

e. Town Meeting

The Blount County Community Health Initiative Steering Team recognized a need for collaborative efforts among the community where group discussions would generate topics and ideas for future work. They organized a Town Meeting November 1997 for key leaders to come together to work toward a common goal, a healthier Blount County. The goals for the meeting were:

- ◆ Develop a better understanding of the key aspects of health and quality of life in our community and begin to develop a unified vision of health.
- ◆ Talk together about values and concerns.
- ◆ Identify community assets and obstacles in achieving the vision.
- ◆ Create an area for growth among existing efforts, not to duplicate those efforts.

An ad-hoc committee was formed to develop a vision statement of how they would like the community to be in the future and to determine issues concerning assets, obstacles/challenges to achieving that goal. The following is the vision statement developed and a list of those issues ranked by importance by the committee.

Vision Statement:

“A healthy Blount County community is one with a social and physical environment which is conducive to a sense of harmony and unity among its citizens. Institutions and civic groups cooperate to provide educational opportunities, to assure safety, to provide spiritual sustenance and health care, which are accessible to all sectors of the community. Institutions are responsive to the needs of families, without undermining their competence by fostering dependence. In managing growth, community leaders and civic groups have the foresight to put as high a value on the long term health of the community and the environment as on the short term economic interests of individuals.”

As we serve we will be guided by the following beliefs:

That health is reflected by personal responsibility, education, safety, accessible medical care, religious involvement, recreational opportunities, balance and life skills.

That there is planned economic development with wise use of our natural resources.

That youth grow up with self-esteem, absent of substance abuse.

That the special care, services, and resources for seniors promote independence.

That accessibility to services empowers each citizen.

That progressive leadership and cooperation among government entities, communities, and neighborhoods, promote affordable services and living expenses.

That specialized health care services be continually evaluated for need before addition to the community.

That the health of our community is reflected in each of us.

Key Assets:

1. GOOD BASE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Strong Religious Base/Churches

Retired Population-Volunteer Resources

Variety of Civic Group, Clubs

Overall Caring People/Volunteers

2. SCHOOL SYSTEM

3. ENVIRONMENT

Maintain Integrity in Smoky Mountains, Townsend, Little River

Growing Population

Tourism