



Listening to the  
Community



Together **4** All  
Family Support Project  
Better Lives  
for Children & Young People

# Together 4 All Community Consultation Report

June 2007

# Acknowledgements

**Together 4 All**  
**Moylinn House Resource Centre**  
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**Craigavon**  
**BT65 5BE**  
**[www.together4all.org](http://www.together4all.org)**

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Trust)

## 1. Introduction

The Together 4 All project is located in the borough of Craigavon, 25 miles from Belfast. The Together 4 All Planning Group's intention was to design an innovative strategy to serve children that live in four areas of Aghagallon, Bleary, Brownlow and Lurgan within Craigavon. The four areas comprise 13 electoral ward areas and are served by a Health and Social Care Trust, an Education and Library Board and 24 schools. The total population in the four Together 4 All areas is 37,193 living in 12,703 households. The child population is 11,519. Within the Together 4 All areas.

The beginning of the development of the Together 4 All strategy was initiated by the Atlantic Philanthropies who approached the Southern Area Children and Young Peoples Committee to establish a local partnership to take forward a long-term plan.

The Together 4 All Planning Group was set up in April 2006 to take forward and develop a strategy for children and young people in the Together 4 All area to improve outcomes for children and young people. The Planning Group brought to the process a range of skills and expertise from the community, voluntary and statutory sectors that also included parents from the area. In designing the strategy, the Planning Group were conscious that the voice of the community, and in particular, children and young people would be heard and their views taken on board when agreeing the vision and content of the strategy. This process was intended to be inclusive and transparent so that the community in which the strategy would serve would be confident that they played a vital role in its development and shared vision.

This report sets out the findings from a range of consultations across the Together 4 All area that took place from January 2006 to November 2006. These results together with the findings from the Children and Young People's Consultation Report and the Epidemiology that was carried out through schools provided the Planning Group with a strong evidence base that would decide the outcomes to be achieved for children and young people in the Together 4 All area.

The collective knowledge of all the participants in the consultation process has assisted the Planning Group in shaping the vision and ten year strategy. Together 4 All will continue to listen to the community as the strategy is developed and implemented.

## 2. Methodology

### ***"How do I get the opportunity to meet others?"***

In addition to the community consultations, Together 4 All carried out consultations with 1600 children and young people using a range of methods such as arts, drama and sport. The findings from the children and young people are compiled in a separate report.<sup>1</sup>

In carrying out the community consultations, Together 4 All was conscious that the process needed to be inclusive and user friendly. The Together 4 All team used existing community organisations to tap into. Together 4 All hosted over fifty consultation events and sessions through 2006. (Appendix 1)

In addition, various fun days and events were used to add value to tailored workshop sessions. At the fun day events, people completed questionnaires that asked "What community do you belong to?" and "What prevents children and young people from being Healthy, Happy and Safe?" (Appendix 2). One hundred questionnaires were completed.

In total, 750 people took part in the community consultations that Together 4 All hosted. These were organised to suit various needs and we had the support of parents, community workers, voluntary, community and statutory organisations who all gave up their time to contribute to the process. Together 4 All also hosted workshops that were tailored to meet the needs of Minority Ethnic communities to ensure their voice was heard in the process.

In organising the consultation sessions the team used an informal approach to ensure maximum participation and inclusiveness. The sessions were interactive with the facilitator acting as guide, with the participants leading on discussions about their community.

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<sup>1</sup>. Children and Young People Report, Together 4 All, May 2007

Within the community consultations we asked the following:

