

Connected Lives: Building Community Relationships and Networks

Stories and Strategies from Building Careers and Community



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WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Our personal relationships and community networks are often the place to start when looking for a job or ways to better connect to our community. The purpose of Building Careers and Community (BCC) is to engage local communities to welcome and support more naturally citizens with developmental disabilities, thereby helping those citizens to get and keep great jobs that build careers, to have positive relationships, and to be involved in their communities. We believe communities are better when they welcome and utilize the gifts, talents, and skills of all citizens.

BCC seeks out community members who have personal connections to people, places, businesses, organizations, and resources in their community and who are willing to use these contacts to support the dreams and aspirations of their fellow community members with disabilities as they seek employment and involvement in their community. We have discovered that there are many well connected community members who want to facilitate these efforts on behalf of all citizens. As a result, individuals, their families, and the community are building more inclusive and welcoming communities together.

HOW DO WE DO THIS?

It's all about building relationships. Here are some of the helpful ways we have found to develop relationships with community members, including people who are well connected and knowledgeable about their community:

- ❖ **Ask people you already know** (friends, family, neighbors, and coworkers) for information, ideas, or personal contacts or to get involved in your efforts. **Ask specific questions**, such as “Who do you know who cares about your community?” “What organizations do you belong to, and who helps others to participate in your organization?” “Would you introduce me to your friend who works at the place where you work?” **Follow up on these contacts and the suggestions you receive, and let the person who gave you the contact know how it went.**

Sally and Fred asked a member of their church about the possibility of work for their son, Dan, at the church member's family owned business. As a result, the church member hired Dan as a part time employee.

Joanne, Snohomish County's BCC coordinator, asked an acquaintance, whose husband owns a small manufacturing company, whether Chris could have a tour of the business to see if he would like that kind of job. Chris not only toured the business, but applied for a job and got an interview. Although he was not hired for the job, this experience gave Chris a better idea of the type of job he was looking for. Joanne expressed her appreciation to her acquaintance for this opportunity.

- ❖ **Get to know and engage well connected community members, business leaders, and elected or public officials** in the community and **ask them to get involved in specific ways**, such as by becoming a member of someone's personal support team, making introductions to other community members, organizations, and businesses, or asking about job openings and contacts. Well connected community members and leaders have a wealth of information and contacts and often want to help to make their communities a better place for all those who live there.

Tamara, Chelan Douglas County Coordinator, asked Tom, an attorney and a member of a community advisory board, to join Dan's informal network to help Dan take action on his goals. Dan and Tom both like to work with wood, and Dan was starting a business to make bird houses. Tom joined Dan's network and gave him a woodworking jig to make it easier to cut wood to build the bird houses. He also provided ideas and contacts for a wood working shop where Dan could make his bird houses and develop his business.

Wendy, Everett's Department of Neighborhoods director, knows lots of community members and organizations through her work. Joanne asked Wendy if she would introduce her to community members who would welcome and include individuals who interested in joining neighborhood activities, events. Wendy always knew the right person with interests who would welcome these individuals. For example, Joanne asked Wendy about someone who likes dogs in Tara's neighborhood. Wendy told Joanne neighborhood leader, Holly, who lives a few blocks from Tara. Holly loves dogs and walks her dog just like Tara. Joanne introduced Tara to Holly, and they started to walk their dogs together. This first meeting led to lots of different ways that Tara and her mother could become involved in their neighborhood. After a couple of years of walking their dogs, visiting with each other in the pub Holly owns, and hanging out at neighborhood events, Holly and Tara have developed an enduring friendship. Through her friendship with Holly, Tara has met other people in her neighborhood, including Jim and his wife, Sue.



- ❖ **Continuously build relationships with the new community members that you meet.** Calling people out of the blue can be difficult. Making connections with people is easier when someone makes a personal introduction. Once an introduction is made, it is easier to ask community members specific questions about their community groups or businesses and how people contribute.

