

Forward Thinking: How to Effect Community Change in Jacksonville

*An Issue Forum report by JCCI FORWARD
for the Jacksonville Community*



October 2005



Introduction

How can individuals and groups effect community change in Jacksonville, Florida? To help answer that question, a JCCI Forward Issue Forum committee explored how citizens lead positive change, including the advocacy,

organization, and implementation skills that help build a better community. This committee of citizens came to the following consensus of findings after speaking with resource people and reviewing published materials.

Where Does It Start?

People who have been successful in leading community change in Jacksonville get involved through many paths. Sometimes they carefully select an issue they feel passionate about, an issue with broad community appeal whose timing is right. Sometimes the issue chooses them,

thrust upon them by impending actions in the community. And for some, participation in a JCCI study or JCCI FORWARD issue forum provides the structure to advocate for community change.

Individual Skills and Characteristics of Leaders

Citizens who are effective in creating community change share several key characteristics and skills. These include the 6 P's of Passion, Patience, Persistence, Preparation, Participation, and Positive approaches.

Citizens who are effective in creating community change share key characteristics and skills.

* Passion	* Preparation
* Patience	* Participation
* Persistence	* Positive Approaches

Community change is often a long-term, difficult process that is sustained by personal passion for the issue that continues over time. Efforts succeed when people prepare carefully, share a positive message, and participate in the process. Resource speakers warned against becoming one of the CAVEs – Citizens Against Virtually Everything – and recommended finding ways to provide solutions and alternatives.

large is a necessary step in reaching the goal.

In addition, effective leaders are honest and trustworthy, respectful of others, candid with the media, and straightforward with elected officials and the community. They are knowledgeable about the change they want to see happen, understanding both sides of the issue and able to share facts and data from reputable sources to underscore their position. They are organized and follow a well-thought-out plan to move the community forward.

Leaders that are most successful in effecting community change are more than single-issue advocates. They work for the good of the entire community, not just what would benefit them personally, and are able to engage others in the work.

Most importantly, effective community leaders understand that they are not just trying to get the community to believe in an idea; they are trying to get the community to believe in them. If the integrity and credibility of the leader is in question, the leader's idea can flounder, regardless of its merits. Who a person is, contributes to the success of a change effort.

Successful efforts also rely on the 4 C's of Courage, Commitment, Courtesy, and Communication. Standing up for the issue while respecting those who disagree is critical, and sharing the message with elected officials, interested citizens, the media, potential partners, and the community at

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* Courage	* Courtesy
* Commitment	* Communication

Begin with the End in Mind

Successful efforts begin by knowing the desired outcome. Clarity and agreement in knowing what you want is critical. Once leaders and supporters know the direction of change, the next step is to create a strategic plan--a well-thought-out and organized method to proceed. The strategy considers timetables, priorities, specific actions, and measures of success. It identifies who needs to do what and when in order for the effort to succeed, and it identifies current resources and capacity to accomplish those steps. Where capacity, resources, people, or partnerships are lacking, the plan includes strategies for recruitment, fundraising, outreach, and other steps to be able to move the initiative forward.

plish their goals. They may build common ground with others, and then focus their shared energy on a specific issue. Effective leaders are constantly listening to others and learning from them. Successful leaders also understand what drives the media, and they know how to work with them.

Effective community change begins with a plan for an outcome, but it also needs to include flexibility. If something doesn't work, then try something that does. Leaders know in advance where they are willing to compromise – what is the best they can get and what is the least they will accept. Sometimes the best teacher can be failure. They also are willing to do some of the work necessary to make change happen, rather than just ask elected officials to do it for them.

Successful leaders may begin their change efforts by being good supporters and helping other people accom-

Putting Together a Team

Successful leaders don't do it all themselves. They play to their strengths, and build a team of others with the skills necessary to get the job done. Roles for team members include someone to work with the media, a negotiator, a strategic planner, someone to provide legal advice and draft legislation (if applicable), and a fundraiser. They build

relationships with other people who share the same vision for the community, creating coalitions and partnerships to build support for the issue. These efforts often build unity and a sense of purpose that extends beyond the topic that brought them together.

Working with Elected Officials



The steps to effective community change often involve elected officials. Community leaders know how to work with elected officials. They build community consensus across party lines. They identify elected officials who share their position and build a base of support; they also identify officials who do not share their views and work to change those positions while helping the official

“save face” in the process.

Effective community leaders get to know the elected officials, understanding each official's governing style and approaching them accordingly. Elected officials approach their responsibilities differently. Some feel they are elected to represent what their constituents want, while others feel that their election empowers them to make decisions on behalf of the community.

The efforts of community leaders to effect change in their community change may require legislative action or

executive decision-making. Successful change advocates understand what is needed and how to get it. They also use public education campaigns, petition drives, public forums, or other tools to build support for their ideas. Sometimes they create a new organization to provide structure and staffing for the change effort.

Effective leaders get involved in politics. They attend meetings and participate in the process. Individually, they may help on a political campaign, understanding that the risk of working for a losing campaign can more than offset the benefits of working for a successful one. They know who makes appointments and offer themselves as someone willing and able to serve. However, when leading an organization, effective leaders often avoid endorsing candidates, working instead to have each candidate endorse (and campaign on) the message of the organization.

