

Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) Project  
6 page Project Overview (1,916 words)

A proposal for new section in small to mid-sized town newspapers

Introduction

The Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) Project advocates for a new section in newspapers associated with small and mid-sized towns. The new section (NTNCE section) would be used to highlight and accumulate stories, personal experiences, and other forms of reader contributions which identify helpful people and valuable resources, and reinforce important community goals.

The NTNCE Project is an example of community service work which can be done by local newspapers, which:

- a) highlights what is valuable and important in everyday community life
- b) encourages positive neighbor to neighbor relations
- c) provides records of community life which can be used by future historians
- d) helps increase consensus for local specific, commonly agreed upon definitions of “the greater good”.

Why is this Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) Project Needed?

We now live in the most complex cultural landscapes ever created on Planet Earth.

Access the search engines on the Internet; Wikipedia; YouTube; Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.); professional networks, etc. on Ning Platforms; iPhones and iPads; television networks; cable networks; newspapers; and radios mean that however carefully schools—and other educational institutions—attend to their social responsibilities, there are countless ways in which unworthy features of our complex world can counteract, rather than reinforce, important educational goals.

It is in such a context—in the most complex cultural landscapes ever created—that the Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) Project suggests there is a profound need for not just schools (and other educational institutions)—but all citizens—to recognize their social responsibilities to identify and reinforce only those cultural “building blocks” which help create and support commonly agreed upon definitions of “the greater good”.

The Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) Project is an invitation to local residents to share positive experiences in a new section of their local newspaper (the NTNCE section) as a way of highlighting and illustrating how even the smallest events of everyday community life can be positive contributions to:

- 1) the education goals of the local public school system
- 2) increasing consensus on a local specific, commonly agreed upon, and revitalized “moral compass”
- 3) the greater good of all residents in the local community and region

Examples of the kind of contributions the NTNCE Project would be seeking

A Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) Project would invite anyone (no age requirement) who is a resident of \_\_\_\_\_ County/community/region to contribute to the \_\_\_\_\_ local newspaper/NTNCE section by:

sharing positive personal experiences; sharing descriptions of places; sharing descriptions of work life; sharing descriptions of people who have been helpful, or organizations which have been helpful; sharing a letter written to someone in another state, or another county, which describes people and events; sharing a journal/diary entry of a day or a week of everyday community life; sharing about a hobby; sharing farm, home, and/or car repair tips; etc.

To further highlighting the positive potential of this NTNCE Project, this project overview also includes some specific suggestions for contributing to a Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education section in a local newspaper. (Note: these suggestions are specific to Callaway County, Missouri.)

Students at Westminster College, William Woods University, and the Missouri School for the Deaf; professors and other instructors at Westminster College, William Woods University, and the Missouri School for the Deaf; local school boards; Students and teachers in public schools; members of local churches and other places of worship; Instructors and participants in the 4-H programs; government officials; residents; staff of the United Way; members of the Callaway Action Network; staff of the Fulton Housing Authority--and recipients of assistance from the Fulton Housing Authority; staff of Central Missouri Community Action (CMCA)--and recipients of assistance from CMCA; staff of the Fulton State Hospital--and recipients of assistance from the Fulton State Hospital; staff of assisted living and nursing home facilities--and recipients of assistance at these facilities; and members of the Fulton Chamber of Commerce—and other chambers of commerce located in Callaway County--

--are encouraged to contribute to the NTNCE section of their local newspaper by sharing stories about positive experiences and valuable local resources.

In addition, all local residents are encouraged to contribute responses to NTNCE Community Survey Questions [such as “what would you like to see in (Ex: Fulton, Mexico, etc) which is not already a part of the community?”]—and to suggest questions which can be used as Community Survey Questions.

What isn't appropriate content for a Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) section of a newspaper

This Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) Project is being offered as a way of highlighting and accumulating records of events in everyday community life which reinforce important community goals. Thus, while problems to be solved, and general personal difficulties which are not too private, will be a necessary part of some contributions, an NTNCE section of a newspaper is not a forum for--

- a) expressing opinions on controversial issues
- b) staff, employee, organizational, business, or family personal relations issues
- c) private/personal grievances
- d) self-promotion for personal or business purposes

In addition, the NTNCE section is--

- a) not a substitute for professional journalism
- b) not for press releases describing organization efforts, events, etc.
- c) and not for contributions, submissions, etc. which belong in other sections of the newspaper

Seeking partnerships with local newspapers in small to mid-sized towns—on a print version only basis

The Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) Project is most interested in partnering with local newspapers in small to mid-sized towns—on a “print version only” basis. The NTNCE Project’s interest in partnering on a “print version only” basis is founded on six important considerations, with the first being: the importance of partnering with an “Official Standard Bearer”.

The Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) Project recognizes the importance of having Official Standard Bearers for civic education, social responsibility, and the development (or revitalization) of a commonly agreed upon “moral compass”—especially in small to mid-sized towns, where it would be best to locate the first pilot projects. The NTNCE Project believes it can best help create—or revitalize—a local specific process for identifying, preserving, and reinforcing cultural “building blocks” which support the “structures of the good life” and “make for a better future society”, if it is collaborating with Official Standard Bearers in the community.