Ginevra, Clark County BCC coordinator, met Shonti through her work and developed a relationship with her. Ginevra was helping Linda find employment and talked to Shonti about her knowledge of good jobs that would interest Linda. Shonti introduced Ginevra and Linda to the director of an assisted living organization who happened to have a job that fit the skills and desires of Linda. Linda was perfect for the job and was hired as a nurse's assistant.

- ❖ Wendy introduced Joanne to Juanita, who manages the Family Support Center in Barbara's neighborhood. Joanne and Barbara talked to Juanita about volunteer opportunities, and Juanita was delighted to welcome Barbara as a volunteer in this community organization. Barbara has volunteered at the neighborhood family center every week for the last few years, including helping with events such as National Night Out. She and Juanita enjoy each other's company, and Barbara feels she's making a contribution to her neighborhood and getting to know more people.

- ❖ **Attend community events or visit organizations and groups and introduce yourself to other people.** Ask them what they do and what they are involved in. Exchange contact information if appropriate. When the time is right, follow up on any contacts you made.

Molly works as an employment specialist and was looking for a job for Bill who wanted to work outdoors. She attended Green Drinks, a networking group for environmentally friendly businesses. She introduced herself to the owner of a small organic farm and asked if she could visit it. After touring the farm, Molly knew this place for Bill to work. Bill visited the farm, met the owner, and tried his hand at farm work. As a result, he was hired as a farm assistant.



Kelly, Chelan Douglas BCC coordinator, attended a Douglas County Sheriffs event and introduced herself to the county sheriff. Later, when Jeff told her that he had always been interested in riding in a law enforcement vehicle, Kelly contacted the sheriff. He invited Jeff to take a ride in a patrol car. It was an exciting day for Jeff, and he was thrilled to meet the county sheriff. A few weeks later, the sheriff called Jeff and invited him to participate in a graffiti paint-out event.



- ❖ **Ask community members** or people involved in specific organizations of interest (business leaders, civic leaders, elected officials, neighborhood leaders, local government officials/staff members) **for a 30 minute conversation to talk about their organizations** and the ways they include people. Use this information to build relationships and knowledge about your community. This may be useful immediately or be tucked away for future use. Most people are willing to meet and like to talk about their organizations.

Kelly called several community members and asked if they would be willing to talk to her about their organizations and the ways they're involved in the community. She found out about these individuals by asking friends and coworkers and from her own knowledge of her community. All of the individuals she contacted were more than willing to talk about their organizations and share their knowledge of the community. She interviewed elected officials, local government managers, community organization leaders, and local media and business people. These interviews improved Kelly's knowledge of local people, organizations, and issues. The interviews also introduced her to more community members who could be future contacts for job leads for individuals. Kelly was then able to share with others her new knowledge and contacts.

- ❖ **Network** with others in your community by **joining community groups** and coalitions of interest. **Build welcoming and inclusive places** by bringing your perspective to these community places and groups.

Kelly and Tamara asked Allison, the Executive Services Director at the City of Wenatchee, to meet with them so they could find out about the city's programs and opportunities. As a result of this meeting, Kelly and Tamara learned about a variety of programs. In addition, Allison asked Tamara to join the citywide Diversity Committee. Tamara joined this committee and brings greater awareness and insight to the city concerning broad citywide issues and programs that represent the perspective of people with developmental disabilities.

Tracy and Nick both use wheelchairs and are very interested in local transportation issues. Tracy lives in Everett and became a member of DART, the local transportation services' advisory board. Nick lives in Wenatchee and joined the Link Transportation Planning Committee. Both are making a difference in their communities by advocating for accessible and reliable transportation systems.



- ❖ **Set up informational interviews and tours of businesses or community organizations, and develop mentorships.** These are all important ways for people to get an idea of what they want to do. They help people to clarify their interests, become more knowledgeable of possible jobs and community resources, and build relationships with community people who have similar interests or can provide guidance.

