

Healthy Neighborhoods Networking Session for Upstate NY Sites

Session focus: Community Engagement

Date: February 11, 2016

Community: Syracuse

Partners:

Rebecca Bostwick

Maarten Jacobs

Roberto Martinez



Brief summary or highlight about your partnership's current work around community engagement.

The Spectrum of Community Engagement ([Policy Link](#)) gives an idea of the components of CE and it's important to know what component you're doing in your neighborhood.

Take Back the Streets Campaign: This focuses on Community Origination. The community is expressing needs, goals and solutions. The Seed and Scale Model helps guide us to do the work in the community. We did resident meetings during a 100-day challenge. One of the neighbors said "We need to take the streets back and have family activities." Multiple residents selected that as a theme. We have included 25 different organizations present in the neighborhood to do 50 events in 50 weeks in 2016. A couple of events for each agency meets this goal. This will increase the number of family-friendly events AND help reduce crime.

We are hoping to recruit and make an active group of residents who can lead the kinds of activities they want to see in the community to increase community cohesion. One partner has a building to use to continue connecting with residents monthly to host them at the center, do ongoing training, nurture relationships, etc.

Table Top is an extension of the TBtS Campaign. It came out of the Gifford Foundation who did work on the southside around a co-op grocery store. The model is to ask a few community residents to host a dinner in their home and invite 10 other people. A couple of people from the partnership joins them to hear the conversation. The food is paid for plus a \$50 stipend to the family who opens their home. The conversation is about the needs, wants of community. What they want to see. And then asking one other person there to host another dinner two weeks later and invite 10 new people to the conversation. The Gifford Foundation used this model and met with more than 100 people this way. It's a great way to learn and identify potential leaders.

A recent success or lesson learned that can be helpful to other partnerships.

The launch of a new grocery store with NuVal—to make it easier for people to buy healthy food. They've launched NuVal in the store. The store signage was done with intercept surveys and talking to community groups about what nutrition means to them and how to make healthier purchases. Learnings from residents helped to roll out NuVal system (scoring the nutrition value in foods) in that store.

One thing you'd like to learn or brainstorm about today.

What structure are people using and how do you keep it sustained? Who continues to oversee resident engagement?

Niagara: Hoping to co-create a leadership program with a coach to build capacity to lead. Hoping to help sustain whole collaborative. Turning over some workgroups to partner organizations. We are identifying a cohort of resident leaders to help through all steps. Talking about a train the trainer component to that. Have some strong resident leaders already and will have them involved along with the lay resident who is a little less engaged at present. Hoping any of those leaders can carry this training forward and train their peers. Goal is to have residents step in as co-chairs of workgroups.

Healthy Neighborhoods Networking Session for Upstate NY Sites

Session focus: Community Engagement

Date: February 11, 2016

Rebecca: Who oversees that effort? For us that's the Peacemaking Center for now. Long-term, who is the organization that is organizing the leaders? The Backbone Organization?

Shelley: We have a Create a Healthier Niagara Falls, Inc. (501C3). We have a leadership team and a strategic plan. Multiple workgroups. The backbone organization is the leadership team (the nonprofit). We don't have paid professionals at this point. We have partners who are beginning to provide in-kind support. One has assigned a high-level person to go to the meetings and provide communications help. We want to get to the point where the community and organizations own it.

Lourdes: One of the strategies we have used is to connect people who are interested in being more civically involved in their community. The Community Board in NYC is the smallest and closest to the ground body for decision making. We connect young people to the youth council who send members to the Community Board, which plugs them into the structure. There are some churches who have service programs about social justice and quality of life, so some people are plugged in there. It's easier to sustain that work because you're making the connection between the people power, those who are engaged in desired change, and organizations that by virtue of their structure (i.e. church, a school board, etc.) they are driven and fueled by engagement of people who have more stake in their neighborhood.

One new learning or action step:

Healthy Neighborhoods Networking Session for Upstate NY Sites

Session focus: Community Engagement

Date: February 11, 2016

Community: Clinton County

Partner:

Mandy Snay

Brief summary or highlight about your partnership's current work around community engagement.