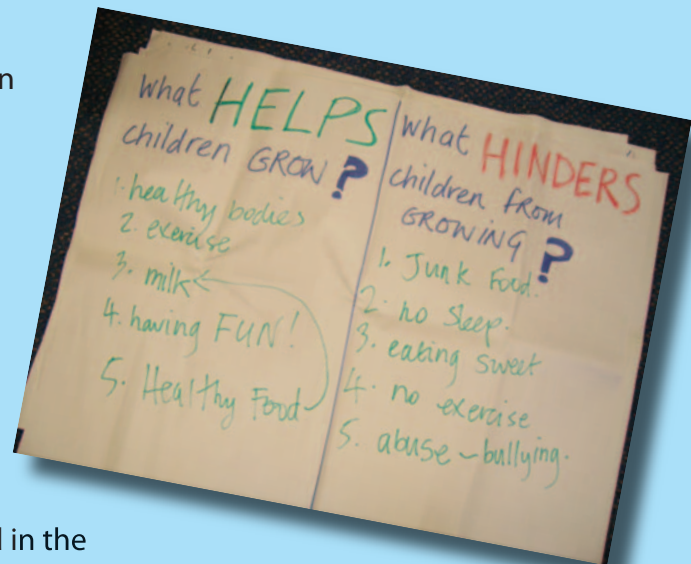
***“What are the barriers in preventing our children in being safe, healthy, happy and confident?”***

This stimulated discussions around the issues that face children and young people in growing up in the Together 4 All area. One of the most frequently noted answers was growing up in a segregated community and feeling safe.

This was also cited in the results from the children and young people themselves.

The sessions also looked at particular issues that relate to different stages of a child’s life. For example, early years 0-4 age group, 5-11 years and 12- 18 years. Participants discussed the importance of transitional stages in a child’s development such as pre- school to primary, primary school to post primary and post primary into adulthood.

To ensure that all communities were represented in the planning process, Together 4 All carried out consultations with various minority ethnic community groups. These sessions were translated into various languages as needed, to ensure maximum participation.



## 3. The Voice of the Together 4 All Community

### 3.1 Findings

The following pages provide an insight into some of the discussions held and give an indication of the thinking that was behind the identification of the outcomes Together 4 All want to achieve.

#### **“Expectations Not High”** (Quote from Parent)

In analysing the findings, Together 4 All separated the results into various categories.

The themes that emerged from the consultation sessions were as follows:

#### **Parenting Issues**

- Lack of tailored Parenting Programmes
- Stress
- Not enough peer support
- Inadequate parent voice in planning
- Lack of information
- Not enough signposting for parents
- Insufficient consistent support for young parents
- Insufficient drop in services
- Not enough support for fathers
- Need more encouragement for parents to become involved - look at more innovative and new ways
- Insufficient support for working parents becoming involved with their children
- Insufficient information and support for teenage pregnancies for families

#### **Families**

- No role models
- Family unit diminishing
- Crisis / break ups - not enough support
- Not enough choices
- Not enough activities that involve whole family
- Families needs not being met by Statutory services

- Encourage respect in families
- Issues around marginalised youth - children and parents can't be bothered - not enough support for this
- Not enough workplace support for family activities
- Not enough help and support for non traditional families

### **Overall Community Fears**

- Safety - sectarian issues such as violence, knife culture
- Images - clothing, scarves, football tops etc denotes type of school or religion
- Anti social behaviour spiralling

### **EDUCATION**

#### **Parents / Community perspective**

- Children left out in favour of high standards
- Lack of opportunities
- More support needed for career opportunities

#### **Youth Clubs**

- Insufficient opening hours
- Lack of outreach workers
- Keep children off the streets
- Lack of choice and facilities
- Lack of one to one support at venues if needed
- Lack of support for youth development in a range of activities

#### **Schools / Teachers perspective**

- Lack of resources in primary school for 1:1 tuition
- Lack of classroom assistants
- Inadequate support for learning disabilities
- Timescales for assessing a child is too long – 6 months
- No transition support
- Parents need to be more involved
- More transition support
- Link officers needed
- Lack of safe places in schools for students
- Teacher training needs more up to date and flexible to deal with issues- cultural diversity,

counselling, support, signposting etc

- Teachers need to be heard on what is needed

### **COMMUNITIES**

- No local points for activities
- Not enough play areas
- Not enough community spirit
- Not enough connections between services in the community
- Not enough mentoring for smaller community groups to plan
- Lack of access to information
- Not enough community voice in planning
- Not enough training in communities around respect / cultural diversity
- Not enough sharing of resources
- Respect for community - litter, vandalism etc
- Not enough evening entertainment
- Unemployment high in some areas - target opportunities / training
- Alcohol and drug misuse in communities
- Not enough community resources to target youth – prevent anti social behaviour
- Lack of community policing
- Not enough safe / secure places to play / hang out
- Raise confidence in communities

