

Community Development... The Eleven Fundamentals *By Scott Thoward*

Identify community assets. Connect assets in a way that increase their power. Look for existing networks in the community and build on them. Understand that committed volunteers provide energy skill, time, and experience that are significant assets.

Be effective leaders who establish relationships. Bridge differing groups and opinions. Be a focal point for people.

Do not understate local knowledge. Practical community development solutions are there for the asking.

Understand the difficulties in the community. Investigate local realities, address problems before they become certainties. Be open to the challenge. People in the community are in the best position to understand their environment.

Rally participation. Connect people, resources and problems in ways that bring results. Consider what it is that people want from community activities and develop programs that deliver these expectations.

Improve opportunities for the community. Be specific: explain that participation can help build the ongoing knowledge and experience of the group.

Distribute fact sheets. Demonstrate to the community that every person and significant community landmark are worthy of a story. Let people bring you their stories.

Expand on existing strengths. Look at what is being done right not what is being done wrong. Find value in what people do.

Foster meaningful engagement. Be responsive; expand your programs when needs are identified. Where possible, involve people let their ideas form policy and programs. Encourage people to tackle issues.

Encourage purpose. Community development involves people to look far while noticing what is near.

Write a column in the local media. Provide thoughts and observation about the group's activities in the community. Use the column to explain the benefits of community involvement and inspire a willingness among people to help other people.



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