle Creek Police Chief Jim Blocker, Circuit Judge John Hallacy, and Battle Creek Superintendent of Schools Kim Carter.

Other partners included Calhoun Intermediate School District, Calhoun County Great Start Collaborative, Family and Children Services, Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi, Southwest Michigan Urban League, and Great Start to Quality Southwest Resource Center. Funders included the United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region, Battle Creek Community Foundation, and the Calhoun ISD.

All materials disseminated at the event, including presentations and transcripts, are available through BC Pulse. For information or to learn more, call (269) 986-0797.

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