17 Neighborhood Activities That Lead to Building a Neighborhood Culture

The Stewards of the Asset-Based Community Development Institute indicated that the development of a neighborhood culture is the new frontier for ABCD work. The following list is a result of their understanding of culture building activities that reach beyond the implementation of programs. The activities below do not each stand alone. They are the threads that together create a community fabric from which a culture will emerge.

What do your neighbors do together that creates an enduring culture?

1. Recognizing Significant Life Events
   A. When someone dies? How does the block join in mourning and memorializing the person and their neighborhood contributions?
   B. When a baby is born into the neighborhood? How does the block join in recognizing and celebrating?

2. Raising Children
   A. How do families in the neighborhood play together? (Street games, organized sports, music, dance, barbecues, etc.)
   B. How do you identify and use the capacities and abilities of neighborhood young people?
   C. When children graduate from elementary, high school or college?
   D. What does the neighborhood do to facilitate young people learning from the knowledge of the adult residents?

3. Helping Your Neighbors
   A. How do the neighbors encourage a tradition of local sharing? (Sharing food, equipment, child support, advice etc.)
   B. To grow food locally?

4. Using Special Skills and Capacities of Neighbors
   A. How does the neighborhood identify the capacities that each neighbor has to contribute to neighborhood improvement?
   B. How do you identify and involve the connectors on your block?
5. **Strengthening the Neighborhood**
   A. What do the neighbors do together for fun?
   B. What are the activities that have increased neighbors’ sense of community and experience of belonging?

6. **Creating a Neighborhood Identity**
   A. How did your neighbors identify the geographic space that they feel is the boundary where they are responsible for the well-being of people who live there?
   B. How have your neighbors developed a tradition of greeting and talking to each other when meeting on the street or across yards?

7. **Insuring Inclusiveness**
   A. How does your neighborhood welcome new people?
   B. How has your neighborhood found ways to recognize and celebrate the differences among themselves? (Race, ethnicity, nationality, identity, gender, orientation etc.).
   C. How do new neighbors learn about the community culture and how they can participate?