

Baltimore Social Justice Organizing History Course
Final Class Course Reflection Group Discussion

Thursday, April 21, 2005

INTRODUCTIONS

"Tonight, I am walking away with..."

- A new view / understanding of Baltimore
- Greater ownership of Baltimore
- Greater sense of Baltimore history
- A determination to be involved
- Idea of current events
- Inspiration
- Optimism
- Strategies
- Insight
- Heroes
- An openness to different styles of organizing
- Community spirit
- Mixed feelings
- A sense of responsibility
- Some overwhelmed-ness
- Learning experience / learning community
- Seeing each other differently
- Resources
- Amazing people to contact
- Telling others
- Hope for Baltimore
- Personal stories
- Admiration for the risk-takers
- The power of a diverse group
- Organizing techniques
- Connectedness to history, each other, and the future
- Local focus
- Filling a need
- Where I fit in
- Creativity
- Direct knowledge of others' personal stories
- Feeling small groups can change things
- Things will change as long as you fight
- Success
- Renewed possibilities and desire
- A feeling of rubber hitting the road
- G.A.C.

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CHALLENGES

- Group work was difficult as first, easier towards the end
- Time to interact with the presenters and experience the exercises
- Hard topic to teach/learn once a week
- How does it fit in to organizer training? Is it better for more experienced folk?
- Speaking up and participating
- Applying it to the work
- Keeping track of all the information
- At times there were too many presenters – need to wake myself up
- Scheduling time to be here
- Fatigue (mental and physical)
- Evaluations are difficult to complete at the end of each session
- Creating class community

SUGGESTIONS

- Saturday classes
- Website to house information / summarize activities to retain what happened
- Fewer presenters at a time
- Summary email sent for each class
- Binders to keep at home and track course material
- Add participants' current work into class exercises
- Longer course (more than 8 weeks)
- Split presenters and class exercises into two separate classes
- To create class community: nametags, participant bios, list of associated organizations, show and tell for participants at the first class, more time to interact with each other
- More visuals

KEEPING THE MOVEMENT GOING...

- ✓ Telling the story of / for each other people to take charge (each one reach one)
- ✓ Develop a community relationship with JHU Hospital
- ✓ Maintain the vibe
- ✓ Identify who can make the difference
- ✓ Need for organizer training in Baltimore
- ✓ Add to the community development curriculum (at Sojourner)
- ✓ Stamp out elitism in organizing culture (image)
- ✓ Organizing groups can be committed to dismantling racism/sexism/classism
- ✓ Need strategy consultants and mentoring programs available
- ✓ Satellite sites for the course
- ✓ Link to Sojourner's plan for the college and the community

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- ✓ Healing can happen
- ✓ Keep sharing (image of wheel & spokes with this class at its center)
- ✓ Retreat in 3 months to problem solve and add to the course curriculum
- ✓ The cauldron is bubbling over (image)