Community gardens are one way of helping ensure food security for residents in remote, rural areas.

In the tiny town of Dayville (pop. 138), the general store does a lot more than sell groceries. It’s a feed store, a liquor store, a variety store and—like many rural mercantiles—it also does duty as the community center. Mugs with their owners’ names scrawled on them hang on the wall, waiting for local residents to head to the back room for a little coffee and company.

It’s a reminder of how important food is to rural Oregon—not just the consuming of it, but its availability and distribution. At the same time, it serves as a reminder of how these food systems are at risk.

“That store has been for sale for as many years as I’ve been driving by it,” says Sharon Thornberry of the Oregon Food Bank. Thornberry travels to rural areas throughout Oregon for her job as community food programs advocate. “The owner drives to Bend to put produce in her store, and she has to go to Portland to stock her shelves.”

One of the big problems for rural communities is that the country is built around
Conflict may be inevitable but mediation services available

The last issue of Community Vitality featured a column on neighborhood disputes by Tom Gallagher, director of the Ford Institute for Community Building. Judging by the comments we received, “On being a good neighbor” struck a chord with our readers. “I love that you are recognizing disputes,” wrote Shelley Hanson, director of the Spirit Mountain Community Foundation. “Whether we like it or not, conflict is inevitable.”

She went on to point out some valuable resources that are readily available throughout Oregon that allow people to work towards a mutually acceptable solution. Most of them are free.

Housed within the University of Oregon School of Law, the Oregon Office for Community Dispute Resolution (OOCDR) currently supports 20 community dispute resolution centers in 25 Oregon counties. In 2007-2009, 950 professionally trained volunteers provided mediation and conflict resolution educational services to nearly 30,000 Oreganians.

The Oregon Mediation Association Web site (www.omediate.org) maintains a searchable database of non-profit agencies as well as private mediators. A complete list of Oregon resources can also be obtained at the University of Oregon’s Office for Community Dispute Resolution; visit http://oocdr.uoregon.edu/cdrc/.

“As a trained mediator and board member of Neighbor-to-Neighbor in Marion County,” Hanson wrote, “it’s always touching to hear the number of conflicts that are resolved so that families, neighbors and communities can resolve their differences and live peacefully together.”

Raucous debates come too easily in our modern society, where combatants often oversimplify the issues

Our world has many issues—abortion, war, climate change—that generate intense and often uncivil debate. Our communities also have many issues—taxes, public works projects, zoning—that also can generate intense and often uncivil debate. I would argue that the intensity is not an issue, but the incivility is. Over the years of trying to improve my own civility, I’ve coalesced a few thoughts on the subject.

First, name calling doesn’t harm my opponent and really just reflects poorly on me. It is compelling sometimes to say my opponent is a “blankety blank” or is just as bad as “so and so,” but this behavior increasingly makes me look small. Sometimes I find I have really misunderstood the other person and been unfair if not
mean spirited. I’ve noticed that the best community leaders simply don’t do these things. Sarcasm—humor meant to hurt—is much about me trying to be clever. I grew up thinking sarcasm was a higher form of humor, but now I see it as cheap and, with some gentle exceptions, downright mean. The root of the word in Greek means “to cut flesh” and I doubt if this behavior can exist alongside humility, one of my personal goals in this life. I’ve noticed that the best community leaders are not sarcastic.

With time I’ve come to see how important it is to understand and accurately represent the other person’s position and motive. It is easier, of course, to frame my opponents’ positions in the most negative light and to make their motives sound sinister. This not only avoids the truth and is unfair, but I might believe myself. I’ve found that when I get to know the other person, our differences are often not that great, or at least there are areas of agreement which give us some common ground. Again, I’ve noted that strong community leaders take the time to listen, understand and to look for agreement. Not black and white

Time has also taught me that most issues are very complicated. The polar positions offered by many intense voices often create a black and white, you are either “wit me or agit me,” situation. This over-simplification of the issue leads to an equally over-simplified solution, which just creates more problems.

The strong community leader accepts the reality of complexity.

In my effort to be more civil and humble I haven’t given up my deepest values or become wishy-washy on matters that are not negotiable. I have found for the vast majority of situations there are other legitimate ways to perceive an issue, and each is based on a rationale. If I look at that rationale through the lens of my opponents I begin to understand why they hold that position. A valuable outcome is that by knowing my opposition I am able to make my position stronger. As Aristotle said: “A fool tries to convince me with his logic; a wise man tries to convince me with mine.”

