

Community Building Tool Packet:

**Community Asset
Mapping Workbook**



Community Legacy Program
of Our United Villages

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INTRODUCTION

About the Community Legacy Program

When everyone is seen as having value, with a role and purpose in community; when they share ownership for what happens within it, a culture of equity can be created.

The Community Legacy Program of Our United Villages recognizes and promotes that every person can make a positive difference for the benefit of all. Our Sharing Ideas events and Legacy Stories provide a platform for increasing awareness about how people are actively engaged in strengthening the social fabric of their community. We provide free tools and resources to assist people who seek pathways for achieving more vibrant, resilient and equitable communities.

Note: In 2002, Our United Villages launched Community Outreach to serve as a free resource for those who see value in each other. In 2013, Community Outreach evolved into the Community Legacy Program of Our United Villages. This tool packet refers to both Community Outreach and the Community Legacy Program.

How to Use this Tool Packet

This Community Building Tool Packet is based on Our United Villages' observations, practices and research engaging with Portland communities since 1997. We have respectfully included citations where our practices were influenced by the models and materials of others.

We recognize that the ways in which to build community are vast and varied, and recommend that you choose an approach in alignment with your neighborhood or community vision. Our Community Legacy Tool Packets are designed to be "given away," so we encourage you to take from them whatever is useful for achieving your goals.

Consider contacting us to schedule a free Idea Development Session if you have questions about this Tool Packet, or want feedback on how best to implement them into your plan.

If you have suggestions or stories to share for the enhancement of this Tool Packet, please contact us. Your feedback will be welcomed and appreciated.

ASSET MAPPING OVERVIEW

Purpose

Community Asset Mapping refers to the process of creating an inventory of the skills, talents and resources that exist within a community or neighborhood. Identification of assets and skills, possessed by residents, businesses, organizations and institutions, can support neighborhoods in reaching their optimum potential.

Values and Goals of Asset Mapping

Get to the *heart* of community assets:

- Recognize that everyone has skills and talents that are relevant to community well-being.
- Embrace the belief that each time individuals exercise their abilities, the community in which they live is strengthened.
- Envision neighborhoods, communities, as places where capacities of individuals are identified, valued, and moved into action.
- Be respectful and mindful of cultural sensitivities in your approach
- Strive for inclusivity!

Understanding Community Assets

A community asset or resource is anything that improves the quality of a community. Community assets can include:

- Expertise and skills of individuals in the community
- Citizen groups
- Natural and built environments
- Physical spaces in the community (schools, churches, libraries, recreation centers)
- Local businesses and services
- Local institutions and organizations (private, public, nonprofit)

Individual	Institutional	Governmental
Skills Talents Experiences Professional Personal Resources Leadership Networks	Churches Colleges and universities Elderly care facilities Police/Fire departments Hospitals and Clinics Mental health facilities Libraries Schools Transportation	State/City/Local government Federal government agencies Neighborhood Associations Neighborhood Coalitions Military facilities Small business administration State education agency Telecommunications
Organizational	Physical/Land	Culture
Small and large businesses Citizen groups/clubs Community centers Home-based enterprises Radio/TV stations Nonprofit Organizations	Utility Companies Parks and recreational facilities Real estate agencies Waste management facilities Chamber of Commerce	Historic/Arts council groups Councils for cultural affairs Tourism City council Museums/galleries

Adapted: *Connecting to Success: Neighborhood Networks and Asset Mapping Guide*, U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development

What skills are needed to do an Asset Map?

Essential traits for asset mapping:

- A genuine interest in learning about people and environments
- Ability to communicate respectfully with people from diverse backgrounds
- Perseverance
- Desire for discovery, uncovering resources within a community
- Capacity to capture and process information
- Willingness to share what is learned with the community that is mapped

Why use an Asset Map?

The process of asset mapping illuminates connections between people and places; it can foster a greater sense of community pride and ownership; it can build capacity for turning common ideas into positive actions. The knowledge, skills and resource information amassed through *mapping* can inform organizing and facilitating activities on topics that reflect the *pulse of community-thinking*.

