

“Community Connections: Mid-City”

Gang Prevention & Intervention Summit

September 14, 2010

Located in the USD Hall of Peace & Justice theatre, Dana Brown facilitated the Mid-City break out group. Showcasing the ten year plan initiated by The CA Endowment on Systems Change & Advocacy, Dana shared an overview of the unprecedented community organizing underway in City Heights.

The community hub, Mid-City CAN, oversees the process via several Resource Teams and Momentum Teams, in addition to continual leadership development and partnership collaboration. City Heights was the only community chosen in San Diego County. One of fourteen communities state-wide, The CA Endowment has initiated a historical opportunity for collaborative partners dialog, design, and cultivation of systems change through community engagement and leadership.

Building capacity through 25 House Meeting Leaders chosen from community residents, a survey dated January 19, 2010 depicts quality-of-life statistics and is reflective of 1,550 community residents of which 30% were youth.

- 75.1% worried about gangs in the neighborhood
- 62.1% fear child won't graduate from high school
- 41% feel unsafe in their homes

Momentum Teams and Resource Teams were developed from community youth and residents, non-profits, faith-based organizations, law enforcement, community based organizations, educational leaders and colleges/universities.

As Co-Chair of the Peace Promotion Momentum Team, our team chose Outcome 5 as our first priority.

- Outcome 5: Children and their families are safe from violence in their homes & neighborhoods.

Facilitated through a Visioning Process and a Logic Model Plan, all the teams work was developed into the June, 2010 “City Heights Healthy Community Plan”. Accessible on Mid-City CAN's website, please know a plethora of data, Minutes, and statistics are available for every team. www.midcitycan.org

Our systems are broken. The ultimate outcome of a paradigm shift in systems and how we think about doing business is paramount. Partnering, shoulder to shoulder, with community youth and residents, we will shift “power” to a balanced, unified system.

Answering on a large note card, “What is Power?”, attendees shared their insight as follows. Graciously appreciative of Sarah Lebov taking notes on the stage for our break-out group, please find their responses.

- The ability to influence. The ability to facilitate change. Elicit emotions.
- The ability to make change, whether positive or negative.
- The ability to make decisions that affect your life.
- Energy and action
- Knowledge, Education, Collaboration as a community, family, closeness, patience, communication, faith, good health
- Ability to do or act.
- It is a life changing source not limited by human resources.

“What is Power?”, attendees shared their insight as follows;

- Power is the ability/capacity to effect change (physical, sociological, psychological, personal, etc.)
- It's the ability to encourage/influence others to do what is being asked of them by our direction.
- Energy through influence/directions
- The ability to set goals and have the skills to achieve those goals.
- Knowledge and wisdom for our future
- I believe power is knowledge and wisdom given by our Lord, our Savior. I realized in January, 2010 I need to make a difference that would impact my children and wife's future. I went back to school and volunteering to give back to our community by reaching our future which is our children.
- Control of your own life which includes freedom of choice, opportunity and “a voice”.
- Power has strength in numbers.
- Strength, authority to make decisions. Freedom to exercise my own will.
- Power is being able to have control and decision-making over one's own life!
- Power is about being understood!
- Control; the ability to influence others to change
- Power is subjective but in society power provides opportunity, promote change/influence others, instills a sense of freedom to have choice
- Power is the force that causes change, for the good and also the bad.
- Power can take force over other people and things. Power is HUGE.
- Power is the ability to make things happen.
- Authorization (of another) to make decisions that affect you (on your behalf).
- The ability to change, influence, motivate, or empower.
- The strength needed to make these changes happen to that one may be able to succeed.
- Resources, vision, consequences, focused determination, purpose
- Energy to make things move around with a purpose
- Power is the ability to help others in need.
- Power is being able to make your decisions, feel free, to feel capable of doing everything you want to do, and is getting your needs met.
- Power is the energy and gifts within yourself.
- The ability to influence another, a system, and having the capability to empower
- The ability to influence and change others or situations
- The influence you have over yourself, your community, and the people around you
- Power is the ability to make change
- Power is the energy that moves you to do something, positive or negative
- Principle Offered during Weakness Effecting Resources

Sharing with each other their individual responses, dialog ensued on “shifting power” strategies in the development of a sustainable, successful power base of the community residents and youth leaders. Although our dialog had just begun, please find the initial responses shared before our available time ceased.

Transparency on Community Organizing Documentation

- Overcoming mistrust of “us versus them”
- Language/cultural barriers
- Internal struggles existing in families

Strategies on “shifting power”; (cont’d)

Expanding Farmer’s Markets

- Excellent opportunity to connect and celebrate diversity
- Economic development for marketing goods/wares

Becoming an Advocate

Being a voice for UNITY

Law Enforcement as part of wrap-around preventative measures

With time limiting our continued dialog, attendees were encouraged to be informed and/or engaged in the BHC (Building Healthy Communities) ten year plan on Systems Change & Advocacy through Resident Engagement.

Our Peace Promotion Momentum Team meetings are the second Wednesday of each month from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm at the East African Cultural Community Center located at 4061 Fairmount Avenue, SD, 92105.

A calendar of every resource and/or momentum team meeting is on the Mid-City CAN website. Please visit; www.midcitycan.org

We each have a personal responsibility to be part of the solution. There is not any ambiguity of our energy, our individual power. You are either part of the problem... or, you are part of the solution.

Honored to be invited to speak on behalf of Mid-City, please know City Heights has incredible collaborative initiatives unfolding. BHC is striving to be a replicable, transportable model for other communities and collectively becoming the paradigm shift in community partnerships and systems change.

Written by:

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