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@jacaanet.org
THANK YOU!

Sara and Christine