



# Building a Movement Through Partnership and Public Engagement: One Organization, Many Communities, and a Landfill

A Capstone Presented By Nicole Guzenski

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Photographs on Cover Page (*Right to Left*): Children at First Friday Exhibit (*Consent Form Page 92*), Tree Craft with wish for the environment from NEPA Green Fair, Landscape of Keystone Sanitary Landfill

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## Abstract

This reflective paper will explain and summarize a community engagement capstone project focused on building a partnership with Friends of Lackawanna (FOL), an organization that has been developed in order to oppose a 50 year expansion proposed by the Keystone Sanitary Landfill (KSL) in Dunmore and Throop, Pennsylvania. The expansion would add about 106 million tons of waste to the landfill's capacity, making the physical height of the landfill about 220 feet higher than its current height. Local residents have expressed concerned over the landfill's traffic, pollution, effects on air quality, and the overall impacts to the health of residents and the environment. <sup>1</sup>

The capstone project's mission was to develop more opportunities for the Friends of Lackawanna to engage the community around the topic of waste, the environment, and the issue of the landfill while also increasing the organization's outreach. This paper outlines, reflects, and analyzes the methods of engagement used to create social awareness around the issues within the context representative of the organization's (FOL)<sup>2</sup> commitment to community organizing.

The project worked to incorporate various ways to use public engagement tied to the proposed expansion of the KSL<sup>3</sup> landfill such as a children's art exhibit, engaging

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<sup>1</sup> THE TIMES-TRIBUNE, *What you need to know about the planned expansion of Keystone Sanitary Landfill*, August 20, 2014. <http://www.thetimes-tribune.com/news/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-planned-expansion-of-keystone-sanitary-landfill-1.1738961>

<sup>2,3</sup> Glossary of Acronyms Available on Page 86

youth to act as leaders by sharing their stories and creating art as part of a local workshop, and an outdoor, environmentally focused fair. The project explored ways to implement and increase tools or strategies for FOL in order to engage deeper with community members by demonstrating the importance of partnerships and the development of social networks.

Throughout this project I discovered various ways that FOL can work to increase visibility and support through active governance and stewardship with community by reviewing their community engagement efforts and partnerships with local residents, organizations, and agencies. I also developed an organizational history and timeline of indicators of FOL's work. This helped the project determine recommendations that align with the organization's mission and aid in the progress of the achieving their goals. The organizational history helped in demonstrating ways that community members have engaged or needed to engage with the organization and determine what roles FOL plays within the community.

My reflective responses and collections are documented through photographs and an Internet based, password protected, blog. The purpose of the blog was to serve as ongoing journal to store experiences, stories, reflections, ideas, and photographs. It also serves as a way to demonstrate the various partnerships which were created to plan public events and local activities, which were an integral part of this project. The blog contains outside links to organizations, partners, and events in order to showcase local collaborations which supported the project's work. The blog was also created to serve the Cultural Sustainability community and its students, so that they will be able see and

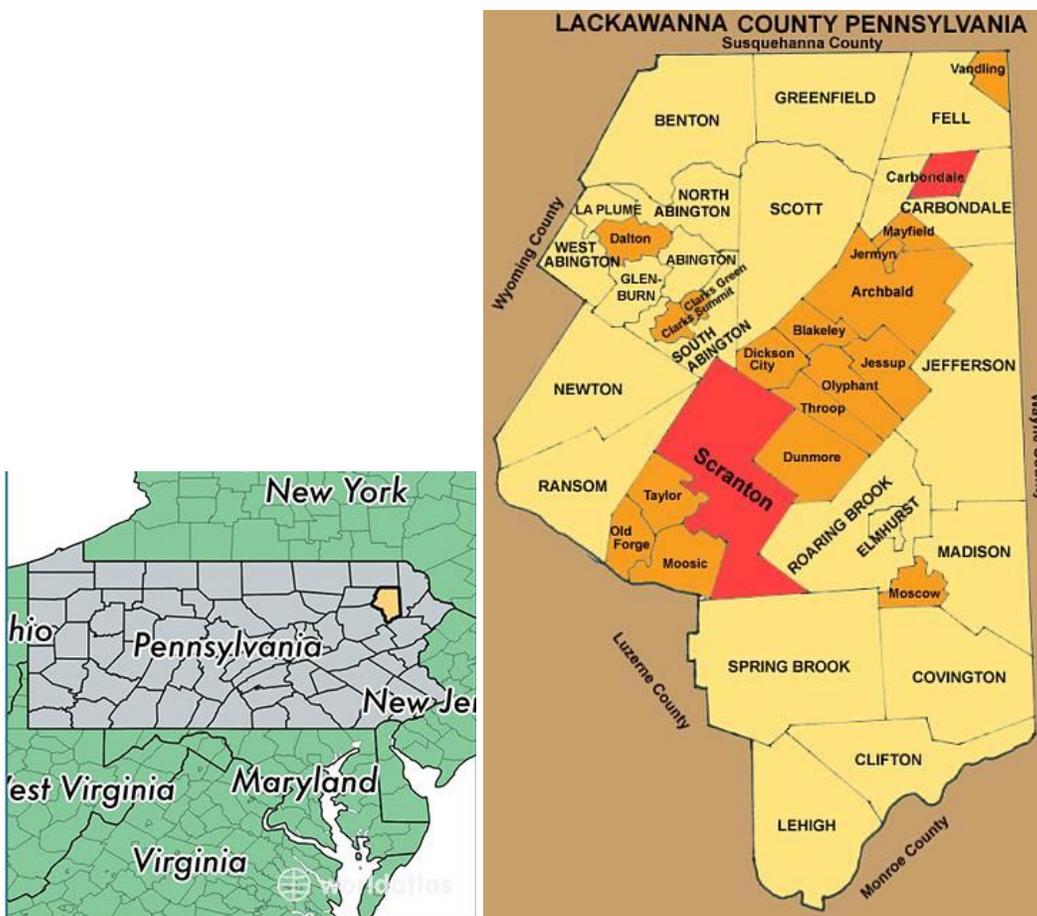
read what a capstone project entails in order to provide guidance and to improve upon the uses and implementation of a graduate project for their community and future work.

The blog can be accessed at:

<https://niguz001.wixsite.com/capstone>

All pages are password protected using the password (all caps): MACS

Additional photographs can be found on the blog, along with reflective writings and links to partnership websites.



The above maps show the state of Pennsylvania and the location of Lackawanna County, in the northeastern area of the state. The image on the right displays the different boroughs and towns within Lackawanna County and their proximity to one another.

### Executive Summary

This capstone project is based in my hometown of Dunmore, Pennsylvania which is where I also currently reside and own a home. This capstone reflects my feelings, beliefs, and experience of living in a small, close-knit community. It is important to reflect on the various political structures that affect not just the larger regions, but the smaller towns in order to examine the idea of these power structures vs. the shared power that

communities can collectively have through collaboration. Through the act of community organizing, I wanted to discover the various ways in which community members define their community and share a sense of belonging through a common cause centered on the future of the community and families.

