



Creating Policy, Systems and Environmental Change: Victorville Success Story and Lessons Learned

Fresh Fruits, Vegetables and Safe Streets - Residents Come Together for Community Change

Intervention Summary

On a warm summer afternoon in August 2014, city officials and residents came together as part of the Communities of Excellence initiative. Residents were seated inside the city hall's meeting room across from City of Victorville officials, staff and other community partners. Residents were there to discuss the changes they thought were necessary to improve access to healthy foods and safe streets

Their first priority, safe streets, led them to find a way to improve a dangerous intersection located at Hesperia Road and Center Street in Victorville. Residents contacted the Victorville city engineer, Anwar Wagdy and expressed their concerns to him about the lack of signage and close calls at that intersection where pedestrians were at risk. Mr. Wagdy's department went out and surveyed the intersection and came to the conclusion that, in fact, there was a need for better signage to warn drivers.

For many months after that first forum, residents continued to advocate for change and go through the proper channels. This resulted in the installation of a bright yellow caution sign, warning drivers of oncoming traffic.

SUCCESS of this priority for residents involved in the Communities of Excellence (CX³) initiative happened because they took action and learned how to advocate through local government channels requiring multiple meetings and advocacy.

Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions

The greatest challenge was to help residents feel empowered to approach city personnel and public officials. For many of the residents, this was the first time they had interfaced directly with them. For many it was the first time they had entered city hall for anything other than paying a utility bill. Residents were educated about how their local government works, what to expect at city council meetings, etc. Most importantly, residents have come to understand that change is a process, that the results of their efforts may take a while to unfold and not to be discouraged.

Helping residents stay the course and follow through to completion is rewarded in the end with a very concrete example, the sign, that residents can point to and say, "I helped make that happen."

Future Directions/Sustainable Success

Residents now feel they can approach city personnel and public officials with any concerns they have. This new found sense of access and partnership will continue to strengthen as they work collaboratively to improve health and safety in neighborhoods throughout the city.

Contact information about this Narrative

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