It is particularly easy to be uncivil in our modern society where we probably have never met those with whom we disagree. Media personalities lob cheap grenades of incivility at faceless opponents, many of whom may not even exist. For me, such behavior at best expresses legitimate frustration and at worst expresses ignoble character and certainly a lack of leadership.

Media personalities lob cheap grenades of incivility at faceless opponents, many of whom may not even exist. For me, such behavior at best expresses legitimate frustration and at worst expresses ignoble character and certainly a lack of leadership.

Civility in communities

There have been many efforts to increase civility in the United States. In 1867, after the Civil War, Oliver Kelley and six others founded The National Grange “to restore kindly feelings among the people” in the war-torn South. The Grange spread to the North and West and Grange Halls have served as a gathering place for communities all through Oregon and Siskiyou County over the decades. And in 1905, Paul Harris founded the Rotary Club of Chicago, now Rotary International, which has spread to many of our rural communities. Rotary offers four ethical tests of behavior which have much to do with civility: Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Will it build goodwill and better friendships? And, will it be beneficial to all concerned? ■

For more on the subject of civility, see pages 6 - 7.
There’s only one thing better than visiting the offices of a thriving community organization, and that is visiting two at the same address. Or three, or four. Sharing space is a concept that has been enjoying a surge in popularity as nonprofits look at ways to leverage their resources to cut expenses.

Splitting the costs of housing, utilities and even office staff can go a long way toward stretching precious dollars. That’s important, but the advantages of sharing space can be bigger than the budget, if organizers are intentional about how they go about it. Close proximity to like-minded groups can help inject new energy into projects and increase collaboration among groups.

In northern California, the Yreka Community Resource Center building started life as a Montgomery Ward store, and today, the 19,000-square-foot space still bustles with activity. There is a not-for-profit martial arts dojo, a large classroom off the mezzanine for social services programs, a drop-in soup kitchen, a sprawling family space complete with games and TV, and enough open space on the ground floor to periodically put up the air-filled Bounce House, just for fun.

In all, Director Michelle O’Gorman counts more than 27 programs that operate out of the center, which last year provided 11,000 services to the community.

Half of the ground floor, some 3,000 square-feet, is occupied by the center’s thrift store. “That pays our mortgage, light and heat,” O’Gorman says. “That makes my life so much easier—all we have to worry about is finding money for programs and people.”

Part of that money comes
from tenant Remi Vista Inc., a nonprofit group that provides youth and family services. Other tenants have included Girl Scouts of America and Southern Oregon Goodwill Industries.

**Income secondary**

Resource center leaders offered the space for lease after identifying their goals and studying the market. “The income is not the main reason why we’re renting it out,” O’Gorman explains. “I’m more of a landlord for the purpose of having that space used appropriately—we want multiple things going on.”

It’s a strategy that enjoys resounding success. “I have never seen a building more alive,” O’Gorman says. “We have 40 people a day in and out, not even counting the thrift store traffic.”

Still, she carefully studied what other downtown landlords were charging, and chose a price right in the middle. A formal lease agreement spells out each party’s responsibilities, and, in order to protect the group’s property-tax exemptions, only nonprofits are allowed to lease.

But the most important requirement, O’Gorman says, is to ensure that the groups that share space are compatible. “We wanted to rent to Remi Vista because our missions matched,” she explains. “Their clients are sometimes our clients—it’s just perfect.”

At Coos County’s Dora Center, space is shared by a fire department, public library, quilting group, service group and a church. “There are activities seven days of the week,” says Rich Kirk, board chairman of the Dora-Sitkum Rural Fire Protection District.

The Dora Center project, which was completed last year, involved building a new fire hall and multipurpose room and extensively remodeling an existing structure.

When it comes to expenses, the fire district, which operates the center, is transitioning from a landlord-tenant situation to a we’re-all-in-this-together model. All of the user groups are represented on a committee, which organizes fund-raisers to pay the bills; volunteers do all the cleaning. “These methods give everyone a feeling of ownership,” Kirk says.

