

making a difference

NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR



Strengthening Families and Transforming Neighborhoods

Effective Practices in Neighboring and Other Innovative Volunteer Strategies

ISBN # 1-585-34-053-7
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INTRODUCTION

Improving the lives of children and families in under-resourced and tough communities is not easy. The challenging circumstances in these communities, such as lack of affordable housing, unemployment, diminished access to fundamental services, and an overabundance of crime and drugs, make them “tough” places to raise a family. However, “tough” also connotes the internal assets, strength, and remarkable resilience of the families who live in these communities.

Each story included in this publication illustrates how every day, in communities across America, people are working together to contend with overwhelming odds and volunteering to make a difference in the lives of their neighbors.

Whether it is families who organize to help meet the needs of neighbors or residents who contribute their time and talent by “neighboring” to better their community, services rendered neighbor to neighbor play a critical role in combating social ills, connecting people, and restoring the health and well-being of tough communities. Similarly, by partnering with the communities and employing innovative volunteer strategies, nonprofits, government agencies, and businesses can transform tough communities into family-supportive places where children and families can thrive.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation believes that “children do well when their families do well, and families do better when they live in supportive communities.” The Points of Light Foundation also embraces this message. Believing that volunteering is one of the best strategies to strengthen families and transform neighborhoods, we are modeling our own commitment to the children and families living in America’s tough communities through a national movement of people and organizations committed to being good neighbors.

We invite you to join us in recognizing and celebrating the stories of “neighboring” and the extraordinary volunteer efforts of community members, families, nonprofits, businesses and other organizations. We also invite you to consider how you might as an individual or organization be a better neighbor by adopting neighboring as a strategy to strengthen families and transform neighborhoods.

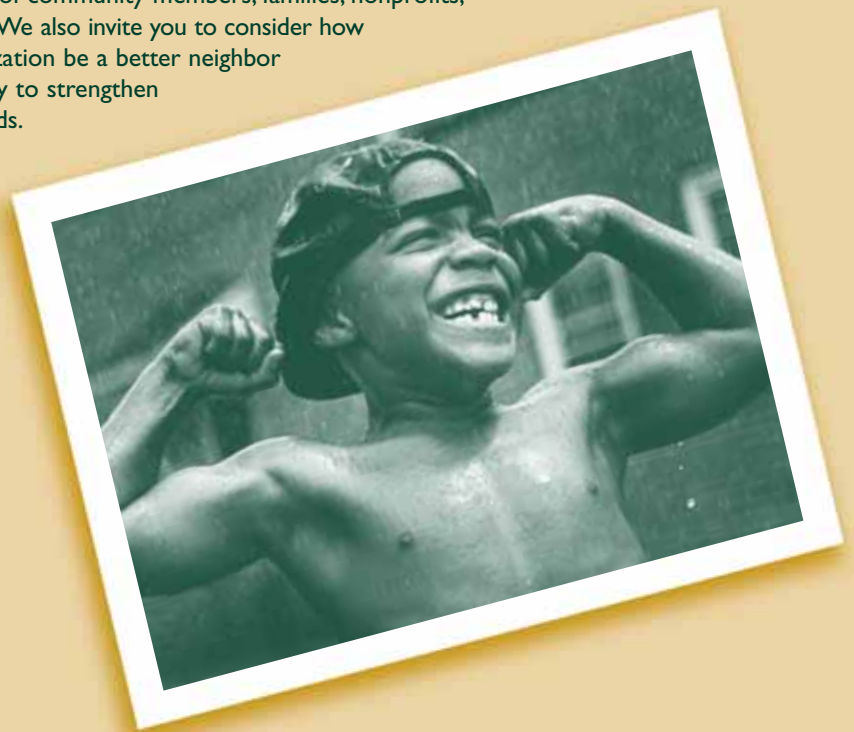


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revitalizing neighborhoods

South End Neighborhood Revitalization Zone Initiative – Stamford, CT

Like many other historical inner city neighborhoods across the country, Stamford's South End neighborhood has had its share of serious problems brought on by lack of investments, deteriorating infrastructure, and a gradual decline of social institutions. Until recently, concentrated poverty and staggering social and economic problems such as crime, poor housing, and unemployment made South End a tough place to live and raise a family. However, thanks to a dynamic partnership between South End neighbors working together to strengthen the community, things are looking up.