The other five important considerations which influenced the NTNCE Project to seek partnerships with local newspapers in small to mid-size towns—on a “print version only” basis:

- 2) Limiting access (to the NTNCE Project) to people who will be most affected by what is published
- 3) A need to slow down—and more carefully think through—the process of identifying valuable cultural “building blocks”
- 4) People feel more comfortable about disclosing their personal identity in the context of a local newspaper (especially with the print version)—as opposed to the context of a website on the Internet
- 5) Access to the local newspapers’ already established number of subscribers
- 6) Many people still do not use computers regularly, and some people don’t use them at all

Of the six considerations described above, the most important reason for a “print version only” focus is the need to slow down—and more carefully think through—the process of identifying valuable cultural “building blocks”.

There is a tendency, in this world of advanced information technology, to think in terms of faster and faster speeds for the processing and delivery of content. If the NTNCE Project is partnering with the print version of a local newspaper in a small to mid-size town (which is only published once or twice weekly)—the focus on speed can be reined in. And when potential contributors of content (to an NTNCE section) consider that their contribution is only going to appear in print once (in connection with one of the local Official Standard Bearers)—and that it is part of their civic and social responsibilities to make that contribution reinforce important community goals—it is hoped that such considerations would result in:

- a) more carefully thought out contributions
- b) more careful reviewing of the contributions by NTNCE staff
- c) much more careful evaluating—by everyone involved—of the whole process of identifying and reinforcing valuable cultural “building blocks”

No financial compensation for contributing personal experience stories, etc. to the NTNCE section of a local newspaper; however, by “sowing an NTNCE section, citizens can “reap many benefits

While there is no financial compensation for local residents who contribute personal experience stories, etc. to the Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) section of a local newspaper, there is the possibility that many people will see how initial contributions to the section could inspire more and more contributions--

--and thus result in highlighting and accumulating countless numbers of experiences, information, and resources which make positive contributions to important community goals.

Further, it seems possible that many people can understand making such contributions to be a part of the civic and social responsibilities that come with being a part of the community. Thus, rather than confining our definition of civic duty to voting in elections, or to contributing to the service work of one organization (important as such civic duty and community service work is), many people may—as a result of the NTNCE Project—come to the realization that even the smallest events in everyday community life can be positive contributions to:

- 1) the education goals of the local public school system
- 2) increasing consensus on a local specific, commonly agreed upon, and revitalized “moral compass”
- 3) the greater good of all residents in the local community and region

#### Supporting documents for the NTNCE Project

The Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) Project is a part of The Community Peacebuilding and Cultural Sustainability (CPCS) Initiative (at [www.cpcs.co](http://www.cpcs.co) ). Supporting documents for the NTNCE Project are accessible at the [NTNCE Project webpage](#), and include:

- a) a 2 page Press Release (in a “letter to the editor” format) (463 words)
- b) this 6 page Project Overview
- c) a 16 page Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) Project proposal which provides further discussion in the areas outlined above, and has additional sections, including:

“Some of the inspiration for the NTNCE Project” [Countryside Magazine (reader contributions which reinforce a specific philosophy; Reminisce Magazine and Good Old Days Magazine (which both encourage a conversational style in reader contributions); and Community Journals (Ex: in a hostel along the Appalachian Trail)]; “Learning how to contribute a personal experience story, etc. which will be accepted and published in the NTNCE section”; “Possible categories for a NTNCE section in a local newspaper”; “Possible Staff Requirements”; and “Indicators of Success”.

#### “...truths which none can be free to ignore....”

The Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) Project is hoping to find managing editors, publishers, and whole communities who would like to be among the pioneers experimenting with this new approach to the community service role of “newspapers”.

I look forward to having further discussion about how this Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) Project can be adapted to the community service goals of the

\_\_\_\_\_ newspaper, and help increase consensus for local specific, commonly agreed upon definitions of “the greater good”.

“... there are truths which none can be free to ignore, if one is to have that wisdom through which life can become useful. These are the truths concerning the structures of the good life and concerning the factual conditions by which it may be achieved....”<sup>4</sup> [From “General Education in a Free Society” by The Harvard Committee (1945)]

For a Greater Common Good,

Stefan Pasti, Founder and Resource Coordinator  
The Community Peacebuilding and Cultural Sustainability (CPCS) Initiative  
[www.cpcs.co](http://www.cpcs.co)

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The Neighbor to Neighbor Community Education (NTNCE) Project is a part of The Community Peacebuilding and Cultural Sustainability (CPCS) Initiative (at [www.cpcs.co](http://www.cpcs.co)). The CPCS Initiative provides research for critical challenges alerts, and support for collaborative problem solving initiatives which seek to maximize citizen participation.

Stefan Pasti is the founder and resource coordinator for The Community Peacebuilding and Cultural Sustainability (CPCS) Initiative (at [www.cpcs.co](http://www.cpcs.co)).

Mr. Pasti’s most recent critical challenge assessment/solution guides include: [“IPCR Critical Challenge Assessment 2011-2012: Summary Report”](#) (444 pages; January, 2012) [“Invitation Package for Possible Board of Advisors”](#) (589 pages; November, 2013)

During November-December, 2014, Mr. Pasti created key documents for The Recalibrating Our “Moral Compasses” Survey Project, which include a 74 page prospectus, a 13 page overview, and a 5 page “Project Overview and Invitation to Collaborate”. Those key documents are accessible at the [ROMC Survey Project webpage](#), on The Community Peacebuilding and Cultural Sustainability (CPCS) Initiative website (at [www.cpcs.co](http://www.cpcs.co)).