The context of the Keystone Sanitary Landfill has always been a topic of interest as a concerned community member myself, but also as someone who has been actively involved in community non-profits and local causes. I was curious about the organization who opposed the landfill's proposed 50 year expansion, Friends of Lackawanna, how they got their start or who this group of community members included. In a way, I wanted to join their efforts on the ground and felt that the group could be more engaged with community work yet still focus on policy decisions, an action they have continued to expand upon.

I developed an organizational history and informally interviewed and spoke with multiple members to discuss their milestones, current goals, and stories about the organization. Creating a timeline of FOL's work also help me to become clear about the intent of project and also understand the structure and work of my partners. In order to make recommendations and make my project a contribution I had to become engaged with the organization's work both past and present.

When following the latest news on the appeals that Friends of Lackawanna organized and implemented against the landfill, I found myself thinking of creative ways to engage other community members. Reading a new article on the landfill's expansion and FOL's legal action had me wondering what the rest of the public knew about it. It seemed that this issue wasn't in the headlines of our local news but often reported as an

inside story. It may have at first only concerned those who live closest to the dump or who were already aware of the ongoing opposition for the expansion. I often wondered about collective ways to engage the public about the issue of the landfill through art and public engagement or interactive events.

The focus of the project became three different public events which were geared to all ages and collected support from various organizations, businesses, and agencies. The partnerships, documented and represented through the body of this paper, demonstrate a great amount of support for the mission of Friends of Lackawanna and also for environmentally focused events in Lackawanna County. In addition, they showcase the solidarity which comes from communities that are willing to work together and support one another.



The Google Map Image displays the size and area of the Keystone Sanitary Landfill. It also reference the landfills location to the Mid Valley School Public District. The entrance of the landfill is marked by the wording Keystone Sanitary Landfill and the surround area is the landfill property, circled in red.

### Organizational History of Friends of Lackawanna

The impetus that helped to form Friends of Lackawanna came from a local article in April 2014, in the Times Tribune on the Keystone Sanitary Landfill expansion proposal. Michele Dempsey, one of the founders and still a key player in FOL, remembers getting the article emailed to her from her mother “Everything about it was horrifying. I couldn’t help myself so I talked about it to anyone who would listen to me.”<sup>4</sup> Ms. Dempsey connected with other community members who were enraged and alarmed by the proposal of the 50 year expansion.

<sup>4</sup> Quote from unrecorded, informal interview with Michele Dempsey. 2017

The severity of 50 years felt real and the landfill's impacts would be more extreme than what the town and county had become used to dealing with; the smells coming from the landfill, the masked sight of a mountain full of garbage, and leachate entering public water sources and groundwater. The life of the landfill is currently a little less than 10 years.<sup>5</sup> It takes on average 7,250 tons of waste per day, and has enough capacity left for almost 21 million tons <sup>6</sup> without the expansion.

Within weeks after Michele read the article and connected with community members, she, Pat Clark, Katharine Spanish, and Katherine Oven began participating and attending Dunmore Borough council meetings together. After meetings they continued their conversations and created Friends of Lackawanna with constant meetings of community involvement and participation.

### **Background on the Keystone Sanitary Landfill**

The newly proposed, 50 year expansion is Phase III of the landfill's development. The previous expansion of the Keystone Sanitary Landfill from Dunmore into the neighboring town of Throop was met with opposition in April, 1987. The Throop Property Owners Association (TPOA) filed a complaint against the permit with the PA Environmental Hearing Board. After review, the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) cited violations of capacity and erroneous certification to properly

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid. Informal interview with Michele Dempsey. 2017

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. THE TIMES-TRIBUNE, *What you need to know about the planned expansion of Keystone Sanitary Landfill.*

handle and prepare solid waste. This caused the DER to shut down the landfill and issue \$500,000 in fines.<sup>7</sup>

A year later, DER<sup>8</sup> cited KSL with violations when the landfill owners were caught under an agreement to dump 10 tractor trailer loads of auto waste illegally. The landfill received over 80 misdemeanor charges and was also charged with criminal conspiracy to violate the state of Pennsylvania's Solid Waste Management Act. KSL was fined the maximum fine allowed by state law of \$150,000.<sup>9</sup>

After all of this, the Throop Borough Council approved the landfill expansion. Two years later, the TPOA<sup>10</sup>, the Throop Council, and KSL entered an agreement to drop the complaint that TPOA filed against the expansion into Throop. With this agreement, an advance payment of \$50,000.00 plus \$1 per ton was given to TPOA from KSL.<sup>11</sup>

For over thirty years the Keystone Landfill has been in the background of Dunmore and was accepted as a part of an area which degraded much land for industry and coal mining. Pennsylvania is a top importer of waste with the majority of waste imported from the neighboring states like New York and New Jersey. Pennsylvania has also taken waste from 28 states including Puerto Rico and Canada.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The Morning Call, Agreement Closes Keystone Landfill Owner Fined \$500,000, April 18, 1987, [http://articles.mcall.com/1987-04-18/news/2580519\\_1\\_keystone-landfill-keystone-site-landfill-operator](http://articles.mcall.com/1987-04-18/news/2580519_1_keystone-landfill-keystone-site-landfill-operator)

<sup>8</sup> Glossary of Acronyms Available on Page 86

<sup>9</sup> Pennsylvania State Ethics Commission,

<http://www.ethicsrulings.state.pa.us/webink/DocView.aspx?dbid=0&id=34723&page=33&cr=1>

<sup>10</sup> Glossary of Acronyms Available on Page 86

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. The Morning Call, *Agreement Closes Keystone Landfill Owner Fined \$500,000*

<sup>12</sup> Casey Introduces Legislation to Restrict Flow of Trash Into PA From Other States, August 5, 2015, <https://www.casey.senate.gov/newsroom/releases/casey-introduces-legislation-to-restrict-flow-of-trash-into-pa-from-other-states>

This history of violations to state law should have helped to create a clear-cut opposition towards the newly proposed expansion. Yet, the opposition needs to have continued involvement and public participation to establish a strong coalition against the KSL expansion and the potential harms it may cause. Friends of Lackawanna's Katharine Spanish has stated that "what we are trying to do is not only stop the expansion but prevent a disaster, in the long run, from happening."<sup>13</sup> In the face of these issues, Friends of Lackawanna has demonstrated civic environmentalism, where communities take an environmental stance to protect the local environment for their homes, family, and the future of the community's health.

