

Hands On Community Engagement For Enduring Spaces And Places



In today's fast-paced world, community engagement has become an essential aspect of building enduring spaces and places that truly serve the needs of the people. Gone are the days when decisions were made behind closed doors without any input from those directly affected by them. The modern approach to urban planning and development embraces the power of hands-on community engagement as a catalyst for positive change and sustainable development.

Understanding the Importance of Community Engagement

Community engagement involves actively involving community members in the decision-making process concerning the development and improvement of public

spaces. This approach ensures that the needs, ideas, and concerns of the people who will ultimately be using these spaces are taken into consideration. By actively engaging the community, decision-makers can gain valuable insights, build trust, and create a sense of ownership over the spaces and places being developed or revitalized.



Dream Play Build: Hands-On Community Engagement for Enduring Spaces and Places

by James Rojas (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

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The Power of Hands-On Engagement

While traditional methods of community engagement, such as surveys and public meetings, have their place, hands-on engagement takes the process to a whole new level. By actively involving community members in physical activities related to the development or revitalization of spaces, a deeper connection is established. This hands-on approach not only encourages active participation but also fosters a sense of pride and responsibility among the residents.

For example, imagine a vacant lot in a neighborhood that is transformed into a community garden through a hands-on engagement process. Community members participate in all stages of the project, from planning and design to planting and maintenance. This direct involvement creates a bond between the

participants and the space itself. They are more likely to take care of the garden, as they were active contributors to its creation, leading to enduring and beautiful spaces.

The Benefits of Community Engagement

The benefits of hands-on community engagement for enduring spaces and places are numerous. Firstly, it helps ensure that the resulting spaces align with the needs and desires of the community. By actively involving community members, their insights are incorporated into the decision-making process, leading to spaces that truly reflect their values and aspirations.

Secondly, community engagement fosters a sense of pride and ownership over the spaces and places developed. When people are involved in the creation of a space, they feel a deep connection to it, leading to increased care and resilience. Well-maintained and loved spaces have a higher chance of enduring and becoming community gathering spots that foster a sense of belonging.

Thirdly, hands-on engagement helps build social capital within communities. By working together towards a common goal, residents develop relationships, trust, and a sense of unity. This enhanced social cohesion can have far-reaching positive effects, including increased collaboration on future projects, improved communication networks, and a stronger sense of community identity.

Best Practices for Hands-On Community Engagement

To ensure successful hands-on community engagement, urban planners and decision-makers should consider the following best practices:

1. Start the engagement process early: Begin involving community members from the early planning stages to maximize their input and creativity.

2. Use a variety of engagement methods: Combine traditional methods like public meetings with hands-on activities like workshops, community-built projects, and volunteer opportunities.
3. Ensure inclusivity: Make sure that all members of the community, including marginalized groups, have equal opportunities to participate in the engagement process.
4. Provide clear information: Communicate the project's objectives, progress, and outcomes transparently to build trust and keep the community informed.
5. Empower community leaders: Identify and support community leaders who can serve as liaisons between the project team and the broader community.
6. Recognize and celebrate achievements: Acknowledge and appreciate the contributions of community members throughout the engagement process to maintain their motivation and enthusiasm.

Hands-on community engagement is a powerful tool for creating enduring spaces and places that truly meet the needs of the people. By actively involving community members in the decision-making and physical activities related to urban planning and development, a sense of ownership, pride, and connection is fostered. These enduring spaces become more than just physical entities; they become a source of community unity and resilience. Embracing hands-on community engagement is crucial for building sustainable, livable, and vibrant communities that stand the test of time.

Written by: Your Name

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The room is dim, the chairs are in perfectly lined rows. The city planner puts up a color-coded diagram of the street improvement project, dreading the inevitable angry responses.

Jana loves her community and is glad to be able to attend the evening meeting, and she has a lot of ideas for community change. But she has a hard time hearing, and can't see the diagrams clearly. She leaves early.

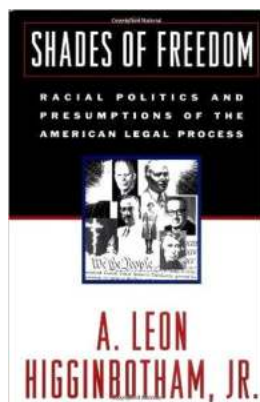
It's time to imagine a different type of community engagement – one that inspires connection, creativity, and fun.

People love their communities and want them to become safer, healthier, more prosperous places. But the standard approach to public meetings somehow makes everyone miserable. Conversations that should be inspiring can become shouting matches. So what would it look like to facilitate truly meaningful discussions between citizens and planners? What if they could be fun?

For twenty years, James Rojas and John Kamp have been looking to art, creative expression, and storytelling to shake up the classic community meeting. In Dream Play Build, they share their insights into building common ground and inviting

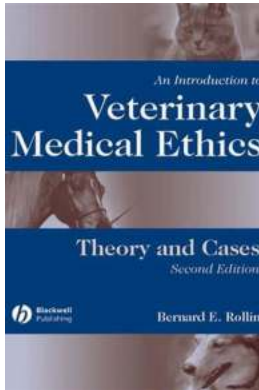
active participation among diverse groups. Their approach, “Place It!,” draws on three methods: the interactive model-building workshop, the pop-up, and site exploration using our senses. Using our hands to build and create is central to what makes us human, helping spark ideas without relying on words to communicate. Deceptively playful, this method is remarkably effective at teasing out community dreams and desires from hands-on activities. Dream Play Build offers wisdom distilled from workshops held around the world, and a deep dive into the transformational approach and results from the South Colton community in southern California. While much of the process was developed through in-person meetings, the book also translates the experience to online engagement--how to make people remember their connections beyond the computer screen.

Inspirational and fun, Dream Play Build celebrates the value of engaging with the dreams we have for our communities. Readers will find themselves weaving these artful, playful lessons and methods into their own efforts for making change within the landscape around them.



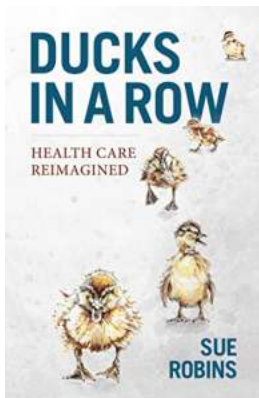
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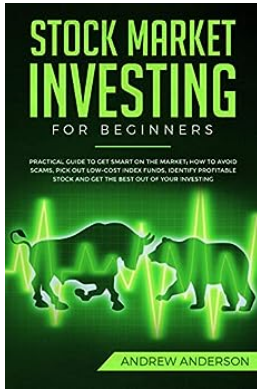
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5,203
THINGS
TO DO
INSTEAD OF
LOOKING AT
YOUR PHONE

BARBARA ANN KIPFER
Author of 14,000 Things to Be Happy About

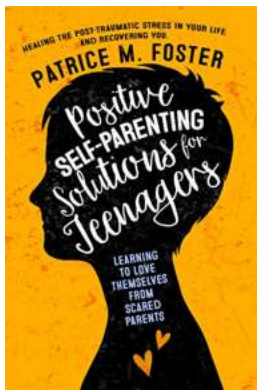
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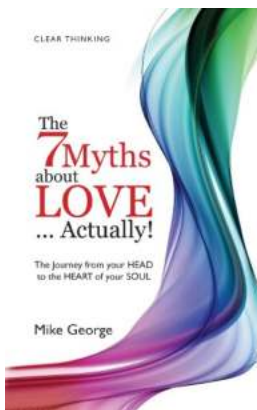
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