The South End Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative (NRZ) is an effective grassroots community mobilization vehicle that engages community residents, property owners, municipal representatives, area businesses, nonprofits, and others in a partnership to revitalize this historic, diverse, urban community. By Connecticut state statute, at least 51% of NRZ members are local residents, and since the organization's inception, its chair and vice chair have been neighborhood residents.



The groundwork for the NRZ was laid in 1995 through a

major neighborhood clean up that engaged residents, community members, and employee volunteers of Stamford-based **Pitney Bowes** Inc. In 1996, the partnership expanded to create the NRZ. Monthly meetings brought together a broad range of community stakeholders to discuss concerns, build consensus, and create and implement a community vision. Pitney Bowes and other area business partners provided services, supplies, and technical assistance to the initiative including training to help residents become effective and engaged community leaders.

Since 1996, South End residents and other NRZ partners have worked to identify priority issues and meet collective goals of revitalizing the community to make it a better place to live and work. Their work has included establishing a community garden and starting a community policing effort to combat crime.

In 2000, the NRZ obtained its 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. The same year, an antique center and a motorcycle shop opened their doors in formerly abandoned warehouse buildings in a central part of the neighborhood. In 2001, a land donation made by Pitney Bowes ensured that a state-of-the-art fire station would be located in the neighborhood. In 2002, the NRZ raised over \$100,000, and after six years of being a completely volunteer-driven initiative, the NRZ hired a full time staff person.

Major neighborhood infrastructure improvements have resulted from the NRZ's efforts such as the design and construction of a new transportation center parking garage, redevelopment of a large waterfront park, and a planned major road improvement. Other developments, not as apparent but equally important, are also taking place in South End. For example, thanks to community volunteers, South End children can play safely on renovated playgrounds. Similarly, the reopening of a renovated community center and funding from the Federal Weed & Seed program has brought expanded youth programming to the area. In addition, Brownfield remediation education programs have enabled residents to receive job training.

The South End NRZ Initiative is an inspiration to tough communities across the nation. It is a model of effective community partnership that respects and values all members. Through the mobilization of empowered community volunteers and the participation of committed organizations that focus human, financial, and technical resources on collective goals, the NRZ has illustrated how a tough community can be transformed into a well-connected and an increasingly supportive place for families.

fighting against homelessness

Aftershare®, Volunteers of America Chesapeake – Woodbridge, VA

Families who become homeless often have to choose between food, shelter, and other basic needs. Every night 600,000 men, women and children go homeless in America. **The Hilda Barg Homeless Prevention Center** is one of thousands of shelters across the country that has risen to the challenge of serving the homeless and providing support and services to families and children in need. Operated by **Volunteers of America Chesapeake**, the Center has a 30-bed shelter in Woodbridge, VA.

An innovative volunteer program called **AfterShare®** sets apart Volunteers of America Chesapeake and the Homeless Prevention Center from most other shelters. Started in 1992, AfterShare is a volunteer program of mutual support and service to the community operated by former Center residents under the guidance of the Center staff. This program gives former residents the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of others currently facing homelessness, while building their own confidence and creating a support network of fellow volunteers.

Marnita Johnson is a former resident of the Homeless Prevention Center and a Daily Point of Light award winner recognized for her outstanding volunteer service. After leaving the Center in 1996, Marnita came back to the shelter as a volunteer.

With a passion to help others and a deep understanding of the issues faced by the homeless and in partnership with staff and fellow volunteers, Marnita has started many innovated volunteer services to meet the needs of current residents and also to provide support to formerly homeless individuals and families.

