

Wellville 10-Year Process Evaluation

Why a process evaluation vs. impact evaluation?

Originally, we positioned Wellville as a competition to see which of our five communities (the Wellville 5, or W5) would improve the most over five years on five metrics. At the suggestion of our communities, we quickly pivoted away from the contest – and from our plan to use a particular set of metrics to assess the winner. About two years into the project, recognizing that long-term change takes time, we added five years to the timeline, extending Wellville’s support to 10 years. We also shifted away from an initial focus on data and technology, supported by a “health mart” of companies offering their products and services. Instead, we emphasized locally driven approaches, supported by Wellville Advisors who helped our communities in discovering and redefining what was important to them, questioning and counseling them as their work evolved over the 10 years. Thus, for a project like Wellville that learns and adjusts along the way, a process evaluation is more useful than a 10-year impact report measuring the results of a defined intervention. The defined interventions (for some of which there is data) were simply part of a much bigger picture.

Wellville is interested in whether/how communities have **shifted mindsets**, whether/how they find meaningful ways to **act on what they know/learn** will make them healthy long-term, and whether/how they can **expand and strengthen their collective capacity to collaborate** and create positive change for all. We are interested in helping communities align themselves to change health and wellbeing in ways that will not often deliver empirically evident outcomes for many years. Traditional metrics don’t make the case for Wellville’s work. We are not so much interested in discrete outcomes like increasing healthy food access as we are in strengthening the social fabric that produces richer, more sustainable change. (But we do acknowledge the correlations!)

Accordingly, we have gathered evidence that focuses on the processes – and the resulting long-term initiatives (see the tables below) – our communities have put in place, with Wellville’s direct influence or support, that will improve meaningful equity, health and wellbeing outcomes sustainably over time.

Evaluation questions

As we assess the 10-year Wellville project, we are interested in three primary questions:

1. **What happened?** For example, what did the W5 communities do – and how did Wellville support them – as they worked to increase equitable wellbeing?
2. **How did it happen?** For example, is there evidence that the W5 communities have shifted mindsets away from short-term fixes to efforts that produce longer-term, “upstream,” sustainable results?
3. **Why does it matter?** For example, what can other communities and stakeholders learn from this?

How we operated in our communities

Recognizing that we need each other is the essential first step in addressing what Wellville diagnosed (with helpful prodding from our Advisory Board) as the core problem causing America’s deteriorating health and growing inequities: *short-term self-interest*. Wellville’s focus over the past decade has been on learning and influencing *how* communities move from short-term self-interest to long-term shared interest.

We were not experimenting on the communities or observing them, but engaging with them. Our role was to be present – frequently and in person – and offer advice, ask questions, encourage or provoke further thinking, and catalyze. As our founder Esther Dyson reminds us, “We are the stone in the stone soup.” Rather than prescribing “best practices” for our communities, we created space for our communities to come together and shape their own vision and work. We kept showing up and prodding – disinterested outsiders who were acting for the benefit of the communities we served. Our tactics as a national team changed and iterated over the years to respond in ways that our communities needed. And in each community, we were individuals, not a chorus.

During the 10-year Wellville project, we helped our communities convene stakeholders across neighborhoods, institutions, and systems to:

- Listen empathetically and generatively;
- Uncover ground truths about the causes of harm or health;
- Imagine new futures;
- Collaborate across institutions and cultures; and
- Move forward together, learning and adjusting through all the messiness, breakdowns and potential opportunities that emerge along the way.

The annual Wellville Gatherings, where we brought together representatives from all five communities for three days, were an opportunity to set aside daily distractions, reflect together on the state of our work, collaborate on visions and plans for future work, and get to know one another more deeply. Gathering in this way can generate profound change in ourselves and our relationships that (re)weaves the social fabric of our communities. Connecting across differences (along with occasional conflict) has changed how people in the Wellville communities see each other, the places they love, their shared histories and future possibilities.

How has Wellville engaged the W5 communities, and what were the results?

