



Uniting community members to transform our neighborhoods is at the heart of what we do.

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<https://ccc-cultivatingcommunityconnections.net>



Our Two Organizations

Cultivating Community Connections (CCC) was formed in 2017 with the goal of strengthening communities. Our mission is to develop meaningful relationships between communities. Through these relationships, we share what works, research solutions for common concerns, and connect communities to resources. We work across all political ideologies to hold elected officials accountable for serving constituents.

Our members are from many geographical areas. We welcome all interested people to become members by joining our email list. Members will receive: 1) a monthly newsletter, 2) email notifications about new posts on our web site, and 3) interesting and useful CCC-Clips with timely information. We never ask for money and you are always welcome to share our newsletter and web site information. www.CCC-CultivatingCommunityConnections.net go to CCC [Contact Page](#)



Movers and Shakers. Our mission is to bring individuals who are community leaders together to amplify and strengthen their advocacy efforts. We seek to partner with our local governing bodies and service agencies by forming working relationships. Together we work to solve problems and educate our community members about how to advocate for the services they need.

Our members are community leaders and activists from Northern Prince George's County. We are keeping this group small and adding specific experts, as needed. We are happy to share our methods and successes so that other communities may adapt any activities to meet their community's needs.



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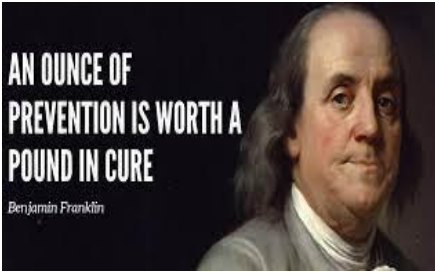
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Please visit our web site at:

<https://ccc-cultivatingcommunityconnections.net>

Contact Us At:

CultivatingCommunityConnections@gmail.com



What Do You Think?

Cultivating Community Connections would like to know about the people in your community that are making a difference. Tell us who they are and what they are doing. Email us at:

CultivatingCommunityConn@gmail.com

Our Leadership Team

Carol Jenkins- founder

Jeff Jenkins- co-founder

Melissa Daston- *Movers and Shakers* past president

Carol Relitz- web administrator

Thank you for supporting CCC's efforts to strengthen communities.

What Makes A Community Strong?

In an uncertain world, our communities are one of the biggest factors in creating a sense of security or insecurity for residents. How do we create secure, thriving communities? What are the factors that are most important? According to one study of 26 communities across the nation, the most important factors are:

“The 5 community characteristics that most influenced community attachment (in order of importance) were: **social offerings, openness, aesthetics, education, and basic services**. While there were some differences in the relative strength of each of these factors across the 26 communities, these 5 factors consistently had the strongest influence on feelings of attachment. Other important, but somewhat less influential factors included leadership, economy, safety, social capital, and civic involvement.” <https://extension.psu.edu/what-makes-the-good-community>

Our community leaders work hard on all of the factors in the quoted list. The most important factors- social offerings and openness- are where we have the greatest impact on our residents and, happily these two factors are within our own control. However, the rest of the factors require cooperation with governmental agencies. When aesthetics are not maintained and basic services are not consistently provided, the sense of community is undermined for all residents. When an agency is tasked with keeping the neighborhood looking good, and that basic service is not provided, property values plummet and a chain of destabilizing events is likely to occur. One bad apple, one blighted or blatantly disruptive area, spoils the whole area.

This blighted property from an unknown location would clearly be out-of-compliance with our County codes. If this was in your neighborhood, it would negatively impact your property value and your pride in the community. Our County services tell us to report this to 3-1-1. If you make the call, what outcome would be acceptable?



Movers and Shakers - Our Work is Just Beginning

For many years Prince George's County community leaders have expressed frustration with the perceived lack of response to 3-1-1 requests for service. Movers and Shakers, as a collaborative group of community leaders, has been working with a variety of county agencies to address some of these issues. We applaud the county's willingness to partner with Movers and Shakers in search of solutions.

When a community member looks at a cause of frustration; whether it is an abandoned house, an illegal rental property, or on-going noise issues; from a resident's perspective this should generate speedy intervention, but also as important is observable remediation. From the agency's perspective, after they make their initial assessment, they know the solution may take a lot of work and involve multiple other governmental entities. **A reporting individual, has no way of knowing why the problem remains unresolved unless there is on-going communication. Movers and Shakers' priority is to work with agencies to standardize institutional procedures so that on-going feedback to customers is built into the system. On-going feedback will benefit everyone.**

10 Traits of Positive Communities

Positive communities may differ in what they encourage, but overall, ten characteristics tend to make for a successful community.

1. Common goals

Effective communities often share similar values and belief systems. These can motivate its individuals to accomplish mutually held goals, the nature of which may vary depending on the group in question. For example, one community may value environmental goals, such as promoting recycling and making forest areas more habitable for wildlife. In contrast, another community may place value on an [effective education system](#) and thereby work toward the goal of influencing education policy.

2. Freedom of expression

Central to developing a positive community is comfort among its members when it comes to speaking their minds and expressing what is important to them.

Individuals who feel encouraged to give input about an issue and who feel heard when they speak their minds are more likely to feel connected to their community. Further, successful communities recognize the importance of opinions that diverge from the majority and are open to hearing these (Greenberg & Edwards, 2009). In contrast, dysfunctional communities tend to silence voices that diverge from those espoused by the majority or group leaders.

At best, communities with such dynamics may miss opportunities to improve their practices and enhance their members' fulfillment from their involvement (Bashshur & Oc, 2015). At worst, they may harm their members by isolating them from diverse viewpoints or exerting undue control.

