

POD<sup>3</sup> Triangle Regional Symposium  
Healthy Early Childhood Outdoor Learning Environments  
June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2013  
Finding OLE Resources Through Community Engagement



## Finding Resources for Your OLE Through Community Engagement



## Community Engagement

### What is Community Engagement?



The process of engaging people in the local area with your organization and project.

#### Why do it?

- To get your project started – create buy-in.
- Generate ideas and resources - multiplies your efforts.
- Increase your organization's visibility.
- Create public support.
- Build future improvements and sustainability.
- Educate public/stakeholders about your work and the importance of early childhood obesity and children's health.

## Fundraising Formula

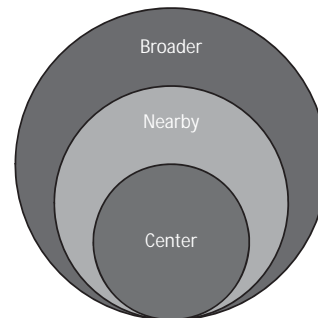
At the community level, community engagement and fundraising are linked together for success.

+ Know your community  
+ Create community awareness  
+ Make connections to potential resources/funders  
= Success

Friendraising = Fundraising  
Remember - People give to People.



## Know Your Community



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## Define Your Community Partners

### Center Level

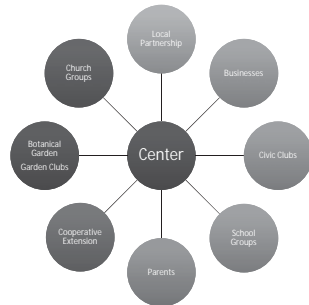
- Parents
- Board members
- Center sponsor

### Nearby

- Local Partnership
- Churches
- Businesses

### Broader

- Botanical gardens
- Civic clubs
- Schools



## OLE Project Core Team

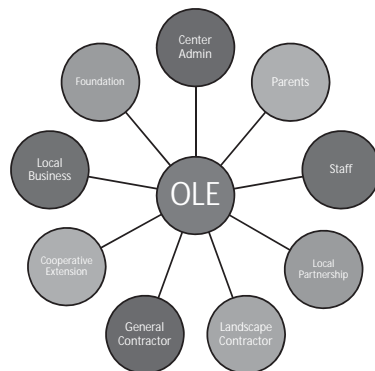
- Administration
- Staff
- Parents
- Advisory Boards
- Local Partnership



## Implementation Team

### Needed resources

- Volunteers
- Landscape contractor
- Plants and Gardening
- Materials
- Local funder
- Publicity
- Business sponsor
- Fundraising



## Volunteer Engagement

### Do ongoing volunteer recruitment

- Parents
- Community individuals
- Community organizations
- Civic groups
- Schools - Community service
- Scout Troops
- Churches
- Corporate employees
- Community college classes



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## Asset Mapping

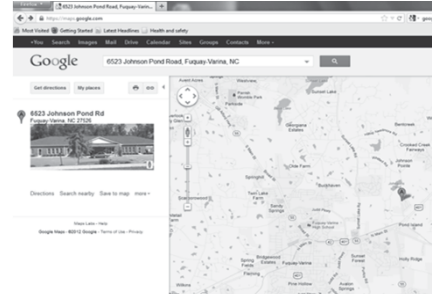
What are the social, material, and financial assets of your community?

Use Asset Mapping to:

- Develop inventory of businesses, organizations, and institutions that help create community.
- Identify local resources that have the potential to provide programs, services, funds, or in-kind gifts.

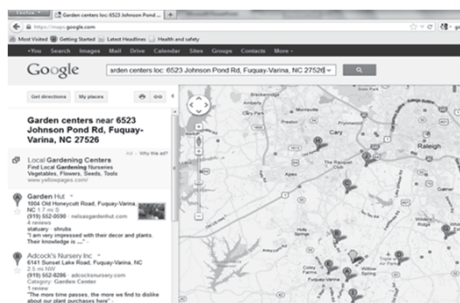
## Web-Based Asset Mapping

1. Start asset mapping by using a Web-based search engine, such as [www.google.com](http://www.google.com).
2. On the top of the page, click Maps to open the mapping application in the Web browser.
3. Type in the center's city and state location in the search field.
4. Click the "Search Maps" button to the right of the search box.