Wellville's emphasis on relationships and change from within helped the W5 communities create their own paths, make meaningful progress on priorities they set for themselves, and build strengths and resilience that will endure long after the project ends. In the words of members of the W5 communities, the Wellville initiative has been "wildly different" from most such efforts, starting with the fact that it was not a short-term, outcome-oriented grant with a prescribed set of activities and objectives. Rather than providing restricted funding and requiring a specific approach, Wellville has been a catalyst for community-directed change by helping locals to:

- "See old problems in new ways";
- "Build relationships" by "trying, thinking and learning" together;
- "Make connections and link to opportunities we wouldn't have had"; and
- "Align for bigger impact."

Having a dedicated Wellville Advisor who "meets us where we are" has been "invaluable" and "very different than the typical T.A. [technical assistance]." Wellville took the time "to know our community, our people" by being "on the ground on a regular basis." The annual Wellville Gatherings "helped us form as a team" and "develop deep connections" that have been "literally life changing...both personally and professionally." We now "have relationships with four other communities" who "care about what happens in each place...(and) know we can all call on each other."

This approach has yielded significant results during the 10-year project. With Wellville's support, the W5 have:

- Launched long-term community-wide initiatives, shifted policies and transformed systems that are now producing more equitable support and outcomes in areas ranging from maternal health and early childhood to neighborhood development and economic opportunity;
- Learned skills and implemented inclusive practices that facilitate deeper connections, bridge differences and focus collective learning and action on shared interests;

- Established local structures — both formal/centralized and informal/decentralized — for ongoing collaboration across diverse networks of people in neighborhoods and institutions;
- Started collaborating *across* structures; and
- Generated hundreds of millions of dollars in co-investment from a broader, thus likely more sustainable, variety of internal and external sources.

There are many examples of Wellville’s direct or proximate involvement in initiatives our W5 took on to improve health and wellbeing. Some of these are considered by our communities to be great successes. Others did not work as planned, but offer learnings. Some took a long time to create and implement, and many iterated along the way. Most target upstream, long-term investment, and most will not show significant impact in common wellbeing metrics (e.g. diabetes prevalence, education attainment, poverty rates) in the short term. On the other hand, each individual project showed positive responses among participants – e.g. Muskegon’s Diabetes Prevention Program showed positive results for the members it served and likely for their family members and even some friends or colleagues.

The table on the following pages offers a few illustrative examples from each of the W5 communities and from Wellville’s national work.

Initiatives That Are Changing Communities: Some Examples from W5 Communities and Wellville National Work

MUSKEGON COUNTY, MI

Wellville Advisor: Esther Dyson

What the Community Did	How Wellville Was Involved	What Happened
<p>Livability Lab: an annual process where community members generated ideas to improve wellbeing and form action teams to work on them over the course of 100 days</p>	<p>Participated, exposed the model to other W5s, provided data consultation</p>	<p>Ongoing annually; community action teams generated “small wins” that led to big changes, including parts of the Tri-Share Child Care and doula projects, below</p>
<p>Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP): Muskegon YMCA provided free personal coaching, in-person and virtual support and education for pre-diabetics</p>	<p>Advised and encouraged YMCA</p>	<p>DPP expanded in virtual form to YMCAs across the state; served over 1,300 participants; useful data available on request from the Y</p>
<p>Tri-Share Child Care initiative: the local Goodwill and YMCA collaborated to create a Tri-Share Child Care funding model</p>	<p>Advised and encouraged YMCA and partners</p>	<p>Created innovative model to increase access to high-quality, affordable child care; cost of employee’s child care split equally among the employer, the employee, and the State of MI; became a statewide model; data available</p>
<p>Goodwill’s remanufacturing initiative: opened a remanufacturing center to recycle and reprocess the three highest-volume materials sent to landfills: plastic, glass, and wood</p>	<p>Encouraged Goodwill, helped make connections</p>	<p>Kept waste out of landfills, created local, good-paying jobs, and generated revenue to support Goodwill’s other programs</p>

