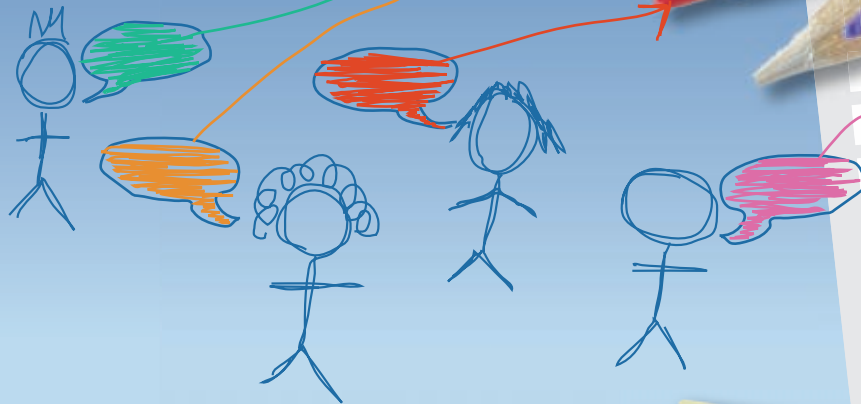


# NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS



One of the main goals of organizers is to engage the community in meaningful and thoughtful dialogue so that its voice can be heard.

One good way to do this is through community meetings. Community meetings are a good organizing tool to bring people together in order to inform, gain consensus, gain input or even evaluate work. However, in order to make the above things happen the meeting must involve detailed planning to ensure that results are reached. Meetings must also have a good facilitator who knows how to engage participants in a neutral fashion.

When planning a community meeting for desired results there are a few new methodologies that an organizer can use to engage the community in dialogue. They include but are not limited to: Open Space Technology, World Café, and Town Hall. We hope you explore these approaches when developing your next neighborhood meeting. They could prove to be just the right method to achieve your desired results.

## What's Covered

- The 3R's
- Effective Questions
- Meeting Facilitation
- APE'ing
- Meeting Methodologies
- Meeting Planning

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## THE 3R'S OF MEETING DESIGN

When people are engaged in meaningful conversation, the whole room reflects curiosity and delight.

*Margaret J. Wheatley*

A good organizer will need to know how to facilitate a conversation to draw out the 3R's when designing any meeting. The 3R's are Relationships, Resources and Results. The concept was designed courtesy of Sherbrooke Consulting, Inc. for the Resident Leadership and Facilitation Work Book, Sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (Annie E. Casey Foundation, n.d., chap. 9). Key to this 3R process is Appreciative Listening. Appreciative listening is an awareness of oneself and an intense listening to a speaker for responses to effective questions. Often this is done by setting a background statement and listening for the key responses. But before we focus on effective questions, let's look at the 3R's in more detail.

The 3R's of meeting design are not reading, writing, and arithmetic. They are instead "Relationship + Resources = Results" and good organizers depend on them to bring about effective meetings.

### Relationships + Resources = Results

- **Relationships:** how people relate to you, to each other, and to the result.
- **Resources:** what people have and can bring to help get the results. E.g., their time, their commitment, their passion, their talent, who they know, who they can influence, access to others, etc.
- **Results:** what you want to accomplish. They consist of what you see when actions achieve their purpose.

## TRY IT!

Think about one result that you would like to see from your next meeting and fill in the three sections of this matrix with your answers. Always start with the question on Results then move to the Relationships and Resources questions.

### RESULTS

What do you want to accomplish. What will you see when actions achieve their purpose?

### RESOURCES

What do people have and can bring to help get the result?

### RELATIONSHIPS

How will the people you invite to this meeting relate to you, each other and the result?

# EFFECTIVE QUESTIONS



Effective Questions are a very good way that organizers ascertain what groups really want to see happen at their meetings. They focus on the 3R's, while challenging the group to think about their results. Facilitation of these questions involves using open-ended, inquisitive, you-oriented and appreciative styled questions. Good listening skills are also key to using effective questions.