In Klamath County, the Chiloquin Community Center also has a publicly funded library at its core, but it’s home to several other groups. Chiloquin Visions in Progress, an umbrella nonprofit organization, operates the 10,000-square-foot center, which was completed in 2004.

**Library, gallery, sheriff**

One third of the building is devoted to the library, and an art gallery and studio occupies another third. The remaining space serves a variety of groups, including the Klamath County Sheriff’s Department, the Klamath Crisis Center and the Klamath Youth Program.

Longtime volunteer Chuck Wells says one of the keys to the center’s success at sharing space is by sharing administrative resources. Each of the direct projects has a representative on the nonprofit’s board of directors. “It’s a real cooperative way of sharing administrative resources,” he says.
Collaboration yields

Differences of opinion about the management of Oregon’s natural resources have led to a lot of very public conflict over the last 20 years. They also have led to the creation of highly collaborative organizations that seek to deal with those differences civilly.

Eco Trust, Wallowa Resources, Nature Conservancy, Sustainable Northwest—these are just a few groups with a reputation for dealing with difficult issues in an all-inclusive, solutions-oriented manner.

Sustainable Northwest, for example, was instrumental in helping stakeholders come together to develop the historic Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement, beginning its efforts about the time the region was struggling with the infamous “water wars” of 2001.

The group describes its mission as “providing dedicated, nonpartisan support for a community-oriented, conservation-based economy in the West.”

Working together

Organizations prove civility can prevail, even when dealing with divisive issues

It took nearly a year and a half of consensus-based discussions for the group that would become Wallowa Resources to decide on a mission statement: Promote community, forest and watershed health while creating family wage jobs and business opportunities, and broaden the understanding of the connections between community well-being and eco-system health.

It has accomplished that mission in part by its deep partnerships with diverse stakeholders, from the U.S. Forest Service to private landowners to the Nez Perce tribe.

A model of civility

The Coos Watershed Association has been, from its very inception, a model of civility. It was founded in 1993 by a group of landowners and land managers who had just endured the spotted owl conflict.

“They were trying to find a way to avoid having a similar sort of train wreck occur with coho salmon,” says Jon Souder, who became the group’s executive director in 2000. “They believed if they came together to come up with a plan for the Coos Basin, they could avoid the species being listed under the Endangered Species Act.”

The group spent the first couple of years working at learning to talk with each other—from state agency officials to private landowners, foresters to estuary reserve managers.

Coho salmon did get listed in the late ’90s (and continues to go on and off the list), but by then the watershed group had built relationships among stakeholders that helped it develop a necessary resiliency. “People truly believed our work was worth doing, and in the end, whether salmon was listed or not did not make a real difference to our objectives,” Souder says.

Mistakes happen

Mistakes are inevitable, and the most successful groups learn from them. Souder identifies one misstep made by his...
In 2005, the Coos Watershed Association launched an outreach program directed at landowners in the lowland areas surrounding the Coos estuary. Unlike the large timber acreages of the uplands where the group had been doing much of its work, the lowlands are characterized by a diversity of use by many small-acreage landowners.

In the past, the potential for conflict with the many private landowners in the lowlands had persuaded the group to concentrate their work elsewhere. This time, the organization was determined to forge strong working relationships with an intentional engagement strategy.

The strategy did not include holding traditional public meetings. “Anyone who has been to any public meeting on natural resources, particularly in rural areas, realizes how uncivil they can be,” says Executive Director Jon Souder. His solution? Take the meetings out of town hall and put them in a living room, and limit invited guests to the people directly involved.

Souder calls this the “coffee klatch” method, and says it’s so successful that his group has used the assessment and planning method in nine lowland stream basins around the watershed. The association holds three meetings in each area they want to assess. A local landowner is recruited as host, and letters of invitation are sent to the residents. The first meeting is intended to solicit land management concerns and objectives from landowners, but its main purpose is to introduce the watershed representatives and assure residents that their participation is voluntary.

“Instead of participating, Souder says, the Coos Watershed Association pulled its restoration efforts out of the lowlands and “retreated to the woods, where we could work with willing landowners.”

After a 2002 board retreat, leaders of the organization decided that not getting involved in the contentious issue was a mistake. In 2005, the organization launched an outreach program to address the lowland issues (see story, right).