Successful advocacy efforts are FAST: Focused, Accurate and Appropriate, Simple, and Timely. Leaders approach legislators and ask them to sponsor legislation, write it up, or introduce it. They find ways to show the breadth of community support behind the issue. They stay in constant communication, through phone calls, letter, face-to-face, speaking up at meetings, or participating in workshops. They are respectful, clear, and consistent.

Ineffective Advocacy

- Takes on too many issues at one time
- Provides inaccurate or false information
- Happens after the fact
- Ignores or does not understand the process
- Is overly partisan
- Uses a cannon when all it took was a fly swatter
- Is overly complicated
- Does not have full commitment of board or staff
- Does not include media
- Does not link field effort with lobbying effort

Ericka Thoms, The Center for Community Solutions

Follow up/monitoring



Effective community change does not end when a political leader or other decision-maker agrees to make change. At that point, successful leaders shift from an advocacy position to a monitoring phase, providing support but not removing citizen pressure to implement their ideas. Some of

the hardest work may occur between initial agreement and the patient, negotiated steps for full realization of communi-

ty change. This may mean making sure that legislation is not only enacted, the legislation is also fully funded to ensure results. Staying on top of the change throughout this process may be critical. In some cases, monitoring may continue for years, as advocates guard against future attacks on their hard-won gains.

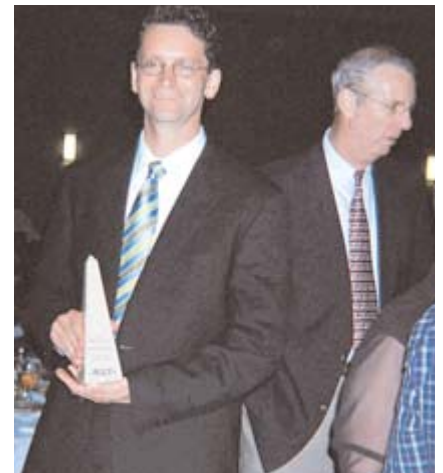
Staying on top of the change throughout this process may be critical.

Appreciation, Celebration, Continuation

Rewarding the team with a shared victory celebration may often be appropriate.

Successful community change efforts end with heartfelt thank-yous to those who listened and made change happen, to those who joined in the effort, and to all who supported the process. Rewarding the team with a shared victory celebration may often be appropriate. For some, when the effort has been successful, the team dis-

bands. For others, the results of successful community change encourage more action. The community does not lack for issues that require champions. For these community leaders, the process begins again, with the selection of the next issue and the creation of the next plan of action.



Interested in joining the next Issue Forum?

Call Esther at 904.396.3052
or email esther@jcci.org

Action Plan

Committee members will work with JCCI *FORWARD*'s new Training Committee to develop a curriculum to train leaders in the skills needed for effective community change. In addition, committee members will create a web-based self-directed resource library and how-to guide for those in the community who want to know how they can lead community change.

ACTION PLAN CHAIR - Scott Shine

If you would be interested in participating in this Action Plan, please contact Esther at 904.396.3052 or email esther@jcci.org

Forum Participants

(Bold Names are Management Team)

Co-Chairs

Art Graham
Amy Hays Holliman

Christine Allmand
John Allmand
Jordan Boss
Dan Davis
Kay Ehas
Brian Fuller
Sarah Gay

Fionnuala Geoghegan
Dawn Gilman
Jennifer Gornto
Melissa Gross-Arnold
James Holt
Jill Jinks
Jay Johnson
Melissa Johnson
Leslie Kirkwood
Georgia MacLean
Charles K. "Chuck" Mann

Heather McEachen
Jeremy Miller
Ju'Coby Pittman-Peele
Eileen Raynor
Dan Richard
Scott Shine
Jim Varian
Valerie Williams
Stephen "Ken" Wilson

2004-2005 JCCI *Forward* Executive Committee

Eric "Brian" Smith, Jr., Chair
Kay Ehas, Chair-elect and Vice Chair Issue Forums
Fionnuala Geoghegan, Treasurer
Perri Cohen, Vice Chair Socials
Dawn Gilman, Vice Chair Action Plans
Abel Harding, Vice Chair Recruitment
Amy Harrell, Vice Chair Communication & Technology
Martin Harrell, Vice Chair Leadership Development Workshops
James Holt, Vice Chair Fundraising
Jill Jinks, Vice Chair Nomination Process
Earl Johnson, Jr., Immediate Past Chair

Resource Speakers

Bill Brinton—Leader of three citizen initiatives, Chair of JCCI
Matt Carlucci—former President, Jacksonville City Council
Sandy Golding -- Beaches Watch, Inc.
Diane Kerr—North Riverside Community Development Corporation
Mike Langton—former State Senator
Andy Wojcicki— Board member, St. Johns Riverkeeper

Additional Resources

"Grassroots Advocacy and Lobbying" by Ericka Thoms, The Center for Community Solutions. National Association of Planning Council/Community Indicator Consortium Conference, May 12-14, 2005.