There are many reasons that you may decide to do an Asset Map of your community or neighborhood. You may want to develop:

- A *Community Map* to paint a broad picture of community assets
- A *Community Involvement Directory* to showcase activities of formal and informal groups, including ways to get involved in their efforts
- A *Neighborhood Business Directory* listing neighborhood businesses and services
- An *Individual Asset Bank* featuring the gifts, talents, interests, and resources of individuals

In addition, you may want to create inventories or maps based on interests or specific topics. For example, you may decide to put together an inventory of:

- **Transportation:** public transportation stops, bike routes, flex car sites, carpooling opportunities, taxi services
- **Child care:** individuals who provide childcare, are interested in swapping child care or collaborating on play dates
- **Open Spaces:** meeting spaces, parks, playgrounds, walking paths
- **Food:** community gardens, individual/family gardens, fruit trees, urban edibles, farmers markets
- **Emergency Preparedness:** water lines, gas lines, trucks, cell phones, ladders, fire extinguishers
- **Local Economy:** goods and services provided by individuals within the community
- **Bartering:** skills and stuff that neighbors are willing to barter for and share with other neighbors

Structure your map to fit the needs of your project, neighborhood or community.

THE ASSET MAPPING PROCESS

Identifying and mapping assets in your neighborhood or community can be as simple or as in-depth as you like. While each asset mapping project will ultimately involve different steps and outcomes, there are several key elements to consider in the development of your project:

- **Identify and involve partners**
- **Define your community or neighborhood boundaries**
- **Define the purpose**
- **Determine what types of assets to include**
- **Identify the methods**
- **Report back**

Identify and involve partners

Depending on the scope of your asset map, you may want to explore potential partners for involvement based on shared interest. Involve key people who have a stake in the process and/or outcome of your asset mapping project. Engage enough people in your project to strengthen capacity for a successful outcome.

Define your community or neighborhood boundaries

Determine the boundaries that your project will include. Are you developing an asset map of your street, block, neighborhood or wider community? Are you creating a map based on specific interests or topics (i.e. transit options, parks, restaurants, dog parks)?

Define the purpose

Ask yourself, or group, what you hope to achieve by carrying out an asset mapping project. Identifying your specific goal will aid in setting objectives and formatting processes to accomplish positive results. Kretzmann and McKnight (1997) advise that you or your group answer the following question:

How will the skills and capacities of local people be translated into meeting community-building goals?

Determine what types of assets to include

People

People are the central source of wealth for the community. Learn about each person through one-to-one interviews or Community Conversations. Make sure interview questions, whether conducted in person or in writing, are relevant and appropriate, based on your identified goal. Determine how you will document what you discover.

Possibilities you might explore:

- What is important to you?
- What does “community” mean to you?
- What are your hobbies or interests?
- In what ways have you been involved in the community?
- In what ways do you want to be involved in the community?
- What would you like to see in your community that doesn’t exist now? What hopes and dreams to you have for your community?
- Who do you consider to be neighborhood historians?
- Who has lived in the neighborhood the longest period of time?
- What skills, talents, resources, materials, or supplies do you have that you would be willing to share with neighbors or put towards a community effort?
- What, if any, associations or networks are you a part of?
- What, if any, associations or networks would you like to be a part of or help to form?
- Is there anything in particular that you need?
- What positive activities already happening in your community would you like to see more of?
- What is the best way to contact you?

While learning about the individuals, you will begin to see how people are interconnected. You will also learn about the informal groups that exist within a community. Voluntary associations are groups of people who know each other fairly well, work together, and have a shared interest; they are a community asset that can be easily mobilized into action.