Knowing that sometimes only a few hundred dollars towards a rental deposit can mean the difference between success and continued homelessness, Marnita organized the AfterShare Rent Fund in 1999. The fund helps residents into homes of their own and prevents the move from shelter to shelter. All funds raised go directly to meet immediate housing needs for residents.

Marnita Johnson has overcome many obstacles in her life. As an AfterShare volunteer who continues to serve her neighbors, she is an inspiration.



An important aspect of AfterShare volunteers' work includes outreach to those currently homeless. Volunteers go out into surrounding wooded areas, where the unsheltered homeless seek shelter, and provide them with survival items. An estimated 400 individuals are helped each month.

AfterShare volunteers meet monthly to discuss service projects, adjustment problems, and to share donated food and items. On Tuesday nights and Sundays, volunteers help with a "give away" at the Center when individuals and families in need come to receive donated items including food, clothes, and household goods to help them make ends meet and prevent them from becoming homeless. In addition, AfterShare volunteers raise funds for the Center and take the lead in organizing the annual Fannie Mae "Walk for the Homeless."

As the fastest growing segment of the homeless population, over half of the Center's residents are children. AfterShare volunteers include children who come with their parents to volunteer as a family. These children befriend and comfort currently homeless children and also educate the community about homelessness.

By engaging a usually untapped resource as volunteers and by partnering with former clients, Volunteers of America Chesapeake's AfterShare program expands and strengthens the Center's services to the community. AfterShare empowers formerly homeless volunteers to create change in the lives of others and helps them identify their hidden skills and talents, build self-confidence, and benefit from the mutual support of fellow volunteers.

creating healthy communities

Barrett Station Health Advisors Organization – Barrett Station, TX

Reliable health care and medical services are crucial for the well being of children and families. For families, such as the citizens of Barrett Station, Texas, living in low-income and medically underserved areas medical services such as emergency care and regular preventive medical care can be costly and inaccessible.

With the closest medical facility 15 miles away and no local Fire Department, Barrett Station lacks adequate health and social services. However, thanks to committed residents and an innovative **Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services (HCPHES)** program, today Barrett Station has a cadre of community members working hard to bring services and health education to their neighbors.

As part of the Healthy Community Project sponsored by HCPHES, 37 Barrett Station community members participated in two 10-week health and leadership training programs. Adapted from a model created by the Center for Sustainable Health Outreach, the training builds participants' leadership skills and empowers and equips them to lead health initiatives in their community. After successful completion of the trainings, participants were recognized as Community Health Advisors.

In 1999, with help from a VISTA Volunteer, the Community Health Advisors formed **Barrett Station Health Advisors Organization (BSHAO)**. Based on community needs, the group identified cancer, overall wellness, and safety as the top three community health issues. Under the auspices of the new organization, volunteers have sponsored many projects to improve the health status of the community.

After the initial training, HCPHES continues to provide technical support to the Health Advisors and assists in connecting BSHAO with other partners. Since its inception, BSHAO has partnered with organizations such as the Texas Department of Health, American Red Cross, Columbia East Hospital, and the African-American Health Association to provide health screenings, education on disease prevention, and access to social services.

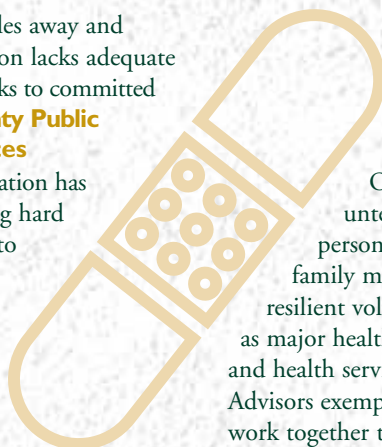
More than 200 people participate in the health fair BSHAO sponsors in partnership with the Civic League

and the Brentwood Wellness Access Demonstration Project during the Annual Homecoming. BSHAO and its member volunteers have made other contributions to the community including a free annual mammography screening in partnership with MD Anderson Cancer Center, distribution of more than 20 car seats as part of the Safety Seat

Loaner Program sponsored by the Texas Department of Health. Today the volunteers are looking forward to starting a Diabetes Support Group and a Caretakers Support Group.