Tracy wants to be a legal assistant. Aimee, Snohomish County BCC community connector, got to know Tracy and introduced her to a friend, Linda, who is employed as a legal assistant. Tracy and Linda met for coffee, and Linda encouraged Tracy to pursue this career goal. She also offered to meet with her again. Tracy was encouraged by this meeting and became more knowledgeable about the skills she needs to acquire to pursue this career. Tracy was encouraged to continue taking classes at the community college.

Dan decided to explore employment in the recycling business. Jack, the City of Everett Recycling Manager, set up a tour for Dan and his parents at Cedar Grove Composting, a large composting facility. This tour, although fun and interesting, let Dan know that composting at a large facility may not be the job for him. The place had an unpleasant odor, and the employees had to handle big machinery that looked too difficult for Dan. Dan used this information to continue to clarify what kind of job to pursue.

- ❖ **Be curious about your community and discover places where people regularly gather and “hang out.”** Read bulletin boards, local newspapers, blogs, and local internet sites to stay on top of what is happening in the community. Become a regular at a local gathering place. Show up at events, open houses, community workshops, and meetings that sound interesting to you. Notice which community members keep showing up. Talk to people.

Ginevra and Ginny would often meet for coffee at the same fast food restaurant to talk about Ginny's search for employment. During her visits to the restaurant, Ginny got to know one of the restaurant's employees. The employee, who, like Ginny, is hard of hearing and uses signs to communicate, encouraged Ginny to apply for a job at the restaurant. Ginny did so and was offered the job. It was great for Ginny to know and work alongside her fellow signing coworker. Little did Ginny and Ginevra realize that going to the same place over time and talking to people there would lead to a satisfying job.

Lemolo's Café in downtown Wenatchee is a local gathering place where people eat fresh food in a fun atmosphere. When Tony got a business license to sell earrings that he makes, Tony and his employment specialist asked the manager of Lemolo's Café if he could display and sell his earrings there. They knew this would be a great place, because so many people frequent Lemolo's. The owner was delighted to display his earrings, and now Tony's business gets exposure, and community members can admire and buy his jewelry and help Tony be successful with his new business.

- ❖ **Organize a community/neighborhood event** that brings together neighbors and community members to build relationships, in addition to making a vital contribution to the community.

Dan and his parents went to a workshop, organized by the City of Everett, to learn about emergency preparedness and how to help neighbors in case of a neighborhood emergency. As a result of this, Dan's brother became inspired to organize a summer barbecue for the people who live on their block. Many of the neighbors didn't know each other, and Dan's family felt this was a great opportunity to change that. Many of the neighbors came, and they enjoyed getting to know each other while eating some good food. A few neighbors gave Dan's father some contacts and ideas for possible jobs for Dan. The neighbors talked about organizing a neighborhood barbecue every summer as a result of this successful gathering.

Joe enjoys everything to do with Star Trek. He decided to share this interest with others in his community by organizing an outdoor Star Trek movie event called “Star Trek Under the Stars.” He and Kelly asked the Wenatchee Parks Department to help out so the outdoor movie night could be held at a local park. Both the local radio and TV stations invited Joe to talk about the movie event. Although the movie was free for any community members, Joe asked



people to bring warm coats, which would be donated to a community organization. During the event, Joe presented Star Trek trivia questions to the audience. Although the evening was colder than expected, Joe and everyone else who came had a great time.

- ❖ **Hire a well connected community member who can be a resource to individuals and their personal networks** as they seek the contacts and opportunities that will help them connect with the community, find employment, and become involved in community activities. Building Careers and Community engaged a “community connector” in each county to act as a resource and consultant to individuals and their personal networks as they worked on building meaningful connections to their community. The community connectors worked an average of 3–5 hours a week. A well connected community member who has a desire to do this work can be found through the community-connecting methods described above.

Snohomish County engaged two community connectors throughout the project. Wendy, Everett’s Department of Neighborhoods Director, recommended Lori as someone who would be a great connector. Lori had been president of her neighborhood association and involved in citywide neighborhood organizing. She had been involved in other community organizations, including local theater groups, and she had organized her neighborhood block watch. When Lori needed to cut back the time she devoted to BCC, she recommended Aimee to take her place. Aimee was also the president of her neighborhood association. She belonged to a church with a large and active membership, and her family had lived and worked in Everett for several generations. Both Lori and Aimee knew many people and used these connections to make introductions for BCC participants who were looking for employment or ways to get involved.

