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DESCRIPTION OF THE VALENTINE BALL

The Valentine Ball has become a tradition in Uptown. This year, a Steering Committee, composed of representatives from 29 different groups in Uptown and a total of 61 individuals met for 6 weeks to plan the Uptown 5 4th Annual "Uptown You're Beautiful" Valentine Ball.

The dance was held on Valentine Day, February 14, at the Aragon Ballroom, from 1pm to 5pm. There were one hundred ten (110) people who signed up in advance to work on enabling the Ball, through putting up locally made decorations, checking coats, escorting Seniors, serving food and other tasks. A large number of the volunteers were youth from local agencies and clubs. Outside, crews from The Dept. of Streets and Sanitation, along with volunteers, shoveled snow on sidewalks and streets. Private citizens also patrolled the area with CB radios to spot needs as Seniors approached.

Six buses, obtained from four sources, had been arranged in advance to pick up groups of Senior Citizens and Handicapped and bring them safely to the Aragon.

Tickets were sold at the door, even though approximately 800 tickets had been sold in advance. One half of the ticket was dropped in a box for the drawing for door prizes and the other half was given to the hostesses for refreshments. These simple, but elegant deserts were served to everyone ~~at once~~ during an entertainment break.

Dancing was the key activity of the day--using a 16 piece orchestra to recapture the big band sound once so popular at the Aragon. It was a program filled with a variety of dance styles including The new Uptown Disco Walk. Trophies were given to the winners of the following dance competitions: Waltz, Polka, Jitterbug and Disco. "The New World March" by Don Sadofsky was introduced. The Royal Gladiators color guard led hundreds in a spectacular Grand March.

Professional singers, dancers and a magician entertained during breaks in the music. Also, The Master of Ceremonies kept everything running smoothly with introduction of special guests, recognition of special celebrations and pauses for reflective comments. Several service clubs and organizations also had booths to demonstrate their particular services to the community.

All in all, the 1500 people who attended this year's Ball and the many people who worked to prepare it felt that it was one of the finest community events Uptown has seen.

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GUIDELINES FOR WORKING IN LOCAL COMMUNITY

There are 5 presuppositions that guide the work of The Institute of Cultural Affairs whenever it engages in local community work. These presuppositions not only influence the general direction of the work but also have impact upon the nature of any particular event for which it is the initiating agent.

Geographical Focus

The project must have a clearly delineated geographical focus. This concentrates energy upon a social unit small enough to be dealt with, thereby avoiding needless dissipation of effort. This geographic approach also helps to catalyze community identity. For The Valentine Ball, the name "Uptown 5" appears in its title. That refers to the area originally targeted for The Ball: from Foster Ave. to Montrose and from Broadway to Marine Dr. --or approx. 1/5th of the whole Uptown area. Within "Uptown 5 " there are 5 geographical sub-divisions, so that people working on recruitment or ticket sales or whatever have a way to grasp how much area they are responsible for and can actually service every building in that area.

All-at Once

All community problems are dealt with simultaneously. The complexity of community life makes a partial approach to problem solving a futile effort. Therefore, a one day event such as a Ball or Clean-up day is worthwhile only when seen in the context of a more comprehensive approach to the underlying contradictions of the community.

Depth Issue

The depth human issue beneath all the underlying socio-economic contradictions is discerned and addressed. As this occurs, people are released to see the possibility of effective engagement in arenas previously considered impossible. In Uptown, many people had a negative image of themselves and experienced Uptown as a fragmented place. The Valentine Ball was designed to affirm everyone--particularly the Senior Citizens and Handicapped and The Steering Committee method cuts over against fragmentation and builds unity.

All People

Particular effort is made to involve all social and age groups in the task and the event.

Social Symbols

Finally, social symbols are employed as the key to mobilizing community effort and occasioning profound transformation. Every year a theme is selected and from that a "logo" or design is created for The Valentine Ball.