Over the last four years, the BSHAO volunteers have faced many challenges including personal sicknesses and deaths of volunteers' family members. Despite these obstacles, the resilient volunteers remain committed. Recognized as major health leaders who provide crucial information and health services to the community, the Health Advisors exemplify how community volunteers can work together to make a real difference in the lives of their neighbors.

BSHAO is an inspiration to all medically underserved, low-income communities across the country. The Barrett Station experience illustrates that through effective leadership development, the answer to creating a healthy community can be the residents themselves.



partnering for safe neighborhoods

Community Problem Solving Teams, Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance – Kansas City, MO

Who has the responsibility for crime prevention – the community or the police? Ask that in a room full of officers and citizens and the answers will vary. Faced with drug houses, dangerous buildings, overgrown lots, and loitering teens, it's easy to see why many urban residents rely on the police for problems of all kinds. Many citizens give in to apathy and hopelessness. But, not all.

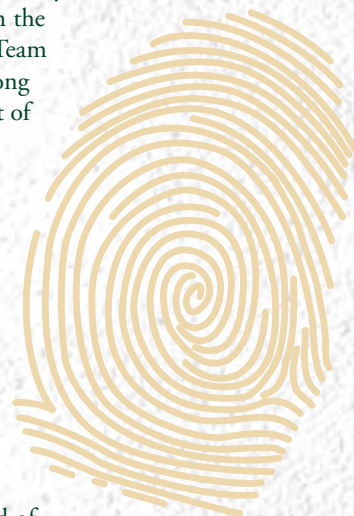
Reggie Pierce was on the fringe of neighborhood activities for years. His wife led Kansas City's Blue Valley Neighborhood Association while he worked nights. But, in 2001, Mr. Pierce began attending neighborhood meetings and volunteering. When the **Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance (KCNA)** entered Blue Valley with its Neighborhood Preservation Initiative Reggie wanted to know what was going on. The excitement that came from knowing houses were being rehabilitated, partnerships were being strengthened, and someone cared about his neighborhood moved him to action.

In 2002, KCNA, the **Kansas City, Missouri Police Department (KCPD)** and the Regional Community Policing Institute (RCPI) brought another new program to Blue Valley. Realizing that crime prevention is not solely the job of the police, the program sought to engage residents and show that they could make a difference in crime in their neighborhood. KCNA facilitated a 10-hour engagement session to bring officers and residents together and help build teams. These teams helped the police officers



assigned to this low-income, tough neighborhood and their resident counterparts view crime and safety issues in their neighborhood in a new light.

Residents realized that the KCPD was not the only solution. As they realized their role, residents decided to become part of the solution. Reggie Pierce represents citizens all over the Kansas City metropolitan area working with the police to prevent crime. Team members have walked along streets they never thought of walking. They identified dangerous buildings and reported them to the City. Working with the City and KCNA, more than 15 abandoned houses were boarded up. Residents provided information that helped police close several drug houses. Another team had more than 150 abandoned cars towed. Instead of calling the police about an abandoned car, they now know to call the City to arrange a pickup. A third team is getting to know their police officers, advocating for them, and educating their neighbors on the important role they play in crime prevention.



Citizen team members do not feel helpless anymore. When Reggie gets overwhelmed with the distress he sees everyday, he drives down the streets that he has impacted. Another team member feels safe knowing that if she doesn't contact her officers every few days, they call her. Officers on the teams now call these tough neighborhoods their own communities. They enjoy making solid arrests, putting more criminals in jail, and closing down drug houses. The police officers' jobs have been made easier by the citizens' work.

The Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance continues to offer support to the teams as they progress through issues, laying paths for partnerships and resource development. Through active partnerships like the one between residents, the police and KCNA, sustainable progress is created every day in Kansas City neighborhoods transforming them into healthier and more connected places where children and families can do well.

engaging residents as volunteers

**Neighbor to Neighbor Community Development Corporation:
Daily Point of Light Award Recipient – Sharon Hill, PA**

Failing to recognize the assets internal to the community they seek to serve, organizations often miss out on a tremendous resource - the skills and talents of people of the community. **Neighbor to Neighbor Community Development Corporation (NNCDC)** shows that by recognizing the strengths of a community and tapping into the skills, talents, and time of its residents an organization can serve a community even better.

NNCDC presents a successful model of “neighboring” focused on engaging residents in volunteer service to their neighbors. Over 2,500 low-income and largely minority households in eastern Delaware County, Pennsylvania, are better off today because of the collective work of neighbors who care and an organization with the commitment to serve a underserved community and

the vision to see the residents as resources in themselves.

Established in 1995, NNCCDC is a nonprofit that provides urgently needed community services to low-income and minority residents of eastern Delaware County. Like its name suggests, NNCCDC is

focused on addressing the needs of the community through the effective mobilizations of community residents as “neighbors.” Recognizing community members as assets, NNCCDC depends of community volunteers to meet the service needs of its clients.

NNCDC programs are designed to combat common problems that face their low-income community clients. It tackles issues of hunger, homelessness, and the lack of economic opportunities, as well as addresses issues of transportation, positive youth development, and mentoring needs. The After-School Enrichment



Program, Community Health Services, Emergency Food Program, Employment & Training, Youth Offender Program, and Community Outreach & Homeless Program are just some examples of programs that provide access to services and assist clients in maintaining links to crucial services.

NNCDC programs provide services to

the residents of eastern Delaware county and by engaging community members as volunteers, they build local capacity, model self-help, and empower the community.

With deep compassion, an extensive knowledge of the community and the critical issues faced by the low-income/minority neighbors, NNCCDC volunteers and staff ensure maximum community and client impact. These volunteers exemplify how, given an opportunity, residents are themselves agents of change.



investing in the future

Dollars for Scholars Lincoln Heights – Los Angeles, CA

Education is said to be the key to a bright future, but for children and families living in America's tough communities, a bright future through a college education is often just a dream. However, for many families and young students in East Los Angeles, this dream is being made real thanks to the **Dollars for Scholars Lincoln Heights' (DSLH)** volunteers.

Located four miles from downtown Los Angeles, Lincoln Heights is one of the oldest neighborhoods of the city. Though rich in local culture and history, Lincoln Heights, like many other urban neighborhoods across the country, has its share of challenges. Founded originally by the city's growing affluent population, today Lincoln Heights is home to a Latino working class and, more recently, to a sizable Asian population.

In addition to the hazards of gangs, drugs, and violence, young Lincoln Heights residents like Maritza Hernandez face many challenges, often including being the first in their families to attend college. Even when they excel in academics and extracurricular activities despite many odds, the students and their families still have to contend with the ultimate challenge of having the financial resources for college.

Recognizing this fundamental barrier led Hank Castillo and other community activists in Lincoln Heights to organize and start a scholarship program to benefit low-income students. The volunteers soon connected with **Scholarship America**, formerly Citizens Scholarship Foundation of America, the nation's largest private sector scholarship and educational support provider. In 1988, DSLH registered as an independent nonprofit and became one of the first urban-based chapter of Scholarship America.

Since then, this grassroots community-based organization has leveraged its national affiliation to further expand and strengthen its programs while keeping focused on the needs and assets of the community. Based at Lincoln High School, DSLH serves two area high schools: Sacred Heart (all-girls Catholic school) and Lincoln High School. With the aim of providing scholarship assistance to the largest number of graduating high school students as possible, the volunteers develop financial resources to distribute scholarships to interested students to attend accredited four-year colleges or universities, community colleges, or vocational institutions.