### **Growth of Friends of Lackawanna**

Friends of Lackawanna has grown since the start and is now a 501(c) 3, non-profit organization. The key actors in the organization bring their own professional experience but also personal input since they are from the greater Scranton area and also currently residing locally. The organization has been supported by US Senator Robert Casey Jr, who has campaigned for local officials such as Vince Amico, a member of the Dunmore City Council and a current member of FOL. After 24 years, in a pivotal event for Dunmore's mayoral race, Tim Burke, a long-time supporter of FOL and outspoken community member against the landfill, took the seat by a three-vote margin in 2017.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Quoted from un-recorded, informal phone interview with Katharine Spanish. 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Singleton, David. *Burke adds GOP nomination to Dem win in Dunmore mayoral race*, The Times Tribune. May 25, 2017. <http://www.thetimes-tribune.com/news/burke-adds-gop-nomination-to-dem-win-in-dunmore-mayoral-race-1.2197329>

As of May 2018, FOL has a pending zoning case in Pennsylvania court which has been going back and forth since 2015 and is currently in appeals. “The residents testified they are adversely impacted by the landfill’s noxious odors, bird droppings, dust and heavy truck traffic.”<sup>15</sup> Although the zoning board ruled that these concerns were deemed merely of aesthetic concern and did not equate to “substantial harm”, a three-member panel of the Commonwealth Court disagreed. The court stated that the expansion would continue or exacerbate the issues the residents are experiencing.<sup>16</sup>

As of May 2018, the DEP has not made a ruling yet on the Phase III expansion. Even though this zoning case has been appealed the expansion, it can be still be ruled on at any time going forward. FOL’s belief is that the DEP is awaiting the final results from the Health Consultation that is currently under review and in draft form. This document could be published either in the summer or perhaps fall of 2018. Once DEP has this file created, they may issue a ruling on the expansion.

The draft can be found here:

<http://www.health.pa.gov/My%20Health/Environmental%20Health/Documents/Keystone%20Sanitary%20Landfill%20HC.pdf>

In a recent discussion I had with Pat Clark of FOL he stated that “Ultimately, this zoning case will likely be decided on the merits. This could be a year away or so away. It is not clear if DEP will wait to see this result before ruling.”<sup>17</sup> The most recent appeals

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<sup>15</sup>Morgan-Besecker, Terrie. *Appeals court reinstates lawsuit challenging Keystone Landfill expansion*. The Times Tribune. May 8, 2018. <http://m.thetimes-tribune.com/news/appeals-court-reinstates-lawsuit-challenging-keystone-landfill-expansion-1.2334594>

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Quoted from un-recorded, informal interview with Patrick Clark. May, 2018.

court decision suggests that the Commonwealth Court validated resident's issues as being a present and future problem. The wording of the decision projected the possibility of negative impacts that an expansion of this kind might have in stating "the proposed expansion would, at the least, continue, if not exacerbate, the present harm."<sup>18</sup>

FOL's ultimate goal and target is for the DEP to deny the expansion. Their best tools to accomplish this are through informed research, information from residents and locals, and analysis of their findings. DEP makes the decision for the KSL Phase III expansion on a state level, so FOL focuses diligently on all officials including state-wide and the local level, specifically PA State Governor Wolf, and federally elected officials such as Sen. Robert Casey Jr. and Congressman Mathew Cartwright (both who have officially expressed their opposition of the 50 year expansion). FOL has also worked with DEP staff at the regional and state level in order to address the concerns over the expansion.

FOL's mission and work has created a strong sense of governing public and local policy as it collectively works towards influencing and affecting impacts on zoning ordinances and residential concerns, which seeks to prevent the expansion from being approved. They work diligently with other collaborators in order to discover, analyze, and disseminate information to the public while also impacting the local political landscape. Although most of FOL's work is done through appeals to state agencies and local governments against the landfill, they have held a spotlight in local media and have

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<sup>18</sup> The Editorial Board, *Citizens to get day in Court*. The Times Tribune. May 9, 2018. <http://www.thetimes-tribune.com/opinion/citizens-to-get-day-in-court-1.2334915>

been covered and quoted in countless news articles about the case against the expansion.

The group has held a few community gatherings and have encouraged residents to attend local city council meetings but they have not been the most consistent with community organizing or engagement. Therefore, this project seeks to demonstrate the various types of activities and events the group could implement in order to develop a more collaborative opposition, engage more residents and increase awareness of their mission.

### **Timeline of Actions and Targets**

In order to document the actions taken by FOL, I have comprised a brief timeline:

- March 2014: KSL files initial application for Phase III of the expansion
- June 2014: DEP notifies KSL that the Phase III application was deemed incomplete
- December 2014: KSL Phase III application is deemed completed by DEP. This accepted filing includes KSL's version of the Harms Benefits Analysis, typically referred to as the Environmental Assessment Review
- June 2015: FOL submits its first Harms Benefits Analysis based on the point of view of the public and local residents
- October 2015: First Environmental Assessment Review issued by DEP
- May 2016: KSL submits reply to DEP's findings
- August 2016: FOL submits organizational reply to DEP's findings

- May 2017: Second Environmental Assessment Review issued by DEP
- August 2017: KSL submits reply to DEP's second set of findings
- November 2017: FOL submits reply to DEP and KSL's second set of findings
- May 8 2018: FOL ongoing zoning case is reinstated by a unanimous vote
- Currently as of May 2018: The DEP has not made a ruling yet on the Phase III expansion. DEP is awaiting the final results from the Health Consultation currently under review and in draft form.



### Conceptual Tools

The literature that supports most of my project's initiatives and themes throughout this paper focus on understanding three key elements of community organizing: defining community and networking within a community, building and assessing partnerships, and the context of framing<sup>19</sup> and commitment to being engaged and governing local policy. One text that supported multiple ideas through my project's purpose was *The Creative Community Builder's Handbook* by Tom Borrup. It served as a comprehensive guide to community organizing, especially with elements to utilize the

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<sup>19</sup> Framing is the act of filtering or bracketing reality to guide attention as defined in Source:27

arts that I also incorporated in my project. Borrup's book helps the organizer define and discover their community through various, practical worksheets and by specific topic areas such as youth engagement and stewardship of place.

The Borrup text promotes a sense of agency for not only the community itself, but also the individuals that benefit from each tool or method of engagement. In understanding the importance of collective efficacy, agency of oneself is crucial to realizing you have the power to impact the civic agenda. Borrup's text recognizes each individual's asset and role in community building, which leads to powerful and lasting partnerships. Through different case studies and approaches the text demonstrates a key point of organizing, which is meeting people where they are through discovery and engagement to reach cohesion and collaboration.<sup>20</sup>

The interdisciplinary nature of Cultural Sustainability has provided me the differing lenses in which to operate through community work. The intention and agency of this work through the Cultural Sustainability framework is that of representation and authenticity. When developing partnerships, building community, and connecting with people while doing on the ground work it is of the utmost importance to reflect on one's positionality and respect another's. Therefore, the intention and purposeful work of community building comes from the development of equal and collaborative partnerships, which cannot be achieved without authenticity and representation.

Defining and redefining community in the context of an organization is both reflective and inquisitive, which leads me to demonstrate how the processes within Peter

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<sup>20</sup> Borrup, Tom, Partners for Livable Communities. McKnight Foundation. 2006. The Creative Community Builder's Handbook: How to Transform Communities using Local Assets, Art, and Culture. Saint Paul, Minn. Fieldstone Alliance.