There are many types of voluntary associations between people:

- **Interests:** art, music, sports, health, gardening, hiking, writing, books, politics
- **Work or Career:** networking, unions, business associations
- **Community Involvement:** civic engagement, volunteering, fundraising,
- **Age:** children, youth, adults, elders
- **Geography:** neighborhood associations, block watches
- **Spirituality or Faith:** congregations, study groups, choirs
- **Support:** parenting group, self-help group, support groups

Organizations

Learn about the organizations that exist within your community. With each one, think about what possibilities exist within the organization, and beyond their intended purpose(s). For example, think beyond a church in your neighborhood being solely a place of worship; think about it also as a meeting space, a resource for parking, kitchen use, storage, copy machine, tables and chairs. A restaurant within your neighborhood might extend its use beyond a place to eat; it may also offer space for community gatherings; it might present opportunities for employment, internships; it may grant donations of food for project activities.

On your exploration of organizations, seek to discover:

- What organizations exist within the community?
- What are the purpose, intent, mission, and goal(s) of the organizations?
- Who works with those organizations?
- What role would you like the organizations within your community to play?
- What goals, services, or projects do you hope for within these organizations?

Intentionally seek out: churches, colleges, universities, elderly care facilities, fire departments, hospitals, clinics, mental health facilities, libraries, police department, schools, utilities, community centers, radio or TV stations, small businesses, large businesses, social services, government agencies, home-based enterprises, non-profit organizations, religiously-affiliated organizations, grocery stores, markets, and/or restaurants.

Environment

Learn about the natural and built environment you live in. Explore air quality, water safety, trees, landscaping, agriculture, plant and animal life, energy resources, forests, lakes, ponds, streams, rivers, minerals, natural landmarks, parks, recreation areas, vacant land, recycling, compost, and waste resources. A built environment includes buildings, bridges, sidewalks, street lights, roads, gardens, playgrounds, sculptures, historical landmarks and more.

- What natural elements exist within the community?
- Where are the open spaces?
- How is land currently used? How would you like to see the land used?
- What buildings or structures exist within the community?
- How are those buildings or structures being used?

Local Economy

Learn about how money is earned, spent, and invested within your community. You might explore: income, occupations, methods for exchange and bartering, major industries and services, community wealth, untapped economic resources, access to goods and services, and circulation of money.

- How is money spent on a regular basis in the community?
- In what ways does money remain local and in what ways does it leave the community?
- What forces outside the community influence its economic health?
- What ideas do you have to enhance the economic vitality of the community?

Culture and Spirituality

Culture is the socially transmitted knowledge and behavior shared by some group of people (Peoples & Bailey). A community's culture binds people together and affirms their identity. Learn about the culture, customs, traditions, and way of life of a community.

Examples of questions you might explore:

- Who lives in the neighborhood or community?
- What is the history of the community?
- How is history preserved, celebrated, and honored?
- What forms of art and music exist?
- How are community customs, traditions and identity preserved?
- How is culture transmitted to younger or newer community members?
- What forms of culture exist beyond the surface of casual observation?
- What languages are spoken? How is language used to affirm culture?
- What different forms of spirituality are present and expressed in the community?
- How are community members' spiritual beliefs and practice connected to community life?

Information, Knowledge & Communication

Equal access to information and communication among its members, are vital to a healthy, vibrant community.

- What schools and training programs exist for the community?
- How are new skills and knowledge developed and shared?
- How do people learn about what is going on in the community?
- How is information technology used and by whom?
- To what extent and for what purposes are community members interested in communicating with one another?

Political Capital

Community life requires a continuous series of decisions on matters that affect its members. Learn about structured processes that establish and enforce policies within in the community.

- How is the community linked to political power?
- What is the formal process for community-based decision-making?
- Who represents leadership within local government?
- How does the community influence political decisions?

Community as a Whole

Get the big picture! Observe how people, places, and systems fit together, how linked together, their skills, talents, and resources can strengthen their community? How are talents and skills recognized and developed?

- How are the people given opportunities to contribute their gifts and talents?
- How do people learn about what is going on in the community?
- How do people with shared interests exchange ideas and information?
- How is new knowledge introduced, taught, or shared?
- What forms of art and music exist?
- How do people within the community define culture? What does it mean to them?
- What cultural values are practiced in everyday life?
- How are cultural differences valued?
- In what ways does the community have the desire and ability to work together?
- What is the level of trust, sense of safety and security within the community?
- What are sources of pride and joy within the community?
- What do people do for fun?
- What natural elements are defining features of the community?
- How do environmental conditions affect human interaction?
- How consistent is access to food, shelter, and clothing?
- What symbolizes the community's history?