PHILOSOPHY OF STEERING COMMITTEE METHOD

Using a Steering Committee to plan and actualize local events is a way of releasing the creativity and effective action of Those Who Care. It is a dynamic process and, therefore, each gathering of the Steering Committee may be somewhat different. There are, however, six general guidelines that undergird each new Committee.

Grassroots Involvement

Most importantly, the Steering Committee trusts the wisdom of local man/woman. Grassroots involvement is crucial from the beginning of the planning. It is the needs and concerns and practical suggestions at the local level that direct the Steering Committee.

Broadest Cross-section

At the same time, care must be taken to include the broadest cross-section of the community possible-- all levels. Businesses, service clubs, agencies, churches, ^{the 11400's 11500's 11600's} synagogues, schools, building management companies, hospitals, etc. need to be included in order to have a consensus and a thrust that truly reflects the total community. No one from the community should be excluded.

*groups,
politicians,
interested
residents,
managers.*

Common Task

One of the greatest factors in holding such a diverse group together is that the group always focuses its planning and action on a common task, for the sake of their common community. Once it is determined what the needs are and which project will deal with those needs, a consensus is created to move forward. The success or significance of any one individual or agency does not depend on what is chosen. The Steering Committee is not another club--not another service agency--it is simply a gathering of folks, of all kinds, who want to help make their community a better place for all. ~~At~~ Traditional competition and distrust can be put aside and forgotten because the Steering Committee does not represent any "special interest" or any particular political or ideological constituency. The concern is one everyone shares and the project chosen is one upon which everyone can agree.

Ongoing Training

Another factor in creating a Steering Committee is that it can be organized and coordinated by a minimum of trained staff (eg.2). From the beginning, the trained workers attempt to find someone from the group to "shadow" them. The shadows watch and learn everything that the staff do and know so that they can soon do the same. One of the aspects of every gathering is training--not in a formal sense, but as a self-conscious realization that everything is done intentionally, with a purpose, and can be done by anyone.

Replicable Model

The "shadow principle" is necessary because it supports another basic assumption that working through a Steering Committee is a replicable model. This means that this method of organization can be used in any community in the world and applied to accomplishing any kind of project (as demonstrated by Uptown's Steering Committees which have successfully sponsored as diverse activities as The Valentine Ball and the Beautification Campaign).

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PHILOSOPHY OF STEERING COMMITTEE METHOD (cont.)

Lively Meetings

Another understanding necessary to the success of the Steering Committee process is that each meeting of the whole committee or of the individual task forces needs to be an exciting happening in itself. The methods and style used in creating that kind of meeting event are described in subsequent paragraphs. The importance of this cannot be underestimated because it is one of the greatest factors in sustaining the motivity of the group and building corporateness within it.

Finally, style is key to every aspect of The Steering Committee. The leaders and the whole group assume a stance of winning. They decide that their project is going to be successful long before the day of the event. They enjoy doing what they are doing because they know it is what needs to happen in their community and that confidence and enthusiasm produces greater momentum.

ORGANIZATIONAL METHODS

There are four steps to organizing a Steering Committee and in each, the key thing to remember is to be inclusive. These steps are: Frame the community, Recruit the Steering Committee, organize task forces and Time-line the work.

The first step is to Frame the Community. Make a list of all the businesses, service clubs, agencies, religious institutions, schools, building management companies, hospitals, politicians, block clubs and interested residents. ^{managers}

Recruiting the Committee

Second is recruiting the committee. At least one community group needs to initiate the invitation to launch the meetings. That is, they send the first letters of invitation. This group must be willing to initiate the project without taking all the credit for its success. The credit needs to be given to the whole community represented by the Steering Committee. If this is a new project, then visiting with prospective Steering Committee members prior to the first meeting is necessary to explain the nature of the project and the purpose of the Steering Committee. During the time the group's consensus is being formed about the nature of the project, letters need to be sent out indicating what was decided at the past meeting and giving information about the next meeting.