### **Cross community**

- Not enough opportunities to mix with all communities
- No integration across services and communities

### **Paramilitaries**

- Address bullying and paramilitaries
- Not enough respecting difference

### **HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE ISSUES**

#### **Lack of**

- Counselling
- Mediation
- Support for mental health- particularly men and youth
- Lack of training tailored to suit varying communities and age groups around specific issues-

diet, unknown risks, sexual health, disorders

- Parents not listening to Health Visitors- different approach?
- Lack of consistency for new mothers in terms of Health Visiting

### **Alcohol, Drugs and Bullying**

- Not enough awareness programmes
- Too much peer pressures
- Primary to post primary- peer pressure a problem in trying out new things
- Underage drinking
- Impact of drinking on mental health
- Drugs increasing
- Eating disorders increasing
- Bullying increasing
- Not enough resources within localities to deal with issues
- Not enough cross agency working
- Policing on under age drinking and drugs an issues

### **Self Esteem Issues**

- Break the circle of low aspirations and achievements
- No vision of potential
- Not enough early self esteem building

### **Childcare**

- No accessible drop off childcare in own areas
- Not enough cost effective childcare during working hours
- Not enough 2-3 pm clubs

### **Summer Schemes**

- Gap for 11-18 yr olds

### **Parents of Children with Disabilities**

- Lack of leisure activities
- Lack of training for mainstream providers of leisure activities
- Lack of awareness from the general public around disability
- Lack of support for siblings
- Services too office led
- Not enough "care packages" at an early stage

- Not enough transitional support for 14+
- Lack of support for young carers
- Inconsistency in support
- Not enough integration into mainstream services
- Not enough monitoring to identify those who need support

### **Child Protection**

- Puts off volunteers - needs reshaped
- Overcome community fear of Child Protection arena - not user friendly
- Limited information on Child Protection – the way it's presented

### **General Health Issues**

- Waiting lists too long
- Constant referrals
- Reaction to crisis rather than prevention
- Safe places for young people from self harm
- Social isolation for children at crisis points
- Increase in mental health issues in pupils

### **The results were further analysed into the following age groups:**

#### **0-4 yrs**

- Behavioural management
- Lack of support in home
- Too much worrying about being a parent
- More promotion of parent and toddler groups
- Not enough informal peer support for parents- link this with other issues, health, education etc
- Lack of modern parenting classes
- Lack of accessible local venues
- Lack of innovation in promoting parenting skills
- Not enough identification of community hubs
- Inadequate support for transition to playgroup, nursery, primary school
- Transport an issue
- Not enough "one stop shops"/ centres for consistency in child's development
- More support for child's social skills

#### **5-11 yrs**

- Lack of transition support
- Lack of support for parents with disabilities
- Children worrying too much about bullying
- Lack of confidence
- Not enough addressing of major issues early- bullying, eating disorders, mental health etc
- Not enough programmes where children have a role to play

### **12-18 yrs**

- Not enough talking or addressing difficult issues
- Not enough outreach to young people to look at issues and encourage involvement
- Schools not utilised enough
- Services in isolation – encourage more integration
- Lack of self esteem and promotion of self worth
- Not enough relationship building with youth
- Inappropriate sexual behaviours
- Not enough choices
- Not enough innovative ways of highlighting issues
- No peer education

The discussions that took place around the issues showed frequency in terms of the barriers that impact a child's development. In particular, bullying, peer pressure, mental health and transition support were all priority issues that needed to be addressed if Together 4 All was to impact positively on children's development into adulthood.

### ***"Get to know "them" from the other side!"***

Respect for others and awareness and understanding of cultural diversity were identified as significant issues that are especially important in the Together 4 All area where communities are divided and segregated. The discussions that took place with children and young people raised similar issues. They want to feel safer in their communities.