"Forward Thinking, Sideways" by Richard Michalski. CMA Management, June/July 2005.
<http://www.managementmag.com>.

"Learning to Lobby: Steps to Successful Legislative Advocacy" by Judith Bell.
Race Poverty and the Environment, Fall 2003.

Implementation Guide and Tools Handbook, Jacksonville Community Council Inc.

Community Implementation Guide: A Framework for Community Action. Child Welfare League of America.

JCCI Staff

Anne-Marie Logrippo JCCI *FORWARD* Planner
Karen Kempf JCCI *FORWARD* Planner
Ben Warner, JCCI Associate Director

For more information about training opportunities for community change, contact JCCI FORWARD.

What is JCCI Forward?

Established in July of 2000, JCCI Forward is an initiative of JCCI that seeks to involve developing leaders and community-minded people with important issues facing our community. With an emphasis on developing rising leaders from the ages of 25 to 45, JCCI Forward provides the information, tools, and resources needed to develop strong leadership skills and to affect positive change in our community.

Mission

The mission of JCCI Forward is to provide a dynamic forum for developing leaders and community-minded individuals to identify and discuss issues facing Northeast Florida and to strive for solutions.

Why Join JCCI Forward?

JCCI Forward is an ideal way to interact with city leaders, to experience leadership development, and to build a network of friends and associates who all share the common goal of improving our community.

Activities & Events

JCCI Forward provides the information, tools, and resources needed to develop strong leadership skills and to help affect positive change in our community. Like JCCI, JCCI Forward hosts its own community forums and workshops, all with the three-fold aim of studying the issues which are central to our community's growth, providing an opportunity to meet, interact and work with our community's existing leadership structure, and focusing on the skills critical to assuming a leadership role in our community's future.

Issue Forums

Issue Forums offer participants a venue to interact with respected community leaders and resource experts on issues of concern to Northeast Florida's citizens. Participants explore issues critical to the community's growth, seek understanding of related problems, and come to consensus on proposed action plans that can be implemented locally.

Leadership Development Workshops

Leadership Development Workshops are half-day seminars devoted to keeping JCCI Forward members involved, engaged, and connected. These workshops offer a foundation for leadership skills by allowing members to study important community issues in a dynamic setting, while interacting with expert resource speakers.

Trainings

Trainings offer JCCI Forward participants opportunities to learn and improve their leadership skills, such as facilitation, consensus-building, and how to run effective meetings.

Leadership Opportunities

While JCCI Forward is supported by JCCI, it maintains an Executive Committee and several established committees that offer opportunities for individuals to get involved and hold leadership positions. Additionally, Issue Forum Management Teams provide participants with hands-on planning experience.

Other Events

Networking Socials allow members to connect with each other, strengthen relationships, and learn more about JCCI Forward. Mystery Guest Lunches provide participants with access to local leaders in the intimate setting of lunch with a community leader. Food For Thought gatherings offer an additional way for members to connect, network, and discuss community issues.

How to Join

JCCI Forward members are also members of JCCI and are encouraged to participate in all JCCI and JCCI Forward functions.

Name: _____ Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____ Phone Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Please select a membership category from the following:

- Basic Member: \$50 Receives bimonthly newsletter, annual report, and invitations to JCCI and JCCI Forward events.
- Family: \$75 Two family members receive basic member benefits.
- Patron: \$150 Receive basic member benefits plus the Quality of Life Report, a JCCI study, and a sponsored membership.
- Visionary: \$225 Receive patron benefits plus a second sponsored membership and a VIP Reception invitation.
- Corporate/Business: \$250 Receive visionary benefits plus a third sponsored membership

Complete the above and send it along with your check to JCCI Forward 2434 Atlantic Blvd., Jacksonville, FL 32202

For more information please visit us online www.jcci.org/forward

ISSUE FORUM

2000 - Emerging Business/Workforce Preparedness
2000 - Transportation System
2000 - Arts Education in Public Schools
2000 - Public School System Education Plan
2000 - Voter Education
2001 - Preparing for the Super Bowl
2001 - Downtown Living
2001 - Professional and Community Theatre
2001 - Truancy
2001 - Voting Irregularities
2002 - Business as a Partner in Education
2002 - Downtown as an Entertainment Center
2002 - Pathways to Power
2003 - Convention Business
2003 - Financial Literacy
2003 - Role of the Mayor in Education
2003 - Job Growth
2004 - Ecotourism
2004 - Community Health
2005 - Downtown...Greentown?
2005 - The Underground Connection
2005 - *Forward Thinking: How to Effect Change*
in Jacksonville

FORUM CHAIR

Valerie Williams
Trip Gulliford
Sara Roberts
Tricia Booker
Carla Marlier
Mike Barile
Carol Brock
John Zell
Bill Joel
Brian Smith
Melissa Gross-Arnold
Marcus Haile
Earl Johnson
Bill Kwapil
Martin Harrell
Jim Varian
Dawn Gilman
Lee Brown
Al Ocasio
Vitina Pelot
Michael Connolly
Art Graham & Amy Hays Holliman (Co-chairs)

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**United Way
of Northeast Florida**



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