MUSKEGON COUNTY, MI (cont.)		
What the Community Did	How Wellville Was Involved	What Happened
Expanded doula services: local advocates created How YOU Birth Doula Initiative , which trains doulas and helps them find clients and earn reimbursement to provide birthing support to (mostly) persons of color	Advised and encouraged along with multiple funders and other partners	Created more capacity to actively address the 49% of Black births that have less than adequate prenatal and postnatal care; helped community members to gain training and earn respect
West Michigan Blueprint Hub : developed concept and advanced efforts to establish a free community space for entrepreneurs and organizations looking to network, plan, and create	Attended meetings, nudged to improve cadence, brought in partners	In progress; partnership of Muskegon County Public Health, Trinity Health, and Access Health
Flu shots	Pushed the idea from outside	No real impact (but an early learning experience for Esther and the rest of us!)
Community organizing	Encouraged	Marquis Childers developed as a leader in Muskegon Heights; Neighborhood Associations developed/grew and gained a sense of agency
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Muskegon Community Report	Used it, shared it, promoted it	Awareness of ACEs increased; many teachers and care workers trained to provide better support to traumatized children and adults

NORTH HARTFORD, CT

Wellville Advisors: Kathleen Brady and Rick Brush

What the Community Did	How Wellville Was Involved	What Happened
<p>Established the North Hartford Triple Aim Collaborative (NHTAC): a multi-stakeholder group focused on policy, system and environmental change</p>	<p>Led co-design process with community members and local institutions to establish the city's designated table for collaboration on long-term health and wellbeing; supported efforts to generate funding/resources, diversify participation, formalize governance, and integrate ongoing learning and improvement processes</p>	<p>Increased ongoing collaboration among institutional leaders and community representatives, strengthened trust, launched multiple initiatives and generated investment; served as Hartford's designated lead for several national, state and local initiatives and funding awards (some listed below); integrated ongoing process for learning and adjustment to make the NHTAC more inclusive and effective</p>
<p>Transforming Communities Initiative (TCI): a program of Trinity Health</p>	<p>Aligned TCI and other city initiatives with NHTAC to improve collaboration and impact</p> <p>In round 1 of TCI funding: Wellville was a member of the steering committee; helped shape the initiative and determine the investment, partners, community engagement, etc.</p> <p>In TCI round 2, Wellville was a resource partner; provided input and technical assistance; made cross-community connections (e.g., with Spartanburg Northside and Purpose Built Communities)</p>	<p>Round 1 (see TCI reports and final evaluation) resulted in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stronger collaboration and community engagement ● Multiple policy, system and environmental strategies to improve community conditions and service access ● Investment in community leaders, organizations, resources and programs <p>Round 2 is ongoing: residents identified four priorities (housing, access to care, access to healthy food, community violence); residents and organization partners advanced initiatives (e.g. healthy bodega project, mental wellness hub)</p>

NORTH HARTFORD, CT (cont.)		
What the Community Did	How Wellville Was Involved	What Happened
<p>Healthy Hartford Hub (HHH) and Community Action Task Force (CATF): a comprehensive development and policy initiative to bring a full-service grocery store, health-promoting services and economic opportunity to North Hartford</p>	<p>Partnered with local residents, institutions, community development and food ecosystem professionals on grocery store and other components of HHH; provided ongoing support to the resident-led CATF; collaborated with Invest Health (multi-year funding, cross-community connections) and other national resources</p>	<p>Ongoing project with initial results: shifted to resident leadership through the CATF; completed significant pre-development work (market study, funding commitments, neighborhood master plan, healthy policy overlay); generated data and narrative change through community participatory research; identified potential grocery operator; engaged mayor, city planning and other support (requires continued cultivation)</p>
<p>North Hartford Ascend: a \$30M U.S. Department of Education (DOE) grant-funded initiative providing cradle-to-career wrap-around services to children and families in North Hartford</p>	<p>Supported process to develop initial concept during 2018 Wellville Gathering (DOE grant awarded in 2021); provided ongoing proximate support via NHTAC; consulted on various aspects, such as community engagement and sustainability</p>	<p>Increased community trust through ongoing process and partnership between residents and institutions; created and launched integrated and universally available system of services to address academic, social, economic and health inequities; established resident co-leadership through shared governance, goals/priorities, partner selection and investment decisions; added \$36M in matching funds from local institutions; created evaluation framework, with early favorable trends in key areas such as chronic absenteeism</p>
<p>Combined Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) among three hospitals and the city</p>	<p>Provided thought partnership, technical assistance</p>	<p>Promoted collaboration, efficiency, focused resources, shared priorities; identified potential co-investments via Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)</p>

