

Asset Based Community Development

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CORNERS

OUTREACH

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Good things happen when you dispense of deficit based thinking

What is Asset Based Community Development

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) is an approach to thriving community that focuses on assessing the community first, then finding the talents to fulfill the needs in the community. Asset-Based thinking concludes that deficit thinking is a detrimental system which divides communities rather than uniting them. Asset-based thinking says that every person has a talent, and takes an intentional path towards organizing people around their gifts, while acknowledging that people live *here* for a reason, and connects individuals in the community. ABCD also moves people from being clients and passive receivers to co-producers and active creators; a community moves from being provider-led to being citizen-led.

Five keys steps to creating ABCD in community

1. Be aware of your deficit thinking and be intentional about seeing the good in your community.
2. Identify assets in your community through surveys, listening sessions, and one-on-one conversations. Everyone has a gift and can contribute.
3. The ABCD approach looks at three groups: individuals, associations, and institutions.
4. ABCD recognizes that the exchange between people sharing their gifts and assets creates community, and these connections are VITAL to the community. The social relationships, networks, and trust form the social capital of each community.
5. It's essential to engage the wider community as actors (citizens) not just as recipients of services (clients).

Maria's Story

When we launched our Mommy and Me program last fall, Maria* showed up to every session and was eager to learn more about how to help her children. She was also very honest about what she didn't know, which allowed for growth. At the third session, when we were talking about ways to improve your child's reading, Maria shared that she had never read to her kids before. She thought because she couldn't read in English that she shouldn't read to them at all, but we encouraged her to do it. The important thing, we told her, is that you have lots of conversations with broad vocabulary, and reading is a great way to do that. When she came to the next session, she was bursting with excitement. She told us her children adored their new story time, and that they've incorporated it into their daily routine.

*We have changed the main character's name in this story to protect her privacy.

Our Families

Corners has incorporated Asset Based Community Development in two powerful ways. In 2016, Corners surveyed parents at each of our after-school clubs and found that their number one occupation was landscaping. In 2017, Corners launched Corners Industries Lawn Care, and hired parents into better paying jobs. By the end of 2018, Corners Industries hired more than 12 parents, given more than \$20,000 in donations towards our tutoring program (15% of each sale is donated to tutor students in the community), and has become a way for us to advocate for living wage pay for our families.

Too often our families are insulted for not knowing English, or don't feel competent enough to speak English to a native speaker. Many parents in our community have been told that they can't help their child with their education or their future until they learn English (which is completely untrue). In 2018, Corners partnered with the Atlanta Speech School to create a Mommy and Me Program in Spanish. From birth, young children need strong relationships with adults who engage them in conversation (in any language) and celebrate their use of language. The Mommy and Me program helps parents understand that it's the conversations that are important. Being bilingual should be something that is celebrated, not discouraged, as it is – a HUGE asset to the community.

What can you do?

There are 3 paths of investment:

- 1. Volunteer-** We need tutors, mentors and parent workshop volunteers. [Sign up today.](#)
- 2. Become a client** – Landscaping covers normal yard maintenance plus projects like new shrubs, flowers, pine straw, sod, sprinklers, retaining walls, drainage, etc. [Request a quote here.](#)
- 3. Become an investor-** Sign up to be a [Corners Champion](#) that donates monthly or be a [one time investor.](#)