Block's work, *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. This text helped me to continually define and redefine my community and the target community of FOL's mission. The overview of what it means to be a community and citizen within this text is a powerful call to action for civic engagement. It served me as I continued to reassess the platform for the engagement methods of the project and the reflections I had throughout each process. Many challenges that arose throughout the project resulted due to a failure of recognizing the collective body.<sup>21</sup> Block's text reaffirms that the collective body is more powerful than one and demonstrates how different ways for organizing and thinking about community and leadership can be transformative as a cohesive, collective body.

Throughout my project, I was disconnected with the type of leadership the FOL held within the community and as an organizer of community. Block explains, "The effect of buying in to this view of leadership is that it lets citizens off the hook and breeds citizens dependency and entitlement. It undermines a culture where each is accountable for their community."<sup>22</sup> I determined this type of leadership that FOL seemed to employ was due to a lack of partnerships, therefore lack of collective efficacy. Determining this as a root cause to lack a citizenship participation and action, transformed the project's methods for engagement through developing the space to help individuals define community through inquiry and partake in civic forms of collective action and celebration.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Block, Peter. 2008. *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. A BK Life Book; BK Life Book. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers. Page 74

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. Block, Peter. 2008. *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. Page 41.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

I utilized the intersections between Block's text and James Bau Grave's book *Cultural Democracy* to reflect on what it means to increase partnerships and defining the need for them to FOL, which had already partially developed themselves in the community. Graves demonstrates the need for partnerships as a means of ethical agency and intent with community. Allowing for critical reflection of one's own work and participation through transparency, authenticity, and objectives can aid in facilitating work that bridges community and builds inclusion. The act of defining community itself is sought not only through collaboration but also contention.<sup>24</sup>

Grave's text provides the examination of the many dynamics that emerge when seeking to organize and build partnerships within community in the face of local, socio-political issues. Through such partnerships which can create collective and self-efficacy, the needs of the powerless can be recognized and as a collective body and therefore addressed to those in power.

A community's defining of itself can be its culture from which it operates and in combating an issue and Graves reminds us that "there is an enormous role waiting to be played in mediating the real needs of the small and powerless within the complex and symbiotic systems of governance and commerce."<sup>25</sup> The role of the powerless within communities are stronger when they come together and essentially the purpose of developing partnerships and capacity building is crucial to successful organizing.

Inclusion for all community members, especially minority voices as demonstrated within Grave's text, supports the importance for utilizing the

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<sup>24</sup> Graves, James Bau. 2004. *Cultural Democracy: The Arts, Community, and the Public Purpose*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press. Page 34.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. Graves. *Cultural Democracy*. Page 107

environmental justice framework of FOL's mission. This could provide equal and equitable representation. These relationships and partnerships may deepen and extend the commitment of the organization to tackle injustices that impact diverse communities. Saul Alinsky's organizing models utilize cultural brokerage<sup>26</sup> as a framework to bring community members together for a common cause, while also individually recognizing each groups' unique narratives and interpretations of shared or separate issues. <sup>27</sup>

I utilized the article, *A Saul Alinsky Primer for the 21st Century: The Roles of Cultural Competence and Cultural Brokerage in Fostering Mobilization in Support of Change*, to sustain the use of Alinsky's models for organizing within this work. Based in perspectives that examined the use of cultural competence for community building as well as framing<sup>28</sup> an issue for executing meaningful and effective movements, I was able to uphold the importance that partnerships and framing for local intervention within my project and recommendations to FOL.

Framing the environment is something I have often explored throughout my graduate work and it was a continued subject that I kept coming back to during my work on this project. The framing of the landfill expansion as an issue gave me both the perspective of a local community member but also an outsider to FOL, the organization taking on the issue. My access to FOL through my partnership and work within this project also allowed me to observe the framing of this issue from their perspective as a

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<sup>26</sup> Cultural Brokerage is bridging and negotiating among actors with different cultural repertoires as defined in Source: 27.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid. Giorgi, Simona, Jean M. Bartunek, and Brayden G. King. 2017. *A Saul Alinsky Primer...*

group. Therefore, it made it easy for me to continue to reflect on the way FOL was framing their issue and it's differing in certain contexts and possibly lack of framing overall.

I needed to revisit articles and readings from my environmental sustainability courses to be reminded of the context of framing over the environment. The concept of framing for social organizing, just like environmental framing for policy and governing, is both evolving and complimenting to various applications and uses. Within the context of social movements, it was important for me to understand defining an issue with framing as a constructive, collective, and cohesive method.<sup>29</sup> The differing methods of community engagement for this project demonstrated a flexible way to utilize framing as a way to create tasks and objectives for organizing. Appealing to community through new uses of framing helped in turn to build partnerships and public relationships with a variety of interests and values.<sup>30</sup>

The use of different framing creates frame bridging which can bring together diverse constituents together on the same issue.<sup>31</sup> Simona, Bartunek, and King's essay, *Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment*, provided me with a thorough explanation of how to use framing for community organizing, which validated my perceptions on the perceived challenges I thought FOL had with framing the issue of the landfill expansion. This type of flexible, yet concrete use of framing is vital to developing a social movement that seeks to impact and affect various forms of

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<sup>29</sup> Benford, R. D. and D. A. Snow. 2000. "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment." *Annual Review of Sociology* 26: 611.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. Giorgi, Simona, Jean M. Bartunek, and Brayden G. King. 2017. *A Saul Alinsky Primer...*

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. Bendord, R D. and D.A. Snow. 2000

policy and regulation within an issue. By constructing framing at the local level it can build community and jointly represent different actors and create clear targets for issues.

With strategic framing that is cohesive and direct, goals can be easily created and sometimes met. “Frames are developed and deployed to achieve a specific purpose-to recruit new members, to mobilize adherents, to acquire resources, and so forth.”<sup>32</sup> Framing can help organize the movement itself, but also the objectives and targets for what the organization or movement wants to achieve. Therefore, in order to impact local and state policy framing needs to be diversified in order achieve the desirable outcome of change.

It is important to note how the literature used in order to support and provide further discovery for this project is interconnected. Partnerships cannot exist without an integrated understanding of your community or the community you seek to engage through organizing. Likewise, without thorough and strategic framing practices, partnerships will be dissolvable and lack deepened community engagement that may be necessary to create and encourage opportunities for civic action. The relationship between networking with community which enables the development of partnerships is often sustained through the use of complex framing methods.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid. Page 264.

## Methods of Engagement (and observations)

### Teen Workshop

The idea of a running a teen workshop came from witnessing some young adults or teens who attended past Friends of Lackawanna events. One of the most recent instances was at a panel hosted by the Department of Health and Human Services to discuss findings to determine the air pollutants in proximity to the landfill. The event was hosted at one of the testing sites, Mid Valley High School. The elementary and high school for the Mid Valley School District are next to one another and are both situated at the top of a hill, which is adjacent to some of the Keystone Sanitary Landfill's property. This panel took place in February 2018, right around the time I decided to develop this project.