### **3.2 Specific Issues Raised By The Minority Ethnic Community Consultations**

In the Together 4 All area there is a growing population from minority ethnic backgrounds including Chinese, Asian, Eastern European and Irish Travellers. At present there are approximately 200 children from minority ethnic backgrounds. To ensure that all communities were represented in the planning process, Together 4 All carried out consultations with various minority ethnic community groups. (Appendix 1)

Analysis of the findings showed the following issues that impacted on a child's development.

- Children's Rights were not upheld

- Racism, including physical and verbal abuse
- Lack of access to service provision in key areas
- Lack of English language support, interpretation and translation

**Themes that emerged through the consultations were:**

**Health**

- Language Barriers
- Lack of knowledge about service entitlement
- Lack of service provision
- Cultural differences
- Mental Health
- Drug/Alcohol Abuse
- Diet
- Lack of parenting skills to assist child development

**Language Barriers**

- Because children do not attend nursery school they do not learn English
- No interpreters available for parents to discuss issues with teachers/schools
- Difficulty in helping young people do homework as parents' English is poor
- Children moved down a year when they struggle due to lack of English
- Schools felt it was difficult to communicate with parents
- Schools felt that the language problem was very different across ethnic minority populations
- Teachers cannot assure children that their mum is coming back as they do not speak the language
- Children interpreting for parents (may not always report accurately)

**Racial Abuse/Tensions**

- Racial abuse
- Many children are bullied – cannot explain what is happening to them
- Children feel isolated if they are one of only a small number of minority ethnic children
- Traveller having to move because of intimidation
- Minority Ethnic children 'getting the blame' in school

**Lack of Support**

- Lack of support for children, hence they do not understand homework
- Difficulty in helping young people do homework as parents' English is poor
- Disabled young people cannot cope in mainstream school

- Private tutoring too costly
- Need computers for most subjects – very expensive and unrealistic if you are a nomadic Traveller

#### **Difficulty for Children in Making Friends**

- Lack of integration into community and having to work
- Cannot make friends as they do not see them out of school
- Unwelcoming school environment/culture

#### **Lack of After-School/Holiday Activities**

- During school holidays there is no care available as both parents are working
- Summer schemes too expensive
- No places to take young people
- Some people send their children back to their own country during holidays or bring other family members over
- No after school classes, homework classes, drama, dance sports

#### **Problems with Service Provision**

- Too much emphasis on academic achievement
- Lack of variation in schooling – too focused on religion
- No central location to obtain information about schools
- Schools full, cannot enrol children
- Children leaving schools at different times can be difficult if parents are working
- School uniforms expensive
- Lack of healthy options in food

#### **Cultural Difficulties**

- Teachers do not understand Minority Ethnic children, their culture and issues, therefore less attention is paid to them
- No cultural option in food

### **Lack of Information/Services**

- During school holidays there is no care available as both parents are working – this could lead to isolation and safety issues
- Lack of knowledge/information about who to go to about concerns/issues
- Many young people are not registered with GP or dentist
- Lack of affordable childcare facilities
- Lack of transport available to get to services
- Poor housing conditions
- No housing schemes available for travellers
- Overcrowding
- Unlawful encampment laws

### **Employment/Unemployment**

- Unemployment due to lack of child care facilities
- Parents work long shifts often at nights no one to look after children
- Lack of opportunity to expand their education- so they can move on from factory work/catering work
- Both parents have to work, lack of interaction with children

### **Transition Difficulties**

- Moving from another country
- Having to leave children behind for a while
- Changing jobs
- Changing houses
- Children often arrive with only one parent as the other parent has to stay in own country – hence causes instability
- People have high expectations when they come to Northern Ireland ; often disappointed and they become depressed

### **Family/Community Issues**

- If parents are heavy drinkers/smokers
- Marriage break-up/difficulties
- Domestic abuse
- Lack of family support – as family are in own country
- Lack of awareness among Traveller community regarding health issues

### **Poor Housing Conditions**

- Poor Housing Conditions/Cramped

### **Racial Discrimination**

- Discrimination – ‘Migrants taking Northern Irish jobs’
- People worried about the huge increase in migrants entering will mean less jobs available for them and their children

### **High Cost of Living**

- House prices increasing dramatically
- School uniforms very expensive, as are school meals
- Heating costs too high
- Childcare costs
- Difficult to get transport to services