Organize Task Forces

Third, organize all the work into Task Forces to get the preparations completed for the project. Some advance thinking about what Task Forces are needed is necessary by the coordinators before the first meeting. In addition, it is necessary during the first or second meetings, to have an open, corporate brainstorm on all the tasks. Then, they are slotted into the recommended Task Force categories or new Task Forces are created. There are no "spectators" at the Steering Committee meetings. Everyone meets with a Task Force and all major decisions are made during the weekly Steering Committee meetings. In this way, optimum creativity and input is gained from the whole group. The Task Forces for the past Valentine Ball were: 1. Finance 2. Publicity 3. Food & Hosting 4. Program 5. Decoration & Facility 6. Ticket Sales & Transportation.

Time-line the Work

The fourth step is time-lining the work of the Task Forces. Each Task Force takes the corporate list of tasks to be done and then, adds to that list whatever else they can think of that needs to be done to ensure the success of the project in their specific arena of responsibility. Next, the Task Forces decide during which of the remaining weeks before the project each of the tasks will be begun and at which time it will be completed. Assignments for who will do what tasks during the following week are then decided. Step number four is then repeated every week until the project is completed.

3rd draft

MEETING METHODS

The common format for each weekly meeting is designed to allow for effective planning and action. Each part of the agenda plays an important role in providing for a motivating and enriching experience. There are four parts to every meeting: the corporate opening, the corporate workshop, the task force meetings and the corporate plenary.

The Corporate Opening

In the Corporate Opening, we begin with singing. The experience of singing transforms a collection of individuals into a body of people who sense their power in a new way. Many of us are afraid to sing in public so the leadership must help it be fun. Then, there is an accounting for all the Steering Committee members who are not present, an introduction of new people, and the announcement that the group gathered is just the group needed to do the task before them. Next, an objective list, on the blackboard or butcher paper, is made of all the Victories of the past week, i.e. what assignments have the task forces completed. Following the listing of the Victories, a song is sung to celebrate the work and say a big "Yes" to the past week.

The Corporate Workshop

In the Corporate Workshop, the whole group deals with those things on which everyone's wisdom is needed or where a corporate decision is necessary, such as deciding the over-all theme for The Ball. Methods used for this are: 1. Brainstorming - a corporate procedure where individual responses are called forth to create a bank of data. All answers are recorded, understanding that each person's insight is significant. 2. Gestalting - the rational organization of the raw brainstorm data into groupings of similar responses. Holding titles are given to the groupings which give handles for the group to grasp the raw data as one entity. 3. Consensus - the inclusive deliberation of all those concerned until an express will of the people is discerned. This does not necessarily mean that all agree with the decision but unlike voting, it does mean that all agree to fully support the decision's implementation.

The Task Force Meeting

The Task Force Meeting is the time when the Task Forces gather and work on their particular tasks in securing the success of the project. This would include accountability for last week's assignments, corporate work on task force issues, planning the work of the next week and making assignments to get that work done.

The Corporate Plenary

The Corporate Plenary is begun with a song. Each Task Force is then called upon to give a short report on the work completed in its meeting and the major tasks to be accomplished in the coming week. Announcements about next meeting time and place and leadership roles and any special committee work events are made. A song is sung to celebrate the work of the meeting and everyone is sent forth.

PRACTICES METHODS

Another aspect of every meeting which is crucial but often goes unnoticed has to do with "practices", or all of the small practical things which are done to enable a well run meeting. Here is a list of recommendations, in the arenas of meeting set-up and _____:

1. Room arrangement is very important. If possible, everyone needs to be sitting at a table. This emphasises the seriousness of the work--providing everyone with a writing surface for taking notes.
2. The tables need to be arranged in such a way that a minimum of people have their backs to each other. Dialogue is enhanced when people face each other across the table. A "front of the room" needs to be designated with 2 chairs for the 2 leaders for the week. (see diagram below).
3. Always have a blackboard or large sheets of paper to write on. Having one set of images in front of the whole group during a corporate workshop helps to focus and hold everyone's attention.
4. The room should be set up before ^{most} the bulk of the group arrives. Confidence is increased when things look like they are going to go well. (Use the early arrivers to help get the room ready.)
5. Song sheets need to be printed up and placed at everyone's seat, along with a copy of the week's meeting agenda and any other materials needed at that meeting.
6. Paper and pencils are always placed neatly on the tables, so that if a person arrives ill equipped to take notes, he would still have an opportunity to do so.
7. Always have some type of refreshment for the meeting, such as coffee or fruit punch. This adds much to the fellowship of the gathering and indirectly demonstrates care for the group.
8. Be sure to have everyone "sign-in" as they arrive. This allows ~~the coordinators to compile a~~ ^{the} list of people participating on the Steering Committee so that the Task Forces can quickly contact their members for various tasks and questions during the week. *To have a*
9. Each Task Force should have a file folder in which it keeps a growing record of its work. The folders can be put in one box at the end of the meeting and kept by the coordinators or they can be kept by each Task Force leader.
10. Always clean up and re-set the room afterward!

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FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The task of funding a community project through a steering committee is based on 3 principles 1. use as much of the local resources as possible, 2. use as much donation of goods and services as possible, 3. Charge something for the event--people will think it more worthwhile and be honored to not be getting a hand-out.

Below is the statement of our finances for the 1978 Valentine Ball. We have found over the years that even in the midst of rising costs we have been able to ~~each year~~ reduce the actual cash expenses by increasing the donation of goods and services. We have also seen an increase in the number of ticket sales.

<u>Income</u>	<u>Donated Goods & Services</u> <i>(Estimated Value)</i>
Ticket Sales	Aragon
\$1,075	\$2,200
Sponsors (\$25 or More)	Buses
\$1,400	\$ 450
Contributors (Under \$25)	Entertainers
\$ 200	\$ 150
Total	Dance Judge
\$2,675	\$ 50
	Photographer
	\$ 40
	Printing & Paper
	\$ 185
	Letterhead
	\$20
	Flyers
	\$80
	Tickets
	\$60
	Posters
	\$25
	Door Prizes
	\$ 100
	Mailings
	\$ 30
	Meeting Materials and Refreshments
	\$ 50
	Food
	\$ 90
	Creamers
	\$ 8
	Sugar
	\$ 7
	Candy
	\$25
	Juice
	\$30
	Popcorn
	\$20
	Paper & Plastic
	\$ 175
	Plates
	\$50
	Napkins
	\$10
	Cold cups
	\$90
	Forks
	\$ 7
	Stir Sticks
	\$10
	Hot Cups
	\$ 3
	Total
	\$3,520

Expenses

Facility	\$ 300
Band	\$ 928
Food	\$ 772
Buses	\$ 136
Entertainment	\$ 20
Postage	\$ 6
Total	\$2,662

4th draft

THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The original decision to initiate The Valentine Ball project came from the planning and efforts of the Elders Node and The Guild of Uptown 5--two Uptown grassroots groups concerned with the underlying contradictions of the community. These groups use the consultative services of the Institute of Cultural Affairs.

The Institute of Cultural Affairs is an intra-global reaserch and development, training and demonstration group concerned with the human factor in world development. The Institute presently has coordinating centers in Brussels, Nairobi, Bombay, Hong Kong, Singapore and Chicago and is registered in 23 nations. In the United States, ICA staff are located in 46 cities, organized in four areas with centers in New York, Houston, San Francisco and Chicago. The Institute is convinced that effective human development must be initiated on the local level. Toward this end its national and extra-national staff live and work with local people in planning and actuating socio-economic projects around the world. The projects, located in both rural and urban communities of extreme need, are established for the purpose of demonstrating comprehensive human development.

The laboratory community for all such projects is located on the West side of Chicago in a neighborhood called 5th City. It began 15 years ago and is nationally recognized as a creative response to an apparently hopeless situation. Its major achievements lie in the arenas of: industry, environment, health and education.

The work of the ICA also includes planning and training seminars, community To3n Meetings and other consultative services. It is supported by private foundations, corporations, concerned individuals and government departments and agencies on the national, state and municipal levels.