Think of all of the systems that impact an individual, family, or community life. Systems include:

- Health care
- Education
- Housing
- Transportation
- Child Care
- Emergency Response
- Faith
- Environment
- Government
- Food
- Financial
- Recreation
- Employment
- Social Services
- Utilities

Consider the three A's:

- Availability = goods and services available in the community
- Affordability = of options made available
- Accessibility = ability to utilize goods and services that are available

Identify Methods

Once you have identified which community assets to include in your project, the next step is to determine how you will collect, record and analyze this information. Depending on which assets you decide to include, you may want to use a single method or a combination of methods:

- One to one interviews
- Calling people on the phone
- Online surveys
- Mail-in surveys
- Group Interviews
- A community event
- Canvassing

Next, determine how you will record the information you receive. Make decisions in advance about the way in which you will organize it. How you organize the information you receive will vary in relation to the size and scope of your mapping project. Be creative! Organize the information into categories or themes, create a spreadsheet or visually display it with post-its or pins on a map of your community or neighborhood. (*See Appendix*)

Lastly, analyze the information you have received and categorized. Ask yourself if you have achieved your initial goal (i.e. *how will the skills and capacities of local people be translated into meeting community-building goals?*) Use your project as a way to identify those assets in your community that are clearly valuable and those that may be underused. Additionally, identify ways that your asset map can be used to develop and build upon new and existing relationships in the community.

General principles for organizing information and assets on a map

- Find a map that contains the boundaries you have selected for your project including the details of your community. The *Office of Neighborhood Involvement* (www.portlandonline.com) is a resource for Portland city and neighborhood maps. Metro Regional Council is another great source (<http://www.metro-region.org/>). Additionally, [Google Maps](#), and [Yahoo Maps](#) can also be used.
- Use different colors of post-its, pins or stickers to identify the different types of assets in your community.
- Identify the categories in which there were numerous skills for individuals (i.e. childcare, arts, and crafts) and list them by this category. List those skills that are unique to specific individuals separately as they may provide special opportunities for developing relationships in the community. For organizations, copy this process.
- When utilizing a map to showcase your findings, include a map legend or key so others can understand the information.

Report Back

Once you have completed your mapping project, it is important to share its findings with the neighborhood or community of focus. The information gathered should be accessible to everyone within your defined boundaries. You may choose to do this by hosting a community presentation, creating a resource directory, showcasing results in neighborhood newsletters, local newspapers or on a website, or mailing a report to every address within the defined boundaries.