### **Cultural/Peer Pressures**

- Minority Ethnic children want more as they see other children have things they do not have

### **Family/Community Issues**

- If parents are heavy drinkers/smokers

### **Abuse within own Country**

- Sex Trade by own community

### **Lack of Discipline/Respect Among NI Children**

- Schools not near houses, lack of safety for children
- Other children have bad behaviour hence they are a bad influence
- Lack of respect of local people towards the local neighbour, e.g. kicking cars, antisocial behaviour
- Lack of discipline of local children

### **Feelings of Fear/Isolation**

- Afraid to go out at night, especially Saturday nights due to drinking
- Parents unaware of safe places to take children – hence they are confined to school/home

The results from the Minority Ethnic consultations highlighted that children coming from a Minority Ethnic background are experiencing racial abuse and isolation in the communities in which they live. Lack of cultural awareness and understanding, contribute to further isolation and exclusion. This in turn has an impact on a child's mental health that impairs their development into adulthood.

## 4. Conclusion

Clearly, Together 4 All has a challenging task ahead in developing a strategy that will lead to an improvement in the outcomes that are identified. One of the key challenges of Together 4 All is that children feel that they have a sense of belonging and pride within the community that they live in. For some, living in the Together 4 All area is frightening. In order for children to feel safe and secure, Together 4 All needs to address the barriers that prevent this.

Together 4 All learned a lot from the consultation process that together with the Epidemiology Study and other research will assist in the identification of the outcomes that the project wants to achieve for all children and young people in the area.

## Appendix 1

### **TOGETHER 4 ALL COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS 2006**

- Public information meeting held in Brownlow Library
- Public information meeting held in Bleary Young Farmers' Hall.
- Public information meeting held in St Patrick's Primary School in Aghagallon
- Public information meeting held in Lurgan Town Hall
- Consultation with Children's Services Planning Disabled Children and Young People Working Group
- Public Workshop carried out by Southern Area Children's Services Planning – Black and Minority Ethnic Children and Young People Working Group – Armagh City Hotel – all day event. The purpose of the workshop was to agree the main issues/concerns regarding Black and Minority Ethnic children and young people in the Southern area and to use this information to inform the Family Support Project Plan
- Consultation with ethnic minority communities - settled communities, Travellers, Asylum Seekers and Migrant Workers
- Health and Social Needs Assessment was conducted on Travelling Communities by Craigavon and Banbridge Health and Social Services Trust
- Consultation with Young Carers Group
- Consultation with Children's Services Planning - Young People Leaving Care Working Group
- Zero-8-Teen art consultation with children
- Community and Parent Planning Group representatives information session at Moylinn House
- Business in the Community information session
- Information event was held for Lurgan/Brownlow School Teachers at Mount Zion, Lurgan
- HomeStart information meeting
- Speech and Language consultation event
- Information session with ContinYou

- Services Planning Working Group on Children, Young People and Offending – Consultation/ Workshop
- Craigavon and Banbridge Early years Fora - Information Session
- Follow up session with Business in the Community
- Craigavon Travellers Support Committee and NIPPA, completed a report on behalf of the Travelling community
- NIPPA information session
- Consultation with Pakistani Community – Moyraverty / Craigavon Muslim Community
- Chrysalis Women's Centre
- Information session with sports representatives
- Brownlow Net Consultation
- Monbrief Residents Association - Information Session
- Drumgor Residents Association – Information Session
- The Planning Group members consultation
- Drumellan Residents Association – Information Session
- Delta Parenting – Information Session
- Jethro Centre in Lurgan – Information Session
- Black and Minority Ethnic Team - Chinese parents with children under the age of 5 were consulted at Drumellan Family Learning Complex
- Brownlow Net follow up the Information Session
- Completion of questionnaires at Mourneview / Grey Estate Community Association Cultural fun day
- The project attended Zero-8-teen Play Day at Brownlow College. Promotional items were distributed to children. Parents completed questionnaires. Art workshop with children
- Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership – Information Session
- Craigavon Borough Council – Information Session with Community Development Team
- Extended school meetings to agree action plan to engage schools

