

Neighborhood Connections: Core Classes

Coordinators

Emily Allen

Senior City Planner

eallen@fcgov.com

(970) 224-6047

Katherine Bailey

Program Assistant

kbailey@fcgov.com

(970) 416-4352

Instructors:

Mitch Majeski

Sarah Stephens

Alma Vigo-Morales

Mayan Smith

Thomas Fahey

Patsi Maroney

Annie Bierbower

Emily Allen

I. Course Summary

Connected neighborhoods are safer and healthier, and allow a shared understanding of outcomes desired by the community. This course is designed to enable residents and City representatives to co-create a structure that works for our neighbors to enhance connections. We will work on improved communications and ways to recognize the variety of strengths that exist within neighborhoods, while giving those neighborhoods a stronger voice in the future of Fort Collins. This program seeks to connect neighbors with each other and with the City, to help identify neighborhood-level priorities and learn how to work together to address them. We will provide concrete tools to engage neighbors, manage conflict, build relationships across differences and disagreements, connect across neighborhoods, and improve access to City services.

II. Learning outcomes

Upon completion of this course, participants should have a better understanding of who their neighbors are, what their strengths are, and what their priorities are. They should know how to encourage *healthy* disagreement and transform unproductive conflict. They should better understand what communication tools are appropriate for their neighborhood and how to use them. They should develop connections with others in the program and begin to build relationships across neighborhoods. By the end of the course, every participant should host a neighborhood gathering or similar event (planning assistance and grant funding to make this event possible will be provided to participants).

A. Neighboring

1. Have a better understanding how to engage with neighbors.
2. Meet more of the immediate neighborhood.
3. Gain perspective on neighbors' priorities.
4. Have a fuller understanding of the strengths existing in your neighborhood.

B. Conflict and bias

1. Demonstrate an openness to diversity and an appreciation of the importance of sharing different perspectives.
2. Have an understanding of how to productively manage conflict and allow for healthy disagreements.
3. Demonstrate willingness and ability to engage with difference and acknowledge bias.

C. Communication

1. Have a better understanding of communication across cultural barriers.
2. Understand how to improve communication to minimize unproductive conflict
3. Better understand communication tools and how to implement or improve them in the neighborhood.

III. Recommended Texts

- Kageyama, P. (2011). *For the Love of Cities*. St. Petersburg: Creative Cities Productions.
- McKnight, J. and Block, P. (2010). *The Abundant Community: Awakening the Power of Families and Neighborhoods*. San Francisco: Barrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

IV. Principals Motivating Classroom Instruction

- A. Focus on what's strong, not what's wrong.
- B. "Home is the relationships, not the space" Mitch Majeski, neighbor
- C. "I truly believe we don't need to recreate community, we need to reconnect it; and there's no route map or short cuts for that." - Cormac Russell
- D. "Social networks in a neighborhood lower crime, improve public health and raise test scores."— Robert Putnam, Bowling Alone
- E. "Our communities are abundant with the resources we need for the future. It is the awakening of families and neighborhoods to these resources that is needed" - McKnight and Block, The Abundant Community
- F. "...every place has people who love it. Find them. Bring them together, ask them for their help. Find what is lovable about your place and make it better." - Peter Kageyama, For the Love of Cities

V. Attendance & Participation

This course is a mixture of lecture and discussion format, therefore it is important that participants attend and be prepared for each class. We expect participants come to class ready to contribute from an informed perspective based on having engaged with and completed the pre-class materials (any assignments, videos, etc.).

- a. Participants in the core classes will be permitted 2 hours of missed instruction time if they complete online material to compensate.
- b. If more than 2 hours of instruction time are missed, they may be made up in a later session.
- c. To be considered a part of the Neighborhood Connections program, participants who graduate the core classes must attend at least 4 continuing education classes per year.

VI. Incentives/Program Perks

Active participants in the Neighborhood Connections program will have access to all the Continuing Education classes. They will benefit from direct connections with a variety of programs and neighbors and access to City resources to benefit their neighborhood. They will be allotted grant money to assist in holding a neighborhood gathering or event, and have assistance from a City staff member planning and organizing this event. Upon request they will have a City staff member present at their event to facilitate.

VII. Assignments

- A. **Art of Neighboring** Each participant will be tasked with meeting all of their immediate neighbors. Participants who already know these neighbors by name will be asked to learn something new about the neighbor (name of pets or children, their strengths or passions, etc).
- B. **Create or enhance a communication tool specific to your neighborhood (NextDoor, Facebook, phone list)** What is the best communication tool for your specific neighborhoods? If there is not an well functioning communication tool used by your neighbors, create one! If there is, expand upon it!
- C. **Host a neighborhood meeting or event** Participants will choose a topic around which to gather their neighbors (ideas will be provided) and will organize and host a neighborhood gathering (participants will have assistance from a City staffer in organizing their event). Participants will be contacted after the class to follow up about their experience.

Class Schedules

Winter 2018: Saturday January 27th and Saturday February 3rd, 8:30am-1:30pm

Topic	Date	Subject Matter	Assignment
1	January 27 th	The basics of neighboring Mitch Majeski	The art of neighboring
2	January 27 th	Mindful Neighboring Sarah Stephens	In-class participation
3	January 27 th	Healthy, productive dialogue across cultural differences Alma Vigo-Morales	In-class participation
4	February 3 rd	Communication tools Mayan Smith	Create/expand upon a communication tool
5	February 3 rd	Facilitation: The art of communicating and Grants Patsi Maroney and Thomas Fahey	In-class participation
6	February 3 rd	Neighborhood gatherings and events and class overview Annie Bierbower	Host a neighborhood gathering

Spring 2018: Every Tuesday April 3rd –May 8th 12:00pm-1:30pm

Topic	Date	Subject Matter	Assignment
1	April 3 rd	The basics of neighboring Mitch Majeski	The art of neighboring
2	April 10 th	Mindful Neighboring Sarah Stephens	In-class participation
3	April 17 th	Healthy, productive dialogue across cultural differences Alma Vigo-Morales	In-class participation
4	April 24 th	Communication tools and Grants Mayan Smith and Thomas Fahey	Create/expand upon a communication tool
5	May 1 st	Facilitation: The art of communicating Patsi Maroney	In-class participation
6	May 8 th	Neighborhood gatherings and events and class overview Emily Allen	Host a neighborhood gathering

Disclaimer: This schedule is tentative and is subject to change at any time. Any changes will be communicated in class and/or by email

Inclusivity Statement

It is the participant’s responsibility to demonstrate respect for diverse opinions, abilities, and backgrounds. Inclusivity will be at the foundation of this program.

Accommodating Special Needs

We will offer interpretation/translation services and daycare to participants who would like the use of these services. Please contact us if so.