**AN EFFECTIVE QUESTION IS:**

- ✓ **Open-ended** (not answered with "yes" or "no");
- ✓ **Inquisitive** – leads people to think ("what?", "How?", not "why?")
- ✓ **You-oriented** ("What do you think...?" "How do you feel about...?); and
- ✓ **Appreciative** (trust that the person has the answer).

As you ask these types of questions in your work, the greater your capacity will become of getting the results that you are working toward.

The following matrix is based on the 3R's. Included in each of the areas are examples of effective questions that can be used to draw out information that will be helpful in making your meeting results oriented. Thinking about your upcoming meeting, fill in other effective questions that you can use to draw out information to use while planning your meeting.

## TRY IT!

### RELATIONSHIPS

What effective relationship minded questions could you ask when developing your next meeting?

- Who needs to be involved to get our results?
- Who has been invited?
- Who else is needed?
- How do we get them there?
- 
- 
- 

### RESOURCES

What effective resource minded questions could you ask when developing your next meeting?

- What do we know about making this successful?
- What can those invited do to help?
- What do they need so they will give their time and attention?
- When do resources need to be available?
- 
- 
- 

### RESULTS

What effective Results minded questions could you ask when developing your next meeting?

- If successful, what would we see?
- What do we want to have at the end of the meeting?
- How would you measure progress?
- 
- 
-

**Meeting Design:** As you set up your meeting based on what you want to accomplish, the following are examples of what you can do to get different types of meeting results.

Meeting Result	Type of Work	Approaches	Preparation
Relationships strengthened	People getting to know each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eating together</li> <li>Ice Breaker</li> <li>Meet and greet/mingle</li> <li>One-on-Ones Intro</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name tags/tents</li> <li>Food</li> <li>Gather Materials</li> <li>Stress toys</li> <li>Sign in sheet</li> </ul>
Information shared	People learning new things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Story telling</li> <li>Hand out</li> <li>Small Presentations to review highlights of a report</li> <li>Facilitation discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose topic</li> <li>Prepare report</li> <li>Read report</li> <li>Practice</li> </ul>
Ideas generated	Creative thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post It Notes</li> <li>Flip chart brainstorming</li> <li>Draw pictures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gather materials</li> <li>Set context for participants and ask questions</li> </ul>
Issues explored	Inquiry and dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paired conversation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set context for participants and ask questions</li> </ul>
Solutions developed	Problem solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define Problems</li> <li>Flip chart brainstorming</li> <li>Create options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set context for participants and ask questions</li> <li>Define problems</li> </ul>
Decisions made	Making choices together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consensus (rule of thumb)</li> <li>Dot Voting</li> <li>Listing topics and allowing for those who have an interest to emerge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn rule of thumb</li> <li>ID sources of conflict</li> <li>Set context for participants and ask questions</li> </ul>
Commitments made	Negotiating requests/ contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dialogue to ID barriers to actions and what is needed to overcome them</li> <li>Flip chart brainstorming for list of task and solicit from the group support</li> <li>Listing topics and allowing for those who have an interest to emerge</li> <li>Follow-up and next steps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set context for participants and ask questions</li> <li>Solution development</li> <li>Decisions making</li> <li>Relationship building</li> </ul>
Feedback	Evaluations of the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questionnaire/survey</li> <li>Check – in with participants</li> <li>Exit Poll</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare survey/ questionnaire</li> <li>Post question on flip chart, message board etc. and allow participants to mark their answers</li> </ul>

*Adapted from Resident Leadership and Facilitation Work Book, Sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. (Annie E. Casey Foundation, n.d., chap. 11).*

# MEETING FACILITATION



It is one thing to plan a meeting and quite another to actually facilitate one. Facilitating a meeting requires skill, preparation, and a good attitude. The role of a facilitator is to exhibit neutrality and good listening skills. These skills essential for someone who is organizing in the community because it allows the organizer to support all types of groups with their efforts. If you have not already done so it is always a good idea to add training to your work plan and start with a really good training on facilitation that is progressive and challenges you as an organizer to practice effective questions, good listening skills and staying neutral.