Stephanie became the community connector in Clark County. Ginevra met Stephanie while she was a volunteer at Clark College teaching recent immigrants to read. Stephanie was an avid community volunteer and involved in a variety of community activities herself, including dance groups and fundraising events. Stephanie had recently moved to Vancouver and was getting involved in organizations to get to know people and the community. She was naturally curious about her community and willing to ask community members for information and opportunities that would benefit BCC participants.

In Chelan/Douglas counties, Tamara knew Amy from her involvement in local schools. She felt Amy would be a great asset for building community connections, because Amy was positive, friendly, active, knew how to get things done, and was not afraid to ask others to get involved. Amy was the president of the PTA, worked at the local community college, and was involved in numerous community sports teams. As the BCC community connector, Amy looked to her network of friends, neighbors, and colleagues to provide contacts for employment and other opportunities, such as walking partners, volunteers for community events, or jobs at the Public Utilities District. She also asked one of the BCC participants to help her teach a computer class at the local community college.

WHO ARE COMMUNITY CONNECTORS?

We have found many people in the community who want to include and engage others. They include well known community members such as elected officials, individuals employed by local government, and community and business leaders. They also include neighbors, church members, business owners, and friends who have just the right idea or just the right connections, either to other helpful people or to people within their own organizations or places of employment. **You may never know what can happen unless you ask others.**

Building Careers and Community employed a person in each county, as described above, who had local community ties and who was willing to use his/her personal contacts and local community knowledge to help find or develop the right opportunity or connection that could lead to employment, involvement in community life, or new relationships for BCC grant participants. The BCC **community connectors** were hired for a few hours a week to organize these community building efforts.

What We Learned From Community Connectors:

We asked Amy, Stephanie, and Aimee a series of questions to get their perspective on what it takes to build welcoming and inclusive communities. Here is **what we have learned** about well connected community members, paid or not paid, who are building communities to welcome and include everyone:

What Are the Qualities of a Community Connector?

- ✓ Believes that **all** citizens have something to offer to the community and that there is a real purpose in acting on the belief that communities are better when everyone contributes and belongs.
- ✓ Knows people, places, and resources in the community; and if he/she doesn't know, knows who to ask and how to find him/her.
- ✓ Is open minded and sees endless possibilities for people and the community.
- ✓ Is involved in the community as a result of personal interest **and** a desire to benefit the community in general.
- ✓ Is seen and respected in the community, because he/she takes action and builds positive relationships.
- ✓ Finds it easy to talk to others and is an active listener.
- ✓ Is willing to help when others ask.
- ✓ Is willing to use personal connections and make new ones.
- ✓ Has the ability to ask others in ways that result in action: Is specific, realistic, and respectful.
- ✓ Has a "match maker" mindset: Can see where and how people can contribute.
- ✓ Has time and is flexible.
- ✓ Knows limits and communicates what is needed.
- ✓ Is able to communicate about people's strengths and abilities to contribute; avoids getting stuck in conversations about barriers and limitations.

Why would community members want to join these efforts?

- ❖ This is something this person does naturally already and enjoys doing.
- ❖ It is worthwhile to join a community effort with others who share similar values and want to take action on building a more inclusive community.
- ❖ It is an opportunity to give back to the community and to help other people.
- ❖ It is an opportunity to find out more about his/her own community and to get better connected as well.

What are some ways to engage well connected community members and encourage them to join in these community welcoming and inclusion efforts?