NORTH HARTFORD, CT (cont.)		
What the Community Did	How Wellville Was Involved	What Happened
<p>Demonstrated the value of investing in community capacity to drive long-term change; multiple local organizations, for example:</p> <p>Advocacy to Legacy: focused on educating and supporting youth in advocating for policies and other changes they care about in their communities</p>	<p>Provided general support and connections, along with other NHTAC partners, funders, community leaders, etc.</p>	<p>Advocacy to Legacy increased number and impact of youth leaders who successfully advocated for policy change/created policies (tobacco 21, proximity law, Crown Act); implemented range of programs, including community education (credit, college prep, COVID), organizing (voter registration), improvements to built environment (e.g. resulting from walking audits), and narrative change</p>
<p>State health reform: various projects including Health Enhancement Communities (HEC) initiative and current advocacy for Medicaid reform</p>	<p>Worked at the state level (Population Health Council) in designing HEC approach; provided national expertise and support to NHTAC (e.g., health care reform, investment strategies, systems change); served as a connector to other models and resources within CT and across states</p>	<p>Comprehensive HEC proposal developed by diverse group of stakeholders; community voice elevated in shaping potential state health policy; investment analyses demonstrated value of long-term improvement in community conditions needed for health (CT's 10-year savings from prevention: up to \$3.26 billion for Medicare, up to \$1.9 billion for Medicaid, and up to \$2.3 billion for commercial payers in the state); connected regional collaboratives around the state to advocate for CT Medicaid reform; state allocated more investment and partnered more closely with community-led efforts (e.g. during COVID)</p>

SPARTANBURG, SC		
<i>Wellville Advisor: Jeff Doemland</i>		
What the Community Did	How Wellville Was Involved	What Happened
Way to Wellville (W2W) collaborative: established by existing core team of collaborators around community wellbeing to work on Spartanburg’s initial five focus areas	Provided support, including vision and regular participation; created a halo effect (see "What Happened")	Core team energized by challenge to “dream big,” and while all dreams don’t materialize, those that do transform communities; W2W core team spread word of Wellville, positioning it as innovative thought leadership; because of this early trust, Wellville contributed voice/perspective to various initiatives focused on health equity in Spartanburg County; the W2W eventually merged with a similar county-wide initiative, Road to Better Health, and became Live Healthy Spartanburg
Hello Family : a hub of resources and support for parents and caregivers with children ages 5 and under; available to every child born in Spartanburg	Provided support, including technical assistance throughout the prolonged funding process	Hello Family’s initial launch was financed through an innovative pay-for-success strategy ; it has since become an initiative of Spartanburg Academic Movement’s (SAM) Center for Early Childhood Success ; in part due to additional investment that SAM secured through Blue Meridian (see below), Hello Family has scaled from initial launch in the city (pop. ~39,000) to the entire county (pop. ~360,000); in 2024, Hello Family was also awarded funding from the U.S. Treasury Social Impact Partnerships to Pay for Results Act (SIPPRA) toward the county expansion and outcomes payments if results are achieved; the initiative has produced improvements in full-term births and healthy birth weights, reduced neonatal intensive care admissions, and other measures (data available)

