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RESILIENCE CIRCLES

Sarah Byrnes

Introduction

Our country is facing a time of economic uncertainty that threatens the community's security (job, home, etc.). Lack of job or home security can lead to high crime, health issues, and puts a major stress on the limited government resources. Resilience Circles (RC), or Common Security Clubs (as they're sometimes called), are small self-organizing groups of 10-20 people that gather to increase personal security. Sarah Byrne, the organizer of RC, explains that the main focus of these RC is for communities to unite to identify and address the economic hardships that people from different backgrounds are experiencing in the community. Through these RC, the community is able to find positive outcomes in tough situations.

Goals

The missions of RC are to have community members learning together to change their personal stories, provide mutual aid by creating community, and generate social action that will change the rules. The way that RC accomplishes these missions is by employing a 7-session curriculum that transforms the way that community members approach economic issues in their community. The goals of these sessions are for individuals to take charge of their issues (instead of scapegoating) and educate them on how to survive in an economic crisis.

Once a community is able to change their story, they will have created a solidarity economy. The idea is that there are plenty of resources in a community for everyone to thrive, if those resources are properly distributed and protected. One example that was offered during this workshop is for community members to weatherize each other's homes. This will cut down on energy costs and eliminate the need to hire help, while building community ties. Another example is having rent parties for members facing evictions. Members of that RC may offer a dish or a skill at a small community event that will raise money to save that member from losing their home.

TimeBanking Connections

Sarah Byrnes made a point to remind workshop participants of the importance of community and how valuable Resilience Circles (RC) can be to TimeBanks (TB). Aside from the fact that TB and RC share core values, RC can be used as a component of TB that will allow members to acknowledge their needs and promote the idea of reciprocity in the community. Several of the workshop participants were pleased with this. One of the issues that one of the TB coordinators faced is ensuring that members are actively trading services, not just offering services and skills. After the workshop she commented that RC may help those members identify their economic needs and promote active trading in her community.

Participants

Sheryl Walton
Jeff Dicken
Shawn Kimmel
Alan Webb
Ramona Preciado
LaDonna Foster