- ❖ Share the vision of building a welcoming and inclusive community for **all** people. This is about everyone, not just people with developmental disabilities.
- ❖ Know what you want, and **ask** them to do something **specific**.
- ❖ Engage people immediately and build momentum.
- ❖ Find someone in a specific interest group or organization who is willing to be introduced to the person with disabilities and who will help to find ways to support that person's efforts to make contributions.
- ❖ Continually ask what is working and not working and what the community members need in order to include others.
- ❖ Get their perspective on ways to involve and support individuals. Ask them how they naturally include others; don't add any unnecessary steps.
- ❖ Ask them to look at the ways their community is already organized, and build on that.
- ❖ Uncover their interest in this role—find out what's in it for them.

Once community connectors are engaged, what helps them to build connections?

- ❖ **Get to know the person.** To help make individual connections for a person, it is important for the well connected community member to meet the person and know his/her interests. As one community member said: *"I can connect the person to all of these things, but if it doesn't matter to the person—if it is not the right connection—will she keep involved, connected?"*
- ❖ **Build community around the individual, but focus on everyone.** *"At first we just focused on what was needed for people to get jobs, but as we have gone along, we discovered it's about building community around the individuals, whether they have a job or not. I have broadened my thinking to focus on community in general and how people can get jobs as a result of this."*
- ❖ **Share what you do that you are passionate about.** *"I'm always telling people about the volunteer activities I'm involved in. People see the passion in me, and they get excited. I need to ask others to join me."*
- ❖ **Talk to everyone you know.** Constantly talk to friends, family, and/or coworkers about what you are doing to connect people. People will start coming up with ideas and new connections on their own.

- ❖ **Look for others who say, “I can open these doors for you.”** The more doors that are open, the more we have access to them, and the more we can do network building.

What are some barriers to building communities that include everyone?

- ❖ **The unknown.** People have a general fear of things that they don't know; if you don't ask, you can't expect a response.
- ❖ **Knowing how to ASK.** People do not necessarily do things on their own, or know what to do if they aren't asked. As one person put it, *“I figure in any group five percent see a problem and fix it on their own, but the majority may see a problem and are willing to help, they just don't know how to help.”* **Ask people to do something specific**—for example, *“Here are your choices: When can you volunteer?”*
- ❖ **Fear of NO.** If people are afraid the answer might be “NO,” they won't ask.
- ❖ **Staying within our comfort zones.** *“People are used to doing their own thing and having the same people doing it with them, so they don't always know what to do when someone new joins in.”*
- ❖ **Follow through.** *“One barrier is following up. For example, finding the right person within the organization is important. I got a person's name, but she hasn't gotten back to me. I need to follow up and call her again and set up a time to meet her.”*
- ❖ **No experience of community.** *“We have gotten so far away from community. I remember when neighbors helped each other. Now, people go into their houses and close their doors; they want privacy and to be left alone.”*
- ❖ **Transportation.** Many people don't work close to home and spend long hours in their cars; or there is no public transportation at the time needed for people to get places.
- ❖ **No time.** People are pulled in many different directions, and they can't take on any more.
- ❖ **Not enough gathering places.** *“There used to be ‘mom and pop shops,’ gathering places where you would see people regularly.”*

What are some additional barriers to including people with developmental disabilities?

- ❖ **Who are people with developmental disabilities anyway, and how do we relate?** *“Add to the above issues that the majority of people have had no contact with people with disabilities; they are not sure what this means or what to do. There is a lack of exposure—we don't see a lot of people with disabilities in the community. There is an instinct not to*

engage if you don't know how to relate. We need to stop and figure out how to relate to each other."

- ❖ **Possible rejection.** In addition, some people with disabilities are afraid to get involved, because they might feel rejected by the community.
- ❖ **Follow through.** There is a question of who is going to follow up with the connections in the community once they are made.

What are some opportunities?