## Web-Based Asset Mapping

5. Once the location is pinpointed on the map; click the link labeled "Search nearby."
6. In the "Search nearby" field, enter a key word related to a potential resource, such as: university, health care, or "garden centers."



## Web-Based Asset Mapping Demonstration

[Google Maps](http://www.google.com/maps)

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### Creating Community Awareness



### Public Awareness - Powerful Messages

- Young Children
- Connecting children to nature
- Early childhood education
- Preventing childhood obesity
- Green environments
- Revitalization in low income areas
- School/Neighborhood development
- Model, demonstration projects



### Project Assessment: Create a Wish List

- What do you want to see in the outdoor learning environment?
  - Center planning
  - Parent-teacher surveys
  - Children's workshop
- What resources do we need?
- Who can provide these resources?



### Sample Wish List

- Additional funding
- Plants
- Building materials
- Construction
- Landscaping equipment and services
- Volunteers for installation
- Ongoing care and management
- Promotion and publicity



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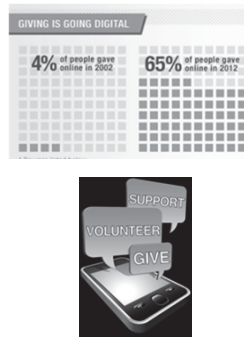
## Use Multiple Approaches

### Traditional Media

- Print
- Radio
- Advertising
- Outreach meetings
- Hosting an event
- Cosponsor an event
- Networking

### Social Media

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Linked-in
- You Tube
- Blogs
- Websites
- Smart phones



## Build Community Awareness

### Center or Nearby Community

- Parent welcome boards
- Agency websites
- Newsletters
- Distribute flyer or brochures

### Broader Community

- Generate local newspaper articles
- Invite speakers to your centers
- Speak to community groups
- Seek sponsorships and publicize
- Sponsor a contest
- Open houses/Ribbon cutting ceremonies
- Join the Chamber of Commerce
- Host community meetings
- Send a letter/package of project materials



## Community Engagement and Fundraising

### Make it Easy to Give

- Ask!
- Develop an Elevator Speech
- Post your Wish List/Giving Tree
- Add Donation button on your website/webpage
- Create on-line fundraising page
- Use Social Networking – Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest
- Share Photos and Videos
- Outreach into the community



## Community Engagement Examples from the Field



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## Community Resources

### Gardening

- Botanical garden, garden clubs
- Nurseries and garden centers
- Landscaping companies
- Farmers
- NC Cooperative Extension

### Services

- Girl and Boy Scout Troops
- Civic clubs such as the Rotary, Kiwanis, Junior League
- Local Partnership
- Local high schools
- Community Colleges

### Health

- Local Hospital
- County Health Department
- Child Care Health Consultant
- Pediatricians

### General

- Parks & Recreation Dept.
- Arts Council or Art Museum
- Chamber of Commerce
- Local Businesses
- Neighborhood associations
- Community Foundation



## One Center's Journey Friendly Avenue Preschool

- Publicity – I am Nature Friendly Kid T Shirts
- Eagle Scouts/4 H Groups – created raised planting beds.
- Pathway - contacted local concrete company that provided materials at cost.
- Installation days – parents and church members
- Facebook Page – photos posted, parents organizing 'Toddler Park Hop' play days at parks.
- Local Farmers - vegetables starts donated to get new garden started.
- Environmental Center – staff training and discount for family days.
- Fundraisers – Cookbooks with healthy recipes, seasonal events.



\*Networking over time really pays off. Not necessarily on the first contact but once they learn more about your project and your level of commitment.\* Sandy Johnson, Director

## Community Support Examples

- Parents and grandparents donated more than 6,500 in cash and donated around 240 hours of volunteer work.
- Our partnership with Warren Wilson College has been tremendous with plantings and garden design.
- The local prison and community college carpentry department are constructing our wooden structures.
- Eat Smart Move More \$2500 grant helped purchase container gardens and plants.
- The boys scout troop assisted us with planting a vegetable garden. They tilled the plot of land, the seeds were donated and we ended up with a wonderful garden and a bountiful harvest.
- Lowes – connections to vendors, discount on arbor, rainbarrels, other materials.

## Keys to Success for Finding Community Resources

- Develop a project plan and wish list
- Create a project team
- Identify community resources
- Initiate outreach
- Promote your project
- Cultivate ongoing support