Appendix 1: A Community Asset Map

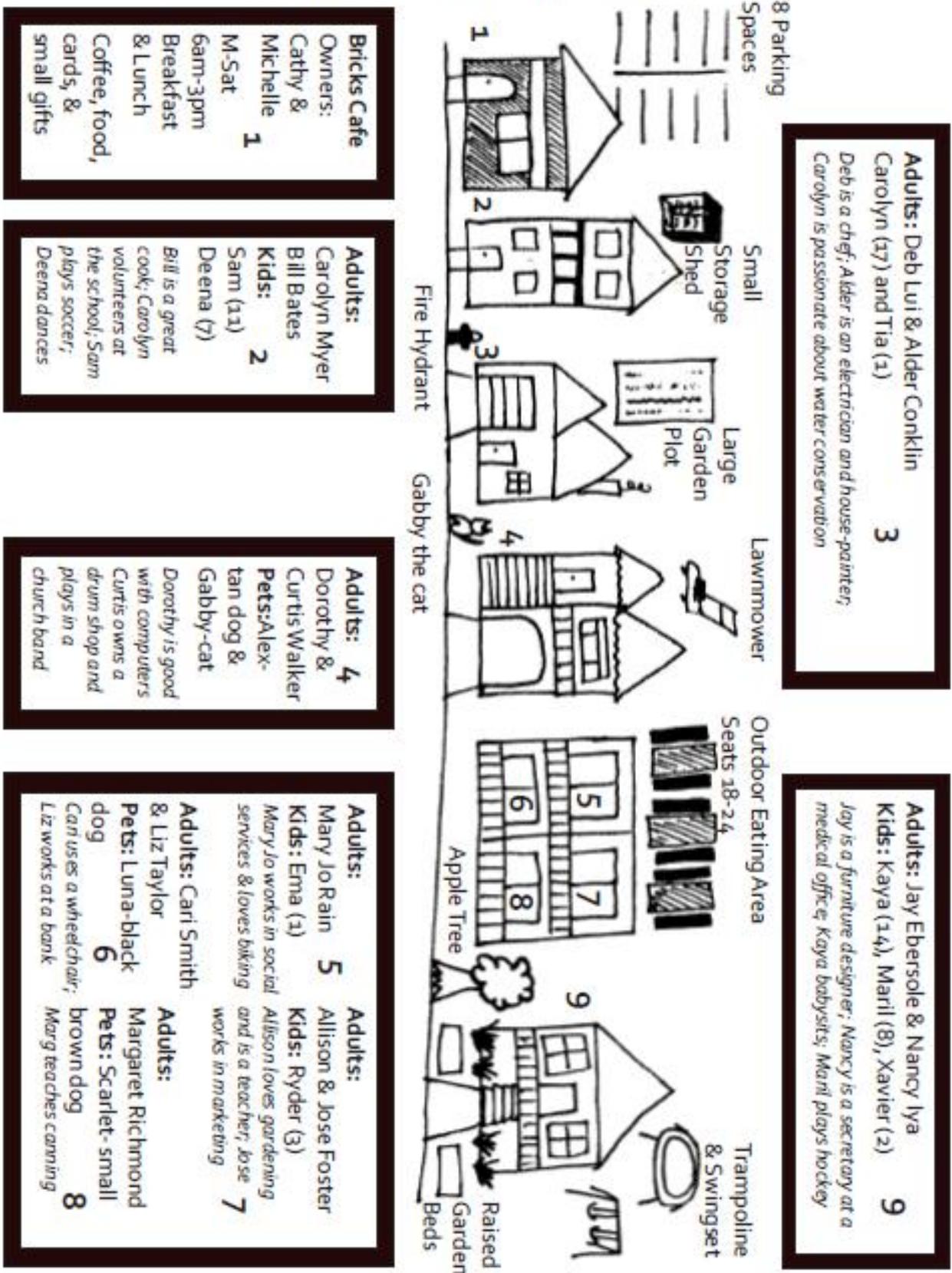
(Healthy-Children-Healthy City Asset Mapping Project at <http://www.healthycity.org/>)



