

We Are Alive and Well in Greeley, Colorado

by Rick Hartman

Just wanted to let you know some things that were happening here in Greeley. I am just about to finish up our eighth class, this is the first one in the revised format and we enjoyed and struggled a little bit with the revisions. Part of it was just adapting to change. I'll go into that more when we complete next week. Part of it was time factor. I struggled on the first three modules with this class in the ability to just facilitate and still guide them through all the information. One thing I noticed was in preparing a presentation about Getting Ahead the website said 20 sessions and the facilitator notes show 18 with orientation and post Ga. It looks like I will run 20 sessions with Post GA and the orientation.

The biggest reason I am writing is to share a couple of success stories.

I didn't realize it but I am constantly emphasizing "getting folks at the table" as we are going through the modules. In Module 3 I prepared cards for the income levels and had the class line up with the different cards. We were limited on room but I had the different quintiles move according to the chart on page 79 of the facilitator notes. When the highest quintile had to move 10 steps she ran into the door of the room at about 5 steps. I had her open the door so she could go out into the hallway and the door shut behind her. This created an opportunity to ask the class "does Linda know what we are saying now? Does she know what is going on in this room? I asked them all to laugh real loud and then asked Linda to come back into the room. I asked Linda if she knew what was going on in the room and she said no. I asked her what she thought we were doing and she said maybe making fun of her while she was out there. I stated again this is why we have to get folks in the same room and "at the same table" from poverty, middle, and wealthy classes.

One of the ladies then challenged me to "you keep talking about the doggone table, Rick, where is the fricking table?"

I thought that was a wonderful question and used it through this class as different individual stories came from the group.

Through another connection that developed through our presentations to the community on Bridges Out of Poverty I got a call from a local agency that wanted to train people that had been in the system to receive training on a Family Advocacy program a collaboration was starting. Through the stories one of the ladies had shared her experiences and we recommended her. She was selected, trained for three days and is now one of thirty-four state certified Family Advocates in the state of Colorado.

Jennifer came back to the class (we had to make up 2 sessions one on one) lifted up and enthused. She spoke to the class and told what she would be doing and how that "bridging thing" really worked. She has folks that are going to go to hearings with her from local agencies and she will be helping families in

her situation. She "got at the table"!!!! This all came as we were just getting into Module 9 and and prompted quite a discussion on a review of page 188.

Next story and I'll cut it shorter. We have done about 5 county wide presentation on Bridges Out of Poverty. **R.I.S.E.** (Relief, Independence, Stability, Education) a local faith based organization has been sponsoring the local Getting Ahead classes since we were certified. A collaboration of agencies here in Weld county are now forming a **Community Corps** to go into neighborhoods to help inform the population on the resources we **do** have in Weld county. One of the end results will be a recommendation for the folks to attend Getting Ahead classes. **R.I.S.E.** is also sponsoring a voluntary monthly meeting of the GA graduates to just to get together, collaborate and bring together other resources that the graduates feel will help them. They have called this "Steps Beyond".

RICK HARTMAN

WE CANNOT DO WHAT GOD DOES

HE WILL NOT DO WHAT WE CAN