

"We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say, 'It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.' Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes."  
Fred Rogers

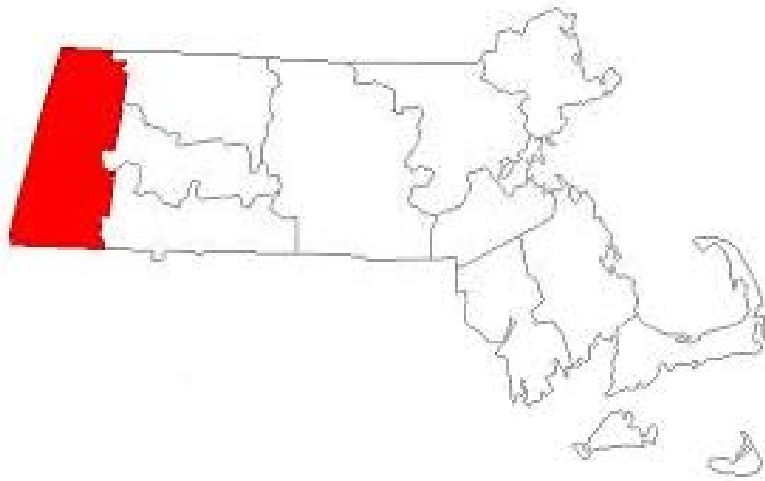
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Northern Berkshire  
Community Coalition

Community  
Outreach  
&  
Civic  
Engagement  
Training





- Rural Western Massachusetts
- Focus Area: 7 communities, total population about 37,000 people
- Municipal governments do not have the resources to support distinct Department of Neighborhoods
- In 1994, the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition recognized the value of organized neighborhoods and created Northern Berkshire Neighbors

•The mission of Northern Berkshire Neighbors is to promote community building by bringing together neighborhood residents of all ages to discover and capitalize on the potential and resources that exist in their communities and neighborhoods.

# In the beginning...

- Created in 2009 following a monthly forum
- Initial training solely focused on helping others access services and resources
  - Participants identified themselves with a specific neighborhood to dispense information
- Over the years, participants motivations for taking the training changed
- nBn attended the 2014 Neighborhoods USA Conference in Eugene, OR and heard a presentation by the Seattle Dept. of Neighborhoods

# The times they are a changin'

- Expanded from 15 weeks to 5 months
- Hours changed from morning to evening to incorporate students and those that work daytime shifts
- Greater focus on relationship building
- Several components added to the training:
  - civic engagement workshops
  - community assessment (needs & assets)
  - service projects
    - project teams
    - based on community assessment
    - submit funding proposals to support projects
    - must match 50% of funding with volunteer & skilled



## OUTREACH

nbCC programs:

- UNITY
- Mass in Motion
- The Family Place
- Community Health Worker
- Nb21/Substance Abuse Prevention

Berkshire Community Action Council

Berkshire Rides

Project RECONNECT

Adult Basic Ed

Dept. of Transitional Assistance

Dept. of Children & Families

MA Rehab

Ecu-Health Care

Women, Infants & Children

Elizabeth Freeman Center

Brien Center

Friendship Center

Neighborhood for Health

Louison House & Family Life Support

Accessing Local Government

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Different Styles of Leadership

Balanced Leadership Theory

Community Organizing

Conflict Management

Sustaining Involvement

Understanding the Group Process

Meeting facilitation & Agenda Setting

Professional Writing

Effective Marketing, Communication & Use of Social Media

Soliciting Donations & Fundraising

Ethics & Accountability in Leadership

Mentoring

Public Speaking

## COMMUNITY MAPPING *Internal Assessment*

### Asset-Based Approach

- **Associations of Citizens** (formal and informal groups)
- **Local private, public and non-profit institutions** (public institutions, non-profits and businesses)
- **Physical assets** (this is both obvious and not-so-obvious choices: i.e. Mountains and vacant lots)

### What Do You Wish Our Community Had?

### Draw Your PERFECT Northern Berkshire

- What does it look like?
- What does it feel like to live in one of its neighborhoods?
- What stays?
- What is added?
- THE SKY IS THE LIMIT!

### Share Your Visions!



## COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT *External Assessment*

### Interviews with Community Members

- What do you think are the three greatest assets within our community?
- Why do you call this region your home?
- What are the three greatest challenges facing our community?
- What solutions would you suggest to fix the challenges you named?
- For whom (populations, groups, ages) do you think it is the hardest to live in this area & why?
- If you could improve only one thing, what would it be and why?

### Research

- Through print & internet news sources
- Social Media
- **GOAL:** determine what these sources have identified as assets, positive happenings, and community concerns/issues

### Report on Your Findings

*Findings from the community assessments lay foundation for service projects*



## COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS

**PURPOSE:** for participants to have an applied understanding of the skills and information presented throughout the training.

### **REQUIREMENTS:**

- Service projects must either build upon an existing asset or work to meet a community need that had been identified during the assessment process
- Service projects must be completed by graduation
- Mini grants are available through Northern Berkshire Neighbors. Service teams must write grant proposals outlining:
  - Funds requested
  - Intended use of funds
  - Goal of the service project
  - How they will match ½ of requested amount with either volunteer or skilled labor
    - Volunteer labor= \$15/hour
    - Skilled labor= the specific wage/hour
- 1-page project reflection due by graduation

# CURRICULUM

BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY...

It all starts with...

Building...

**RELATIONSHIPS!**



# A SNAPSHOT OF OUTREACH VOLUNTEERS

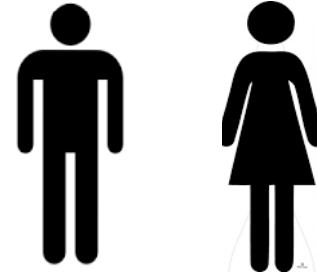




# Who Are They ?



**VolUNTEER**



Northern Berkshire Community Coalition



# ONWARDS & UPWARDS!

- Greater emphasis on supporting graduates' efforts following the training
- Utilize graduates for current and future nbCC programs, i.e. UNITY youth mentors, Employ North Berkshire, etc.
- Curriculum & Training Development
- Focus on fiscal sustainability

# Mark Rondeau Class of 2014

It's become increasingly obvious to me that the time of paternalistic, big institutions taking care of everything for people has passed, whether it be the Sprague Electric Company of my youth or the former North Adams Regional Hospital. Regular people need to be given the tools to better take care of themselves and others, and even to join together to provide the services and support no one else will. The Community Outreach program is a means of empowering this concern and activism...

*(from Mark's comments regarding the impact that Community Outreach Training has had on him and the Northern Berkshire community during a donor luncheon)*