A completely volunteer run organization, DSLH has no paid staff and 85 percent of the organization's budget is allocated to the Scholarship Program. The ten volunteer board members who serve as the steering committee represent the ethnic diversity of the community and include residents, graduates of Lincoln High, community activists like Hank Castillo, as well teachers and a school administrator.

The volunteer board meets quarterly and organizes community fund raising activities such as the annual 5K/10K Run and horse track race. Volunteers also reach out to new prospective supporters including high school alumni and past scholarship recipients who have completed college. In addition, by developing partnerships with individual and corporate contributors, high schools, and other area organizations, volunteers enhance educational and vocational opportunities for students and enable them to become contributing members of society.

Since 1988, DSLH has distributed 86 scholarships, totaling more than \$40,000, to deserving low-income students from Lincoln and Sacred Heart Highs. Students have attended four-year universities including UCLA, USC, Occidental College, UC-Irvine, Davis, Berkeley, Cal State LA, Long Beach, MIT, Northridge and others.

Dollars for Scholars Lincoln Heights is a model of how volunteers can make a difference in their community and in the lives of individual students. Maritza, a 2001 Community Service Awardee of DSLH and a student at California State University, pledges to pursue a Ph.D. in Biochemistry and give back to the community that has supported her. The work of these volunteers enables students to achieve their dreams and inspires a new generation to make a difference in their community.

parenting as a community

Concerned Parents of Pueblo: 2002 National Family Volunteer Award Recipient – Pueblo, CO

Located 110 miles from Denver, Pueblo is a diverse and growing community in Southern Colorado. Though known as the “America’s Home of Heroes,” like many other communities across the nation, Pueblo too has had to contend with increasing youth violence in its schools and community. Prompted by mounting concern, in 1992, two Pueblo parents, Fred Tripp and Ben Ramos, came together to find an effective solution to the challenge and respond compassionately to the needs of youth and parents.

Since its humble beginning in a neighborhood garage, **Concerned Parents of Pueblo** has grown greatly, as has the impact in the local community. Today, this grassroots organization seeks to provide youth and families the opportunity to address critical issues facing their community.

One of the first issues that Concerned Parents tackled was the overwhelming amount of graffiti throughout the community: an important issue to the people of Pueblo. Gang members often use graffiti to mark territory, challenge competing gangs, and communicate messages of rivalry or camaraderie. Though much of the graffiti in Pueblo neighborhoods was the work of individual “taggers,” gangs are a growing concern in the Pueblo area. The community prioritized the need to combat such vandalism, not only because defacement and destruction of property affects property values, but also because of the negative environment that graffiti creates in neighborhoods for residents and visitors.

Through an innovative program called the “**Youth Incentive Program**,” Concerned Parents offers young people in Pueblo neighborhoods the opportunity to volunteer their time to remove graffiti from homes and businesses. In return for their service, young people receive simple but attractive incentives.

In 2001 alone, over 1,500 graffiti sites were removed and four mural projects were completed.

Concerned Parents engages families to work together to make a difference in their community through family volunteer opportunities. In 2001, over 700 local family volunteers cleaned 346 yards, recycled

5,000 bags of rubble for elderly citizens in their community and worked on a beautification project in 12 neighborhoods. Through the **Youth Issues Workshop** series, Concerned Parents brings youth and parents together to address issues of gang participation, teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, and the importance of education.



Concerned Parents has strengthened its outreach and expanded its programs through local partnerships with agencies and businesses including local chapters of the United Way, Junior Achievement, and the YWCA, as well as Keep Pueblo Beautiful, the Pueblo Chamber of Commerce, local school districts, and the judicial system. Started by two local parents with a vision to make their community a better place for their children, Concerned Parents counts Boeing, the Creel Foundation, the City of Pueblo, Wells Fargo, the David & Lucile Packard Foundation and many other national and small businesses as its supporters.

Every year, Concerned Parents mobilizes an average of 1,165 community volunteers of all ages to contribute nearly 23,390 hours of service to their neighborhoods. Since 1992, more than 6,500 youth, 3,250 parents and 1,900 senior citizens have contributed over 233,904 volunteer hours.