SPARTANBURG, SC (cont.)		
What the Community Did	How Wellville Was Involved	What Happened
Spartanburg Academic Movement (SAM)	Created a halo effect	Raised \$100M in Blue Meridian investment and matching funding for comprehensive effort to ensure children enter school ready for success and to increase the percentage of high schoolers who enroll in postsecondary education; Dr. Jennifer Parker, who formerly led the Child Protection Training Center at USC Upstate (and trained hundreds on trauma-informed approaches across multiple social and civic sectors in the Upstate), joined SAM to lead the Center for Resilient Schools and Communities
Northside Development Group (NDG): a resident-led community development organization in Spartanburg’s Northside neighborhood	Created a halo effect Provided direct support via 2023 Wellville Gathering (local and national exposure for Dr TK Gregg Community Center and neighborhood spotlight)	NDG continued to advocate for mixed-income housing, cradle-to-college education, community wellness, and economic vitality; NDG, which is a Purpose Built Community , received national recognition for many aspects of its work, including the Northside Voyagers resident leadership group
Spartanburg Initiative for Racial Equity Now (SIREN): a “resident-led collective that helps amplify the voices that are often excluded from the conversations that shape this city, county, and state”	Provided support	SIREN members attended the 2022 Wellville Gathering in Lake County as part of a 10-person contingent that also included the Spartanburg mayor and assistant city manager; the opportunity helped cultivate more cooperative working relationships between two adversarial groups; SIREN became more widely recognized as a legitimate voice of underrepresented residents; e.g., Live Healthy Spartanburg planned to work with SIREN on community engagement efforts

SPARTANBURG, SC (cont.)		
What the Community Did	How Wellville Was Involved	What Happened
“New Day CHNA”: with the help of county grassroots and community organizations, Live Healthy Spartanburg conducted resident listening sessions that add depth and real voices to the qualitative component of the 2024 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA)	Provided support, including concept and technical assistance	Drafted report (still being finalized); demonstrated potential for this model to continue, both as a means of documenting resident voice and also creating stronger ties between the hospital system and community groups
Highland neighborhood / Bethlehem Center and Southside neighborhood / CC Woodson Community Center	Created a halo effect Provided direct support via 2023 Wellville Gathering (local and national exposure for community centers and neighborhood spotlight)	Generated continued investments in Highland; work guided by strong neighborhood association; Bethlehem Center slated for redevelopment
Seeing Spartanburg in a New Light	Provided support, including story spreading	Bloomberg Philanthropies-funded public arts project led to collaboration between Highland neighborhood leaders and the City of Spartanburg on neighborhood revitalization efforts (ongoing)
Won an Aligning Systems for Health Equity grant from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	Provided support	Five “resident leaders” selected and trained to build awareness of and engagement with the work of Live Healthy Spartanburg

CLATSOP COUNTY, OR

Wellville Advisor: Marya Stark

What the Community Did	How Wellville Was Involved	What Happened
Clatsop Equity Committee: dedicated to increased and more meaningful inclusion of the local Hispanic population	Launched this committee at the start of the pandemic; organized bi-monthly calls for 2 years; eventually folded the committee's work into CHART (Community Health Advocacy + Resource Team), a local networking group	Conducted creative surveys regarding County spending priorities; published op-eds about the priorities; hosted bi-lingual events to learn more about community priorities
Childcare funding: feasibility study was initially conducted to consider this as a pre-k social impact bond; pivoted after study results	Applied and received federal grants; requested County funding; supported grantmaking process	Efforts have resulted in 10+ grants totaling > \$200K annually made by grantmaking committee
Trauma Informed Care Network	Applied for funds to create network	Local Medicaid provider hired full-time staff person to drive forward a trauma-informed care network across the county
Peri-natal Task Force	Supported organizing of stakeholders and gap analysis	Re-launched quarterly community baby showers that build awareness and support, highlight service providers and gift baby gear and clothes
Blue Zones initiative in the town of Astoria	Supported local team in considering the potential of this initiative and made intros to other Blue Zones communities	Co-funding raised to pay for Blue Zones assessment; convened group to determine if implementation will move forward (nearing decision)

CLATSOP COUNTY, OR (cont.)		
What the Community Did	How Wellville Was Involved	What Happened
The Outpost : a new “third place” (i.e. not home or work/school) in a previously abandoned building in a neglected part of downtown Warrenton	Supported entrepreneurs’ vision with coaching and introductions; highlighted the project at a Wellville-sponsored local event	Site purchased and development commenced, with opening projected in Q3, 2025
Expand collaboration to County Planning	Invited County Planner to 2024 Wellville Gathering (example of Wellville-facilitated connections)	County economic planning now integrated with county wellbeing initiatives