“You always have to pick your battles,” Souder says. “but just because they are going to be controversial isn’t a reason to avoid them.”

Civility reigns in living rooms

Along with the coffee, residents are served salmon. “We want to let them know we like to eat it as well as protect it,” Souder says with a laugh. The second meeting is to familiarize residents with restoration and look at local projects. At the third meeting, watershed representatives present assessment results, identify potential restoration opportunities, and allow participants to rate potential restoration project types for their suitability.

The process has significantly increased the group’s ability to do survey work on streams, and Souder says it has also had some unexpected benefits. A lot of landowners work in town and don’t really know their neighbors. After the living-room meetings, many of them continued to socialize.

“One of the really interesting outcomes was to watch conversations across fence lines,” Souder says. “People started talking to each other, started playing cards together. It really highlights the importance of having processes like this that bring people together.”
Participating in the north Curry County leadership class of Fall 2008 faced a bit of a challenge as they tossed around possibilities for their class project. They wanted something that put their newly learned skills to use while benefiting all three of the towns represented: Gold Beach, Port Orford and Langlois.

They finally settled on a winner: bioswales, or constructed landscape features that remove silt and pollution from runoff water. And not just one bioswale, but three—one in each coastal community. That way, class members figured, everyone would have the opportunity to be involved in design, planting and maintenance. The bioswales would be highly visible from Highway 101, would teach people something new, and would be a "green" project that demonstrated the importance of taking care of the water.

"We have an active near-shore fishery for salmon, tuna and crab," says class member Harry Hoogesteger, "and we wanted to make the point that all of our water, clean or otherwise, ends up in the near-shore ocean—and we eat things from the sea."

The concept behind a bioswale is simple: the swale, basically a shallow drainage ditch, is planted with selected vegetation to help filter the slowly moving water before it is absorbed into the sand and eventually, the ocean.

The concept may be simple, but the reality? Not so much. "It was very complicated and took a great deal of planning," says Donna Chickering, who served as a trainer for the leadership class. "There were some frustrating moments, but for the most part they all hung in there."

The 23 class members concluded their classroom training in November 2008, and spent nearly all of the next year researching, planning for and designing the three bioswales. Construction and planting was done in October of 2009.

"It was a crazy challenge and we didn’t shy away from it," says Hoogesteger, who appreciated the challenges...
more than most—his day job is program coordinator for the South Coast Watershed Council. “Some people put in literally hundreds of hours, when we had committed to just 20.”

‘Monumental’

“There were many times when the work ahead seemed monumental,” says class member Ann Vileisis. “Different people had different styles of working—some were very casual and low key, others of us were planners, wanting to get all the i’s dotted and t’s crossed. The clash of expectations and styles was at times very stressful.”

The process was complex. To design the Gold Beach bioswale, for example, class members had to seek approval from and collaborate with the Gold Beach City Council, Gold Beach Public Works and the South Coast Watersheds. The bioswale, a 12’x80’ shallow depression, was excavated in the center of the Visitors Center Parking lot and planted with more than 700 native plants.

The other two bioswales are at Battle Rock City Park in Port Orford and at the library in Langlois.

“The most important thing I learned is that different people bring very different skills to a project, so if you can tap the full range of skills, you can really accomplish a lot,” Vileisis says. “Orchestrating all the different people remains the big challenge, but the possibility is definitely there. I feel like we got a good sense of that possibility in our training—and we managed to do a pretty good job at it.”

“The class may have lasted four months, but the relationship will last a lifetime,” Hoogesteger says. “When we see each other among the three communities, there is an instant bond and an instant understanding of how can we help each other.”

“...different people bring very different skills to a project, so if you can tap the full range of skills, you can really accomplish a lot.”
—Ann Vileisis

The special vegetation in the shallow depression will naturally filter the runoff from the parking lot before it empties to the beach below.

Leadership class members and other volunteers come together to plant the bioswale in Port Orford.
Making the most of his potential

Ford ReStart Scholar served three tours in Iraq and Afghanistan before returning to school

For 28-year-old Ryan Dutton, the path to higher education has been anything but straight. After graduating from Siuslaw High School in Florence in 2000, Dutton attended one term of school at Lane Community College in Eugene before bouncing around a series of minimum-wage jobs.

