



We Rock Wall

A workbook for creating an Asset Map or Interest Inventory of your community.

Community Legacy Program of Our United Villages
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ABOUT THE COMMUNITY LEGACY PROGRAM

When everyone is seen as having value, with a role and purpose in community; when they share ownership for what happens within it, a culture of equity can be created.

The Community Legacy Program of Our United Villages recognizes and promotes that every person can make a positive difference for the benefit of all. Our Sharing Ideas events and Legacy Stories provide a platform for increasing awareness about how people are actively engaged in strengthening the social fabric of their community. We provide free tools and resources to assist people who seek pathways for achieving more vibrant, resilient and equitable communities.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL PACKET

This Community Building Tool Packet is based on Our United Villages' observations, practices and research engaging with Portland communities since 1997. We have respectfully included citations where our practices were influenced by the models and materials of others.

We recognize that the ways in which to build community are vast and varied, and recommend that you choose an approach in alignment with your neighborhood or community vision. Our Community Legacy Tool Packets are designed to be "given away," so we encourage you to take from them whatever is useful for achieving your goals.

Consider contacting us to schedule a free Idea Development Session if you have questions about this Tool Packet, or want feedback on how best to implement them into your plan. If you have suggestions or stories to share for the enhancement of this Tool Packet, please contact us. Your feedback will be welcomed and appreciated.

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INTRODUCTION

Every person brings a unique set of skills, talents, experiences, interests, and dreams to a community. Together, these individual “gifts” form a deep well of resources for the entire community to draw on. A “We Rock Wall” helps a community build awareness of the gifts each person has to offer by visually displaying each person’s gifts.

In 2009, Our United Villages created a “We Rock Wall” highlighting and celebrating the gifts of each employee in our workplace community. Located in our lunch area and break room, the Wall sparks conversations, helps employees get to know each other, encourages sharing skills and making connections over common interests, and celebrates the richness and diversity of our workplace community.

This workbook is intended as a guide to help you plan and create a We Rock Wall for your community. Steps outlined include:

- Identifying the community that will be involved
- Identifying your goals for the wall
- Identifying questions to ask
- Getting the word out
- Planning interviews
- Conducting interviews
- Organizing the information you gather
- Creating a visual portrayal
- Honoring each individual and honoring the group
- Encouraging use of the wall

Take from this workbook what works best for achieving your own neighborhood or community goals!

IDENTIFY THE COMMUNITY THAT WILL BE INVOLVED

Start by identifying the community the We Rock Wall will celebrate. It could be:

- A neighborhood
- An apartment
- A shared interest group or club
- A faith-based community
- Staff of an organization or business

Our community is the staff of Our United Villages. Employee participation in the We Rock Wall is voluntary.

IDENTIFY YOUR GOALS FOR THE WALL

Now think about the role you would like a *We Rock Wall* to play in the community you have identified. Setting these goals now will help you shape the design for the wall. Consider answering the following questions:

- Why are you creating the Wall?
- What do you want to learn about the community?
- How will the community use the wall, and for what purposes? What will make the wall meaningful and useful?

We created our We Rock Wall for the purpose of *internal* community-building; as a way to learn a bit about co-workers, to spark conversations, to encourage us to connect with each other around common interests, and as a forum to share skills. The Wall also connects a face to a name in introducing new employees to the workplace community.

IDENTIFY THE QUESTIONS THAT WILL BE ASKED

Make a list of all the information you would like to gather from each person.

- How will this information help meet the goals that you have identified for your project?

Use this list to develop the questions you will ask each person who chooses to be interviewed. In writing questions consider the people and cultures in your community.

- What types of questions will people find interesting and meaningful? What will they be excited to answer?
- What languages are spoken in your community? Translate the questions into each language.

At OUV, we asked each staff member the same questions. We wanted the We Rock Wall to help co-workers get to know each other by giving a snapshot of each staff member. We also wanted to highlight the connections or common interests between individuals. To meet these goals, we chose questions that focused on each person's interests, experiences, strengths, gifts, and talents. See Appendix A for a copy of the interview questions we use.

GET THE WORD OUT

Strive for inclusivity! Get the word out about your project to everyone in the community. Create messaging that names and describes the project's purpose or goals and how people can get involved.

- How will you explain the project and its goals?
- What are the different ways you are asking people to get involved?
- What channels can you use to get this information out to the community?
- What languages are spoken in your community?

Using more than one method to get the word out can help insure that you reach more people in your community. Be sure to translate outreach materials into each language spoken in your community. Think about the variant ways people receive information – radio and television PSAs, social media, local newspapers, posters – and maximize your outreach efforts.

We talked about the We Rock Wall at the all staff meeting and put a flyer about the activity in every staff member's mailbox on payday. We identified the languages spoken by staff (English and Spanish) and translated the invitation into those languages. See Appendix B for the flyer we used to get the word out.

