

Ending Health Disparities Through Community Empowerment

by
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GOAL: To improve the living conditions and health of people in the community

OBJECTIVES:

- Safe, clean, beautiful, and healthy community.
- Better education and job training for our children.
- Increase business and job opportunities in the community.
- Empower people by emphasizing faith, love, respect, unity, self-help, collective work, responsibility and accountability in the home and community

PRINCIPLES:

- All humans should treat each other with love, honesty and respect regardless of race, color, class, culture, gender or age.
- All humans have rights which include life, freedom, justice, self-expression, religion, education, pursuit of happiness and equal opportunity & protection under the law.
- All communities should have schools, churches, businesses, and cultural institutions that meet the needs of the people.
- People make homes, and homes make communities; therefore, the improvement of the community begins with each person in the home.
- Home is the basic unit of the community; therefore, faith, love, honesty, respect, responsibility, unity, education, and work should first occur in the home.

INVOLVEMENT: Anyone who is sincerely interested in improving the living conditions within the community can get involved in community empowerment.

AREAS OF INVOLVEMENT:

1. POLITICAL:

- Register to vote
- Vote
- Seek political office
- Promote public policy

2. ECONOMIC:

- Earn, save, invest and spend money wisely.
- Pool resources and open businesses within the community.
- Provide quality goods and services
- Support businesses that provide quality goods and services in the community.
- Inform people of business and employment opportunities in the community.

3. EDUCATION:

- Emphasize the importance of education
- Inform people about educational opportunities, events and activities
- Coordinate and organize educational events and activities
- Get involved with the school system such as attending PTA/School Board meetings, and becoming a school board member
- Establish "Saturday school" programs, mentoring programs, tutorial programs, adult literacy programs and other educational programs
- Encourage parents to get involved and concerned with the education of their children.
- Encourage parents to send their children to school and visit the school to see what their children are doing in school.
- Encourage young people to do well in school and go to college or trade school.

4. SOCIAL & CULTURAL:

- Get involved in the arts, music, drama, dance, poetry, literature, history, religion, and other cultural activities which help us grow spiritually and mentally.
- Promote the positive aspects of the community's culture, heritage, and history.
- Organize and coordinate all the social & cultural programs
- Encourage people to value and appreciate their family, community, culture, and heritage.
- Develop programs to address problems in the community such as crime, violence, gangs and substance use.

5. HEALTH:

- Organize and coordinate health and total wellness programs to educate people about health issues and address health needs of the community
- Promote health and total wellness by exercising, eating healthy foods, managing stress, and having faith.

6. FAITH:

- Have faith
- Read the Sacred or Holy Books of your faith
- Practice the teachings of your faith
- Pray, meditate, sing, and participate in sacred rituals of your faith
- Display love, joy, peace, faithfulness, kindness, liberty, and self-control

SUMMARY: THE PATHWAY TO COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

I + S + E + P = COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

I – Intellectual Transformation

- Acquisition of knowledge and skills (education)
- Enhanced awareness and consciousness
- Commitment and willingness to change
- Positive thinking
- Love and respect for self and others, and one's culture, and heritage

S- Social Change

- Changing attitudes, values, practices, norms, and culture
- Establishing positive, productive, and healthy personal relationships
- Developing social cohesiveness, unity and cooperation
- Engaging in collective work and responsibility

E- Economic Empowerment

- Working productively
- Earning, saving, and investing money
- Spending and consuming wisely
- Developing businesses and creating jobs
- Pooling resources and forming coalitions

P- Political Engagement

- Becoming organized, forming coalitions and getting involved
- Influencing public policy and legislation
- Voting and seeking public office
- Advocating, lobbying, promoting and protecting one's interest

The concepts of "ISEP" should be practiced on multiple levels: individual, family, community, city, county, state, and nation. Unless we individually and collectively practice the concepts of "ISEP", no significant changes in health disparities will occur.

CONCLUSION: We must come to realize that the change that we desire begins within, within our minds, hearts, families, neighborhoods and communities. We must realize that we have the power to bring about change if we have the will to do so. Others may help, but only we can liberate ourselves from the disparities in education, income, wealth, and health.

We can begin ending these disparities by practicing the concepts of “ISEP” and getting involved in community empowerment. Lessons from our country’s history teach us that change never occurs without struggle, sacrifice, and service. The questions that we must all ask, and answer are:

What struggle am I willing to engage in?

What sacrifice am I willing to make?

What service am I willing to provide?