

TALKING POINTS SAMPLE

Community Heart & Soul™ is community based.

[ORGANIZATION] is excited to be taking the lead to bring Community Heart & Soul to [TOWN]. Community Heart & Soul has helped to transform small towns across the country by bringing residents together to determine what they value most about their town and getting people to see strengths and possibilities where they may have seen obstacles. Community Heart & Soul lays out a roadmap that then leads to concrete actions the town can take to make positive change.

What sets Community Heart & Soul apart from other community development efforts, and why we like it, is No.1 this project is organized and carried out by residents; No. 2 the project leads to achievable actions, some of which can be acted on right away, others may be more long term. This is not a plan written by consultants that sits on a shelf after the consultants finish their work.

Community Heart & Soul transforms towns.

Based on success in other towns, Community Heart & Soul has the potential to be a catalyst for positive change in [TOWN]. Other Heart & Soul communities have seen the process build leadership, boost volunteerism, bridge divides, create partnerships, preserve historical sites, increase resources for k-12 education and strengthen economies.

The method was developed and field tested over a decade. More than a dozen towns in Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Montana, Maine, New Hampshire, Ohio, Rhode Island and Vermont have worked with Orton Family Foundation on Community Heart & Soul projects.

Community Heart & Soul gets results.

A town coming together and focusing on what matters most to residents forms a strong foundation for positive change. Residents start to see their town through a different lens. Townspeople take pride in their hometown once again. That then gets reflected in a town's plans for the future, often literally when Heart & Soul leads to a master plan for a town. With more confidence and optimism expressed locally, investors are more likely to invest, voters are more likely to approve a bond and suddenly a town is transforming in a positive way. Here are some examples:

- In Biddeford, Maine, in the seven years since a Community Heart & Soul project started there, \$21 million has been invested in the city's downtown, a major

redevelopment of abandoned textile mills is underway and 90 new businesses have come to town. Video: <https://vimeo.com/122431940>

- In Cortez, Colorado, the town had a difficult time passing a school bond to replace a dilapidated school. The measure failed several times. After Heart & Soul engaged the whole community in learning more about the need, the bond passed overwhelmingly.
- In Gardiner, Maine, more than \$500,000 in Community Development Block Grants have been awarded for a food co-op, a beef, lamb and pork facility and a craft cider operation.
- In Polson, Montana, a local resident started a food cooperative downtown. Plans for the business were guided by resident input gathered during Heart & Soul. As a result, in addition to providing a market for local farmers' produce and meat and getting healthy food to townspeople, the coop expanded to become a community center with programming for youth and adults.

Right now we are creating partnerships to fund the project.

[ORGANIZATION] is taking the lead in organizing for Community Heart & Soul. Heart & Soul is a typically a two-year program and will have a full-time coordinator. [ORGANIZATION] is working to build a partnership to support the project. [ORGANIZATION] has committed \$[XXX,XXX]. We are looking to local businesses for an additional \$[XX,XXX] and [NAME] has committed \$[XX,XXX]. The goal is to be ready to start in [DATE].