Think back to a time when you experienced fantastic facilitation of at a meeting, training or group. What did they do? What made the facilitation so fantastic?

TRY IT!

## CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD FACILITATOR

What did they do?

What made the facilitation so fantastic?

In selecting facilitation training, keep in mind the characteristics that you just listed when making your final decisions.



## APE'ING

One good way of using all of these skills in a solid uncomplicated technique is called APE'ing. APE'ing stands for Acknowledging, Paraphrasing and Exploring. The technique combines appreciative listening skills with key facilitation skills such as reflecting, clarifying, summarizing and using silence just to name a few. What makes APE'ing real to the process of facilitating is the way that, if used correctly, the group will be fully engaged in the work at hand and will leave with a sense of empowerment because their individual voices were heard.

## TRY IT!

In the previous "Try It" you thought through and listed the characteristics of a good facilitator. In your list you probably noted the skills of listening, neutrality and paraphrasing. As stated above, APE'ing is a good way to assist the organizer or facilitator in allowing the voice of the group to be heard. Under the characteristics column add other ways a good facilitator can use to Acknowledge, Paraphrase and Exploring with groups.

	How to use	Characteristics
<b>A</b> CKNOWLEDGING	Body language mirrors that of the speaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lean forward</li><li>• Offer a little listening noise</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>
<b>P</b> ARAPHRASING	Empathic responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use your own words to reflect your understanding</li><li>• Address feelings</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>
<b>E</b> XPLORING	Open-ended, inquisitive questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask "what?", "how?", not "why?"</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul> <p>As you do your work, use the characteristics of APE'ing when engaging the people you come in contact with.</p>

## MEETING METHODOLOGIES



After you have facilitated the groups 3R's using effective questions and APE'ing skills, next you will need to settle on what type of meeting you will have.

The following list of meetings can be used to help support methods that your team can use to engage the community with obtaining your results. They include World Café, Open Space, Town Hall, and Appreciative Inquiry. Although each of these are similar in that they all engage community, they differ in approach. Read over the following methods to find which ones are better suited for getting to your results.

### WORLD CAFE

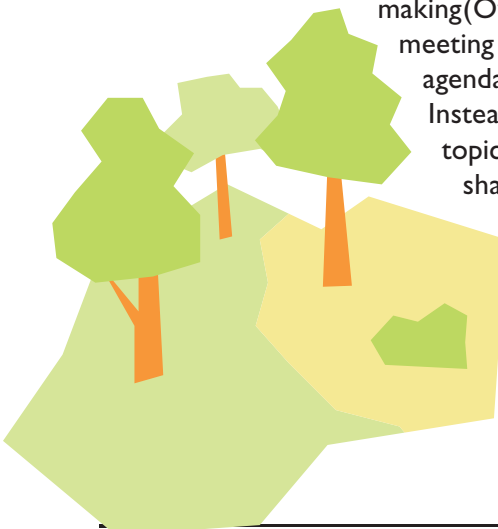
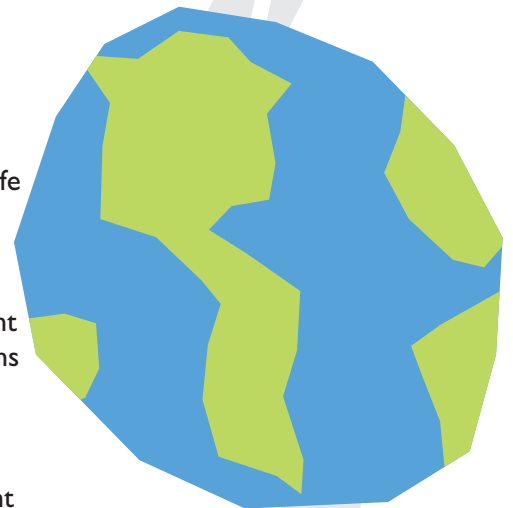
World Cafe Conversations are an intentional way to create a living network of thoughts or ideas around questions that matter. A World Cafe is a creative process for leading collaborative dialogue, sharing knowledge and creating possibilities for action in groups in all sizes.