Better Choice Retailer Program

- Action for Health Insert (print media) reaches 18,000 households. Soft engagement (no direct feedback).
- Customer Surveys (face to face interactions)

Enhancing spaces for play cross-generational

- Rapid Results 100 Day Challenge (social media) promoting enhanced spaces for adults and children. Were able to get more feedback from residents from this.

Support for healthy lifestyle changes

Work with Partners who help us connect with residents.

- Individual key informant interviews with local food retailers. Couldn't do focus groups as they saw themselves as competitors.
- Group problem solving/ brainstorming—we weren't the only people trying to meet these goals.

A recent success or lesson learned that can be helpful to other partnerships.

Connects to group problem solving around a systems gap. There was a system nobody was taking advantage of. We realized we could use the backbone of a system already in place but we all have to do our part to make it work. Lesson is that we don't always have to start from scratch or be something we come up with. The solution was already there, but needed to work with partners to adapt to needs and move forward.

One thing you'd like to learn or brainstorm about today.

Would like other methods of directly engaging the community besides surveys and ways to help collect data.

Roberto: Huntington Family Center has people there every day and we are sometimes invited to go and talk to them and ask their feedback (elderly, youth, parents). Other organizations have regular groups that could be asked for feedback. Another option is to do printed door hangers. Printed materials at doorsteps were one of the preferred method of communication by residents on the west side.

Mandy: How do you capture that engagement?

Roberto: We count the number of people we are engaging with. We don't take personal information, but make a description of the frequency and numbers in report. In terms of the printed materials, we count the number distributed.

Mandy: When you connect with the pre-formed groups, do you count attendance?

Maarten: We aren't concerned with capturing it. We don't feel a need to report on it.

Mandy: We are an accredited institution and are being asked to show how we are engaging people. Counting numbers reached isn't enough for them. We need to "prove" it. We've been told an attendance list doesn't prove they participated. We have to keep elaborate meeting minutes to capture the conversation. It's tedious, time-consuming, requires extra people. Because we're a health department.



Healthy Neighborhoods Networking Session for Upstate NY Sites

Session focus: Community Engagement

Date: February 11, 2016

Rebecca: Community Engagement is hard and sometimes you get three people at a dinner and sometimes you get 20. For us it's quality over quantity. Go back to the Spectrum of Community Engagement. Are you just promoting an event? Or are you trying to empower people?

Mandy: Maybe if we're more explicit in what the purpose is that we're trying to do, maybe that dictates better how we then prove engagement.

Joanne: You spoke about meetings and how this leads to lengthy minutes, I'm wondering if you can document engagement by listing residents as facilitators or co-developers of the meeting. The other benefit of that is that the residents see their names in leadership roles.

Mandy: For one of our groups we're requiring that they submit agenda items, rather than us developing the agenda. We send out a prompting email and ask for their agenda items. People are used to "just showing up." We're hoping that works.

Rebecca: That model presupposes that a people know what an agenda is. Are you talking about colleagues or residents? We are careful not to impose a model used for professionals that doesn't make sense for residents in a neighborhood.

Shelley: What I'm hearing is that it depends on how you segment your resident audience. Our resident engagement council is all volunteer driven who have been exposed to coaching. They have to come up with norms for how they run meetings. They are just beginning to set agendas, talking about shared purpose, and as they grow, more people will learn those norms and take those back to other areas of their lives. Always asking the question of if they have the right people at the table.

Mandy: We're trying to engage different groups and get more participatory in our processes.

One new learning or action step:

Mandy: Spectrum of Community Engagement is helpful. If we are being more deliberate in specifying intent, it may make it more meaningful.

Healthy Neighborhoods Networking Session for Upstate NY Sites

Session focus: Community Engagement

Date: February 11, 2016

Community: Niagara Falls

Partners:

Krista Ehasz

Tom Lowe

Lisa Tucker

Shelley Hirshberg



Brief summary or highlight about your partnership's current work around community engagement.

We have a leadership team and workgroups. For this it's the Healthy Food Healthy People workgroup.

Pop up Park events. One in September that was very successful. Kids, parents, community members built their own playgrounds for the day. They did surveying at the event. The main purpose was resident engagement. We're trying to attract youth to the event (and parents have to come so they can participate).