The school's auditorium brought together community members, most of whom were middle aged. There were only a few youth or teens present. Many adults who were there spoke on behalf of the children's safety and health in relation to the landfill's fumes or air pollutants. There was, however, one teen who was very vocal about the risks and impacts the landfill would have on the community and how it becomes a nuisance in the warmer months because of the smell. She spoke with vigor and passion, but also seemed to represent an untapped demographic of the landfill's impact on the neighboring community. At events hosted by the Friends of Lackawanna and other community organizations to discuss the issue of the landfill and the "future" in correlation to children and children's health and safe, I noted that livable communities were always the message for the opposition towards the landfill expansion. Yet, the

future represented by actual children or teens were not often physically present to represent the facts of this issue.

I decided to conduct a Teen workshop to explore the possibility of physical representation by youth but also to demonstrate that youth in the area do care about these issues. I also hoped to help them get involved. This influenced my decision to host a children's artwork exhibit, as an example of how the environmental movement cares about the future of the children. I wanted to draw the connection between caring for our environment and caring for all of the earth's children.

The Teen Workshop was inspired by Marshall Ganz's "Story of Self, Us, and Now", a technique for creating community stories.<sup>33</sup> This model helps one to recognize and value the uniqueness and power in their individual narratives. Ganz's technique engages individuals to identify the connection that they have to their community as part of their story, which can inspire the use of sharing stories to develop group power and connections a collective experience and possible collaborative actions.

I hoped that the workshop would act as a brainstorming session for teens to see what issues were most pressing and important to them at the time and which ones they shared together. I wanted students to connect with one another to focus on building communities, especially outside of their routine communities, such as school groups or family groups. It was an opportunity for teens to discover new perspectives from fellow students who may or may not have been in their direct communities and learn more about each other. In order to focus and work on each issue within the limited amount of

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<sup>33</sup> Ganz, Marshall. *Story of Self, Us, Now*. Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. Fall, 2009.

class time, I chose to have students create posters in groups. This also ensured connecting with others and working together as a team.

### **First Friday Art Exhibit**

Every first Friday of the month in Scranton, galleries, shops, restaurants, bars and other local businesses host art exhibits or events to attract the local community to visit and enjoy an evening in downtown Scranton. I have always worked closely with the artist community in Scranton and find it's where most of my local connections are. First Friday is also a wonderful outlet for emerging artists, musicians, crafters, as well as a great way for local organizations to get the community involved in their causes.

Friends of Lackawanna has never hosted or taken part of a First Friday event in all the four years they were campaigning against the landfill expansion. It presented a great opportunity to bring them into this popular community space and event, while also increasing their outreach and getting on the street to talk to people. I needed to think of a way to draw people into an event hosted for Friends of Lackawanna and an easy way to generate art to hang up. Children's artwork was not only appropriate given then mission of the organization, but was easy to obtain through eager parents willing to display their child's work or connecting with local schools. It would be a way to engage the public on the purpose behind the displays and generate interests in the work FOL has done and is doing for the community.

### **NEPA Green Fair/ 5K for Clean Air**

The NEPA (Northeastern Pennsylvania) Green Fair was the first annual fair of its kind in Lackawanna County. It focused on the growing environmental movement locally

and benefitted two organizations who both support protecting the environment but also the health and well-being of the community: FOL and Citizens for a Healthy Jessup (CFHJ). CFHJ is another local group with an environmental mission that formed in the face of a power-plant which was developed in the town of Jessup. The fair was also part of a 5K for Clean Air, a race that started the festivities for the day and allowed the fair to generate donations and raise funds for FOL and CFHJ.

The first annual NEPA Green Fair and 5K for Clear Air was developed by Allison Petryk, who is a friend and local activists. Allison also planned the event with her partner, Bryan Dewey. Since I've always been engaged with local issues and am friends with Allison, I was initially part of a planning committee during the event's conception in the fall of 2017. In the beginning I proceeded with apprehension for my commitments to the event, knowing I would be approaching my Capstone for Goucher College (uncertain of the topic at the time).

Once I decided I wanted to do a community organizing project and engagement strategy for FOL for my Capstone, I knew that I could increase my commitment to planning the NEPA Green Fair. Unfortunately, by this time in February the committee of a dozen volunteers that were helping had somewhat disbanded. The event was in May, which meant that it was even more crucial to support the event any way I could since I could incorporate the experience as part of my Capstone project.

Allison and Bryan are not originally from the Scranton area, although they have lived in the area for several years. Therefore, I knew that my strongest contribution for the event was to secure sponsorship or donations and work with local businesses, organizations, and community members to participate. Gathering, recognizing, and

coordinating with community assets were also a strong theme of this Capstone project and it can be clearly demonstrated through the partnerships and donations at the NEPA Green Fair. The contributions, whether it was physical donations of raffles or goods, providing a workshop, or being part of the event by hosting a table modeled the support and potential future collaborations for Friends of Lackawanna.

The overall mission of the Green Fair was to provide the community with an interactive, entertaining event to think about environmentalism at a local capacity and it also served my capstone project as a way to do some asset mapping<sup>34</sup> for Friends of Lackawanna. The event, as a large-scale example of community engagement, would also present the opportunity for Friends of Lackawanna to connect with more potential partners, residents, and think about the bigger picture when it comes to have their mission be shared locally. The Green Fair/5K for Clean Air was also in itself, a commitment, for an annual event and continued gatherings around environmental topics and awareness for local residents to share in and be involved as a community.

### **Reflection on the Implementation of Community Engagement**

#### **Teen Workshop**

#### **Planning of the Teen Workshop**

It became clear through my discussions and conversations with FOL, that they wanted to increase their engagement with youth in the area. The organization really wanted to try and do lobbying activities with teens by running a trip to Harrisburg to meet with Governor Tom Wolf. I did feel like this was ambitious goal, since their prior

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<sup>34</sup>Borup, Tom. Partners for Livable Communities and McKnight Foundation. 2006.

organizing or activities did not primarily work with youth. I suggested doing a workshop with teens to support them in tackling issues in their community, as an introduction to activism on a local level. FOL was very interested in this idea, but were still persistent in trying to move forward with a lobbying trip.

I originally planned to do at least two workshops, maybe three. In my vision, I thought it would be very useful to work with a group of teens over an extended period of time. This would prepare them for a possible lobbying trip but would also inspire them to continue working on an issue that was important to them.

I contacted two civic centers, one in Dunmore and the other in Throop. FOL suggested the Throop Civic Center, as they had a connection to Mary Ruth who is the Director at the facility but was also a school board member for Mid-Valley School District. I decided to go with the Throop location as there was more foot-traffic and it seemed to function more as a community center than Dunmore's facility. When I visited Throop's center there was a plenty of youth either playing on the basketball courts, hanging out in the game room, or just running around the building. There is also a very active senior group that was there doing a painting class when I visited the first time.

Mary Ruth was very willing to work with me. The center usually charges a fee for the use of their rooms but she was going to talk to the city council to see if I can get the fees waived on account of it being free for any teens in the area and the idea was to provide something for the community. I didn't have any doubts that she would waive the fee, as her friendly, yet direct demeanor made me feel confident that she is someone who gets things done by her own volition.

