

## 1. ACCEPTING



### MAIN THEMES

Feeling welcome is tied to self-worth. Safety is important. Diversity in leadership positions is desired. A focus on neighborhoods and better neighboring is seen as a path toward becoming a more accepting community.

#### Quotes

- "People need to feel welcome, accepted, safe, and loved to succeed."
- "People of different backgrounds should feel equally at home in their community. Many people feel Holland is not really their home."
- "I want a community where neighbors know each other."

## 2. EMPATHETIC



### MAIN THEMES

An empathetic community is one that listens to understand, respects all points of view, and engages in intentional dialog around different perspectives.

#### Quotes

- "People can have radically different views, but still treat each other politely and respectfully. Even if you disagree with someone, they are still a decent human being."
- "We need to find those champions who are dedicated to listening and sharing the voices of all."

## 3. OPPORTUNITIES



### MAIN THEMES

Removing obstacles so everyone can access resources, increased access to information about opportunities, using third spaces / festivals to facilitate people meeting each other, providing more entertainment options.

#### Quotes

- "We are an asset-rich community and we just need to build better connections to help everyone access resources and opportunities - break down barriers."
- "We need third spaces with both activities and the ability to just hang out."

## 4. LIFELONG LEARNERS



### MAIN THEMES

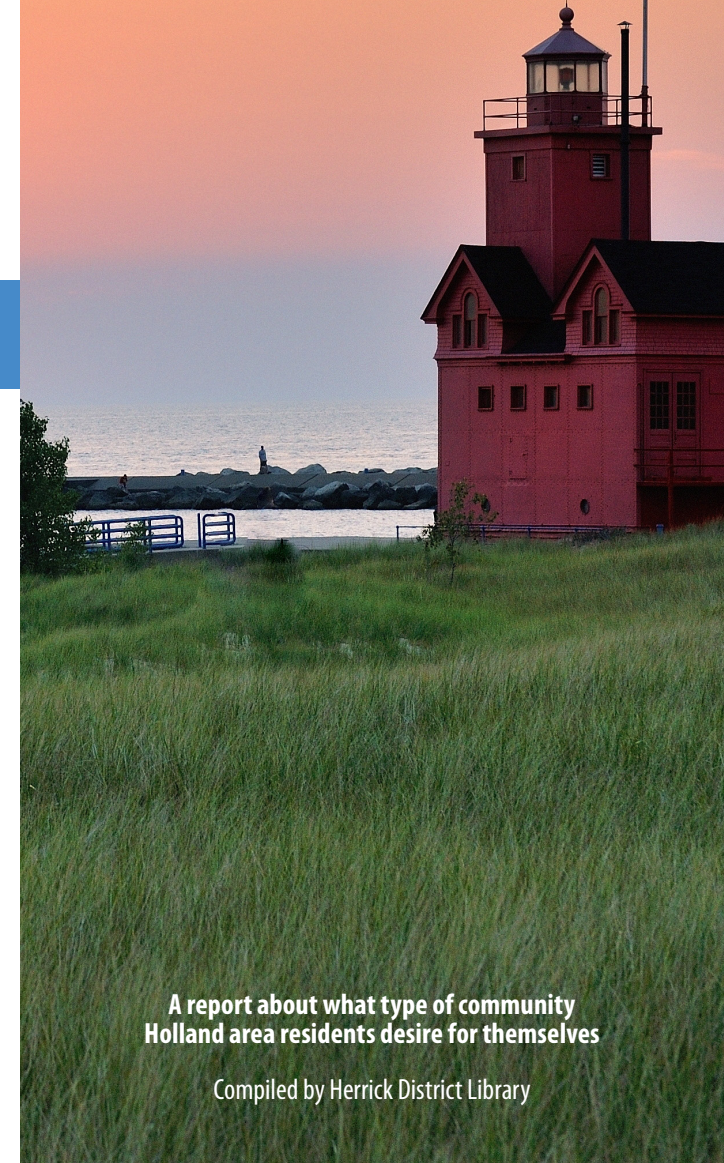
Learning is a foundational piece for becoming a more accepting community. K-12 education should connect students to the community.

#### Quotes

- "Education is one of the tools needed to flourish in a community. It is important to me because when people learn, they grow and can leave the ignorance behind. Consequently, they change, and they're more able to understand and change the world."
- "Learning leads to compassion - people learn about people when they're more connected and understanding of each other."

