

Executive Summary

The second annual Greater Waco Community Education Summit built upon the first summit and the work of the stakeholder groups in what felt like a seamless transition. The first summit, held in November 2008, solidified the organization of the stakeholder groups and launched them through a flurry of work as 2009 began. The second summit, held in November 2009, showcased their work and provided a platform from which to move forward new initiatives that focus the community on the Education Alliance's eight assumptions and on assisting our education providers.

With a mixture of out-of-town and local expertise, the summit program featured several speakers and presentations concerning the focus of the first of the Education Alliance's eight assumptions—early childhood education and healthcare. While future summits and the work of the Education Alliance will focus on the education continuum of ages 0–22, systemic change in the Greater Waco Community requires that attention be given immediately to the very earliest years of our children's lives. Thus, the presentations by the summit's lead speakers had titles such as "The Potential Return on Investment for Early Childhood," "The Role of Healthcare in Education Success," "A View into Parental and Child Interaction: Block Play," and "Waco's Early Childhood Challenges and Opportunities."

The summit also celebrated four of the region's outstanding "Pockets of Excellence." The showcase, a feature of the 2008 summit, will likely continue as the annual summits are used to celebrate the tremendous successes of the community. Rounding out the main tent presentations of the summit was an interview of Ambassador Lyndon Olson by Joe Riley of KWBU and a two-part presentation on "Education as a Means for Ending Poverty: Waco's Challenge and a Practical Approach for Effective Education of Poor Children." The presentations closed the main summit, and the issues of poverty were the main event for a multi-school district in-service held following the summit. Dr. Donna Beegle, a fourth-generation person of poverty, related her journey from sleeping in cars to earning a Ph.D. She provided powerful first-hand insights into how we can address poverty in the Greater Waco area. As in 2008, students from area schools provided for music, color guard, and other official duties, rounding out the summit experience.

Information on the main speaker sessions and the breakout sessions follows. These sessions and the summit production included the planning time of many of our community leaders and doers. There are incredible human and material resources in this region, and we believe that with increased coordination of our collective work we can help our youth achieve their dreams and aspirations for full, productive, and happy lives.

Thank you for working with us as we move ahead through 2010 and toward our third annual summit, November 17–19.

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