

# BUILDING CITIZENS

A Critical Reflection  
& Discussion Guide  
For Community Service Participants



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1998

Walt Whitman Center For The Culture And Politics Of Democracy



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A Critical Reflection and Discussion  
Guide For Community Service Participants



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# thank you

Many hands make light work and we'd like to thank all of those who, through their knowledge, experience and generosity, made this a delightful endeavor.



To those who read and edited drafts, asked questions and contributed many ideas and suggestions that helped to shape and define the manual:

MELISSA BASS, RICK BATTISTONI, HARRY BOYTE AND STEPHANIE OLSON



To those who contributed games, exercises, readings and critical incidents and who also shared with us their own experiences in facilitating and encouraging critical reflection:

AMERICORPS' COMMUNITY ACTION CORPS OF NEWARK, NJ, THE CENTER FOR DEMOCRACY AND CITIZENSHIP AT THE HUMPHREY INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, THE CLOSE UP FOUNDATION, THE MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE, PENN SCOTT PAPER SUMMER INTERNS '97, YOUTH SERVICE NEW JERSEY, DIANE ALLTON, KAREN BOOTH (RAMAPO COLLEGE), RON DAVIS (FORMERLY OF THE HIGHLANDER RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTER), CLAUDIA HORWITZ (STONE CIRCLES), LEIF ELSMO (CHICAGO PUBLIC ALLIES), BERTRAM EYAKUZE, NANCIE KOENIGSBERG, YVETTE MURRY (RUTGERS UNIVERSITY), JOAN O'BRIEN, MELISSA SMITH, GREG WHITE AND THE MANY OTHER PEOPLE WITH WHOM WE SPOKE WHO HELPED US TO BUILD AND STRENGTHEN THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN REFLECTION, SERVICE AND CITIZENSHIP.



To everyone at Public Allies, particularly Public Allies Delaware, for enabling us to learn with you and from you through our many conversations and discussions about service, citizenship and reflection.

Special thanks to the Walter and Elise Haas Fund, Bruce Sievers and Pat Mattox for making this project possible.

# thank you

# PREFACE

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“Building Citizens” is a collaboration of the Walt Whitman Center for the Culture and Politics of Democracy and the Walter and Elise Haas Fund. This project is rooted in our belief at the Whitman Center that democracy is as much a way of life as a form of government, and that it must be served jointly by thought and action, by deliberation and commitment. “Building Citizens” was written to help community service programs to incorporate a deliberative, civic dimension into their programs.

Education-centered service has come to mean service that is directly linked to schools, colleges and universities. However, reflective service — service that combines community involvement and structured, critical reflection — can and should be the rule rather than the exception in all service programs. But making it work is not always easy. Even when groups want to incorporate reflective, critical and scholarly elements into their agendas, they are hard pressed to do so. Too often, we see instead front-loaded training sessions and episodic reflection which offer little opportunity for critical self-examination or group deliberation.

“Building Citizens” will guide community service programs and participants in reflection that makes explicit connections between service and critical, enlivened citizenship. This practical guide will, we hope, allow any group to begin the critical process. Used well, it can expand the horizons of a group’s thinking as well as the boundaries of their service experiences for the immediate benefit of our communities and the sustained vigor of our democracy.

Benjamin R. Barber  
Director  
Walt Whitman Center  
January 1998

# CREDITS

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This guide contains few, if any, original ideas. Our suggestions for building a critical, reflective group process for community service participants draw heavily from the ideas of experiential educators, political theorists and other scholars, service program directors, activists and others.

In particular, we have drawn heavily from the following reference manuals, books and educational organizations:

## MANUALS

*Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*, John Kretzmann and John McKnight, 1993, Evanston Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research  
Neighborhood Innovations Network  
Northwestern University  
2040 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL 60208

*By the People: An AmeriCorps Citizenship and Service Guide; Sponsored by the Minnesota Commission on National and Community Service and The Center for Democracy and Public Life at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs*, 1995

Humphrey Institute

University of Minnesota

301 - 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN, 55455

(612) 625-9505

*A Practitioner's Guide to Reflection - Student Voices and Reflections*, Janet Eyster, Dwight Giles, Jr. and Angela Schmiede, 1996, Vanderbilt University

*Reinventing Citizenship: The Practice of Public Work*

*Staff and Partners of the Center for Democracy and Public Life at the Humphrey Institute for Public Affairs*, 1995, Minneapolis

University of Minnesota

(same as above)

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*Frank Adams* *Unearthing the Seeds of Fire: The Idea of Highlander (with Myles Horton)*, 1975, Winston-Salem, John Blair, Publisher

*John Dewey* *Democracy and Education* 1916, New York, Macmillan

*Peter Jarvis* *Adult and Continuing Education: Theory and Practice* 1995, London and New York, Routledge (first edition published in 1983)

*Janice Kendall and Associates* *Combining Service and Learning: A Resource Book for Community and Public Service / A Publication of the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education (now National Society of Experiential Educators)* 1990, Raleigh NSEE  
3509 Haworth Drive, Suite 207  
Raleigh, NC 27609

*Morris Keeton and Pamela Tate, editors* *Learning By Experience; What, Why and How, New Directions in Experiential Learning, #1, 1978* 1978, San Francisco, Josey-Bass

*Patricia and Richard Schmuck* *Group Processes in the Classroom* 1971, 1975, 1979, Dubuque, William C. Brown and Company

*David Jaques* *Learning in Groups* 1984 Kent, England, Croom Helm Ltd.

*George Lakey* *Strategy for a Living Revolution* 1973, New York, Grossman Publishers,

*Peter Raggatt and Richard Edwards and Nick Small* *The Learning Society: Challenges and Trends* 1996, London and New York, Routledge ( in cooperation with the Open University)

## ORGANIZATIONS

*American Field Service*

*Highlander Research and Education Center*

*The Maine Campus Compact*

*The Center for Democracy and Public Life at the Humphrey Institute for Public Affairs*



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