INFORMING, CONNECTING AND INVOLVING ORLANDO CITIZENS

The Neighborhood Relations team assists neighborhood organizations and residents in effectively accessing and using City services and other community resources. Our team organizes, supports, mentors and guides citizens and neighborhood organizations in their efforts to make and keep their neighborhood a great place to live, work, and play. Connecting citizens to City resources, leadership and volunteer training and technical assistance for associations are our primary services.

HOW WE DO IT

**CITY NEWS:** Neighborhood Happenings Section in the Mayor’s e-newsletter, City News, the Neighborhood Relations team produces the Neighborhood Happenings section.

**RESOURCE GUIDES:** Provides brief descriptions of City departments, programs and services.

**NEIGHBORHOOD CHAMPION AWARD:** Mayor Dyer created this award to recognize the contributions that neighborhood volunteers make to improve the quality of life in our City. Nominations for this award may be submitted throughout the year. The award is presented at the annual Neighborhood and Community Summit.

**MAYOR’S SPEAKERS BUREAU:** The Mayor’s Speakers Bureau is used to keep citizens informed, engaged and knowledgeable about their City government. If you need a speaker for an association or civic meeting, call the Neighborhood Relations team at 407.246.2169. The Neighborhood Relations team manages speaking requests.
NEIGHBORHOOD RELATIONS WEBPAGE: The Neighborhood Relations team has an updated webpage with more resources and links for residents. Visit cityoforlando.net, Office of Communications and Neighborhood Relations and click on the Neighborhoods tab.

NEIGHBORHOOD LEADERSHIP TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

OCNR YEAR-ROUND TRAINING: Training dates, times and locations are flexible to meet the individual needs of the association and their boards. Examples of trainings:

- Organizing a Neighborhood Association
- Nuts & Bolts to Maintaining a Neighborhood Organization
- Board of Director Roles & Responsibilities
- Setting Goals & Objectives
- Getting Things Done Through Volunteers & Committees
- Running Meetings & Parliamentary Procedures
- Project Management & Special Events
- Problem Solving & Conflict Resolution

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS WORKSHOPS: The Community Connections Workshops are offered in partnership with Orange County. The workshops are designed to inform, connect and involve citizens and feature a variety of topics of interest to neighborhood organizations and residents. They are also a great opportunity for neighborhood leaders to interact and learn from one another. They are held the second Saturday of every month from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. at the Orange County Internal Operations Center.

MAYOR DYER’S NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY SUMMIT: The Neighborhood and Community Summit, held every spring, brings together neighborhood, arts & cultural, civic, community and faith-based leaders and volunteers to share information on community building and civic engagement. It also provides an opportunity to learn more about City programs, initiatives and resources that will help guide neighborhood and community organizations towards making a greater impact in our community. A variety of neighborhood engagement workshops, best practices and networking opportunities are available for attendees.

NEIGHBORHOOD RELATIONS TEAM

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An ice breaker is an activity used to start a conversation or to lighten the mood in a group, meeting, event or activity. Ice breakers help reduce the tension from the daily grind and encourage people to relax, open up, interact with others, laugh and are a great way to start the flow of conversation.

WHAT IS AN ICEBREAKER?

WHY SHOULD A NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION CONSIDER USING AN ICE BREAKER?
An ice breaker is a short and quick activity, lasting anywhere from 5 to 15 minutes depending on the audience size and purpose. A well designed and facilitated ice breaker activity can help get the meeting or activity off to a great start. Consider using an ice breaker when:

■ There are many new people attending the meeting.
■ People need to bond quickly to work towards a common goal.
■ It is a newly formed team or committee.
■ The topics are new or unfamiliar to many people involved.

USING ICE BREAKERS AT THE START OF YOUR MEETING OR ACTIVITY IS A GREAT WAY TO:
■ Create a friendly and relaxed meeting environment.
■ Help neighbors get to know each other.
■ Connect neighbors with each other.
■ Keep neighbors more engaged in the meeting or activity.

THE SECRET OF A SUCCESSFUL ICEBREAKING ACTIVITY IS KEEPING IT SIMPLE:
■ Planning is critical to ensure success.
■ Design the activity with specific objectives in mind.
■ Make sure the activity is appropriate and comfortable for everyone involved.

WHAT IS THE ICE IN AN ICEBREAKER?

When using ice breakers the very first step is determining what you want to accomplish with the activity, think about the “ice” that needs to be broken. Here are just a few examples you may face as a neighborhood leader:

■ Like-minded people coming together - the “ice” may simply reflect the fact that people have not yet met.
■ People of different education and income levels - the “ice” may come from the difference in status between participants.
■ People of different backgrounds, cultures and outlooks - the “ice” may come from people’s perceptions of each other.

(1) The above information is from About.com (2013). What is an Ice Breaker? (Online). Available humanresources.about.com/od/glossaryi/g/what-is-an-ice-breaker.htm (Accessed May 20, 2013)
ICE BREAKERS

IDENTIFYING THE RIGHT ICE BREAKER

Here are some suggestions on when to use ice breakers:

- When participants know each other and you want to warm up and get the discussion flowing comfortably.
- When participants are strangers, an ice breaker is a comfortable, simple way to make introductions, help people start communicating and sharing thoughts and generally, warm up the room.
- When participants don’t know each other but share a mission, an interest or an idea and have a lot in common, an ice breaker warms up the group prior to more serious discussion of the topic.