- ❖ **Everybody is different.** *"Based on their own personal experiences, some people are more open than others. When I ask people to get involved, I may receive an uncertain response from one person, while another is person immediately interested and wants to see a more inclusive community."*
- ❖ **Build relationships.** *"Finding the right person and getting in touch with them is key. This needs to happen in the old fashioned way by meeting people where they are at: businesses, churches, book stores, libraries, coffee shops. Initially, I did internet research, but that wasn't as helpful or is only a first step to identify community resources. We need to get people together to know each other."*
- ❖ **Discover places and opportunities.** Seek out places where a person may want to work or organizations to which a person might like to belong. Look at the welcoming qualities of that place or organization and who is there to meet and involve others.
- ❖ **Know the person.** It is important to get to know a person and his/her interests, and it is important to know what works and what doesn't.
- ❖ **Talk about building community for everyone.** *"It's important to first discuss the importance of building inclusive community building in general and for everyone. After introducing this concept, you can give examples about how this also means people who happen to have a disability."*
- ❖ **Build awareness about diversity.** *"There is a huge opportunity for training and education about diversity. Disability can be brought into the conversation about diversity."*

What are some helpful strategies that community connectors use for engaging community members, leaders, and organizations?

- ❖ **Use personal contacts.** Talk to the people you already know in particular organizations and businesses.

- ❖ **Ask others.** *“The majority of organizations approached are open to including others; they just need to be asked and sometimes don’t know how. They don’t always know that people want in—they can’t be responsible if they don’t know.”*
- ❖ **Involve people in the community according to their passions.** Be strategic about where to engage. *“For example, a parent who wants her young son to be involved in the swim team also needs to get involved in organizing the swim team: It happens one subcommunity at a time. Everyone has full plates, so you need to choose what will be the focus.”*
- ❖ **Make face-to-face personal contacts.** It is about getting in front of people. *“An email is not as effective as going to the place and making a personal contact.”*
- ❖ **Be curious.** *“If I hear of something, I go to the web site to find out about the organization and then contact them. If I’m curious, I’ll follow up. Some organizations or community activities are not online, so you just need to get out, discover, and ask people about the community.”*
- ❖ **Initiate conversations with neighborhood leaders.** Talk about building inclusive communities in general, how to focus efforts on people who are isolated, and how to bring people together. *“When I broaden the topic, it helps explain and perks up interest.”*
- ❖ **Couple general conversations with real examples.** Such examples include helping someone get a job, putting together small groups of people with similar interests, and getting more people involved in neighborhood events.
- ❖ **Be specific about what you need from the person you are talking to.** For example:
 - Get the names of people who have jobs in the area of employment that interests another person. Find out who can answer questions or serve as mentors and ask how to get introduced to them.
 - Ask people if they can meet with the person who is seeking employment to brainstorm possible community jobs and contacts.
 - Explore how individuals can be included in the community organization of interest. Find out the opportunities for making contributions to the organization, such as greeting people, handing out information, making coffee, and organizing an event.

What are some other ideas for creating more opportunities for community involvement? How can this happen?

- ❖ Build relationships with employers in the community.
- ❖ Talk to everyone you know and meet; someone will give you ideas, and this leads to other ideas.
- ❖ Go to established organizations like Kiwanis. Find organizations that will be the most valuable for individuals.
- ❖ Tap into the resources within neighborhoods; neighborhoods tap into local businesses.

How can the service system be helpful?

- ❖ Ask, “Who else can do this?” Job developers can do community building, as can residential service providers.
- ❖ How can people communicate and stay in touch without going to so many meetings? Think about other ways to stay in touch, like conference calls and e-mail. Communication needs to be effective, consistent, and reliable.
- ❖ People need to have technology: Persons with disabilities need to have access to email and computers, with support if needed.
- ❖ Build consistency and accountability. It can be confusing to businesses if there is no consistency in how employment providers approach them. It would be helpful for providers to send a clear message to businesses and have something that explains what they are looking for.
- ❖ Follow through with all contacts given and made. Community members may be reluctant to give additional community and job contacts if they don’t know what happened to the ones they have already given.

