

Independent Living Research Utilization



We create opportunities for independence for people with disabilities through research, education, and consultation



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Liberation to Leadership: The Role of CILs in Transforming Communities

Developing Community Leaders

September 16, 2015

Berkeley, CA

Presenter:

Robert J. Hand

Resources for Independence Central Valley (RICV)

- RICV is the independent living center that serves five counties in the Central Valley of California
- RICV has a very active strategic plan system
- The board sets goals, and the staff set measurable objectives for each goal.

Resources for Independence Central Valley (RICV), cont'd.



- About 5 years ago one of the goals set by the board was:
 - **“People with disabilities will be full participants in our communities.”**
- They were making the point that they wanted to go beyond just making specific buildings or services accessible.

Resources for Independence Central Valley (RICV), cont'd. 2



- The staff thought, “How can we affect the system enough to make people with disabilities full participants?”
- When we looked at communities we found that community leaders made decisions without access or independent living philosophy in mind.

Advocacy

- Advocacy has been about asking those in charge to do what is right.
- But, in reality, community decisions are announced, then people with disabilities protest them.

Advocacy, cont'd.

- It's true that we have laws that protect the rights of people with disabilities—the ADA, IDEA, Architectural Barriers Act.
- But what matters is how the laws are instituted in each community, in each situation—they're often ignored.

It Is Time for Us to Act More Effectively

- Implementation of the laws and regulations is still not perfect.
- Protests continue on significant issues.
- Input is often **reactive** instead of proactive.
- Aggressive activism confronts a problem from the outside.

The Next Step

Could we override this system?

- The independent living movement is ready for the next phase.
- The next step in affecting change is to address the problems from the inside.

As Edwin Markham so poignantly said. . .

**He drew a circle that shut me out –
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in!**

Excerpt from the poem "Outwitted"

The Solution

- The solution is to help people with disabilities become decision makers in the community.
- But which ones?
 - Elected officials?
 - Business owners?
 - Government supervisors?

Easiest Start with a Significant Impact

- We have discovered that the best place to start while making a significant impact is in
 - Local and state policy councils
 - Nonprofit boards
- We asked constituents to let us help them get appointments but they didn't feel confident enough to be on those boards

Our Solution?

...A leadership program to develop and encourage persons with disabilities to become community leaders

- We started our own Community Leadership Academy.
 - The Community Leadership Academy teaches parliamentary procedures, leadership skills, open meeting laws, and much more.

Community Leadership Academy

- This is an example of one system to train community leaders
 - Any center can design and start their own program or they can contact RICV to replicate ours

Academies in the Community

- As of now, community leadership programs have been started in:
 - Columbia, SC
 - Hayward, CA
 - Salinas, CA
 - And are about to start in San Rafael, CA and Kansas
- Also, an adapted version of a Community Leadership Academy has been created in South Korea

How to Start

- There are a few steps to starting a community leadership academy, the first place to start is by identifying how to select individuals.
- How do we pick individuals who will become community leaders?
 - Someone who can be part of the change!
 - Someone who can make things happen!

What do we look for in community leaders?

- People who are willing to work with “the establishment,” like Jackie Robinson playing baseball
- People with qualities that the community will respect
 - Independence
 - Positive mannerisms
 - Courage
 - Integrity
 - Confidence
 - Commitment

Community Leaders

- Ability to work well with others
- Knowledge of community, people and resources
- Ability to run meetings effectively
- Activism and community leadership are not the same, however both are needed. Activism addresses issues from the outside, while leadership addresses issues from the inside.

Recruiting

- Look for persons with disabilities who are successful in any field
- Recruit from university students
- Consciously observe those who are doing advocacy

- When we find good potential leaders, we must have effective methods for teaching community leadership

Leadership Skills

Natural vs. appointed leadership

- Natural leaders have authority because people trust them.
- Appointed leaders have authority because of the position they hold.

Appointed Authority

- Board members are appointed authority figures
- They have a responsibility for
 - developing policy
 - providing specific level of governance in the organization they serve

Participants need to understand the roles of officers and boards

Natural Leaders

- “Natural” leaders occur in every group, every business, and even on the playground
- Natural leadership traits can be learned and developed, but they must be encouraged in participants
- Recognizing the actual leaders in a group helps us accomplish our goals

Effective Board Members

- We focus on teaching how to be effective board members
 - Such as how to best communicate in a board meeting and with other community members
 - How to constructively share their thoughts and opinions while advocating for a cause
- We also feel it is important to focus on how to be an effective Chair or Board President

Board Operation

- After discussing leadership we study how boards operate, using parliamentary procedures.
- The Community Leadership Academy teaches Robert's Rule of Order and then how boards actually operate.
- People use Robert's Rule of Order to control instead of to facilitate meetings.

Board Procedures

- Discussion before a motion
- Make a motion
- Amending a motion/"Friendly" Amendments
- Point of Order – enforcing rules
- Calling the question – close debate
- Adjournment – close a meeting

Parliamentary Procedures: Sample Agenda

- Call to order
- Role call of members present
- Reading of minutes of last meeting
- Officer's reports
- Committee reports
- Special orders
- Unfinished business
- New business
- Announcement
- Adjournment

Understanding Nonprofit Finance

- Basic understanding of organization's overall budget
- Anomalies: Is the year to date figure for any line item significantly lower or higher than budgeted?
- Trends: If an income item is low, did it start low or is it going down?
- Odd: Do any numbers look out of place?
- Big changes: has a new department, line item, or major item been added since the previous month?

- Finally: It is important to Ask Questions

Government Councils

- Open meeting laws
 - Sunshine Laws
 - Varies by state
- Accepting the role of a government representative
 - Serving on a government board is like being a government employee.

Leaders Without Limits

- To order RICV's Leaders Without Limits Trainer's Manual at a special discount, go to <http://www.miltwright.com/products/LWL123>. The regular price of \$195 has been reduced for workshop participants to \$130 (plus tax and shipping).
- The code password is LWL123
- The student manuals are \$15 (plus tax and shipping). Everything in the student manual is in the trainer's manual, but some groups like to order a few student manuals for future trainings, or if they are sending more than one staff person.

The next step in the independent living movement is to promote decision makers who understand the civil rights of people with disabilities.

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Lunch Activity

September 16, 2015

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Facilitator:

Paula McElwee

Table Discussion Topics

- Does your CIL have a formal process for developing community leaders?
- If not, what other opportunities are you providing to help people become community leaders?

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