Through innovative community-driven practices and effective neighboring strategies, Concerned Parents of Pueblo has dedicated itself to improving Pueblo one neighborhood at a time. By encouraging families to be positive role models and developing the leadership skills of neighbors and youth, this grassroots organization has turned community strife into positive social change through neighbors helping neighbors.

neighboring: the essential strategies

Since 1996 the Points of Light Foundation, in partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, has explored the nature of volunteering in tough communities and the role it plays in transforming them into family-supportive places where children and families can thrive.

We have learned that volunteer programs and initiatives that view residents as assets and seek to engage the local community as an equal partner by empowering, mobilizing and building upon its assets, are best positioned to facilitate sustainable positive change. Whether it is a short term group volunteer project or a long term community initiative, more and more people are becoming neighbors and developing programs that have lasting impact on the communities.

Following are the seven basic strategies that individuals, organizations, and businesses can use when working with under-resourced communities to strengthen families and transform neighborhoods.

- 1. Understand the language and nature of volunteering in tough communities –** Learning the language is an important aspect of working in tough communities. Volunteers are abundant in tough neighborhoods and have a long history of helping, but residents do not usually refer to themselves as “volunteers.” Often called “helping out,” “giving back,” or “neighboring,” the volunteering that takes place is not usually recognized or rewarded and happens more informally through neighborhood associations, churches, and on an individual basis.
- 2. Overcome barriers to volunteering –** Barriers to volunteering include lack of time, financial resources, child care, transportation, as well as low self-esteem and confidence, negative perceptions of volunteering or outside organizations, as well as cultural and language barriers. These must be addressed in order to engage local residents.
- 3. Empower the communities to help themselves –** Residents must own the issues and solutions and must witness the benefit of their involvement in solving their communities’ social problems. Outsiders cannot be “parachuted” into the community to rescue the residents. Residents must be part of the planning and decision-making process.
- 4. Cultivate community members’ skills and talents –** The gifts and talents of the local residents need to be identified and translated into important assets needed to accomplish a project’s goals. Many residents believe they have no talents or skills to bring to the table, but only by building on existing assets within the community can real change be affected.
- 5. Strengthen existing community leadership –** Organizations should identify existing leaders and help develop new community leaders. Local leaders help build community trust and ensure that the local perspectives and experiences are considered and understood.
- 6. Acknowledge that volunteering is an exchange –** All volunteers need to be rewarded for their contributions in ways that make sense and have meaning to them. In tough communities an appropriate exchange could include meals, services such as tutoring, child care subsidies, and job opportunities.
- 7. Ensure community readiness –** Building relationships and involvement takes time. It is a process that needs patience and flexibility. Communities may need help resolving conflicts or problems that are preventing residents’ involvement.

recognizing the heros

An important part of sustaining volunteer engagement is recognition. The stories contained in this publication exemplify how volunteering and volunteer strategies that value community members as assets can improve the lives of children and families living in tough communities. We hope these stories inspire you to volunteer, encourage others to volunteer, and adopt similar volunteer based family strengthening strategies in your own organizations.

Many of the people and programs included in this publication are awardees of national volunteer recognition programs managed by the Points of Light Foundation. We urge you to look around in your community and organization. Identify the heroes from tough communities who are giving their time and talent to help neighbors. Nominate these neighbors, for these and other awards, so they may inspire others!

Daily Points of Light Award – Sponsored by the Points of Light Foundation, Corporation for National and Community Service, and the Knights of Columbus, with full program funding provided by the Knights of Columbus, the Daily Points of Light Award is designed to honor those groups and individuals who have made a commitment to connect Americans through service to help meet critical needs in their communities and is especially focused on the goals for children and youth set by the Presidents' Summit for America's Future. Each weekday, one volunteer or volunteer effort in the country receives a Daily Point of Light Award.

