

## Savannah's story of community empowerment: Nice Video on Asset-Based Community Development in Action

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While Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) has been around awhile, I think the stories that illustrate the concepts and structure are very important.

I just ran across this nice video from Savannah's experience with two neighborhoods.

<https://youtu.be/6rbRAQLbeRM>

In under twelve minutes, the story covers from the 1970s to today: the decline and revitalization of two neighborhoods. Most importantly the story is mainly about the members of two neighborhoods in Savannah, with less attention to what city employees did or did not do.

Up through the 1990s, there was crime and disinvestment. Then a turn around through many, tough steps which built, or re-built social capital and neighborhood leadership.

A few key points:

- City officials: Listen and engage.
- Residents had a responsibility to each other to lead the change. “It shouldn’t be the city who solves it. It should be the people who live here who should solve it.”
- City’s role changed: from “providing services” to “recruiting, supporting and creating

community leaders.” Respect and include leaders from various situations.

A city government effort: “Grant for Blocks” - small grants of up to \$500 for any initiative which would benefit the community. As I judge the outcomes, I see community pride and self-direction as the greatest accomplishments.

This theme of community rebuilding and self-help is a key strand of the CELE blog. A few examples:

- [Housing Builds a Healthy Economy](#)
- [What Barn Raising Looks Like in Petaluma, California](#)
- [Housing Matters: School and Family Stability and Greensboro's Housing Our Community Initiative](#)
- [Resilient Eastside: Do With Us, Not For Us](#)
- [The Power of Small](#)

A little searching found a related resource - a nice, free, preview of a useful written resource, covering five communities (including Savannah, GA and Asheville, NC):

<http://www.inclusion.com/abcdforward.pdf>

And this [overview of a video](#) that is available for order from Inclusion Press (from their website):

ABCD in Action profiles five diverse groups who have utilized the principles of ABCD to create partnerships with those they serve and in effect, rejuvenate and revitalize their organizations.

Included are profiles from:

- Neighborhood associations in Savannah, Georgia
- Beyond Welfare, an organization supporting people in poverty in Ames, Iowa
- The Archdiocese of Upper Michigan in Marquette, Michigan
- Lakes Region Community Services Council, supporting people with disabilities in New Hampshire
- Neighborhood Housing Services, an organization providing affordable housing opportunities in Asheville, North Carolina.

Plus extensive interviews and commentaries by Mike Green, Henry Moore and John McKnight