A job at Camp Harlow, a Christian summer camp, in 2002 provided him with the impetus for change. “After summer camp I realized I didn’t want to go back to the same place I had come from,” Dutton remembers. “I’d grown spiritually in that time, made a lot of great friends, and realized that I had potential I wasn’t using.”

Dutton wanted to go back to school, and decided to enlist in the U.S. Army to help pay for it. He chose to serve as a medic, looking for a career he could transfer to civilian life.

Dutton served in a parachute infantry regiment; when he jumped out of an airplane, he carried a weapon in his arms and medical supplies on his back. “The unit I was in was at the forefront—we went to the biggest, baddest areas,” he said. “I was an infantryman until someone got hurt, and then I was a medic.”

Extended duty

His four-year hitch turned into five-and-a-half years after he was “stop-lossed,” or ordered to extend his active duty service by 18 months.

“I ended up doing three tours, between Iraq and Afghanistan, and I worked with incredible men and women,” Dutton says. “They are real-life heroes, like the kind they make movies about. I saw things that no one wants to see, but God brought me through that time.

Ryan Dutton plans to pursue either a medical degree or a career as a physician assistant. He volunteers once a week at a free medical clinic in Bend where he uses some of the skills he learned as a medic in the army.

“I want to go where I can be useful ... to underserved rural, low-income areas where the need is great.”

—Ryan Dutton
Revised categories, guidelines announced

Focus remains on issues that affect rural Oregon and Siskiyou County, Calif.

In order to promote greater impact and more lasting change, the Ford Family Foundation has refocused its responsive (community-driven) grant categories on four issues that affect rural Oregon and Siskiyou County, California. The Foundation will continue to provide smaller grants for technical assistance and support for critical needs.

The four categories are:

- **Positive Youth Development**: To support programs that encourage the development of skills, instill values of a successful citizen and create structure for kids in free time.
- **Access to Health and Dental Services for Children**: To increase the health of underserved children through improved access to health and dental services, preventive services and education.
- **Child Abuse Prevention and Intervention**: To lessen the instances of physical, sexual and emotional abuse of children in our community through increased access to programs and services.
- **Public Convening Spaces**: To encourage civic participation and collaboration through the development of places that bring the community together, have substantial and broad multi-uses, are open to the public, and serve multiple populations.

“The Foundation decided on the new grantmaking approach after input from around the region,” says Keavy Cook, a grants officer for the Foundation. “We also assessed our unique assets, values, and areas of expertise.”

Within these four categories, the Foundation will consider more operational and programmatic grants, in addition to capital grants. “By targeting our resources in these areas, we hope to generate greater sustained impact,” Cook says.

**Still committed to Institute and Scholarships**

Responsive grantmaking is only one part of the Foundation’s broader portfolio which includes proactive (Foundation-driven) programs and the Foundation’s Initiatives: the Ford Institute for Community Building and the large Scholarship Programs. “Our commitment to the Scholarship Programs and the Institute remains unchanged,” Cook says, “as does our commitment to meeting the needs of rural Oregon and Siskiyou County.”

For details and eligibility information, visit www.tff.org.
School activities provide focus

Rural communities foster dependency and independence

Karla Chambers has just a few minutes to talk. It’s 3:30 on a Tuesday afternoon, and she and her husband, Bill, are leaving soon for a daughter’s basketball game. It’s a long drive, as are most of the away games in their rural league, but not going is not an option. Sports are an integral part of the warp and weft of life in small-town Oregon. Chambers, a board member of The Ford Family Foundation, reflects on what that life means to her.

By Karla Chambers
Board Member
The Ford Family Foundation

I grew up in Sherman County in the fourth generation of a farming family. We didn’t have a stop light in the entire county. It was a 75-mile round trip to school on the bus, and we were 64 miles from the closest doctor and grocery store.

Friday night football and basketball games were the highlight of the week, and community activities centered on school activities. It was a community where you survived because you were fiercely independent. But you also survived because you depended on the community—on the other ranchers’ skills and resources.

My sister and I were the first in our family to go to college. I got married, got my master’s degree and became the youngest faculty member at Oregon State University. My husband and I, who have four children, started Stahlbush Island Farms in Corvallis in 1985. We just celebrated 25 years of private operation.