She blocked out two dates for me, both of which were Sundays. Sundays were surprisingly more open for booking a recreational room than a Friday or Saturday so I wanted to work with what was best for the center. She was curious about the connection with Friends of Lackawanna for the workshop and seemed a bit nervous about hosting a teen workshop on activism. I assured Mary Ruth that this event was not going to be a rally against the landfill and that it was a project I was working on in order to introduce FOL to various forms of community engagement. I explained that the teens would be coming up with the issues they wanted to work on and that the issues would not be imposed by the fact that FOL was partnering with me on the workshops.

When I visited the Dunmore Civic Center, I met with the director there who was also skeptical about a workshop for teens about activism and partnered with FOL. His attitude was a bit closed off while talking to me and he clearly had a guard up. He said “They’re doing that kind of thing now?” referring to FOL as an organization. His tone was harsh and a bit demeaning, which was off-putting to me for collaborative work. It was later explained to me by one of the members from FOL that the employees from the Dunmore Civic Center might be a bit friendlier with the Denaples, the family who owns the landfill. It has been stated not just by FOL but by others in Dunmore that the Denaples pay the salaries of the Civic Center employees.

The Dunmore Center had only one date available in April which is what my target was for planning. There was also a charge for renting the rooms and it did not seem likely that they would be willing to waive the fee. I also felt like there was not much activity happening in the center itself and there was only three people in the facility sitting at the front desk area when I stopped by.

Based on the experiences I had with the directors of the centers, physical spaces, and accessibility and use of the centers by the public I decided to move forward with the Throop location. It is important to note the perception of FOL by the director of the Dunmore center though. It can be seen as an avenue to collaborate more with the community and specifically in the space of the Dunmore Civic Center.

FOL meets via phone conference on Tuesdays every week. After planning the workshops I met with FOL to talk more specifically on logistics, agenda, and the implementation of the programming I would do. FOL was reluctant about doing two workshops. It was a moment of disagreement in planning. They were concerned about the amount of upcoming activities for them as a group but also for me. It was really considerate to think about my time and planning for the future events but I did think they misunderstood the impacts that I was trying to gain by having multiple workshops.

It was a bit of back and forth and I succumbed to only doing one workshop. I did see the validity and how much time I had put into the planning of just this one event yet I had two more other events going forward. I let FOL know that if the workshop was successful, we could always do another one and continue to do activities like this for the community based on their timeline of goals for the decision of the landfill's expansion. It also felt like FOL was concentrating more on what could happen in terms of lobbying with the teens in Harrisburg. This would have been an excellent addition for my project, but was not the intended purpose or objective for getting teens involved. It was simply to get teens more aware of local issues and for FOL to show their commitment to the future of the community.

I created a Facebook event page for the workshop to reach the public and share the event through FOL's page and personal pages. I needed to develop a slogan or phrase to call the workshop which became "*Your Voice, Your Community, Your Story*". The flyers and event page included a brief description of the workshop. I also needed to create a google phone number in order to have teens or parents register for the event. One of FOL's members, Mandi Perrone Boyanoski, had offered to supply the workshop with some pizza and wing bites. Her brother owns a local restaurant and bar close to the Throop Civic Center, which made it easier to facilitate the pick-up of food. Therefore, I wanted to try and have teens register in order to get a headcount for the food. This was a very generous offer from Mandi and her brother.

Unfortunately only two parents actually registered their children ahead of time. I was very nervous on how the turn out would be since I was getting quite a bit of interested people on the Facebook event but did not have the registration numbers to match the feedback online. Especially in the planning of the workshop, a key aspect was to do group work which I found crucial for capacity building for teens to become more engaged with community issues. So I really needed to have at least 10 teens attending.

FOL reposted the event not only on their main page but also on each member's individual Facebook pages. This made me confident that the word was getting around about the event and made me feel like I was working in collaboration with FOL to push for attracting more teens to attend the workshop. I decided that even if there was a low number of students attending I could still break students into pairs for working together.

## Agenda for Teen Workshop

*Introductions:* Small ice-breaking activity. Ask students their name, schools/town they are from, and favorite movie or the last movie they watched. Quick Game of Zip Zap Zop (allows students to look and pay attention to each other)

*Go over Group Rules:* Some rules will be created as beforehand and others will be developed as part of a group activity and warm up.

### *Starting Rules:*

Step up Step Back (*give everyone room to speak and take time to listen*)

Ask (connecting is done through learning)

Be an Expert! (*this is your Story*)

Don't be an expert on someone else's story

Allow room for emotions and feelings

*Ask for student's input for rules that would help to work together as a team and feel comfortable to share with one another.*

*Issues:* On a paper and as a group we will see what issues students want to talk about share their stories about. We will list as many issues that the students bring up.

Together, we will go through which issues might be the most relevant, timely, and important to them. This will help us narrow down which ones the students will work on in their groups. We can do this by voting or asking each student to pick their top 3 issues.

*Introduction to Story:* *before breaking out the students into groups of 3-4 to share their stories with each other and begin to do a collaborative poster /artwork*

Have a few FOL members talk about their story and why the issue of the environment, the landfill expansion, and clear air/water is important to them; how it affects them, their community, family and what actions they have done about the issues. What cohesive messaging has FOL used to convey their mission of opposing the expansion to the KSL landfill? (Mention tag-lines, images, sense of a collective community)

*Break out into Groups:*

Each Student will have 3-5 minutes to talk about the issue, why it's important to them, how it affects them and their community, and what message they would like to share about the issue.

*After each student shares with one another, they may begin to:*

- find a phrase or tagline to include on their artwork
- think of imagery that may convey a strong message
- narrow the issue to a theme/connection they all had on the issue

Encourage students to draft the images or slogans first before trying to execute it.

*Poster Making/ Artwork Making: (30 mins minimum)*

Check in on each group of students to make sure they are working well together and staying on task.

*Come together to Review Posters:*

Talk about the artwork with the whole group, ask for insight from outside groups and creators-ask those who made the artwork what was behind the images or slogan: *What*

*was a challenge? What came easy? Why did they focus on that particular aspect about the issue?*

Action Items/ Take-away:

Complete post-cards and letters to legislation to call for action. Prompts will be provided for certain issues.

### **Implementation of the Teen Workshop, April 29th 2018**

I arrived an hour early for the teen workshop in order to set up the space, create the list of rules, and put up signage to direct attendees. Members of FOL came about fifteen minutes before the start of the event and helped me put the food out and supplies on the tables. The majority of teens arrived on time, but I ended up getting a last minute message on the google phone number that a group of four teens were coming and would be late. There ended up being 14 total students that attended.

The teens were hungry so we decided to have them eat while others arrived. Shortly after we did a few ice-breakers to introduce ourselves and try and learn everyone's name. I also did an ice-breaker called Zip-Zap-Zop, which allows students to look at each other and get comfortable looking and being with one another. Once the ice-breakers were done I instructed the students to sit at tables in groups of 3-4 students per table. I then discussed that I would be developing rules with them in order to show our intention and responsibility to each other as a group for the work we were about to do.