As part of this we can ask various questions about where parents take their kids to play, where they buy their food. Once the fun started, the adults were also creating, helping the kids out. We've evolved this into a longer series. We're planning on doing four more events. Themes of play, music, art and food (pop-up dinner). The one in September was hosted as a park. The rest will be at city lots engaging residents who live in those neighborhoods.

With the September event, it was a test to see what type of response we'd get. For the 2016 series (and working with the NYU evaluator) we plan to come up with appropriate outcomes and measures to test the effectiveness of this type of community engagement. The consultant we're working with assisting with these events, this is new ground for her as well. So these are "works in progress" from the themes to the evaluation. Once we complete the series we'll have more robust information to share.

Also, we have a cohort of resident leaders to put on food access projects over the summer. We've been reaching out through partners, distributing flyers, events, a Facebook event and word of mouth through health centers, schools, housing authorities, using collaborative's networks. On Saturday, we'll directly engage with people who are interested and getting commitments. We'll provide trainings in March and April. Over the summer each leader can implement a food access project in their neighborhoods.

A recent success or lesson learned that can be helpful to other partnerships.

Pop-Up Parks. Building evaluation piece.

One thing you'd like to learn or brainstorm about today.

Would like to hear other successes related to evaluation. + Ideas of getting people to show up and use their captive attention to engage them and to inform what we're doing.

Shelley: What I predict might happen is that as these pop-up parks and film festivals spread, that people will begin to expect and look for more. Hoping that residents are coming on their own to the table. The first pop-up park energy was good and I think it will exponentially grow.

Healthy Neighborhoods Networking Session for Upstate NY Sites

Session focus: Community Engagement

Date: February 11, 2016

Lourdes: I want people to anticipate them and to be looking forward to them but I think we could also think about a day when people ask to borrow the equipment to do it in their own block. At the end of the day, you want people to “own it.” Community Celebration Committee (CCC)!

Krista: someone suggested doing a more qualitative approach. i.e. “I used to prioritize healthy food this way and now I prioritize it this way.” Also keeping track of how many people came out to the first. How many of those came to the next event, etc.

Mandy: In terms of surveys, we’ve tried asking questions using tablets. If we have our survey on a tablet and they can quickly hit with their fingers their answers, they seem to respond better than with paper. We’ve used that successfully in small groups. We sat up in a provider’s waiting room and being there in person was helpful. Saying “this will take less than 2 minutes.” In the public, we’re using it more, too.

Roberto: Our main intervention trying to change buying behavior offers a captive audience (those shopping). The way we are thinking about doing it is to have people there to help answer questions and doing it systematically to see if there is any change in relationship to our activities.

Rebecca: If we’re asking for people’s time we give them a \$5 gift card.

Tom: We struggle to figure out how to sustain the incentives. I’ve also struggled to see how incentivizing generates genuine engagement. I know it helps with turnout, but we wonder about the sustainability.

Rebecca: We don’t advertise the gift cards. The price point does matter; don’t want it to be coercive. Food helps too. We’re trying to be respectful of the sacrifice they are making. We offer childcare at times and dinner.

Joanne: The art of deciding when incentives can be effective and when other supports need to be provided to sustain that engagement. Published research shows that for initial engagement, the gift cards and giveaways can be helpful. But for long-term sustainability of the behavior or engagement in the process, other types of support are helpful (i.e. childcare, dinner, etc.). It’s figuring out when to use what type of incentives. All incentives require resources, so leveraging partner supports is also helpful.

Roberto: For us, the first slide we shared was about the Spectrum of Community. Ideally we want to move to Origination. This level needs more than surveys. We want to develop a group of residents who can develop relationships with us or their peers to share ideas. In order to get to that level, we think we need a backbone organization structure. When we speak about community engagement, we often fall into community consent. That’s one way. But the better engagement is where a cohesive group of residents generate ideas in a systematic manner (not just one time).

One new learning or action step:

Tom: The door tag idea is a concrete option for us.

Shelley: What Syracuse did with the 10 people in homes is a cool idea for our Resident Council. It’s like “paying it forward.”