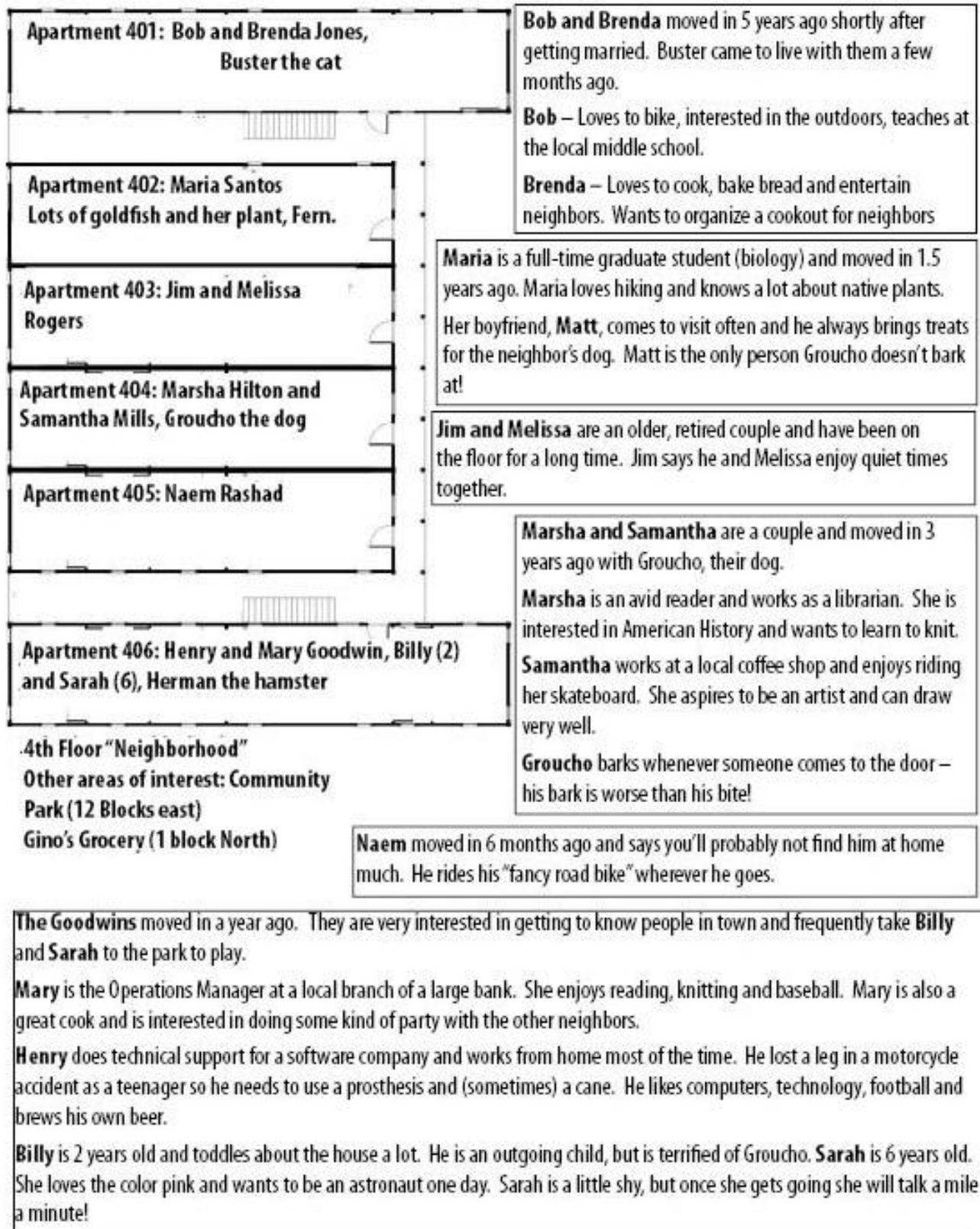
Site Legend

	Basic Needs
	Education
	Health Care
	Mental Health Care and Counseling
	Organizational / Community / International Services

Appendix 2: Asset Map Example - One Street



Appendix 3: Asset Map Example -One Floor of an Apartment



Appendix 4: Asset Based Community Development Example



Asset-Based Community Development Institute
www.abcdinstitute.org

Resources

Community Tool Box

Assessing community needs and resources

http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/en/chapter_1003.htm

Racial Equity Tools

A web site designed to support people and groups working for inclusion, racial equity and social justice.

<http://www.racialequitytools.org/>

Asset-Based Community Development Institute

ABCD resources

<http://www.abcdinstitute.org/>

Data Collection Toolbox

Conducting in-depth conversational interviews

http://www.caps.ucsf.edu/goodquestions/section3/3d_indepth.html

The Capacity Inventory

A guided list of questions to ask individuals by ABCD Institute

<http://www.abcdinstitute.org/docs/abcd/Capacity%20Inventory.pdf>

Vitalizing Community: Building on Assets and Mobilizing for Collective Action

Facilitator's guide

<http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/epubs/U2031/H003-2004.pdf>

Vitalizing Community: Building on Assets and Mobilizing for Collective Action

Community guide

<http://utahreach.org/rp/docs/VitalComm.pdf>

Community Building Initiative

Community Building Initiative (CBI) is a nonprofit organization established in 1997 by government and civic leaders that works to achieve racial and ethnic inclusion and equity in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community.

<http://www.communitybuildinginitiative.org/>