Neighbor—miles away

Today, we live in the Willamette Valley on one of our farms. In many important ways, things haven’t changed that much since my childhood. My closest neighbor is still two miles away. My children go to a rural, Christian school with a strong agricultural and rural influence. We travel two to three nights a week, attending every one of the children’s football and basketball games.

The parents of our school commit to 40 hours of volunteer work per year. My husband, Bill, serves on the school board. I help with fundraising activities, and I keep the basketball scorebooks.

We were at Toledo for basketball one night recently. The gym was completely full. Everyone had worked hard that week, and that one night they all came together to watch their kids play basketball and have a hot dog. I don’t know what else was happening in Toledo that Friday night, but it wasn’t anything that could compete with that game.

There are a hundred life lessons these kids learn through athletics, and to me that adds a real richness to these communities. Traveling around to other districts and around the state is the key way people get to know each other—there isn’t any other reason I would go to Toledo or to Bonanza or to Waldport. It’s just a tremendous way for Oregonians to stay connected, and to build community.
Food systems

Continued from page 1

a food system designed to serve large populations. Food distributors must ship in bulk to make it worthwhile, unlike liquor, with its large profit margin, or cigarettes, which are cheap to transport. “When you can’t buy in large volume, the food stops coming to you—you have to go to it,” Thornberry says. That’s a problem, especially when high gas prices and low incomes are factored in.

Another issue is the inability of Eastern Oregon producers to sell in their own communities. Ranchers raise beef, for example, but can’t sell it locally because the number of USDA processors has steadily declined, and most of them are located west of the Cascades.

Food-system issues permeate all parts of the economy. Take low-income food assistance programs such as WIC and food stamps, which are designed to feed people while injecting cash into local economies—$9 for every $5 in benefits. The economic impact is blunted when recipients have to travel great distances to buy the food, assuming they can afford the gas to get there.

‘It’s about the conversation’

Food-related issues like these are not new, but the hard work of local and regional food coalitions and statewide groups such as the Oregon Food Bank is bringing them to the forefront. The first step toward creating solutions is to build awareness of food issues through community meetings, food inventories and networking.

“Community food assessments can really be anything,” says Katie Weaver, an AmeriCorps RARE (Resource Assistance for Rural Environments) volunteer in her second year of conducting community food systems research. She is one of five RARE volunteers doing similar work in Oregon. “It’s just a broad-based approach to asking a lot of different questions about the food systems.”

Weaver, who works in Gilliam and Wheeler counties, uses a workshop model, where community members come together for a day. The information gathered from these meetings is used to create a report with specific steps to increase food security at local and regional levels. And, often, it’s used to educate residents about their own resources. At a Wheeler County meeting recently, “there were people sitting at that table who didn’t know there was a food pantry in Fossil, or a community garden at the school,” Weaver says.

“It’s about having the conversation,” Thornberry says. “Not just having it and whining, but having the conversation and saying, ‘Okay, what are we doing about this.’”

Mobile farmers market

The conversation often identifies opportunities. The Gorge Grown Food Network launched a mobile farmers market in Hood River after a community foods assessment. The market buys produce from farmers all over the Columbia Gorge area and trucks it to other communities. “There were 40-some people lined up in Dufur during one visit last summer,” says Thornberry, who watched a local Dufur woman set up her own booth next to the truck. “That is simple economic development, but it makes a difference,” she says.

In Tillamook County, the Food Roots organization manages a variety of programs with the goal of cultivating a healthy food system. The group’s outreach activities include administering two community-school gardens, providing start-up support and resources for 12 other gardens, and a vigorous youth education program.

Program Manager Shelly Bowe is betting that the youth element will pay dividends in the future, as students become familiar with the economic potential that food-related endeavors hold. Today, kids run the cash box at Food Roots’ table at the farmers market; in future years, they may be managing the market itself.

Despite the gravity of food systems issues, Thornberry is encouraged by what’s happening around the state. “Community gardens are a huge success, as are school gardens and the farm-to-school program,” she says. “The other bright spot in all of this is all of the food system coalitions that are working in rural areas.”

A vibrant rural store and a local farmers market are signs of a healthy and sustainable community.

“When you can’t buy in large volume, the food stops coming to you—you have to go to it.”

