

# The Toolbox

## Index:

**I. Starting a Connection Project** – *Mike Green, ABCD Training Group*

**II. Beyond Welfare Community Leadership Team: Purposes and Principles** – *Beyond Welfare*

**III. Tools for Building an Inclusive, Citizen-Led, Citizen Governed Community Association** – *Beyond Welfare*

**IV. Guidelines for Listening Pairs** – *Beyond Welfare*

**V. Blue Island Community Resource Inventory** – *SACC Project, Metropolitan Family Services*

**VI. Blue Island Business Survey** - *SACC Project, Metropolitan Family Services*

**VII. Note to Our Elders: Don'ts and Do's for Youth Leadership** – *Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative*

**VIII. Elements of a Neighborhood Based Initiative to Build Inclusive Communities** – *Involving All Neighbors*

**IX. Qualities of Connectors** – *Involving All Neighbors*

**X. Attributes of Community Connectors** – *Waisman Center*

**STARTING A CONNECTION PROJECT** by Mike Green  
([www.mike-green.org](http://www.mike-green.org))

**THE “GETTING STARTED” GROUP:** The first step is to form an initiating group to do the work to prepare for a connections project. This group might be one agency but is best made up of a mix of local leaders with access to needed resources (from government, non profits, and business) and some local citizen leaders (residents, associations, congregations) with strong relationships, trust, and wisdom about the local community. Several questions will need to be addressed:

- A.) What is the geographical area where we will work?
- B.) What group of labeled people will we connect?
- C.) Who are the best prospects among local citizens as core members of our connector group to help connect labeled people? These prospects should be well-connected people from a variety of different groups in the community such as different neighborhood areas, ethnic groups, religious groups, business, agencies, and associational life.
- D.) Where do we get funding for at least three years to pay for one staff person as paid connections organizer?
- E.) Who will we hire as our paid staff person? This “connector organizer” needs to be a well connected person in the community where you will work; a person who is good at making relationships, believes all people have contributions to make, can see her community as a good welcoming place. This person also needs to be good at organizing groups of people helping the connectors group develop, work together, make connections, and is creative at solving any problems that come up with connections.
- F.) What are the “doors to open” before start up? Are there relationships to make with local human service agencies to open the door for connections? With families? With advocacy groups? Media? Law enforcement? Others?

**THE CONNECTIONS ORGANIZER:** The organizer will organize the core group of connectors. Her work is first to have many 1:1 conversations to identify and develop a connectors group and then to support the connectors group making connections of labeled people to the community. “Connectors” are local citizen leaders who are trusted, influential, have a wide circle of relationships and are ready to actively use their relationships to make connections for labeled people to the community. Issues to address in relation to the organizer are:

- A.) How will our organizer get guidance and direction while forming the connectors group? Once the connectors group is formed, the “getting started group” will back off and the “connectors group” will lead the project and guide their organizer.
- B.) How will our organizer learn and develop more skill? Who should our connector visit to learn about connections organizing? Who could consult with our organizer and our project?

- C.) Who are the people we need for the connectors group? How many do we want to involve? From which sectors of the community such as business, congregations, associations, neighborhood areas? The organizer will invite new people to join the connectors group with guidance from existent members of the connectors group.

**THE CONNECTORS' GROUP:** The connectors' group will listen to the dreams, interests, and gifts that could be contributed of people to connect. They will then figure out good places to connect people where there will be opportunities... What does the person to connect want to contribute? Where is the right place which offers an opportunity for connection and contribution? Who knows the right people or right place? The connection group members will each use her or his personal connections to open doors for people to be connected. The connections organizer works for the connection group helping them make connections and assisting them to keep the connections strong. Some questions to answer for the connection group are:

- A.) What is the name of the project?
- B.) What is our vision and goals for the project?
- C.) What are our plans and budget for this next year? For the following years?
- D.) Who do we all know as potential connection places among local residents, associations, congregations, business, and agencies? The connectors and organizer will interview potential connection places developing ever more good connection places.
- E.) How will we discover more connection places among local residents, associations, congregations, business, non-profits, and government agencies?