LAKE COUNTY, CA

Wellville Advisors: Marvin Avilez, Rick Brush, Christina Koukkos

What the Community Did	How Wellville Was Involved	What Happened
<p>Hope Rising (HR): collaborative was established (with funding from Adventist Health) to convene executive leaders from hospitals, local institutions and county government; coordinate collective action; and identify and remove barriers to equitable wellbeing</p>	<p>Provided significant support and assistance on the formation and administration of Hope Rising, which became a 501(c)(3), including its portfolio of work</p> <p>Wellville got deeply engaged – to the point of leading rather than nudging; eventually the first Wellville Advisor overstepped his role, including (but not limited to) assuming the HR interim executive director role without the consent of locals, Wellville or New Venture Fund</p>	<p>In its initial phases: HR focused on its own structure and funding; engaged a vendor to create an interactive data portal available to the community; and launched initiatives, including Safe Rx, Hope Center, and other associated programming (see below)</p> <p>Over time: HR experienced multiple executive director resignations and other challenges to ongoing sustainability</p> <p>Wellville’s involvement ended at the request of HR in October 2023 (see below); the experience underscored the importance of: ongoing communication, among Wellville's own team members as well as with/among locals; establishing and checking-in on agreements; and shared commitment to learn and improve together – guidance/advice is just as important for national initiatives like Wellville as it is for local collaborators</p>
<p>Inclusion of First Peoples</p>	<p>Engaged First Peoples (Pomo Tribes) through a process leading up to the 2022 Gathering in Lake County; worked together to center their voices to lead off the event; supported efforts to more meaningfully include First Peoples in Hope Rising</p>	<p>First Peoples are now represented in Hope Rising</p> <p>Because of a cascade of missteps leading up to and during the 2023 Wellville Gathering, some but not all of which were Wellville’s (and its partner’s) mistakes, these relationships deteriorated and eventually led to Hope Rising cutting ties with Wellville</p>

LAKE COUNTY, CA (cont.)		
What the Community Did	How Wellville Was Involved	What Happened
Safe Rx: a program that provides substance use data, connections to treatment services, awareness / education, and policy advocacy	Supported program start up; coached local team	Increased education about substance misuse disorder and the use of naloxone to prevent overdoses; established four naloxone stations; made narcan available in many schools and other county buildings; hosted youth summits and opioid abatement settlement workgroups
Smart Start Bright Future: a collective of partners focused on improving child and family wellbeing	Supported program start up; coached local team	Expanded local services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility Wizard – on-line services bank to enable quick connections to resources • Family Resource Navigator at Sutter Lakeside Hospital connects families to resources during child’s first year • Enhanced after school programming – more after school opportunities that keep kids safe and inspire them to learn • 10,000 Degrees – expanded this nonprofit to Lake County to help students from low-income families get to and through college
Hope Center: a 21-bed low-barrier interim housing program in the town of Clearlake (opened in 2020)	Supported program start up; coached local team	Established center that provides shelter and case management to resolve barriers to independent living; Adventist Health assumed operations in 2023; letting go of operating responsibility was an important lesson learned for Hope Rising
Hope Rising was selected as a California Accountable Communities for Health Initiative (CACHI) community	Supported Hope Rising’s application process and participation in CACHI	CACHI provided some operating funding for Hope Rising for a period of time, as well as technical assistance, and connected Lake County to state priorities and initiatives as well as other CACHI communities