The teens added a few more rules to my original list such as: "don't be stupid" which I translated into "be respectful to everyone", the students agreed this was a better

interpretation. Most of the FOL members sat the back of the room and didn't become involved until the students were brainstorming the ideas and issues they wanted to discuss for the workshop. Michelle Dempsey, who acts as one of the leaders in FOL, spoke about what inspired her to take on the opposition of the landfill expansion. She recalled "I was just sitting there at the council meeting and was amazed they were going to just pass a 50 year expansion without going into detail or provide the public with any knowledge of it." She went on to state "I couldn't believe this was going to happen and wasn't going to let it!"

She was a very natural and compelling story teller. It engaged the students and made a few of them want to tackle the landfill as a local issue in their breakout groups. However, only one group decided to do a poster and focus on the issue of waste and the landfill. The teens then spoke about the issues they cared about, eventually getting to the landfill issue. The list of issues ranged from very specific issues to general problems they felt were affecting their lives.

Here is some of the issues the teens brought up:

Gun Control, Bullying and Cyber Bullying, Phone/Technology Addiction, Animal Rights/ Endangered Animals, Drug Abuse, Landfill-Protecting the Environment, and Gangs

After talking about the issues more as a larger group, the teens moved again into four separate groups that aligned with the issues they each wanted to work on. The groups ended up choosing these issues: Animal Rights/Endangerment, Bullying, Landfill/Waste, and Drug Abuse. The group that chose bullying, originally wanted to do something about gun control but felt it was too complicated or that they lacked personal

stories about the issue. We talked this through in order to help the students feel like they could accomplish something about their issue for that day.

The four groups had about an hour to discuss and make their posters. Michelle and Sharon sat down with a few tables and I also went to each group to help inspire them, ask them critical questions, and keep them focused for executing their posters with a clear vision and intentional messaging.

The group that chose bullying (previously chose gun-control) still continued to have the hardest time. I asked them if they were comfortable sharing a story where they each experienced bullying themselves or with a friend. They were comfortable and went around in a circle sharing with each other. I asked them to share about how they felt in those stories, but also how it felt to share with one another and look for cohesion or similar themes in their stories. They were able to narrow down bullying about each other's differences or uniqueness and I was able to steer them towards a collaborative vision for making a poster.

We ran out of time, to do an extended regroup to discuss the posters but I had the teens share their posters with everyone and talk a bit about them. The animal endangerment poster was somewhat unfinished, but they shared despite their reluctance. They were the hardest group to navigate and seemed to be less inclined to mingle with other groups of other teens and did not welcome many of my suggestions when I attempted to assist them and check in on their progress.

This did cause me to later compliment my husband for teaching high-schoolers all day, as it takes a certain person to reach teens that are more passive or difficult. That group in the workshop, although they were the ones who came up with "don't act

stupid/be respectful", didn't meet me with kindness and a few times I did remind them of the rules we came up together and told them it would show in their work if they weren't considering them or each other.

If there were future workshops with this age group, I would coordinate to have more adults active in presenting and running the workshop. I think it was something different for the FOL members to experience, so I believe they wanted to observe and see how a workshop like this would work. Their past events were more presentations rather than team orientated collaborative activities. Yet, I do think that if there was more active participation from the members there would've been an interesting mix of sharing stories with the students and inspire them to be passionate about the issues they chose to focus on.

### Photographs of Teen Workshop:



Going over the rules of the workshop and creating a set of guidelines for teamwork.



Michele Dempsey from FOL talking to students at the back of the room.



Writing down the issues and problems the students wanted to work on during the workshop.



Leading team-building and introductions with teen group in a circle.

### **First Friday Art Exhibit Planning**

The initial planning of the First Friday Art exhibit was going to coincide with an Earth Day Celebration on the weekend of April 21<sup>st</sup> or April 22<sup>nd</sup>. It was my original plan to do a children's art exhibit on artwork that centers on the earth, environment, and nature which could be part of a First Friday in April and then presented again for an Earth Day celebration. Early on though, I found out there was another Earth Day event happening in Scranton and was being coordinated by the Penn State Extension programming.

I didn't want to duplicate efforts, as the project's purpose was to seek collaboration among community organizations and businesses. However, I reached out to the person who was coordinating the Earth Day event countless of times without much of a reply or response. The timing was concerning with the amount of planning I

would need to do for the First Friday art-show but also the other upcoming events. I decided to move forward with doing just a First Friday in May, rather than in April in order to give myself more time to draw in other partners and acquire children's artwork for the display.

I reached out to Nikki Moser, who is the former president of Artists for Art Gallery which is the main spot for First Fridays. I have worked with her in the past and have known her since my college years because I would babysit her children in between classes at Keystone College, where she is an art professor. I knew she would give me the information on logistics for getting a May First Friday space to display artwork. She even offered me her office space in the Steam Town Mall, which does participate in the art-walk event.

I decided to contact Jamie Constantine of The Velvet Elvis, an eclectic shop that sells vintage clothing and items in a newly renovated court area in Scranton. Bogart Court is up and coming and they want to draw in more foot traffic to the area and local businesses in this location. I figured it would be a great spot to host an art event and a true collaboration, as the event would seek to increase attendees to the space. Jamie was excited about the event and was happy to host me and the project. She was very flexible with the space and even offered us to use the walls in her shop, which wasn't the most ideal due to the artwork getting lost in the mix of all the interesting items she has in her store. It was still a very accommodating partnership and I was happy to be working with her.

She volunteered to collect artwork while I had a call out for entries through posting on Facebook, leaving flyers at local libraries, the Dunmore and Throop Civic

Centers, the local YMCA's, and even emails sent to local schools. I partnered with a friend, Annie Conflitti, who is a teacher at Prescott Elementary in Scranton and Lori Ryan who runs an after-school program at Skyview Apartments, a subsidized housing complex in South Scranton. They both submitted a plethora of diverse and interesting work. The artwork from Prescott Elementary featured recycled paper collages with images of earth, trees, and nature painted over some of the collage work. The work from Skyview Apartments also used recycled materials such as egg cartons and cardboard food boxes to make mobiles and birds.

I only received a total of three pieces from outside families that dropped off artwork at the Velvet Elvis for display. I was unsuccessful in hearing back from the local schools where I dropped flyers off and emailed art teachers and secretaries. I was inwardly disappointed that FOL did not collect any additional artwork, since many of them have children. This was just something I assumed they would be doing with their families to be part of the event and bring their children into their work.

### **Field Notes for Setting Up for the First Friday event: May 4, 2018**

The themes for this day were all over the place. At 10:30 am I was already feeling scrambled and fried, a reference I relied on was "putting my eggs in one basket" and that's what happened. I didn't have any support other than Jamie from the Velvet Elvis, but she also needed to get ready for the First Friday event herself. I had not heard anything from Friends of Lackawanna but was in contact the day before with Michelle about the rain space.