**PEOPLE TO CONNECT:** People who are labeled move from the edge of the community to the center of the community by contributing gifts. Your gifts are truly your key to community. People to connect need to be asked about their gifts, dreams, and talents. What do you want to contribute? Where? How? The connection organizer spends a lot of time deeply listening to each person to connect. The organizer and connector group then find a good place for connection where the person to connect can participate and contribute. Questions are:

- A.) Who to connect?
- B.) What are the gifts to contribute and dreams to realize of each person for connection?
- C.) What is the best place for participation?
- D.) Who among our group is connected to the people of that place? Who can introduce the person for connection to the right place?
- E.) What resources are needed to support participation and contribution of the connected person such as transportation or childcare?
- F.) How are connections going? Evaluation, documentation of stories, and celebration of connections.

## **Beyond Welfare:**

### **Beyond Welfare Community Leadership Team: Purpose and Principles**

***Vision:*** Beyond Welfare is a community of hospitality and caring where everyone has enough money, friends, and meaning to fulfill their dreams and potential in life, and share their contributions.

***Mission:*** We are dedicated to building circles of support that will eliminate poverty in Story County and become models to other communities.

**We acknowledge the real barriers people face when making the transition from welfare to interdependent self-sufficiency and are committed to learning all we can about addressing both external and internal barriers that face families moving through poverty.**

***Purpose:*** We are dedicated to:

- recognizing and supporting the voices of people marginalized by poverty.
- supporting the development of learning relationships across class, race, gender, and other “lines,” including divisions between the helped and the helpers. We strive to relate to one another first as human, without labels that divide and separate us.
- supporting one another’s movement out of poverty and isolation, into economic well being and thriving communities, where the safety of our children is a shared responsibility of us all.
- building a community and statewide network led by consumers in partnership with service provision leaders and other citizens that will improve the quality of life for all Iowans, regardless of income. We would like to “put smiles” on the institutions that serve people.

***Primary Principles:***

- We are dedicated to the principle of complete respect for all people.
- We believe that everyone deserves the support they need to function at her/his best.
- We believe that the best way to bring about social change is through building authentic relationships. Therefore, our primary strategy for advocacy is relationship building.
- We believe that accountability and reciprocity build self-respect, and invite the respect of others. Therefore, we are committed to empowering all our members by expecting and encouraging accountability and reciprocity from all of us.
- We acknowledge that all people need help and support in different ways and at different times in their lives. We want to change the stigma and shame that are attached to people receiving public assistance as well as give opportunities for people on welfare to make their contributions to the community, and express their personal responsibility.

***Process:***

- We believe that all people have a wealth of gifts and knowledge to share, and to that end, we are dedicated to *listening intentionally and respectfully* to one another.
- We are dedicated to an environment of *safety and trust*. Whatever is shared in a Leadership Team meeting, or other BW interaction, including an individual's affiliation with this group, is *confidential* and will not be shared without that person's permission.
- We also acknowledge that there is information that people may know about one another based on relationships outside of this group. Sometimes people talk about one another in ways that do not support the well-being of the individual or the group. Therefore, we are committed to a policy of "*no gossip*."
- We support people in *resolving and learning from conflict*.

## **Beyond Welfare:**

### **Tools for Building an Inclusive, Citizen-Led, Citizen-Governed Community Association**

#### **Building Inclusive Community**

#### **Know, Develop and Support Yourself**

- You must want it deeply.
- As a leader/organizer, do your own work.
  - What are *your* biases?
  - What are *your* strengths and vulnerabilities?
  - Commit to support for your own patterns of isolation, especially from those who are different from you.
  - *Walk the talk*~never ask staff/participants/community members to take risks you are not taking yourself in building community.
- Develop and follow Guiding Principles. Be explicit about values and visit them regularly as a group.
- Create a climate that acknowledges the inherent goodness, intelligence and humanity of all people. Distinguish between *people* and the hurtful, oppressive *patterns* of behavior that we learn in our culture.
- Surround yourself with relationships that understand and embrace these values.
- Model the ability and willingness to take on difficult things, e.g., racism, classism, sexism, etc. Don't pretend these ways that marginalize people do not exist. Be transparent with your own challenges with these things, but do so in a "no blame" environment.