—Sharon Thornberry
Reading materials offer advice

Ford partners share their favorites from the Select List

Get the tools you need to help make a difference in your community with the Ford Institute for Community Building Select Books. We provide these resources at no charge. Keep them, share them. The only requirement is providing us with your feedback on the publication ordered.

Our partners read and learn from these resources, too, and in this issue of Community Vitality, two share their favorites.


Effective leaders need to be effective communicators. How do you grab attention for your project? How do you make people believe in your mission? How do you make them care enough to act? The Heath brothers (Chip, a professor at Stanford’s business school, and Dan, a former researcher at Harvard University) offer a practical how-to guide for crafting compelling narratives. Made to Stick examines the principles of “sticky” — the art of making ideas memorable.

The book is an easy read packed with examples (both successes and failures from serious to funny), that will help you create your own messages that stick. Before you pitch your next idea, read this book.

—Nora Vitz Harrison


Nonprofit organizations in rural areas are plentiful and often provide the web of services and opportunities that hold our communities together. As vital as they are, many of them are so busy doing the work that they seldom take the needed time to invest in their own well being. Five Life Stages of Nonprofit Organizations is a very accessible and intuitive concept and assessment tool. It explores the vital areas that make up healthy organizations. Sometimes we are doing the right thing but just at the wrong time, or we are strong in one area but are struggling in another. This book can help organizations assess where they are in their life cycle and determine the actions that will help them be most effective.

—Heidi Clark Khokhar

Audio books now available

Finding it difficult to make time to read a good book? Why not listen to a good book? Four titles on the Select List are now available in audio format. Two of the audio books are featured below.


You Don’t Need a Title to be a Leader: by Mark Sanborn: Sanborn has gathered simple secrets to becoming a great leader and put them together in a highly readable handbook. Along the way to becoming a better leader, you’ll become acquainted with some ordinary people achieving extraordinary things. AUDIO EDITION © 2006.
A safety net for children

Continued from page 16

after-school instruction and tutoring sessions.

“Canada’s objective was to create a safety net woven so tightly that children in the neighborhood couldn’t slip through it,” Tough says. “It was an idea both simple and radical, and he gave it a name to match: the Harlem Children’s Zone.”

It was an audacious and ambitious plan, and it hasn’t been easy. A few years after the project began, project organizers decided that the programs simply weren’t working in the schools. The solution? They would open their own charter school.

Chosen by lottery

Tough provides a riveting description of the evening when the first 200 children were chosen by lottery to attend the new Promise Academy—and hundreds more were not, disappointing an auditorium full of parents. The early days of the school were marked by conflicts, struggle and disappointment, but the programs started there are still going strong, as are others in the Zone, particularly Baby College, where parents-to-be learn to be parents.

President Obama has called the Harlem Children’s Zone an “all-encompassing, all-hands-on-deck antipoverty effort that is literally saving a generation of children.”

President Obama has called the Harlem Children’s Zone an “all-encompassing, all-hands-on-deck antipoverty effort that is literally saving a generation of children.” He has vowed to reproduce it in 20 cities across the country.

Whatever it Takes offers an engrossing look at poverty in America today. What will it take to change the lives of poor children not one by one, but in a standardized way that could be replicated nationwide?

While they may not have all of the answers, Canada and the others working with the Harlem Children’s Zone are still asking the hard questions and coming up with some compelling solutions.
A safety net for children

What will it take to change the lives of poor children nationwide?

Whatever it Takes is a no-holds-barred look at one of the greatest social experiments ever taken: a 97-block laboratory in central Harlem where educator Geoffrey Canada is hard at work exploring new, often controversial ideas about poverty in America.

The narrative by Paul Tough, one of the nation’s foremost writers on poverty and education issues, is engaging but frank as he looks at the lessons learned through Canada’s work.

For Canada, the great experiments started after he began questioning the value of his work with a handful of after-school programs. There were 500 children lucky enough to participate in one of his programs, but there were another 500—and 500 after that—who were not getting the help they needed.

And he wasn’t just talking help with school work. Canada envisioned a system where all the children got all the help they needed, starting from birth—and even before. He would have to do it in a tightly defined geographical area, and he would have to do it comprehensively. He envisioned an array of programs that followed the life of a child: parenting classes, a pre-kindergarten curriculum,

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