

Guides Share Their Learnings

Affectionately known as our "Guides on the Side," Bill Little, Mike Mansfield and Alicia Chalmers have spent the past 18 months supporting Harwood-trained Public Innovators in Manatee, Sarasota, DeSoto and Charlotte counties as these Teams learn what people aspire and hope for in their communities in order to bring about positive change. As we all know, change must first begin with us, so our Guides share what they have learned on this amazing journey.



Bill Little
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In reflecting on what I have learned from my experiences with the Harwood practice during the past 18 months, I'd like to share the following:

First, the Harwood approach validates lessons I learned during the past twenty years of engaging community and the importance of listening to others, giving them opportunity to be involved, validating and acknowledging their concerns, dreams and hopes.

Second, I like that community conversations begin with identifying aspirations which in turn can provide the foundation for finding common ground and common purpose that will unify an effort.

Third, I see the value of a shared experience among participants and the bond that can create, as well as the value of creating and infusing a shared language that facilitates and supports community change: aspirations, community conversations, innovation space, community rhythms, to list a few new words.

Finally, community change is about building relationships and setting a pace that doesn't sacrifice building a foundation for change at the cost of a hurried and harried implementation of a project. Debra Jacob's admonition to "SMALLIFY" and to find and celebrate little successes on the path to major accomplishments continues to be good advice.

Mike Mansfield

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I have enjoyed learning and implementing the community engagement model of The Harwood Institute. It has changed me both personally and professionally.

Personally, it has helped me with my family and my personal relationships. I find myself turning toward others for their opinions before making decisions. This has been very well received and welcomed.

Professionally, I find myself turning outward, past our organization for advice and answers. How are we doing? Who can we help? How can we better serve our community? These are all questions we typically answered internally.

I have found it to be much more beneficial to our organization to look outside -- "Turn Outward" -- for feedback, thus having a more diverse look at solving difficult issues. People feel more connected to your organization and that they have a say and a stake in the game. This has been transformational in our organization.



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The Harwood practice has impacted how I do things in my everyday life in many ways.

One way is to focus on listening to others and their respective aspirations as an individual and a member of the community.

Listening is truly an art that requires practice and discipline by the listener while not thinking and planning for a reply. Part of THE (or you could say MY) problem as an extreme extrovert is talking when I should be listening and not arriving with or assuming the answer. This is in order to be more turned outward.

The Harwood practice can be used anywhere and anytime and I practice it in all areas of my life including with my family, which ranges from young children to my octogenarian parents.

I also find that community conversations are such a useful practice to gain public knowledge and to truly understand community aspirations that I have brought it to my volunteer endeavors, including church committees and nonprofit boards. It is a process that takes intentional practice, but I have gained more understanding of others and myself.

WORD!

Keeping up with Harwood ...

There is a growing desire to figure out how communities can marshal their collective talents, assets and people to address tough challenges.

But how does such change happen – and spread? What's in play? And how can one be intentional in their efforts to help bring it about?

This is what [The Harwood Institute](#), with support from the Kettering Foundation, sought to answer in the report [The Ripple Effect: How Change Spreads in Communities](#).

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Blogosphere

Check it out ...

The [Aspirations to Actions Initiative blog](#) has a new posting by Ann Hardy of the Sarasota County Library System.

["How libraries factor into community well-being"](#). It leads into a video recorded during a workshop on Harwood methods and sponsored by the Tampa Bay Library Consortium.

Quote of the Day

A special quote by Dean Jackson and shared by Alicia Chalmers ...

"Listening is an art that requires attention over talent, spirit over ego, others over self."

Save the Dates

Upcoming Innovation Space Learning Sessions at Goodwill Manasota

Session #3 -Tues., March 8
- 8:45AM - 12:30PM

Session #4 -Mon., April 25 -
8:45AM - 12:30PM

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