#### **Concrete tools for practicing your values.**

- New and Good: builds relationship, empowers and celebrates the lives of people who are marginalized, and develops trust and a peer environment.
- Listening Pairs: model and practice of reciprocity, listening skills, communication skills, builds peer relationship (everyone can share the gift of listening), empowers people to tell their story and be heard.
- Appreciations: Notices people who are often invisible, develops a practice of gratitude, peer relationships, trust.

## Constant Commitments

- ❑ Build the capacity of the community to respond compassionately to the real needs of marginalized people *with the opportunity for marginalized people to reciprocate*. (“Warm fuzzy” relationships in and of themselves won’t eliminate poverty.) For example, the car program.
- ❑ Always present opportunities for people to contribute their gifts and talents from where they are at *right now*.
- ❑ *Prepare* people for relationships across the lines of marginalization (in BW, across the lines of class and race, primarily). For example, both sides of the family partnership, receive orientation and support, and know they are both in the relationship to learn and grow,
- ❑ Be prepared to facilitate, support, and troubleshoot these relationships.
- ❑ Get people working on concrete projects together. For example, helping a community member move, gardening, cooperative childcare, speaking on behalf of BW, cooking.
- ❑ Create opportunities for people of different cultures and backgrounds to share through stories, events, food, traditions, etc. with one another.
- ❑ Don’t pretend this is going to be easy, for yourself or for others, and have plans in place for how to sustain yourself and each other when it gets really hard. For example, return to the basics, listening pairs, reflecting on what’s gone well, appreciations, asking for help.

## **Beyond Welfare:**

### **~Guidelines for Listening Pairs~ Some Useful Agreements for Building Intentional Relationships**

1. We agree to take *equal turns* listening to one another *on purpose*, and with *complete attention*. If you listen to me for 5 minutes, I will listen to you for 5 minutes too.
2. While I am listening to you, I will hold onto and reflect my *confidence* in your inherent intelligence and goodness. While you are listening, you will do the same for me.
3. When I am listening to you, I will not interrupt, advise, judge or react with negative emotions to what you are sharing with me. I will listen with *delight* that you are deciding to trust me. While you are listening, you will do the same for me.
4. If you share *feelings* with me while I am listening to you, I will stay *relaxed* and *trust* the natural flow of your process. I will remember that feelings are a natural part of being human, and nothing to get worked up about. If I share feelings while you are listening, you will do the same for me.
5. I will hold *confidential* everything you *choose* to share with me during our listening pair. This includes the agreement that I will not bring up this information again even to you, unless I have your *permission* to do so. You, too, will keep confidential what I choose to share with you.
6. While it is ok to share emotions during this process, we pledge that we will *not* express emotions (e.g., anger and rage) in any way that is *harmful* to each other. While it may be useful for me to yell in anger, or even to hit against something like a pillow, I will not direct my rage at you in a way that will hurt you. You will pledge the same to me.
7. If we *decide* to continue to utilize this tool in an ongoing way, we will continue to build our relationship, each of us taking *responsibility for ourselves*, our own thoughts and feelings, and the mutual understanding and development of our relationship.



**SACC Blue Island:**

The Blue Island Community Resource Inventory (SACC/MFS)

**METROPOLITAN FAMILY SERVICES  
OF SOUTHWEST COOK COUNTY**

***SUCCESSFUL AGING IN CHICAGO COMMUNITIES***

***BLUE ISLAND – 2000***

**Interviewer:**

**Date:**

**THE BLUE ISLAND COMMUNITY RESOURCE INVENTORY**

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, I reside or/work in the Blue Island community and am pleased that you took time out of your schedule to meet with me today. I have been involved in an interesting planning grant with Metropolitan Family Services, a social service agency located at 13136 South Western in Blue Island. The project is called *Successful Aging in Chicago Communities*, which was funded by the Retirement Research Foundation. The ultimate goal of the project is to make Blue Island an “elderly friendly” community. The first step is to make sure that we have a way to identify your gifts and talents and what you are willing to share with your community. I will be asking you questions about you. We are planning a larger project in which we can connect people and resources to benefit Blue Island. Many successful programs were developed as a result of community inventories like this i.e., volunteer resource exchanges, e.g., shoveling snow for babysitting, intergenerational programs, and paid employment. Your participation and time are greatly appreciated!

