Siamese Twins: Community/College Joined Together for Growth

“Where vegetables, flowers & dreams grow”
~ Ken Feske, Chinatown Renewal Project Manager
Salinas, CA: 20 minutes east of Monterey, 2 hours from SF
Chinatown in Salinas: 2 minutes from downtown: Divided by the railroad tracks
Chinatown Neighborhood

- Monterey Bay produce industry: $12 billion annual
- CA Central Coast: 75,000 adults are food insecure (CA Food Policy Advocates, 2005)
- Homeless Census: 2007, Monterey County 3,766 people where homeless
- 48% live in Salinas
• Late 1900’s: Asian immigrant workers
• 1882: Chinese Exclusion Act
• 1943: Exclusion Act repealed
• World War II: Japanese internment
• Mid-1950’s: Thriving neighborhood
• 1960’s: Bars, bordellos, gambling houses & Fort Ord military soldiers
• 1970’s: Downtown district changes “homeless” northward to Chinatown
• Today: Drug trafficking, illegal dumping & homelessness
People

• Research different but similar projects. (*Institutional Settings*)

• Gain neighborhood support (*Community Setting*)

• Recognize power of Social Capital “*Bowling Alone*” Putnam

• Involve diverse group of people in design (*Enduring Relationships*)

• Organize volunteers & community events

• Have Faith !!!!!
Building Social Capital

“Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.”

Robert D. Putnam, Bowling Alone (2000, p.19)
Starting Out

Commitment

• Scare resources shared and abundance is generated.
• Conflicts occur and are resolved.
• Vision projected and programs attempted.
• People empowered & protected from power.
• Life is given color, texture, a festive air.
Team Work

- Strangers meet on common ground
- People are drawn out of themselves
- As mutual responsibility becomes evident, mutual aid is possible.
- Opinions become audible & accountable
- People are empowered & protected from power.

“Teamwork is hard, some of us have different ideas and attitudes.”

“Some people work a little harder than others.”
Collaborative Relationships
The circle is larger and more flexible than the triangle.

- Attitude
- Communication
- Partnership

Local Government
Colleges & Universities
Community Residents

Academics, Culture, Economics, Environment, Leadership

Tense Equilibrium

Dynamic Opportunity
Highlights/Accomplishments

I. A Community Based Planning Process that engaged over 300 residents and 240 students contributing 7500+ hours.

II. The Garden Park & Community in Transition Program on 24,000 square feet of abandoned land providing employment and community building for the homeless.

III. Job Training Micro-Enterprise Incubator Project
A total of 42 marginalized community members received a 60% share ($10,624.95) of close to $18,000 in profits ($17,834.47).
GREENING CHINATOWN

Possible activities to generate $$$:
- Verimcompost workshops with selling worms & organic fertilizer
- Crafts from recyclable stuff
- Mushroom or flower production

- Collaboration with Cal Poly technical wisdom
- Revenue generating activities
- Green Job Corps Program
- Construct an Asian Cultural Center

“Affirmation & reaffirmation that life is good, that change is good, and change here on Soledad St can be even better.”
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