# THE GREATER HOLLAND AREA'S COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

*accepting • empathetic • opportunities • lifelong learners*



**A report about what type of community  
Holland area residents desire for themselves**

Compiled by Herrick District Library

**Herrick District Library has spent the past year engaged in a community listening project.** HDL began to turn outward, and listen to those in our community, in order to understand what matters to us. The library engaged in over 80 small group and individual conversations to identify greater Holland's aspirations.

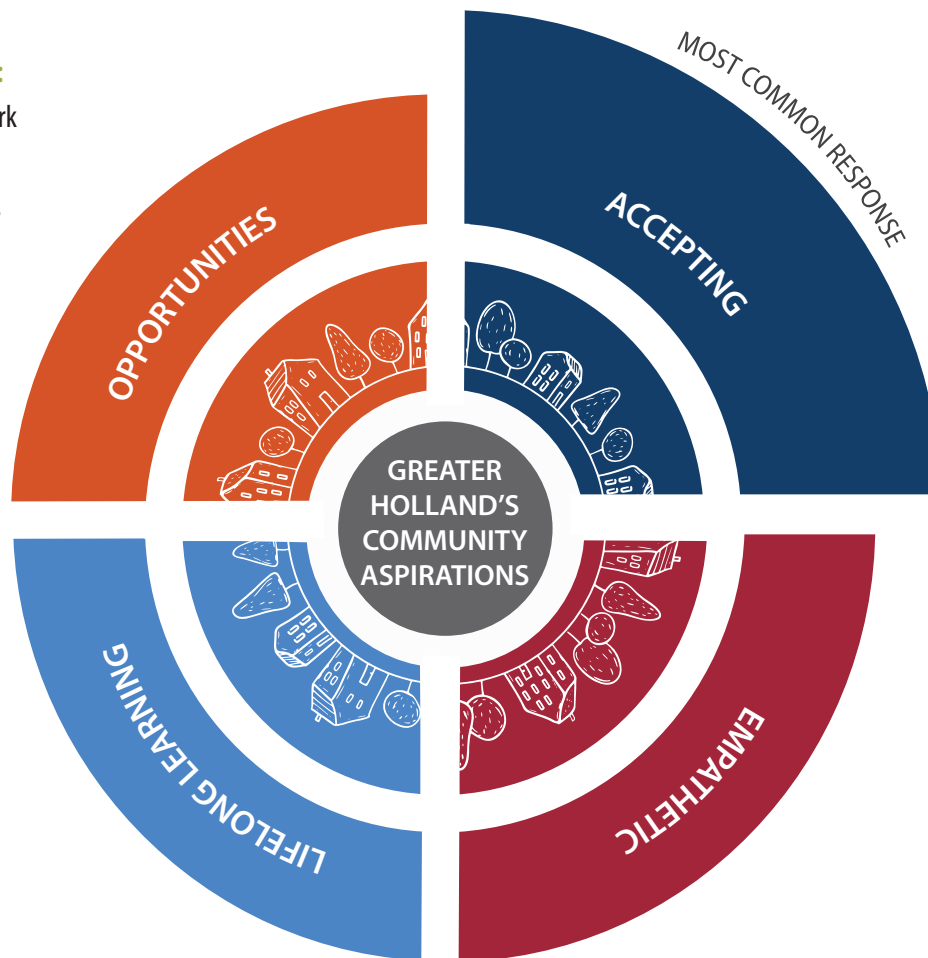
**The library's goals for this project are:**

1. To use what we learn to shape the work we do at Herrick District Library
2. To share what we learn broadly across the community

**We asked the following questions in our conversations:**

- What type of community do you want to live in?
- Why is that important?
- How is that different from how you see things now?
- What are some of the things that need to happen to create that kind of change?

HDL staff members held conversations with a variety of people across the community. The responses told us that Holland desires to be an accepting, empathetic community that values lifelong learning with opportunities for all.



The conversations in this listening project provided the community with a way to connect and share its hopes for the Holland area. People were able to share concerns in a manner that helped them name aspirations for something better than what they are currently experiencing. These conversations have allowed Holland to imagine an alternative future for our community. We hope these conversations have opened doors for others to join in moving toward this preferred future.

**Holland aspires to be an accepting, empathetic community that values lifelong learning with opportunities for all.** Who will join us as we work toward that goal? Who will be part of making the Greater Holland area a more accepting community?

**For more information visit [herrickdl.org/communityconversations](http://herrickdl.org/communityconversations)**