**Part 1 – Personal information**

Name:

Address:

Zip:

Phone (s):

Ethnicity:

Age:

Male/Female:

How long have you resided in BI community?

In what ways are you active in the community now?

In what ways would you like to be more active in the community?

What type of transportation do you use?

Are you seeking paid employment?

**SUCCESSFUL AGING IN CHICAGO COMMUNITIES  
Blue Island Community Resources Inventory – 2000**

Name:

Date:

**Part 2 – Skills Information**

We are interested in finding out about all your skills and abilities that have been learned through experience in the home with your family or friends. They may be skills you've learned at church or in the community or on your job. If you have experience or skill with any of the following activities or would like to help in these areas, please mark the box identified Experience or Skill and if you would like to help in these areas sometimes in the future, then also mark the box identified Willing to Help.

**I. Child Care**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Experience or Skills</b>	<b>Willing to Help</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Caring for children (0 to 13 yrs.)			
Caring for children with special needs			
Foster Parent			
Have you ever taken care of any other child/children other than described above?			

**II. Community Skills**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Experience or Skills</b>	<b>Willing to Help</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Telephoning a list of people to invite them to participate in something			
Organizing a party or special event			
Being an officer in an organization or chairing a committee			

Going door to door in your neighborhood			
Writing Grants			
Writing letters to the newspaper or government officials to support something for youth, seniors or families			
Presenting a workshop topic:			

**II b. COMMUNITY SKILLS - ORGANIZATIONAL**

Organized or participated in any of the following community activities

<b>Question</b>	<b>Experience or Skills</b>	<b>Willing to Help</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Boy Scouts/ Girl Scouts/ 4-H			
PTA or School Associations			
Sports teams			
Camp Trips or Field Trips			
Rummage or Yard Sales			
Religious Organizations			
Fraternal Organizations/Sorority			
Political Organizations/Campaigns			
Neighborhood Associations			
Special Interest Club (Hobby or Sport)			
Fundraisers			
Have you participated in any other groups?			

### III FAMILY SUPPORT

Question	Experience or Skills	Willing to Help	Comments
Having a special relationship with a child not in your family			
Cooking and delivering meals for someone during a time of need			
Providing respite or 24 hour care			
Friendly Visiting			
Running errands, shopping or driving someone who needs transportation			
Caring for someone's pet			
<p>Have you assisted a family member, friend, or neighbor in securing help or referring to a social service agency</p> <p>Describe: (Comment Section)  <i>Examples: Legal Juvenile Delinquency, Probation, Prison, Child Abuse and Domestic Violence</i></p>			
<p>Do you have any type of health related license or certificate? If so, what?</p> <p>Do you have any type of legal or social service certificate? If so, what?</p>			

#### IV. EDUCATION AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Question	Experience or Skills	Willing to Help	Comments
<p>Have you ever assisted youth in any type of classroom activity or educational program?</p> <p>Examples: Tutoring, Teacher's Assistant, Grading Papers, Teaching, Providing Programs, Chaperoning, Recreational Activities</p> <p>Describe: Community Section</p>			

#### V. TRANSPORTATION

Question	Experience or Skills	Willing to Help	Comments
Driving a car			
Driving a van			
Driving a bus/truck			
Driving a vehicle/delivering goods			
Do you have any kind of special driver's license? If so, what?			