What we learned about the benefits of community connectors to BCC participants and families:

- ❖ Often a community connector can prescreen people/organizations who are open and welcoming and could be a good match for someone. This often results in a positive experience that can lead to relationships, activities, and employment.
- ❖ Community connectors can invite people from neighborhoods or business people who have additional contacts to do some brainstorming over coffee with the person and members of his/her team. Such brainstorming will help the person to learn about his/her community and explore ideas and job possibilities.
- ❖ If asked, business/community leaders will join planning and action teams and will give job ideas and contacts. It is a combination of meeting someone who has work connections and who wants to get to know the person: *“I may not know the ‘disability world,’ but I know and really like this guy, and I want to help.”* Connectors make the teams more curious about the community and vice versa.
- ❖ Community members may not want to be part of the person’s planning and action team, but they can help to figure out things for the person, depending on what he/she wants to do.

- ❖ It can be difficult and take time to create new relationships, so it is helpful to rely on other pre-existing relationships as a place to start.
- ❖ Some community connectors want to learn about the ‘system’ and how it works. It is important that this role does not become part of the system and/or mired in its limitations. First, ask members of the community how people are included naturally and build on that. Then, ask those involved in the systems how to support these community connections, if support is needed.
- ❖ One fear is that if things do not work out, it reflects back on the community connector. These connectors want to hear about what happened as a result of their efforts. They want people to follow through on their ideas and contacts and to be kept in the loop. Sharing stories and positive outcomes helps, and it motivates community connectors to keep building inclusive communities.
- ❖ People must know and be OK with the fact that it might work, or it might not; it might be a good fit, or it might not; but it is still OK to try.
- ❖ It is easy to say, “I know someone who wants to come to your church,” but it can be hard to join the church and be involved if no one knows what supports will be given to the place.
- ❖ It is vital that contacts not to be dropped once they are made. It takes time for connections to be made and each can make a difference for someone who is trying to achieve a fuller more connected life.
- ❖ We need to become participatory members of our own community, giving back and building reciprocity as we ask others to engage.

WHAT ELSE HAS HAPPENED?

The following are some more examples of what happened as a result of building and engaging community members and networks.

- ❖ Emily lives in Aimee’s neighborhood. Aimee had met with Emily and her mother and knew she was interested in a job in a beauty salon. Aimee got together with Jim, the current neighborhood association leader, to talk to him about possible employment for Emily in the neighborhood. Through his church and neighborhood activities, Jim knew the owner of a beauty school and salon. He asked the beauty salon owner if she had any job openings and told her that he knew someone who would be a perfect fit. As a result, Emily was offered a job at the beauty school and salon in her local neighborhood. She loves the job and everyone loves her being there.

- ❖ Tracey was interested in acting and drama. Lori told her about five different ways she could be



involved in theater in Everett, including taking acting classes through a local theater group, joining a small theater group that gives plays to schools, or taking acting at a community college. Tracy met with the drama professor at the community college and decided to try out the improvisation class. She really enjoyed herself and was encouraged by this teacher to continue. Tracy took the drama class, which eventually led her to enroll in other community college

classes to become a legal assistant.

- ❖ Janea, a previous City of Chelan council member, was asked by Tamara if she would become a team member for Alan and help him to find employment in Chelan. Alan was interested in starting his own landscaping business. Janea contacted the Chelan Parks Department about potential landscaping jobs and gave these initial contacts to Kelly and Alan's employment provider. Although Alan decided not to pursue this line of work, it doesn't hurt to have a city council member know you and your interest in employment!
- ❖ Sharon was interested in art. Lori introduced her to a few artists who share space at Lowell Art Works, a local artist cooperative. Sharon met some of the artists and decided to vacuum the lobby of the artist studio in exchange for art lessons. Although Sharon only did this a few times, she got to know one of the artists and helped her set up for an art gallery opening.
- ❖ Sally had always wanted to attend her neighborhood church. She was reluctant to go, however, because she didn't know anyone at the church and didn't know how to walk there. Stephanie met the minister of the church and some members who said they would be happy to welcome Sally and make her comfortable. Sally also practiced walking from her home, which was a couple of blocks from the church. Sally is now a regular member of the church and has met lots of new people who attend.

* Some names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

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For more information about Building Careers and Community visit the WiSe website at www.theinitiative.ws or by contacting WiSe at 206-343-0881 Ext. 109.