3. Address member concerns with sensitivity

Not only is it important to create a community that encourages the voicing of concerns, but it is also important to ensure that members feel their concerns are adequately addressed.

Positive communities prioritize their members' wellbeing and address concerns in a timely and sensitive manner when they arise. For community leaders, this means taking the time to listen carefully to any concerns raised and taking the necessary steps to assess risks and conduct further investigations when necessary. Throughout this process, community leaders need to act fairly, keep clear records, and maintain good communication with the member who initially raised the concern (Whistleblowing Helpline, 2016). Sometimes, it may also be appropriate to protect the member's identity by referring to the community member anonymously in any documentation.

4. Set clear policies and obligations

Strong and enduring communities typically set clear rules and expectations to guide the conduct of its members. Doing so ensures that there is as little ambiguity as possible regarding what is and is not okay and will help minimize misunderstandings.

Depending on the community's nature, it may be helpful to establish a code of conduct that explicitly links a community's mission, values, and principles to expected standards of behavior. Such a code can then help community members to behave ethically, meet their obligations, and carry out day-to-day decision making (Ethics & Compliance Initiative, n.d.).

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5. Fairness

With policies and expectations clearly in place, enforcement of these rules should be applied fairly. Feeling a sense of fairness is critical to the experience of good relationships, and good relationships are often a key driver of people's involvement in communities (Butorova, n.d.). Therefore, a community that does not apply its rules fairly risks inadvertently driving away its members and producing feelings of disconnection. For instance, the community member who feels that they must 'pick up the slack' for another member who has neglected to meet their obligations may begin to feel resentment toward this member. They may also feel resentment toward the community's leadership, who have failed to hold this member accountable.

6. Celebrate heritage and traditions

Every long-standing community has heritage and traditions that have arisen during the community's development. Positive communities embrace their culture by reminding members of the long way the community has come.

There are many ways to celebrate a community's heritage and traditions. One way is through its artifacts—observable symbols and signs of a community's culture (Ott, 1989).

Examples of artifacts include a community's stories and legends, such as a dramatic tale of how the community was formed; (Wilkins, 1983); language, in the way members greet one another; rituals and ceremonies (Smith & Stewart, 2011), and physical structures or symbols such as trophies or the design of physical spaces.

7. Promote interaction among members

Positive communities work to foster a feeling of genuine connection among members by providing plenty of interaction opportunities. Doing this can motivate members to meet their obligations and work toward the established goals of the community.

More specifically, crafting opportunities for members to experience emotional contagion in their interactions is key.

Emotional contagion occurs when two or more people focus on a common activity and emotional experience, generating feelings of group solidarity (Collins, 2004). Examples of activities that may induce emotional contagion feelings include protesting about a cause a community is passionate about or singing along to songs together at a karaoke night.

8. Elect leaders that stand by community values

Individuals elected to leadership positions within positive communities should be fair and just in their focus. Their shared values should inform the decisions they make on behalf of the community.

Where possible, leaders should be diverse and represent the full scope of views and identities present within the community, such as electing an equal balance of men and women to a board.

9. Prioritize effective communication

Communication is essential for any effective community. Not only does this mean clearly communicating policies, rules, and expectations, but it also means keeping members up to date about ongoing projects, changes to policies, and upcoming events.

Often, communities will set up their own customized channels to facilitate [effective communication](#). Examples of such channels include regular monthly meetings, circulated meeting minutes, digital social networking services, and newsletters.

10. Make smart decisions (Continued on page 5)

Decisions made by positive and encouraging communities focus primarily on the promotion of its vision and aims. When in doubt about decisions that must be made, [positive leaders](#) should consider whether any major decision is aligned with the community's vision and aims. It is the members' identification with a vision and aims that likely led them to join the community in the first place.

Members will inevitably disagree on some issues, but an effective community leader incorporates concerns from all sides of an issue to arrive at final decisions.

What Makes a Good Community?

Excerpts from: <https://www.lancasternewcity.com.ph/8-qualities-that-make-a-positive-community/>

It becomes no surprise that next to the family, the next most important unit of society is the community. It's from our home locale and neighborhood where we thrive as humans. Communities are made not just from one's proximity with others but are united by a shared vision and interest.

1. Inclusivity

Residential communities today welcome individuals of all shapes and sizes. It's good to watch out for a neighborhood that respects and accepts diversity as one of their community values.

2. Open-Minded and Positive Community

Every homeowners' association needs capable leaders to represent the residents. Upon electing personalities, one should look for fair-minded and positive thinkers that get the job done with the betterment of the neighborhood in mind.

3. Community-Wide Rules and Regulations

Like any model government, policies should be implemented to keep order in the neighborhood. Practical and sensible rules and regulations are set in motion and followed by all.

4. Fun Community Events

Community events not only boost morale but promote strong neighborly ties as well, they also encourage friendship among residents which is key to achieve residential unity.

5. Good Sense of Respect and Responsibilities

Everyone living inside a residential area or township should equally share in the responsibility for taking care of the property and its amenities. Aside from this, residents should also respect and care for their communal residential amenities. These include parks, village clubhouses, recreational centers, swimming pools, open areas, and more.

6. Active Charity Initiatives

It's always a good bonus when your community actively seeks new ways to give back to society.

7. Watch Out for One Another

Ultimately, your neighbors should be an extension of your close circles. A community that watches out for one another during emergencies and security instances are always preferred.

8. Spirit of Volunteerism

In your safe sanctuary, it's always a plus when you are surrounded with selfless individuals who put the community first.



Please check our web site for future newsletters and other updates:

<https://ccc-cultivatingcommunityconnections.net>