**VI. FOOD**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Experience or Skills</b>	<b>Willing to Help</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Have you ever done any type of work with food, paid or unpaid			
Serving food to large numbers of people (more than 10)			
Preparing meals for large numbers			
Clearing/Setting Tables for Large Numbers			
Bartending			
Baking			

**VII OFFICE**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Experience or Skills</b>	<b>Willing to Help</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Have you ever done any type of office work paid or unpaid?			
Typing (word per minute)			
Taking phone messages			
Filing			
Writing business letters			
Receiving phone orders			
Shorthand			
Bookkeeping			
Word Processing			
Operating Computer Software			

### VIII. SUPERVISORY SKILLS

Question	Experience or Skills	Willing to Help	Comments
Have you ever done any type of supervision, paid or unpaid?			
Writing Reports			
Filling Out Forms			
Planning work for Other People			
Making a Budget			
Interviewing People			
Managing Property			
Keeping Record of all your activities			

### IX. CONSTRUCTION/REPAIRS

Question	Experience or Skills	Willing to Help	Comments
Have you ever done construction and repair work, paid or unpaid?			
Wallpapering			
Furniture Making or Repairing			
Plumbing repairs			
Painting			
Repairing Locks			
Building Garages, fences, play equipment			
Building and Remodeling Rooms			
Tile Work			
Installing Dry Wall and Taping			
Electrical Repairs			
Bricklaying and Masonry			



## X. MAINTENANCE

Question	Experience or Skills	Willing to Help	Comments
Have you ever done any type of maintenance, paid or unpaid?			
Window Washing			
Floor Waxing or Mopping			
Washing and Cleaning Dirty Rugs			
Have you ever done any other types of maintenance? Examples: <i>caulking, general household cleaning, fixing faucets, floor sanding, wood stripping, refinishing, recycling, snow shoveling, snow blowing, mowing lawns, caring for gardens, pruning, auto repair</i>			
Describe: (Comment Section)			

## XI. SALES

Question	Experience or Skills	Willing to Help	Comments
Have you done any sales, paid or unpaid?			
Operating a cash register			
Selling Products Wholesale (which ones)			
Selling Products Retail (which ones)			
Have you sold these products (door to door, store, office, mail)			

## XII. THE ARTS

Question	Experience or Skills	Willing to Help	Comments
Have you ever done anything with the arts, paid or unpaid?			
Singing			
Dance			
Playing an instrument			
Theatre: Acting or Directing			
Painting			
Drawing			
Sculpture			
Ceramics			
Photography			
Quilting			
Other arts/crafts			

## XIII. OTHER

Question	Experience or Skills	Willing to Help	Comments
What other skills and talents did we forget?			
Examples: sewing, dressmaking, and tailoring, upholstering, knitting and crocheting, interior decorating, hair dressing, public speaking, graphic design			

Describe: (Comment Section)

Other skills you have that you are willing to share:

#### **XIV. PRIORITY SKILLS**

1. When you think about your skills, what *three* things do you think you do your best?
  
2. Which of your skills are you most likely to volunteer?
  
3. Are there any skills you would like to teach?
  
4. What skills would you most like to learn?
  
5. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about these issues?

**METROPOLITAN FAMILY SERVICES  
SUCCESSFUL AGING IN CHICAGO COMMUNITIES**

**NAME:**

**DATE:**

***THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME***

Do you give permission for the information you have provided to be used for a community resource database? This means that only someone from Metropolitan Family Services will be contacting you either by letter or telephone regarding activities to which you might contribute your time and skills. If you are willing to do this, please sign the form below.

**Signature:**

**Date:**

If not, can we contact you in six months to see whether you are able to participate at that time?

**Yes:      No:**

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**Interviewer Field Notes:**

**SACC Blue Island:**

**METROPOLITAN FAMILY SERVICES  
SUCCESSFUL AGING IN CARING COMMUNITIES  
BLUE ISLAND BUSINESS SURVEY**

We would appreciate you taking a few minutes to complete the following survey. Your responses will help us to understand more about the relationships between Blue Island businesses and older customers and help us plan for a more “elderly-friendly” community.

