

research in brief

Neighborhood Leadership Workshop

The Neighborhood Leadership Workshop was a 54-hour “learning how to help a group identify and reach a goal,” leadership training program for residents of the Montgomery-Hyde Park area of St. Louis. Twelve 6-week workshops were held between May, 1971, and February, 1973. Each group had 10 to 14 participants who met for 3 hours, 3 evening sessions each week. Over 150 black and white residents, predominately low-income, participated in the program. Each was paid a small stipend to attend.

The workshops were directed toward helping residents recognize issues of public concern and begin the process

toward the desired change. Phase I (6 sessions) of the training helped participants get acquainted, discuss their likes and dislikes in relation to the neighborhood, and learn about public issues facing their area. Phase II involved participation training as described in the Paul Bergevin and John McKinley book, *Participation Training in Adult Education*. In this process, people learn that everyone who contributes to the goal achievement process is considered a leader—"a significant person who is living in a social situation that can only function on the basis of reciprocal relationships."

Six final sessions devoted to problem identification and problem solving comprised Phase III.

So what! For many participants the graduation certificate represented the first education program they'd ever completed. Close to 30 have continued their formal education. Some have earned their GED (General Educational Development) while others have attended community college or a four-year school.

Seven graduates were elected to serve on the board of the Montgomery-Hyde Park NAC (neighborhood action corporation). Six of the seven became involved in the NAC for the first time following the workshops.

About 30 participated in 2 political campaigns in the summer of 1972 trying to unseat candidates in the Missouri House of Representatives who didn't live in the area they represented. One campaign successfully unseated a 28-year veteran.

Two graduates were the prime movers in getting the first noncommercial educational radio station in the county approved by the FCC and station KLPH is on the air. Two residents of the area have earned third class radio operators' licenses.

Montgomery-Hyde Park, NAC, Inc., has lost most of its Model Cities support, but most of the NAC's programs have continued on through the strength of trained leaders who volunteer and work together.

Limited resource people can solve community problems if given personal development "participation skills" and an opportunity to understand the public issues in their communities

"Neighborhood Leadership Workshop: A Case Study of Leadership Training in the Inner City of St. Louis." Sam W. Ritchie. *Journal of Community Development Society*, VI (Spring, 1975), 61-70.

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