- Consultation with Vietnamese/Chinese community at Rosmoyle Craigavon
- Brownlow Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Presentation and Consultation
- Environmental Fun Day at Lurgan Park. Organised by Craigavon Council and supported by the project, Craigavon and Banbridge Health and Social Services Trust, Age Concern Northern Ireland and Brownlow Campus Sports Trust. Distribution of promotional items and free fruit in order to raise the profile of the project. Parents completed questionnaires to give their views of issues and solutions
- "Country Comes to Town" in Portadown. Distributed promotional items / questionnaires completed
- Chinese Communities from Portadown, Lurgan, Craigavon and Banbridge
- Promotional items / questionnaires completed by parents at Aghagallon Fun Day
- Lurgan Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership information session and a consultation event
- Public Consultation meeting arranged in Lurgan at Lurgan Town Hall
- Public Consultation meeting in Aghagallon at St Patrick's Primary School
- Public Consultation meeting at Bleary Young Farmers Hall
- Key local Lurgan community, voluntary and private childcare providers Consultation
- Key local Brownlow community, voluntary and private childcare providers Consultation

**Throughout 2006, Craigavon and Banbridge Health and Social Services Trust completed a range of health consultations/ workshop with their staff. These include the following departments:-**

Community Dieticians and Paediatric Dieticians,  
Family Planning,  
Occupational Therapists,  
Allied Health Professionals,  
Social Workers,  
Health Visitors,  
Corporate Communications Team,  
Learning Disability Team,  
Sensory Impaired,  
Visually Impaired,  
Mental Health Practitioners,  
Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatry,  
Specialist Nurses,  
School Nurses and School Nurse Team Managers,  
Residential Workers,  
Young Peoples Project,  
Child Protection Nurse Specialist,  
Assistant Director of Child Care,  
Tissues Viability Nurse (Infection Control),  
Information and Planning Team,  
Family Placement Service,  
Macmillan Nurses,  
Team Managers Health Visiting,  
Hospital Midwife,  
Midwifery Manager,  
Primary Mental Health Visitors,  
Health Promotion Staff,  
PCIS Health Care,  
Dental Officer,  
Physiotherapist,  
Speech and Language Therapists,  
BME Health Visitor,  
BME Health Visiting Team Manager,  
Community Children's Nurses,  
Community Children's Nurse Team Managers,  
Children's Eneuretic Specialist Health Visitor,  
Community Psychiatric Nurses,  
Lay Health Worker Travellers,  
Children living with Domestic Violence group  
Bereaved Children and the Children of Terminally ill Parents  
Children Services Planning living with Domestic Violence working group

## Appendix 2

### Community / Parent Questionnaire

The Together 4 All Planning Group for Children and Young People is putting together a proposal for a 10 Year Plan for

- children and young people in Lurgan / Brownlow / Aghagallon / Bleary and
- Ethnic Minority Communities within the Southern Board Area.

This plan is called the 'Together 4 All 10 Year Strategy'.

The proposal is in the early stages of being developed.

Today is the first step in the process of linking with the Community to hear what the Community thinks should be included in a 10 year plan for children and young people. We would greatly value your input and like to hear what you have to say by taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

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Have you answered this questionnaire before? Yes / No

If 'yes' please DO NOT proceed with the questionnaire.

GENDER OF THE PERSON BEING INTERVIEWED (please tick)

FEMALE  MALE

WHICH COMMUNITY AREA DO YOU LIVE IN?

Lurgan / Brownlow / Aghagallon / Bleary / other: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of an ethnic minority community? YES  NO

### Questions

1) How long have you lived in your area?

2) What age group do you fit into?

18 – 20 years  21 – 30 years  31 – 40 years

41 – 50 years  51 – 65 years  65+ years

3) What services, currently available for children and young people in your area, are most beneficial for you and your family?

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4) In your opinion, what prevents children and young people, in your area, from having a safe, healthy, happy childhood?

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5) What services would you like to be made available or improved for Children and young people in your area?

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If you would like to receive information about the together 4 all family support project, please may we have your contact details?

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Telephone Number** \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your time**





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[www.together4all.org](http://www.together4all.org)