Please state the type of business you are responding for? \_\_\_\_\_

**How long have you been in business in Blue Island?**

- 10 years or more
- 5 to 9 years
- 4 years or less

**Approximately how many of your customers are over the age of 60?**

- 100%
- 75-99%
- 50-74%
- 25-49%
- 0-24%

**How important are your 60+ customers to your overall business success?**

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Important
- Only somewhat important
- Not very important

**Which of the following actions have you taken to make your business more accessible to older people who have disabilities? Please check all that apply.**

- Researched the kinds of actions needed to make my business more accessible
- Installed a ramp
- Modified the building in other ways to make it more accessible
- Trained staff to communicate effectively with people who have experienced hearing or vision loss or mobility problems
- Trained staff to provide extra assistance to older customers when requested
- Used large, easily readable print for signs, flyers and other written materials
- None.

Other. **Please explain:**

**Which of the following actions have you taken to attract older customers? Please check all that apply.**

- Researched what might appeal to older people
- Conducted marketing campaigns targeted to older people
- Developed new services intended to appeal to older people
- None
- Other. **Please explain:**

**Have you ever considered any of these?** Yes  No

Based on interviews with older Blue Island residents, the Successful Aging Communities project plans to develop recommendations for specific actions businesses can take to improve their accessibility or appeal to older people. **How likely would you be to implement these recommendations, assuming they are affordable?**

- Extremely likely
- Very likely
- Likely
- Only somewhat likely, why?
- Not very likely, why?

**How interested would you be to work with the Successful Aging Communities project to develop these recommendations?**

- Extremely interested
- Very interested
- Interested
- Only somewhat interested, why?
- Not very interested, why?

If you are willing to work with us in this way, please fill in your contact information below.

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Phone number:**

**Fax Number:**

**Email:**

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS SURVEY!**

Your answers will help Blue Island to become a better community for people of all ages.

Please send responses to:

Dee Spiech Metropolitan Family Services 13136 S. Western Avenue Blue Island, IL 60406 Fax: 708-371-0466/ Tel: 708-974-5830
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# Lessons from the RCI Experience

## Note to Our Elders: Don'ts and Do's for Youth Leadership Development

<b>DON'T</b>	<b>DO</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Talk down to us</li><li>▪ Give up on youth</li><li>▪ Speak for us</li><li>▪ Use us as bait</li><li>▪ Judge</li><li>▪ Categorize us</li><li>▪ Stereotype</li><li>▪ Live out your dreams through us</li><li>▪ Label us ignorant</li><li>▪ Talk and not do something about it</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Build a strong relationship with us</li><li>▪ Trust us</li><li>▪ Be a role model</li><li>▪ Treat us with respect</li><li>▪ Provide us with continuous support</li><li>▪ Be mindful we have a voice</li><li>▪ Listen more!</li><li>▪ Be understanding</li><li>▪ Remember being young</li><li>▪ Let us make our own decisions</li><li>▪ Remember age is a state of mind</li><li>▪ Encourage us</li><li>▪ Look at our point of view</li><li>▪ Provide tools to develop tomorrow's leaders</li></ul>

## **Involving All Neighbors Seattle:**

# **Elements of a Neighborhood Based Initiative to Build Inclusive Communities**

### **Shared Belief**

- Each supporter and collaborator holds the common belief that *all* people have assets and gifts.
- The community places a high value on participation in civic life.
- Active neighborhood participation is encouraged and viewed as one's responsibility to the community.

#### **Questions to Ask**

*What community organizations and/or leaders hold this belief where I live?*

*How do I know this?*

*Are the actions of the organization reflective of these beliefs?*

*What is the best way to develop a relationship with this community organization or leader?*

### **Rooted in the Fabric of Neighborhood Life**

- This initiative is supported by community organization which represents, welcomes, and actively includes all community members. It is integrated into the organization's culture.
- Activities of the organization promote or enhance community involvement and shared experiences.

#### **Questions to Ask**

*Which organizations represent members of the community? (e.g. neighborhood organizations, civic groups, church groups, public/government organizations and officials)*

*Are the practices of these community organizations and the behavior of its leaders and members welcoming of all people?*

*Are these practices and behaviors incorporated into the way business/activities are normally carried out?*

*Once the awareness level is raised, are people indicating that involving all neighbors is something they're committed to doing in ways that are appropriate for their neighborhood?*

### **Broad Community Ownership**

- Neighborhood leaders take an active role in promoting and carrying out the initiative.
- Neighborhood people understand the initiative and take active roles.
- By design, the initiative is a collaborative effort that involves all parties in meaningful ways.