PLAN THE INTERVIEWS

There are many ways to gather information from people who choose to participate. Choose the technique that will be most effective for your community and will best meet your goals.

Some ideas include:

- One-on-one interviews where a few interviewers ask everyone else the questions, one at a time.
- Group interviews where one interviewer asks questions of a group of people, all at once.
- A paper or online survey, where each person answers the questions for themselves.
- Peer interviews, where people pair up to ask each other the questions.

Consider how your interview method will support your goals for the project. Group interviews can give people in your community an opportunity to get to know each other. Peer interviews can foster a broader sense of ownership over the project. One-on-one interviews with a practiced interviewer may provide more detailed information. An online or paper survey will take less time to distribute, but fewer people may respond.

Depending on your interview method, identify who will do the interviews. We recommend that interviewers be engaging good listeners with strong interpersonal communication skills.

- Who is interested in being an interviewer?
- How can you find interviewers or interpreters who speak each of the languages present in the community?

At OUV, we decided to use one-on-one interviews, in order to accommodate our staff's differing schedules while maintaining a personal connection. Our co-workers speak both English and Spanish, so we have three interviewers (English-speaking) and one interpreter (English-Spanish bilingual). We rotate among interviewers depending on who is available.

CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEWS

Depending on the interview method you choose, find the best way to schedule the interviews.

- Will you do all the interviews at the same time?
- Will the interviews be an ongoing activity?
- How can you accommodate as many schedules as possible?

This is each person's opportunity to share what's important to them—their stories, interests, skills and talents. It is a fun chance to get to know each other better. Think of ways to make each person comfortable as they are being interviewed, and to give them ownership over what they choose to publicly share.

We scheduled interviews with staff as they were interested and willing. As new staff came to Our United Villages, we offered the opportunity to participate. The We Rock Wall is an ongoing effort. The interviews took between 15 and 30 minutes each. We took a photo of each staff member at the time of the interview.

ORGANIZING THE INFORMATION AND IDENTIFYING THEMES

Once you've completed the interviews, take some time to consider how you will organize the information you have gathered.

- What part(s) of the interviews will be visually portrayed on the We Rock Wall?
- What process will you use to identify themes in the interviews?
- How can you organize that information to help achieve the project's goals?

Our goal for the Wall was to encourage employees to connect with each other over common interests and to share skills. We decided to categorize each employee's responses into themes, to help draw connections between people. Nine themes bubbled to the top: indoor activities, outdoor activities, volunteering, music, art, sports, kids/family, social activities, and thrift store shopping.

DESIGNING THE WE ROCK WALL

You've gathered and organized all that information, but it needs some place to go. Placing your We Rock Wall in a central location and giving it a colorful, engaging design can encourage your community to use it.

- Where can the We Rock Wall be located so that it is accessible and useful to the community? Think about places where people gather and spend time.
- What will the wall look like? How will the design reflect the culture of the community?
- How can you get the community involved in designing and creating the wall? Think about asking any artists in the community to help.

The We Rock Wall covers one wall of Our United Villages' staff lunch room. To reflect the culture of this community, we made the We Rock Wall out of recycled and reclaimed objects. For example, the words "We Rock Wall" are made out of wood knobs. A volunteer offered to paint the knobs to make a colorful sign.

FILLING IN THE WALL: HONORING EACH INDIVIDUAL AND HONORING THE GROUP

Now that you've created the Wall, it's time to fill it in with the information each person has given. In deciding how to present the information, refer back to your original goals. Consider ways to make the information useful and to honor each individual while honoring the group as a whole:

- How can the Wall show the strengths, gifts and talents of each individual in the community? How can each person's personality shine through?
- How can the Wall highlight what people have in common? How can it encourage people to make connections with each other?
- How will the visual portrayal reflect the diversity of the community?

OUV's We Rock Wall highlights each employee's individual identity by featuring their photo (taken in their choice of settings) and a unique quote that emerged during their interview. These pictures create a border around the We Rock Wall. In the middle are the nine themes that emerged. Individual responses that relate to the theme are posted on note cards around that theme, to encourage viewers to draw connections between employees' skills and interests. See Appendix C for a sample.

ENCOURAGING USE OF THE WALL AND ENHANCING ITS FUNCTIONALITY

Your community has come together to create a We Rock Wall. Now encourage everyone to participate in using and improving this new resource.

- Bring community together for a celebration unveiling the wall.
- Give examples of different ways community members can use the wall. Highlight connections made through the wall.
- Keep information on the wall current so that it stays useful. In a neighborhood, interview new neighbors as they move in. In a workplace, take employees off the wall if they leave and add new employees as they arrive. Invite people to change their information as their skills and interests evolve.
- Encourage community to take ownership over the wall. Divide up responsibility for maintaining the wall to get as many people involved as possible. Ask people what they like about the wall and how it could better meet their needs. Encourage people to add new components or design elements to the wall to make it more useful.

