**Community Discovery Project**

# **Mapping Basics:**

Community mapping can tell us a story about the places where we live, work and our spend time. It will help uncover the treasures in our community as well as the areas that need some work. We will go on a scavenger hunt to find the assets (the positive aspects of our community like a park, library, playground or even a mural) as well as the deficits (the problems in our community such as trash, homelessness, and gang activity). It will also help us identify areas that have potential to be great-like an unused or abandoned lot. A finished map can help us match some of our wonderful assets with the areas of need to create meaningful change in our communities.

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# COMMUNITY:

1. A social group of any size whose members reside in a specific locality, share government, and often have a common cultural and historical heritage.

2. A social, religious, occupational, or other group sharing common characteristics or interests.

“i DON’T KNOW WHAT YOUR DESTINY WILL BE, BUT ONE THING I KNOW, THE ONLY ONES AMONG YOU WHO WILL BE REALLY HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO WILL HAVE SOUGHT AND FOUND HOW TO SERVE” – aLBERT sCHWEITZER

**Things to Think About as You Explore Your Community:**

* Where in my community do I feel the safest?
* Where in my community do I feel unsafe?
* Where is my favorite place in my community?
* Are there services, places or people in the community that are helping others?
* Look at the community as if it’s your first time there-what stands out to you? What do you not normally notice in your community when you are walking through it every day?

**Tips for Conducting your Scavenger Hunt:**

* Let people know why you are there (if anyone asks): to observe and learn about your community.
* Stay with your group, and never put yourself in dangerous or compromising situations.
* Take good and complete notes at intervals during your observations (stop in a park or café).
* Read through your Community Scavenger Hunt worksheet before you start walking that you know what to look for and refer back to it often

# **Scavenger Hunt!**

**Make notes when you see examples of any of these. In the notes section, provide a brief description of places that are assets and places that could be problems.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **How Many?** | **Details:** |
| **Public Art and Murals** |  |  |
| **Playground/Park** |  | Who spends time at the park? |
| **Grocery Store** |  | How big? Does it sell fresh produce? |
| **Church/Place to Worship** |  |  |
| **Graffiti** |  |  |
| **Abandon Buildings/ Vacant Lots** |  |  |
| **Trash Cans** |  | Are they being used? |
| **Visible Homelessness** |  |  |
| **Different Nationalities** |  |  |
| **Litter** |  |  |
| **Community Garden** |  | Is it being used? |
| **Schools** |  |  |
| **Restaurants** |  | What kind? |
| **Broken windows/Street lamps** |  |  |
| **Police Presence** |  |  |
| **Public Transportation (bus lines, subway system, etc)** |  |  |
| **Stores and Shops** |  | What do they sell? |

***\*\*Bonus:* Find a service agency (food bank, homeless shelter, non-profit organization, etc) and interview someone who works there *or* grab an informational brochure about this agency.**

**What you should find out about the agency :**

* + What is the name of the site or organization?
  + What does the organization do? What need do they meet?
  + Who do they serve?
  + How many people, generally, do they serve?
  + Can students volunteer at their organization? During the week? On weekends?
  + What work would students do as volunteers?
  + Who should they contact if they are interested in volunteering?

**COMMUNITY INTERVIEWS: Talk to 3 or more people (Each from a different category).**

* A business owner
* Someone who works for a community organization
* Someone who lives in the neighborhood
* Someone over the age of 60 who lives in the neighborhood
* Someone under 17 who lives in the neighborhood
* Someone who has lived in the neighborhood for over 10 years
* Someone who has lived in the neighborhood for less than 2 years
* Someone who moved to the neighborhood from another country
* Police Officer

**Sample Questions:**

What is your name?

How long have you lived or worked in the neighborhood?

What is your favorite thing about this neighborhood?

What is one thing you would like to change?

What would you tell people who wanted to move to this neighborhood?

**Person 1:**

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**Person 2:**

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**Person 3:**

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Debrief and Discussion

Have students share out or break into small groups for the following discussion prompts: (Another option is to make an inner and outer circle where the circles face each other and the outer group rotates for each question). If you had students walk around in small groups, then mix them up with people from different groups so that they get multiple perspectives.

* The community scavenger hunt made me think about…
* One thing that surprised me during this activity was…
* One thing I learned about my community is…
* Some assets in my community are…
* Some deficits in my community are…

Come back together as a large group and discuss the following:

* Ask students to share out some things they learned about their community.
* Share out their responses to the questions they answered in small groups (see above).
* What are some of the biggest needs they discovered in their community?
* What are some things that are already being done to address those needs?
* What are some things they could do to address those needs/problems?
* How could they get others involved in helping to address those needs?
* How could they make use of the assets in the community?
* What are some *problems* in the community that you KNOW are part of your community that you DIDN’T see today?
* What are some *assets* in the community that you KNOW are part of your community that you DIDN’T see today?