Forging Unlikely Coalitions - Addressing Urban Change

Marilyn Higgins, Vice President
Anchor Institution Task Force Development Executives Subgroup
Community Engagement and Economic Development
December 9, 2013
Bold Ideas Attract Creative People
What do the grocer, parish priest and entrepreneur have in common?
Salt Throwing Rather Than Groundbreaking
When the Maxwell professor plays jazz on the bus...
Plaza Pals – physicist, designer, stage manager and software engineer
These unlikely coalitions can solve problems in new ways. What does a grocer bring to public health education?
Industrial design, library science and neighborhood residents
Artists and residents connect a neighborhood to a city


**Practice Humility and Inclusion**
A fundamental component of effective anchor institution work, particularly in distressed communities where power relationships seem out of balance, is earning trust. Ed Bogucz, Professor of Engineering, Director of the Syracuse Center of Excellence (COE) and founding member of the NWSI Board of Directors will describe how the COE earned the trust of neighborhood residents. Mary Alice Smothers, longtime neighborhood activist will describe what the University did wrong in the past and right this time. Ms. Higgins will describe how even changing traditional development rituals like groundbreakings and grand openings can unite people, reinforce local project ownership and ignite participation.
Try a Bold Experiment
It was outrageous for the School of Architecture to invite some of the best designers in the world to compete to build an extreme green home on a 40 foot lot in one of the poorest neighborhoods in America. Assistant Director of Upstate, a division in the School of Architecture and neighborhood resident and NWSI Vice-Chair Carole Horan will discuss how being bold and engaging residents on the jury of the International Design competition “From the Ground Up” resulted in the construction of three fabulous and unique homes, the attraction of three new families to the neighborhood and the attendance of over 200 residents at a neighborhood open house preceding their sale. The homes were ultimately featured on the cover of Dwell Magazine and became a source of pride for neighborhood residents. Professor Julia Czerniak will discuss another bold experiment entitled “Movement on Main” which will engage residents in designing the first “Healthy Main Street in America”.

Ingredient 2: Experimentation

Joseph Sisko, Asst. Director
Syracuse University
School of Architecture

Carole Horan, Longtime Neighborhood Resident
Near Westside Initiative Vice Chairman

Julia Czerniak, Professor
Syracuse University
School of Architecture
Honor All Generations

Director of Community Initiatives at SU’s downtown location, the Warehouse, Stephen Mahan runs SU’s Literacy through Photography program. Stephen can be seen any day of the week walking around one of Syracuse’s neighborhoods with a happy line of children following behind him, carrying cameras and peering into the cracks of sidewalks. The decision to fill the vacant windows of the largest deteriorating structure in the neighborhood with the faces and aspirations of neighborhood children truly catalyzed the Near Westside Initiative. Stephen and Leah Tucker, a neighborhood teenager who announced to the world on one of these posters her intention to become a Supreme Court Justice, will discuss the impact that engaging neighborhood youth has had on the democratization and credibility of the NWSI.