Organizers recognize that everyone will look at a question from a different perspective. Knowing this, their role becomes hosting these conversations and insuring that there is a diverse group of stakeholders in the room to explore these core questions. Conveners of these meetings set up the room in the form of a "cafe", with tables and chairs set up to allow participants to sit in small groups. Each table will normally have a different topic or question of conversation.

Using timed intervals and table facilitators, participants will rotate from table to table mixing up groups so that different perspectives are heard for each topic. World Cafe is a great way to break up large groups of people into small, workable conversations, where everyone's voice is heard. Many people may feel intimidated to voice their opinion to a large group of people, but may feel comfortable in this small group setting.

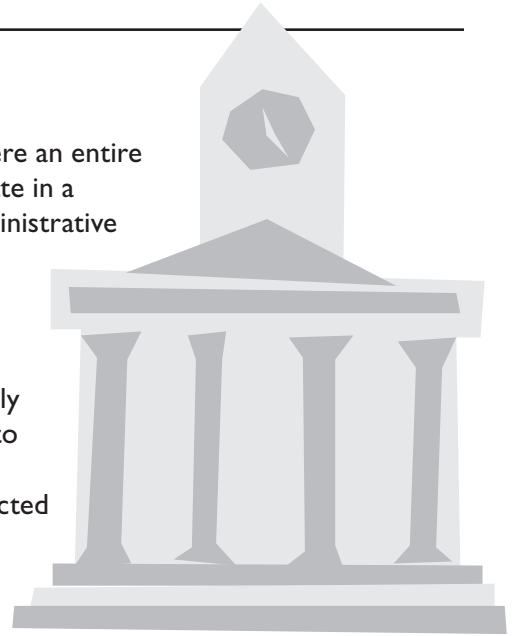
### OPEN SPACE

Open Space Technology (OST) is a meeting process that brings together diverse groups with a common stake in an issue for discussion and decision-making (Owen, 1997). OST differs from traditional meeting is that there are no predetermined agenda items, speakers, or workshop topics. Instead, the large group identifies agenda topics. Participants connect with others who share their interests and exchange ideas, information and experiences. And, when it makes sense, begin planning for change. These meetings are especially useful for sharing information among people who do not frequently interact. OST can work with a group of 15 to a group of 100-plus, and can range from 4 hours to five days.



## TOWN HALL

A town hall meeting is a meeting where an entire geographic area is invited to participate in a gathering, often for a political or administrative purpose. It may be to obtain community suggestions or feedback on public policies from government officials, or to cast legally binding votes on budgets and policy. Normally everybody in a community is invited to attend, voice their opinions, and hear responses from public figures and elected officials, although today, attendees rarely vote on an issue.