The key to a successful ice breaker is:

- To make sure it is specifically focused on meeting your objectives.
- It is appropriate for the people involved.

Planning is critical to the success of your ice breaker. Start with answering why you are considering using an ice breaker and what value it will add to your meeting and objectives.

Ice breakers play a significant role in meetings when communication and participant comfort level are important factors. They help you ensure that all attendees are equal participants. They break down the barriers that exist naturally.

Once the “ice” is established, clarify the specific objectives for the ice breaker activity. For example, when meeting to solve a neighborhood issue, the ice breaker objectives may be:

“To establish a productive working environment for today’s meeting with everyone participating.”

USING ICEBREAKERS
INTRODUCTORY ICE BREAKERS

Introductory ice breakers are used to introduce participants to each other and to facilitate conversation.

THE LITTLE KNOWN FACT

Have participants share their name, if they are married, do they have children, what street they live on, how long they have lived in the neighborhood, why did they choose to live in the neighborhood and one little known fact about themselves. This “little known fact” becomes a humanizing element that can help break down differences and encourage future interaction.

TRUE OR FALSE

Have participants introduce themselves and make three or four statements about themselves, one of which is false. Now have the rest of the group vote on which fact is false. As well as getting to know each other as individuals, this icebreaker helps to start interaction within the group.

INTERVIEWS

Have participants pair off. Each person then interviews his or her partner for a set time while paired up. When the group reconvenes, each person introduces their interviewee to the rest of the group.

TYPES OF ICEBREAKERS

PROBLEM SOLVERS

Have participants work in small groups. Create a simple problem scenario for them to work on in a short time. Once the group has analyzed the problem and prepared their feedback, ask each group in turn to present their analysis and solutions to the wider group.

For example: The neighborhood association would like to hold a summer picnic. They have never done so before. How can the association recruit picnic committee members to organize the event?

HELPFUL TIPS

■ Choose a fairly simple scenario where everyone can contribute.
■ The idea is not to solve a real problem but to “warm up” the group for further interaction or problem solving later in the event.
■ The group will also learn each other’s styles of problem-solving and interaction.

TEAM BUILDING ICE BREAKERS

These icebreakers are used to bring together individuals who are in the early stages of team building. This can help the people start working together more cohesively towards shared goals or plans.

BALL CHALLENGE

This exercise creates a simple, timed challenge for the team to help focus on shared goals, and also encourages people to include other people.

Arrange the group in a circle and ask each person to throw the ball across the circle, first announcing his or her own name, and then announcing the name of the person to whom they are throwing the ball (the first few times, each person throws the ball to someone whose name they already know.) When every person in the group has thrown the ball at least once, it’s time to set the challenge – to pass the ball around all group members as quickly as possible. Time the process and then ask the group to beat that timing. As the challenge progresses, the team will improve their process by standing closer together and learning to work as a team.
ICE BREAKERS

TOPIC EXPLORATION ICE BREAKERS
Topic exploration ice breakers can be used to explore the topic at the outset, or perhaps to change pace and re-energize people during the meeting or activity.

WORD ASSOCIATION
This ice breaker helps people explore the area under discussion. Generate a list of words related to the topic of your event or training. For example, in a goal setting workshop, ask participants what words or phrases come to mind relating to “goals”. Participants may suggest: ‘objective,’ aim,’ ‘end,’ ‘target,’ purpose,’ etc. Write all suggestions on the board, perhaps clustering by theme. You can use this opportunity to introduce essential terms and discuss the scope (what’s in and what’s out) of your training or event.

BURNING QUESTIONS
This ice breaker gives each person the opportunity to ask key questions they hope to cover in the event or training. Again you can use this opportunity to discuss key terminology and scope. Be sure to keep the questions and refer back to them as the event progresses and concludes.

BRAINSTORM
Brainstorming can be used as an ice breaker or to re-energize during an event. If people are getting bogged down in the detail during problem solving, for example, you can change pace easily by running a quick-fire brainstorming session. If you are looking for answers to attendance problems, try brainstorming what kind of activities might entice people to attend, rather than focus on why they don’t attend. This can help people think creatively again and gives the group a boost of energy.

When participants are diverse: various ages, ethnic groups, profit and nonprofit organizations, job titles within their organizations and have unknown areas of commonality and shared interests, an ice breaker is essential to get people talking, generate laughter and start with an initial level of warmth within the room.

CITY OF ORLANDO OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND NEIGHBORHOOD RELATIONS

Strengthening Orlando by communicating and promoting City services to residents, neighborhood organizations and employees.

STAY Informed Connected Involved

WHAT WE DO
The Neighborhood Relations team assists neighborhood organizations and residents in effectively accessing and using City services and other community resources.

HOW WE DO IT
Organize and Revitalize Capacity
Build Train and Support Connect and Partner Grow and Sustain

WHY WE DO IT
To enhance the quality of life in Orlando’s neighborhoods.

For more information and training opportunities, visit cityoforlando.net/iLead or call 407.246.2169.