

Community Action in Illinois

50 Stories for 50 Years



“Stories are the way we naturally think; the way we sort the natural information in our brain. They are also a way to remember – they cement ideas in our brain.”

Kate Lutz



50 years of Community Action



Why Stories?

- Engage our minds, our hearts, our physical beings and our souls.
- It is a critical element of our communication with one another.
- Stories move us and motivate us.
- Stories give life to the statistics that we report.



50 Stories for 50 Years

- Creating a book
- Stories can be from anytime in the history of your organization
- Choose the stories that answer these questions:
 - Why does it matter?
 - Why is it memorable?
 - How does it illustrate what you and your agency do?
- Stories should target those not in “the movement”
 - We are trying to change minds and attitudes about those in poverty and the agencies that help them.
 - Avoid using excessive acronyms or terms that only Community Action people are familiar with.



The Details

- What happened?
 - Place
 - Time
 - Individuals
 - Situation
- Is there a back story?
 - History
 - Culture
- Was there a tipping point?
 - Involvement
 - Learning
 - Aha! moment
- What changed?
 - Impact
 - Change
- Where are they now?
 - Are they willing to share their story?
 - Will they provide a quote?
 - Are they willing to be photographed?



Crafting a story

- Identify a good story.
 - Set the scene.
 - Share the experience.
 - Create vision and action.
 - Share knowledge
- What makes this story resonate? What are the human elements that anyone can relate to?
- Tell the story like you would to an interested stranger to get them to understand what you do.
- Make a point. Relate the story to the bigger movement of the War on Poverty.



Be Mindful of language

- Some words and phrases can be received in a way that does not reflect your original intentions.
- Too many communications about the poor and poverty have stereotyped both poor people and the condition of poverty.
- “Poor” is someone else to most readers, regardless of their own income level.



Structural Causes

- Dr. Donna Beegle, author of “*See Poverty...Be the Difference*” reminds us that people living in economic poverty are blamed for their plight, even though poverty rarely is caused by personal deficiencies.
- She urges us to work to shatter myths by **presenting the structural causes of poverty as part of every narrative or frame.**



QUESTIONS?



Details, please

- Stories are due on March 14, 2014
- Please send more than one!
- Email stories to sratcliffe@iacaanet.org



THANK YOU!

Sara and Christine