NATIONAL		
National Initiatives	How Wellville Was Involved	What Happened
Broad national wellbeing movements	Represented Wellville in multiple national networks, initiatives, advocacy work, etc.	Wellville’s learnings have influenced national thinking in the community wellbeing arena; several of the team will continue to promote our work to shift mindsets, systems, and investments toward long-term shared outcomes
Intermediary Learning Network (ILN): a group of 12 national, multi-site health initiatives	Participated in peer learning with national initiative leaders; exchanged insights and resources to assist communities; developed strategies to influence the field	Shared/learned/influenced together with other intermediaries of multi-site health initiatives, such as Invest Health, BUILD Health Challenge, Building Healthy Places Network, ReThink Health/Rippel, and others; Wellville is contributing to a forthcoming 10-year retrospective co-written by ILN, to be completed in 2025
National workgroups and influence opportunities (e.g. National Academy of Medicine)	Participated in multiple convenings, workgroups, published reports, and recommendations to influence national change	Provided perspective on community-driven health improvement efforts based on the experiences of Wellville communities (e.g., investing in community capacity, enablers and barriers to long-term shared interest, connecting across differences, financing and sustainability strategies)
Telling stories and identifying best practices in advancing community wellbeing	Worked with journalists (e.g. Michael Fitzgerald, Editor of Harvard Public Health Magazine); shared Wellville stories at events, on podcasts, in blog posts, etc.	Engaged national audiences and partners; invited them into the Wellville work; increased awareness of Wellville communities and opportunities to learn and spread what works
Cross-community learning and support	Connected the five Wellville communities (plus others, like Roseville, CA) to each other through the annual Wellville Gathering, monthly Virtual Wellville video calls, and other activities	Wellvillians received emotional and technical support from each other; on numerous occasions, participants described how grateful they are to hear that they are “not alone” in doing this hard work; a North Hartford community member volunteered to coordinate a cross-community group to continue monthly video calls and develop other ways to stay connected post-Wellville

What are the implications for the field?

The Wellville communities (and others) are pointing the way to more effective, equitable and sustainable approaches to health, resilience and wellbeing.

- **Approach:** National organizations can provide valuable perspectives and resources to communities. But we need to do so in harmony with local people, cultures and context. Do we show up as experts eager to implement our evidence-based models? Or are we more open and curious? It takes a patient and enduring presence to navigate the uncertainties of co-development and learning as we go.
- **Connections:** Networking within and across communities can help us spread ideas and accelerate progress. We can also convene in ways that deepen our sense of shared purpose, interdependence and belonging. Who else needs to be part of this work? What does it take to see past our assumptions about each other? How can relationship-building move from transactional to transformational?
- **Intrinsic motivation:** We look to support people in doing things they believe in, rather than incentivizing them to do what we think would be best. Yes, their instincts and beliefs should be questioned (like ours), but ultimately our process is to help them build for themselves and own the results.
- **Learning:** Cross-community research could reveal important insights, while putting data and power in the hands of local changemakers. What should be measured and who gets to decide? How can continuous learning on the ground inform the larger system? How can moving from a prescriptive strategy to an emergent one expand agency and ownership?
- **Narrative:** Our field recognizes the importance of narrative in shaping how we see the problems we face – and how we generate the public and political will to address them. How can we contribute to a national narrative shift by weaving together stories of communities? How can we work with national funders and influencers to elevate these stories? And what can we learn from cognitive and contemplative sciences about the power of changing our minds?
- **Context:** Communities are situated in larger political and social contexts that can enable or restrict their ability to make the changes they want. How can we work collectively to shift state and national policies, systems and structures so that they support community-driven health and wellbeing? How can community development advance local priorities while engaging a broader range of assets and allies?
- **Investment:** The value of community collaboration goes beyond the specific programs and services they produce, and beyond the timing of any specific project. So should the funding. How can we mobilize the resources needed for local teams to continue to lead and sustain this work? How can we co-invest in shared solutions to shared priorities? And how can we help quantitative-minded funders – including the public sector – understand the value of our approach?

- **Reality check:** Wellville was and is an amazing learning experience. As shown above, it demonstrates the value of listening to communities and helping them to find their voice and sense of agency. Every community has more resources than it may know, and can rally by collaborating to solve its own problems. However, Wellville is not a sustainable or easily replicable model without more public, broader-based, continuing investment in basic resources such as child care, education, better maternal care, transportation and the like.

Wellville has shared these insights through national work, some of which will continue in 2025 and beyond.