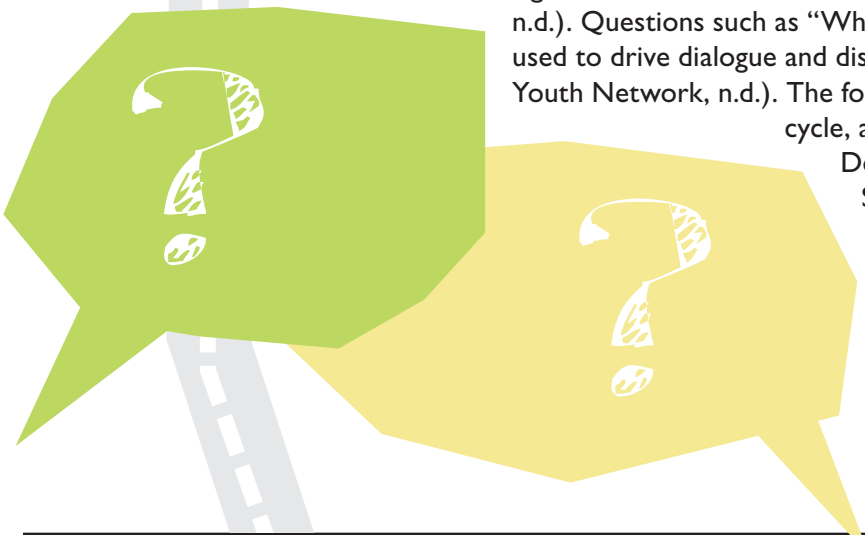
There are no specific rules or guidelines for holding a town hall meeting. If the turnout is large, and the objective is to give as many people as possible an opportunity to speak, the group can be broken down into smaller discussion groups. Participants all hear an opening presentation and then break into smaller groups (“group-up”) to discuss an aspect of the presentation. Each group appoints someone to summarize their group’s discussion.

## APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (AI)

AI is a process that “searches for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them,” (Appreciative Inquiry Commons, n.d., para. 3). Not only is AI a philosophy and methodology that seeks the best, it builds from the strengths in systems, environments, and individuals in an effort to promote change and action (n.d.). When applied to neighborhood meetings, AI can be an effective and powerful tool for uncovering opportunities and solutions that had never before been imagined or discovered.

The simple process of AI involves utilizing positive and unconditional questions to fuel the process of discovery for almost limitless types of organizations, entities, and communities (Appreciative Inquiry Commons, n.d.). Questions such as “What is possible?” and “What is the best?” are used to drive dialogue and discussion along the four steps of AI (Child and Youth Network, n.d.). The four steps involved with AI, known as the 4-D cycle, are Discovery, Dream, Design, and Delivery/Destiny (Child and Youth Network, n.d.).

Starting with the Discovery stage by asking questions like “What is the best of our situation?”, the four step process works in a cycle through each of the stages (Child and Youth Network, n.d.). Building from the successes of any situation, the last stage of AI ends by asking questions about ways to implement the actions and plans created through the entire process.





You have learned about meeting design, facilitation, methodologies and evaluation. Now let's put what you have learned to practice. Think about an upcoming meeting that you will need to design. Use the following form to plan your meeting. Remember it is always best to plan ahead, well in advance of your meeting to insure that your results can and will be met.

**TRY IT!**

## Pre-Planning Meeting

Before you begin, pull together at least 3 to 5 people to assist you in organizing your meeting. Use this form to assist your group with planning your meeting. Once you have completed this form, create the agenda for your upcoming meeting using the information that the group gave.

### Purpose/ Background for Meeting:

*Collaborate with Community public Safety liaison throughout Marion County as well as grassroots neighbors to bring forth strategies to affect Quality of Life for all.*

### 3R's

#### Relationship

*How will the people you invite to this meeting relate to you, each other and the result?*

- *IMPD Liaison*
- *Project Safe Neighborhood*
- *Operation My Town*
- *Indpls. Ngh. Resource Cntr.*
- *Mayor's Ngh. Liaisons*
- *Health and Hospital*
- *Mid North Public Safety*
- *Prosecutors office*
- *Marion County 911*
- *Asst. Director of Public Safety*
- *Butler Tarkington Neighborhood*
- *Crime Watch Coordinator*

#### Resources

*What do people have and can bring to help get the results?*

- *Refreshments*
- *Music*
- *Meeting place*
- *Grassroots people to do One-on-ones*
- *Facilitator*
- *Flip chart*
- *Neighborhood background and information*

#### Results

*What do you want to accomplish? What will you see when actions achieve their purpose?*

- *Give history of the "Unit"*
- *Build Relationship among the group*
- *Consensus on Mission/Objective*
- *Confirm Collaboration among the partners*
- *Brainstorm for program ideas*
- *Explore Next Steps*
- *Schedule next meeting*

