

Reaching out

Wikipedia offers this explanation of outreach.

Outreach is an effort by individuals in an organization to connect its ideas or practices to the efforts of other organizations, groups, specific audiences or the general public.

Outreach often takes on an educational component (i.e., the dissemination of ideas), but it is increasingly common for organizations to conceive of their outreach strategy as a two-way street in which outreach is framed as engagement rather than solely dissemination or education.

Outreach strategies are linked to the organization's mission, and define targets, goals and milestones.

Outreach as a two-way street couldn't be truer for you as neighborhood associations. Your outreach strategy should go hand in hand with your recruitment strategy. When neighborhood associations reach out to their neighbors through tree-plantings, block parties, annual cleanups, newsletters, websites etc., they are perfect opportunities to recruit new members and volunteers.

Always have a way for your neighbors to keep informed at every event. A simple signup sheet asking for just an email is a perfect example. Inform neighbors on how their emails will be used and the frequency of emails.

Present the neighborhood association as an opportunity for skill building. Neighborhood associations are a perfect venue for developing leadership skills, communication skills, writing skills and more. Neighborhood associations are also a place for resume enhancement, career sampling, potential job contacts and an opportunity to showcase skills and expertise.

Four C's of Recruitment

- **Connection-** tie people in, personalize the connection to projects, know your audience, talk with them and listen.
- **Context-** always tell people who you are, about your organization, explain the issue and why it is important to you.
- **Commitment-** tell how and why their participation connects to the project, explain their role and its importance.
- **Catapult-** time line for when it will be done, share the plan of action, the big picture and goals.