## **Questions to Ask**

### ***Which organizations/agencies in the community are project supporters?***

*How have they expressed or demonstrated their willingness to work in this collaborative effort?*

*Are supporters/project partners directly involved in designing and carrying out the initiative?*

*Are project partners involving a broad group of people?*

## **Time and Flexibility to Develop Naturally**

- There is sufficient time and patience to carry-out the initiative to learn what works.
- Project organizers are flexible and open to making revisions because it is seen as a work in progress.
- The initiative is carried out in a way that fits the community. There is no standard design.

## **Questions to Ask**

### ***What are your plans for starting an initiative?***

*Do you have the flexibility to modify this plan based on what's happening? Are you willing to junk this plan?*

*Are you making your plans based on ideas generated by the neighborhood?*

*Do you understand that community ownership means that the plan may change over time and often?*

## **Variety of Opportunities for Participation**

- Diverse opportunities—which are known or can be discovered—exist for involving people in neighborhood life.
- You have a way to map these opportunities and keep them up to date.
- People are getting introduced to these activities.
- There is a way for identifying persons with disabilities who may want to get involved in neighborhood activities and for making introductions to neighborhood leaders or groups.

## **Questions to Ask**

*What are the opportunities for participation in the neighborhood? Who knows about them?*

*Is there a way to keep up to date with neighborhood activities and events?*

*How will you find people with disabilities who live in the neighborhood?*

*Are you doing this in a respectful manner?*

*How are you learning about their interests?*

*Do you have a way to introduce people to other neighbors or neighborhood activities?*

*What kinds of supports are provided if any? Who provides support? What are you doing to encourage support from neighbors?*

## **Advice from Many Perspectives**

- Project includes an advisory body/action team—representing the community’s diverse interests and perspectives—to guide the project, keep it grounded, and act as its conscience.

### **Questions to Ask**

***Who in your community can be part of this advisory/action group?***

*Who do they represent?*

*Will these individuals give the advice, support, and action that the project needs?*

*Are they truly providing direction?*

*Are there opportunities for meaningful involvement by the action group which will lead to further commitment and ownership?*

## **Bridge Between People with Disabilities and Neighborhood Life**

- A key player in the project is someone who listens to people with disabilities and knows the neighborhood organizations and members.
- The individual understands how to ensure that people with disabilities and neighborhood organizations and leaders connect with each other.

### **Questions to Ask**

***Who in the community could play this role?***

*Why do you think this person would be good? Are they active members in the neighborhood, do they know people?*

*Are you thinking about people from the service world as well as neighborhood activists?*

## **Promoting these Efforts and Encouraging Others**

- Opportunities are created to promote/get the word out about the initiative tell its success stories, and to recruit participants.

### **Questions to Ask**

***What are the ways for talking about this in your community?***

*Are people inquiring about this initiative? Are they interested in getting involved?*

*Are you having fun carrying out this initiative?*

## **Rethinking and Reassigning Resources**

### **(money, people, and activities)**

- Resources are used creatively to develop this initiative.
- Resources go directly to neighborhood organizations when possible.
- Initiative includes creative ways to report its successes or impact in ways that are not burdensome to the neighborhood, yet meets the needs of the funders.

### **Questions to Ask**

*Are there resources within your control that can be redirected?*

*What are they: money, people, time, activities?*

*Given the resources within your control, how can you realign them to carry out this kind of initiative?*

*Are there barriers to reallocating these resources and are you willing to go to battle to make these changes?*

*Can funders learn about the initiative and its success in non-traditional ways?*

Source: Experience of City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods *Involving All Neighbors* pilot project, 1996-1998.

## **Involving All Neighbors Seattle:**

List of attributes of a Connector, from *Involving All Neighbors: Building Inclusive Communities in Seattle* by Carolyn Carlson. Published by the City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods.

