



This newsletter is a product of the Community Engagement Action Group, a constructive support group of organizations from various sectors within the Community Builders Network (CBN) seeking to address local issues related to community engagement. We hope that this newsletter can be a resource for nonprofit, public, and private practitioners working in St. Louis neighborhoods and elevate the role of community engagement within our region.

Activating Public and Green Spaces through Community Engagement



Public spaces act as social centers and allow residents to feel a sense of belonging with the community around them. In order to help development focus on improving quality of life and sense of belonging among residents while also encouraging residents to bond, Singapore's Urban Redevelopment Authority developed this master plan and highlighted elements that make for good public spaces.

Source: <https://www.ur.gov.sg/uol/master-plan/view-master-plan/master-plan-2014/master-plan/Key-focuses/public-spaces/Public-space.aspx>

Involving Community Stakeholders to Increase Park Use and Physical Activity

by Kathryn Pitkin Derose, Terry Marsh, Mark Mariscal, Sophia Pina-Cortez and Deborah A. Cohen

This study compared whether parks that used only park directors or parks that used both a park director and park advisory board worked better to increase park use and physical activity. This study was done through a randomized controlled trial of 33 neighborhood parks in Los Angeles.

Key Findings:

- “[p]ark renovations are related to increased park use and park-based physical activity... park programming also appears important, particularly for populations that typically underutilize parks”
- “both approaches [park director and park advisory board] significantly increased park use and levels of park-based physical activity” (8)
- “a number of [park directors] who participated in the trainings expressed an added benefit from interacting with their peers on these issues and getting encouragement about the importance of their roles” (8)

Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4066457/pdf/nihms579616.pdf>

DIY Urbanism: Property and Process in Grassroots City Building

by Celeste Pagano

Whether in the form of miniature lending libraries, roadside memorials, art, gardens or so on, DIY urbanism works to “communicate a message about a specific need in a community and simultaneously move toward filling that need”. This article not only gives examples of DIY urbanism projects but also the legal ramifications of these acts.

DIY urbanist interventions also foster community.

one local sustains and maintains a project, it fades away. For example, a nonprofit organization called Gateway Greening supports almost all of the community gardens in St. Louis, but it gets more requests for support than it can fulfill.¹²⁴ In selecting which projects to support, Executive Director Gwenne Hayes-Stewart seeks those that are backed by community involvement: “If it is not grassroots, and if money is top down, it is not going to work. Residents are tired of being told what is good for them.”¹²⁵ An unworked garden squanders labor and resources.



Source: <http://scholarship.law.marquette.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5192&context=mulr>

BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

The Vineyards and Biocellar of Château Hough



The Vineyards and Biocellar of Château Hough in Cleveland, Ohio is an unconventional take on the traditional community garden. Instead of growing the usual vegetables we are all used to seeing in our local gardens, the Château Hough project purposefully grows grapes and other high profit crops in order to make the project more sustainable.

Although the ultimate goal of the Vineyards and Biocellar project is to establish an inner-city winery, the project's emphasis on community engagement has not only been able to revitalize and rebuild the community around it but has been able to bring residents together with a sense of belonging and ownership. Efforts of community engagement included working with volunteers of all ages, residents of a local halfway house and work crews performing court mandated community service.

More Info: <http://chateauhough.org/>



NEXT STEPS

Potential Action Step

Interested in joining the conversation about urban farming in St. Louis with high profit and high producing crops similar to Château Hough?

Local experts are already interested in partnering on this opportunity. Please contact Gary Newcomer (gary@communitybuildersstl.org) for more information.

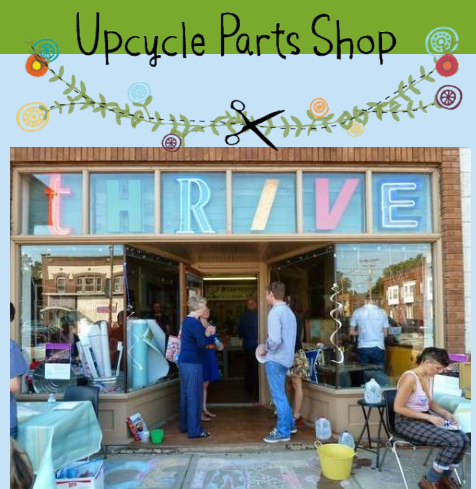


Upcycle St. Clair in St. Clair Superior

Upcycle St. Clair is a project based out of St. Clair Superior in Cleveland, Ohio. Based on creative placemaking and the idea for an artistic intervention, this projects aims to create and build vibrancy in the neighborhood on St. Clair Avenue by engaging and supporting local residents and businesses alike. It teaches the culture of upcycling and at the same time activates empty spaces and builds a sense of community among the residents.

Their creative reuse center, the Upcycle Parts Shop, allows for workshops, community events and programming. Residents in this neighborhood have come together to create art to decorate telephone polls in the neighborhood and have even sold their upcycled art at local markets.

More Info: <http://www.stclairsuperior.org/neighborhoods/st-clair-neighborhood/upcycle-st-clair/>

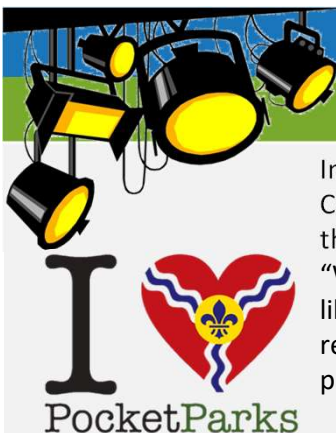


LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

Dutchtown South's Pocket Parks Project

In an effort to increase use of Minnie Wood and Laclede Parks, Dutchtown South Community Corporation (DSCC) asked residents who lived around these parks to help design the space. They did this through art events, picnics, community meetings and surveys simply to ask the question of, "What would you do if you got the chance to design what the park in your neighborhood looked like?" to all the residents- children and adults alike. After months of community engagement, research and planning, DSCC is now inviting residents to participate in implementing the phased park plan by becoming a "Friend of Pocket Parks" supporter.

Source: <http://www.dutchtownsouth.org/pocket-park-project>



Please contact Gary Newcomer (gary@communitybuildersstl.org) or Constance Siu (constancesiu@wustl.edu) if you would like more information about the Community Engagement Action Group, local best practices and/or other research.

Our winter newsletter will focus on "Youth at the Center".

If you have a local project for our spotlight or relevant research related to this topic area, please feel free to share.