### Meeting Methodologies and Approaches

*Based on the outcomes from above, develop strategies to assist you in getting your desired results.*

#### List Desired Results

- *Build Relationships among the group*
- *Give history of the "Unit"*
- *Consensus on Mission/Objective*
- *Confirm Collaboration among the partners*
- *List of program ideas*
- *Explore Next Steps*
- *Schedule next meeting*

#### What Method and or Approach will you use?

- *Provide Refreshments/Ice Breaker-Get to know others*
- *Small presentation on the history of the "Unit"*
- *Flip chart group brain storm session*
- *Pre meeting One-on-Ones to garner consensus*
- *Flip chart group brain storm session*
- *List topics via flip chart for next steps and assign tasks*
- *Gain consensus for next dates and times for future meetings*

### Meeting Evaluation

#### Informal

*Poll on effectiveness of meeting to get results*

#### Formal

## Pre-Planning Meeting

Before you begin, pull together at least 3 to 5 people to assist you in organizing your meeting. Use this form to assist your group with planning your meeting. Once you have completed this form, create the agenda for your upcoming meeting using the information that the group gave.

### Purpose/ Background for Meeting:

### 3R's

#### Relationship

*How will the people you invite to this meeting relate to you, each other and the result?*

#### Resources

*What do people have and can bring to help get the results?*

#### Results

*What do you want to accomplish?  
What will you see when actions achieve their purpose?*

## Meeting Methodologies and Approaches

*Based on the outcomes from above, develop strategies to assist you in getting your desired results.*

### List Desired Results

### What Method and or Approach will you use?

•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•
•	•

## Meeting Evaluation

Informal

Formal

## Draft Agenda

Date: *March 1, 2007*

Time: *6 to 7:30*

Place: *Indianapolis Neighborhood Resource Center*

# of Hours: *1.5*

Note: This draft agenda was created by INRC and used as a tool with the Metro Public Safety Awareness Unit, a collaboration between Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood Association, Crown Hill Neighborhood Association and Meridian-Kessler Neighborhood Association. This unit was created as a result of the Butler-Tarkington Neighborhood Association Study Circle on Public Safety.

Time	Result	Approach
6:00	<i>Build Relationships among the group</i>	<i>Meet and Greet/Refreshments/ Music</i>
6:15	<i>Build Relationships among the group</i>	<i>Ice Breaker on getting to know each other better</i>
6:25	<i>History of the Metro Safety Awareness Unit</i>	<i>Give a small presentation and provide handout</i>
6:35	<i>Confirm collaboration among partners</i>	<i>Pass out colored sheets of legal paper. Ask each stakeholder to write down their responsibilities and goals. Ask each participant to talk about what they wrote and tape it up on the wall. Debrief by the group pointing to how a greater impact could be done if we all worked closer together. Ask each stakeholder for their partnership</i>
6:50	<i>Consensus on Mission/Objective</i>	<i>Present group with the start of a mission ask for their input and work on the development</i>
7:05	<i>Generate program ideas</i>	<i>Unveil a prelist of ideas that the group could undertake and ask for their buy in and additional input for new ideas.</i>
7:15	<i>Explore next steps</i>	<i>Explore next steps for the group by soliciting form the group their thoughts and Flip charting responses. Assign task to participants.</i>
7:20	<i>Schedule next meeting</i>	<i>Gain consensus for the best time for as many as possible</i>
7:25	<i>Informal survey</i>	<i>Pre-board Questions for an informal survey and ask participants for their input. Record the result.</i>

## Tasks for Next Steps

Based on the outcomes from above, develop a task list for next steps.