- Strongly believes that every person belongs and has contributions to make and gifts to give to the community;
- Works to build community in his or her life;
- Is always on the lookout for what's happening in the neighborhood and knows its places, events, groups and people;
- Looks for opportunities for people to connect with others and contribute their skills;
- Enjoys meeting people and bringing together people with common interests;
- Gets involved and asks others to get involved;
- Enjoys challenges and doesn't give up;
- Stays flexible, adjusts expectations, and knows that things take time;
- Focuses on one person at a time and considers how that person's interests and skills can be assets for the community;
- Finds ways for others in the community to sustain new connections;
- Finds ways to take care of and renew him- or herself;
- Believes that anything is possible.

## **Waisman Center**

*The Waisman Center is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge about human development, developmental disabilities, and neurodegenerative diseases throughout the lifespan. (<http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/index.html>)*

### **Attributes of a Community Connector**

A community connector is a person who connects people to people, people to resources and resources to people. A community connector lives in the same city, community or neighborhood as the people with disabilities whom they know, work and play with. A community connector will have and make higher quality connections if she or he:

- Has an extroverted personality and welcoming attitude
- Is a creative thinker who is willing to refine and change ideas and strategies over time
- Knows lots of people and places in the community
- Follows through on commitments to youth, families, and community contacts
- Understands how to fade supports as new connections emerge
- Can relate to people from all walks of life, with all types of values, even if they are not his or her own
- Has the ability to be comfortable in people's homes, workplaces, community centers, churches, schools, wherever they want to meet
- Shows comfort with asking questions
- Takes a genuine interest in people's lives
- Displays patience with the process of self- and community-discovery
- Has willingness to take risks and ask favors
- Exhibits the creative ability to see connections between people's interests and activities already occurring in the community
- Holds an abiding interest in helping people and communities flourish
- Demonstrates stamina and perseverance; doesn't easily give up
- Enjoys bring people together and acting as "host"

# Resource List

*Starting a Connection Project* by Mike Green

**Available from:**

Mike Green  
ABCD Training Group  
2745 Julian St.  
Denver, CO 80211  
PH: 303-477-2686  
e-mail: [mike@mike-green.org](mailto:mike@mike-green.org)  
[www.mike-green.org](http://www.mike-green.org)

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*Circles of Support: Ending Poverty in Our Communities* by Scott Miller and Lois Smidt

**Available from:**

Beyond Welfare  
130 S. Sheldon Ave. Suite #302  
Ames, IA 50014  
(515)292-5992  
[beyondwelfare@mid Iowa.net](mailto:beyondwelfare@mid Iowa.net)  
[www.beyondwelfare.org](http://www.beyondwelfare.org)

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*Involving All Neighbors: Building inclusive Communities in Seattle* by Carolyn Carlson.

**Available from:**

City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods  
700 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave., Ste. 400  
Seattle, WA 98104

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Capitol Heights Presbyterian Church  
1100 Fillmore  
Denver, CO 80206  
(303) 333-9366  
[chpc@denpres.org](mailto:chpc@denpres.org)

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The **Prince George Connector** is available from:

Project Friendship Society  
3491 Clearwood Cres  
Prince George, BC  
(250) 962-2782

The *Connector* is also available as a searchable database of connections and stories at [www.projectfriendship.com](http://www.projectfriendship.com)

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Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative  
504 Dudley Street  
Roxbury, MA 02119  
617.442.9670  
617.427.8047 (fax)  
[www.dsni.org](http://www.dsni.org)  
[UrbanVillage@DSNI.org](mailto:UrbanVillage@DSNI.org)

The Dudley Street story is told in two excellent sources:

***Streets of Hope: The Fall and Rise of An Urban Neighborhood*** by Peter Medoff and Holly Sklar (South End Press: 1995)

And

***Holding Ground: The Rebirth of Dudley Street***, a 58-minute video produced by Leah Mahan and Mark Lipman, available from New Day Films

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Metropolitan Family Services of Blue Island  
13136 S. Western Ave.  
Blue Island, IL 60406  
(708) 974-5830

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Logan Square Neighborhood Association  
2840 N. Milwaukee  
Chicago, IL 60647