



Community Organizing and Activism: Confronting Injustice in Public Spaces



Neighborhood Organizing

"I think it's important that we recognize that there are a variety of roles that people can play in movement work and getting us towards the future that we deserve."

– Casey Merie Thomas, President
Greater Glenwood Neighborhood Association

OVERVIEW

Neighborhood Associations that bring people together to determine their collective fate demonstrate how democracy in action begins at home. As people discuss what works and what needs improving in their lives, they learn from the experiences of others about common concerns and opportunities that can lead to combining energies. Neighborhood associations are often powerful agents of change that can impact how a city develops. They offer an important training ground for residents to learn how to activate the interests of others to work toward goals to benefit the public welfare.

Neighborhood Associations provide a platform, too, to build social capital, the bonds and networks that lead to a better quality of life. Through expressions of care and responsibility, neighbors build trust and a stronger community base by working together to ensure the health and well-being of residents, educate each other on voting and other civic matters, express themselves as a strong voice in city politics, plan fun activities, and introduce programs for social change (see more about neighborhood work at <https://www.yesmagazine.org/health-happiness/2020/01/01/american-health-people/>).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What issues could you see a Neighborhood Association working toward to make the lives better for residents?
2. What are the distinctions between community organizing and neighborhood organizing? What are the benefits and challenges of each?
3. What are the different ways you can think of to be civically engaged?
4. When justice is at the center of organizing action, what topics would emerge in your neighborhood to address?