Task	Responsibility	Due date
Type up final meeting agenda	<i>Val</i>	<i>2/25</i>
Contact special guest (One-on-one)	<i>Callie</i>	<i>2/15</i>
Send out save the dates/Invitations	<i>Callie</i>	<i>2/20</i>
Put together a marketing strategy (See sect. on marketing)	<i>Callie and Ed</i>	<i>2/20</i>
Start gathering needed materials	<i>Val</i>	<i>2/25</i>
Acquire a facilitator and Co-Facilitator	<i>Val</i>	<i>2/15</i>
Gather materials	<i>Ed</i>	<i>3/1</i>
Refreshments	<i>Ed</i>	<i>3/1</i>



# REAL LIFE SCENARIO



There are many neighborhood leaders in our communities that are passionate about public safety and bringing people together. One such person is Elaine Bolden, a resident of the Martindale- Brightwood Neighborhood. Elaine saw a need to reach out to her City County Councilor in 2007 to receive support with abandoned homes, high crime and engaging her neighbors. She invited Duke Oliver, the City-County Councilman for her district, to one of her neighborhood meetings to hear from the residents. It turned out to be excellent timing, because Councilor Oliver had been attending neighborhood meetings throughout the community and was hearing some of the same sorts of issues. Councilor Oliver received a lot of information from this group about their concerns.

Armed with this knowledge, Councilor Oliver sought out assistance to engage neighbors together in order to hear their concerns and issues, and to explore ways to improve the community. He and others from the community reached out to INRC for help. The group had an idea to put together a forum on public safety but had no idea how to proceed. INRC's Neighborhood Development Specialist (NDS) staff led the group through the 3R's to ascertain what they wanted to see happen as their Results, what Relationships that they needed to develop to make their forum a success, and what Resources they were going to have to obtain to see their results accomplished.

In facilitating this discussion, INRC used an Appreciative Inquiry style of questioning and APE'ing techniques to start the 3R group Brainstorming session. The participants were engaged in meaningful dialogue that generated the results they were looking for. It wasn't long before the group saw that planning for this community meeting was going to require at least 2 additional design meetings and involve even more residents. By the end of the meeting, the group was armed with an initial agenda for a follow-up meeting with even more supporters.

At the follow-up meeting, the initial 3R brainstorming sheets were displayed again and reintroduced to the group for revision and buy-in. INRC facilitated this group as they had facilitated the previous and, shortly thereafter, the group put together a timeline which included tasks, due dates and delegated work. This was beneficial because that group only had 4 weeks to pull off the forum that included conducting outreach to the community, ensuring the participation of high ranking City and State Public Safety Officials, and securing a place to host the forum. Good thing for them that they had engaged and built relationships with resources that helped to develop the forum.

The day of the event was well-planned. Everyone was busy doing their assignments. One person was in charge of the food, another in charge of the panelists and yet others the vendors and guests. The volunteer greeters were busy ushering in the people and handing out agendas and

questionnaires that were used to solicit audience questions. The group had secured a well-respected moderator, Amos Brown. Mr. Brown facilitated discussion among the 350 plus participants and Public Safety panelists. The audience left confident that their voice had been heard. Many of them got involved in further outcomes, and Public Safety Officials began working on neighborhood concerns such as unsafe houses in the neighborhood and high weeds and trash, working alongside neighbors in their public safety efforts. The forum organizers achieved their desired results and celebrated their accomplishments together.

## TIPS

- *Enroll in a Facilitation workshop to become a better facilitator.*
- *A good facilitator stays neutral.*
- *Be prepared using the 3R's for meeting Design.*
- *Try out different meeting methodologies (practice, practice, practice).*
- *Always plan well ahead of your intended meetings to allow for good trouble shooting.*
- *Set a relaxed and open tone for your meetings by using food, music, and hostess to greet people as they come in.*
- *Remember the main goal of an organizer is to engage the community in an inclusive manner.*
- *Always arrange your agenda in such a way that you will achieve your intended results.*
- *Pull a team together to plan and implement your meetings. Don't be a "Lone Ranger".*
- *Share responsibilities.*
- *Create and implement an evaluation of your meeting.*
- *Follow-up and share the results of your meeting with participants.*