At OUV, we decided to encourage staff to connect by adding “I am in need of/I am looking for” and “I have to offer/I can invite you to” sections to our We Rock Wall. Several group activities emerged from the common interests that the wall revealed. See appendix D for more.

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Name:

Department:

Interviewer:

Date:

What do you like to do when you aren't working?

How would people in your life describe you?

What is a skill you have that you are proud of?

What is an accomplishment that you are proud of?

How would you like to connect with your co-workers?

What's one thing (not related to work) that you'd like to have conversations with your co-workers about?

APPENDIX B: GETTING THE WORD OUT

OUR UNITED VILLAGES WE ROCK WALL ANNOUNCEMENT TO STAFF

Have you ever wondered if there is someone that you work with who has similar hobbies as you?

Does someone you work with know how to do something that you would like to learn about?

Do you have a skill or talent that you could teach to your co-workers?

Our United Villages' Community Legacy Program is beginning the process of informal interviews with every OUV employee who chooses to participate. We are going to interview each staff member about their skills, talents, and strengths. This is an opportunity for employees to build community with each other. Four employees will be conducting the interviews. Once staff members have shared their responses, we will create a display for the wall of our lunch room. For example, if someone talked about enjoying biking, we may put up a bike wheel on the wall. Each staff member's picture and department will be placed next to the things they enjoy. You will be able to discover what interests you have in common with your co-workers. This interview is a *voluntary activity*; you do not have to participate if you do not want to.

We appreciate the talents, gifts, and skills that every OUV staff member brings to our workplace!

We will contact you to schedule a 20 minute informal interview. If you want a heads-up about what we will be asking, below is the list of questions we plan to ask:

- How do you like to spend your time?
- What do you like to do indoors?
- What do you like to do outdoors?
- What are you really good at?
- How would people in your life describe you?
- What are you proud of?
- How would you like to connect with and get to know your co-workers?

APPENDIX C: HONORING INDIVIDUALS & THE GROUP AS A WHOLE

INDIVIDUAL PHOTO WITH UNIQUE QUOTE

- Photos of individuals energize the We Rock Wall.
- It helps people connect a face to a name.
- We ask people if they have a favorite quote or identify a unique aspect of their interview to highlight.
- Allow the interviewee to have their photo taken in a setting of their choice (outdoors, on their bike, sitting at their desk, in front a sign, working)
- Our practice is to take a minimum of three photos
- We show photos and selected quote to interviewee for their approval before posting to the We Rock Wall.



GROUP THEMES

Individual responses were written out onto index cards based on identified themes. The index cards were displayed around the theme which showed the common interests amongst staff.

Concept	Example
After conducting approximately 20 interviews, we identified nine themes.	Indoor activities, Outdoor activities, Volunteering, Music, Art, Sports, Kids/Family, Social Activities, and Thrift Stores.
We decorated a card with images for each theme.	Outdoor Activities was decorated with images of hiking, camping, canoeing, biking, etc.
Individual's responses were displayed around the theme.	Emily's cards would be categorized in these ways: Baking=Indoor Activities

APPENDIX D: ENHANCING THE FUNCTIONALITY AND UTILITY

NEEDS & OFFERS

The We Rock Wall celebrates how we all have something to offer and something to gain by connecting with our community.

On one side of the We Rock Wall, we put two sections for posting:

- I am in need of... / I am looking for...
- I have to offer... / I would like to invite you to...

Examples of needs and offers that were posted include:

- I am in need of... / I am looking for...
 - A couch
 - Someone to watch my kids this Friday
 - Some who can show me how to change my oil myself
- I have to offer... / I would like to invite you to...
 - My art show this weekend
 - Free bike tune-up done by me
 - Rock-climbing lesson

CONNECTIONS & SIMILAR INTERESTS

The We Rock Wall encourages us to explore the resources we already have amongst ourselves to meet our needs and build community.

We have seen conversations start up between employees based on the We Rock Wall.

- Hey! I saw you like sci-fi movies too, have you seen...
- It said on the We Rock Wall that you know how to sew. Could you show me...
- You have dogs too? Would you be up to trading pet-sitting...

Group activities have emerged from the common interests we learned about.

- Loves to cook → creating A Cook Book for employees to share recipes with one another
- Loves to make music with others → A Drum Circle once a month that is open to all staff
- Loves to eat → A staff initiated pot-luck at work
- Loves to hike → Sharing hiking trails and hidden spots with each other
- Loves sports → Launching a fall ball softball team