National Family Volunteer Awards – Volunteering together as a family provides quality time, strengthens communications, and provides opportunities for family members to be role models while simultaneously allowing them to make significant contributions to their communities. The National Family Volunteer Awards recognize outstanding family volunteering activities performed at any time throughout the previous year. Volunteer efforts may include, but are not limited to, National Family Volunteer Day activities.

Awards for Excellence in Workplace Volunteer Programs – The Points of Light Foundation & Volunteer Center National Network, in partnership with major national businesses and nonprofit organizations established the Awards for Excellence in Workplace Volunteer Programs to recognize businesses that have made an organizational commitment to support company-wide employee and retiree volunteer efforts. The Awards are centered on the Principles of Excellence for Workplace Volunteering-guidelines for a sustainable and effective employee volunteer program.

For more information on the above awards, visit our website at www.PointsofLight.org.

The President's Volunteer Service Award – The President's Volunteer Service Award is a Presidential recognition program for Americans of all ages who contribute a significant amount of time to volunteer service. The program recognizes individuals, families, and groups that have achieved a certain standard of service – measured by the number of hours served over a period spanning 12-months to a lifetime. Though a national recognition program, the President's Volunteer Service Awards are delivered through local, state, or national organizations. To participate, an organization must register to be a “certifying organization.” Certifying organizations agree to:

- Verify the hours of volunteer service
- Nominate potential awardees
- Order and distribute the awards

For more information visit www.PresidentialServiceAwards.gov

Other Recognition Opportunities – Volunteer Centers are conveners for the community, catalysts for social action, and key local resources for volunteer involvement. They bring people and community needs together through a range of programs and services based upon community needs, demographic area, population size, and other factors. There are over 400 Volunteer Centers serving local communities across the country. Many of these Volunteer Centers have local volunteer awards programs. Contact your local Volunteer Center to identify local opportunities to recognize outstanding volunteers from tough communities and innovative neighboring initiatives. To locate a Volunteer Center in your area, call or visit www.1-800-VOLUNTEER.org.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private charitable organization dedicated to helping build better futures for disadvantaged children in the United States. It was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, one of the founders of United Parcel Service, and his siblings, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human-service reforms, and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families. In pursuit of this goal, the Foundation makes grants that help states, cities, and communities fashion more innovative, cost-effective responses to these needs. Learn more at www.aecf.org.

The Points of Light Foundation is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to engaging more people and resources more effectively in volunteer service to help solve serious social problems. The organization collaborates and partners with community leaders to better recruit, manage, and encourage volunteers to effect real change. Through its programs, initiatives, and hundreds of Volunteer Centers around the country, the Points of Light Foundation supports activities focused on engaging the general public and specific volunteer segments - including workplace, family, youth, seniors, and faith-based communities, among others. Learn more at www.PointsofLight.org.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to *The Annie E. Casey Foundation* for continued support in our work to explore volunteering in tough communities and to promote neighboring as a strategy to strengthen families and transform neighborhoods.

Thanks to *the people and organizations whose stories are included in this publication* for not only sharing their stories, but more importantly, for the groundbreaking work they do everyday in communities across the country.

Also, thanks to *the Family Strengthening and Neighborhood Transformation Initiative Advisory Committee Members and Advisors* for their continued commitment and contributions to the cause of “neighboring as a strategy to strengthen families and transform neighborhoods”:

AARP Tax-Aide

Association of Junior Leagues

International

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

Center for the Study of Social Policy

CHARACTER COUNTS!

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IRS – SPEC

Joint Action In Community Services

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National Assembly of Health and

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National Community for Latino

Leadership, Inc.

National Council for Family Relations

National Council of La Raza

National Crime Prevention Council

National Fair Housing Alliance

Partners of the Americas

Pew Partnership for Civic Change

Pitney Bowes

Scholarship America, Inc.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Volunteer Center National Network

Volunteers of America

Points of Light Foundation

Washington, DC

December 2003



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This publication is made possible with support from The Annie E. Casey Foundation