*Here is some background information about the rain space, with may illustrate various forms of partnership:*

Originally the plan was to have the event and artwork outside in the alleyway of Bogart court. This would draw visitors into the area and make the space livelier to welcome First Friday foot-track. The situation of the alleyway is behind Lackawanna Ave, which serves as a prominent street for attending First Friday activities, so it easy to bring people from the main street down to the space if there is something happening to catch their interest. However, the challenge of Bogart court is that there is nowhere to hang work since it's a brick walled space and there is no covering from rain.

I secured a small pop up tent from Jamie for a rain plan and she was also willing to hang some of the artwork in her shop (which she would've cleared her wall-decor for us). Everything leading up to the day of events have been a great partnership in working with Jamie and I was hoping to provide mutual benefits from me doing a project in the space with the potential to increase the foot traffic to her store and the Bogart Court area.

In the last weeks of April, Michelle from FOL kept mentioning that she had a connection to someone on Lackawanna Ave who was renovating a space. She said she was going to get in touch with this person, as a possible back up rain space. Yet, this deviated from the original plan. It was a great suggestion but I didn't hear anything much more about it, thinking it must have not worked out. Approximately a week before the First Friday event, she asked me if I can come see this demo-space her friend was going to offer us.

I had to state my intentions for the partnership with Bogart Court and vision for the art show to Michelle. The outdoor element was going to be an inviting and refreshing for the new space downtown and for the show itself. I explained "It would be

nice to have a rain spot but I've been working with the Bogart people a lot and do not want them to feel unappreciated for the partnership we've developed by going somewhere else." She replied saying "I'm sure it's not an issue not to use the space. I'll take a look at it and let him know it would be a backup for rain." It seemed like it was set deal, even though neither of us had seen the space and I had not planned for this.

There was also the element of complication that required me to track down the owner of the building to get the key to this rain space, even though Michelle at first told me she would get it. Once I got the key, I decided it was better to just set up inside anyways. It was going to be very complicated to set up outside and then move everything inside if it started to rain. There was overcast and thunderstorm warnings for that evening so it seemed safer to just use this new space, plus it would've been a disaster to disassemble everything outside while raining.

The space was clearly in demolition mode, with multiple men working and hammering away when I got there around 1:30pm. The walls were exposed and there was dust and dirt everywhere. The men were super nice though and offered to sweep an area I told them I was going to use, which was truly a huge help since I was doing everything alone. Even after the sweeping, the place was still quite dirty, but it gave off this interesting unfinished "art" vibe. I played with the space a little and the set up ended up being very nice. I wish I took a before and after picture, as it was quite the make-over.

### **Execution of Set-Up and Event for First Friday**

In the morning I made labels for artwork, print surveys for attendees, and exhibit info cards. These were easy tasks that I planned on doing on the day of the event from

the beginning. I then packed up the car with all the supplies, which was easy since half of the artwork was already at the Velvet Elvis along with the partition for the display. On my way downtown, I called the rental car company to switch out my car. This was an added burden for the day. I got into a car accident on April 17<sup>th</sup> and was using a rental car for the meantime. I told the rental company I needed to switch out to a truck or cargo van for these events I was doing this weekend. I needed to use a larger vehicle for the NEPA Green Fair to transport items which was the day after the art-show. I had planned to swap my rental car up the day before but they did not have any large trucks or cargo vans that I requested. They had prior knowledge of the arrangement and instructed me to just call them on my way down to swap vehicles in the morning and that they would have a cargo van for me.

The cargo van was being used by a corporate member who was due to have it back by 1:00pm on Friday. I was to wait and try and do the car swap in the middle of my hectic day on Friday. They attempted to reach this corporate member multiple times, who didn't answer and who ended up not returning the van at 1:00pm, so I needed to just be on call to swap out my vehicle at any moment. I couldn't get the car the next morning (Saturday) because I was going to be at the Green Fair at 7:30am and needed to transport many items back and forth. Plus, the rental car company didn't open until 8:30am! I needed the van on Friday.

Once I determined the rental car swap would just need to happen at moment, I devised a new plan and schedule for myself. Around 1:00pm I went downtown to track down the man who had the key for the rain space. He wasn't at his office, where he knew I was coming between 1:00pm and 2:00pm to get the key. I went to the Velvet Elvis to

begin some of the hanging work I needed to do for the pieces that would be on the partition I bought. At 1:45pm Michelle received a from the rain space's owner, asking where I was and I ran to get the key, which was only a few blocks away from the art space. By 2:00pm, I ended up setting up in the demo site and rain space. When I arrived, there were construction workers there, who also offered to sweep the floor while Jamie and I move the partition up the alleyway and onto the main street of Lackawanna Ave to setup in the space. Jamie was fully supportive the entire time. I borrowed safety pins, wire cutters, and even a mini battery powered drill from her! Every time I ran down to the shop from the rain space, she asked "what do you need" and got it for me. She was truly a lifesaver.

As I was settling in and setting up the exhibit, I received a phone call from the car rental company, "Mrs. Guzinski your van is ready!" Internally I was thinking, "Ohhhhh cool, because I was in the middle of 100 things anyways." This was the worst timing ever. I went to exchange the cars, which was easy because I did not have any cargo to transfer into the new cargo van I was getting.

When I got back to art space around 3:30pm I still needed to set up most of the exhibit. I figured out how to do a make-shift wall on a demolition wall, which was in the space. The wall was neat but was rather "unsafe" looking for a children's event with screws and nails protruding from it. I used packing paper Jamie gave to me to block this space and also pretend it's a wall to hang up more artwork. Michelle showed up randomly because she had a meeting downtown and stopped to check in with me. She hung about 4 pieces of artwork with me and brought two bags of jelly beans but then needed to leave. She said she will be back around 5:00 pm for the start of things.

I had everything set up and ready for display by 4:30pm, except for myself. I was sweaty and covered in dirt, not to mention hungry. A friend of mine who did a STEAM program at the local museum, dropped off 3 sculptures he told me he'd deliver. It really tied the room together nicely and he helped managed the space while I used the bathroom to wash my hands and face and throw a dress on.

The event started technically at 5:00pm but people were already roaming around downtown and trickled into the space to see what's going on. Two families' who had their children's artwork displayed already showed up. They ended up visiting the Bogart court and The Velvet Elvis location first, as I discovered when I went to borrow a bowl off of Jamie for the jelly beans brought by Michelle. Jamie was more than happy to redirect people up to Lackawanna Avenue where the exhibit was set up.

The rest of the event went smoothly as attendees came and stopped by out of curiosity. Around 5:30pm, Sharon Cuff of FOL showed up with a Friends of Lackawanna vinyl banner which we hung up. We set up a table I had brought in front of the building and we put the jelly beans in the borrowed bowl and Michelle and Sharon put out some educational flyers about Friends of Lackawanna and a donation box. I didn't really agree with putting a donation box out for the event but had a feeling that many people might not think to donate. Typically, galleries on First Friday will serve wine and cheese and ask for donations but our display of two bags of jelly beans was meager to be asking for anything in return. In the weeks leading up to the event, I had reached out to FOL to see if they could provide some kid friendly party snacks such as cheese and crackers, veggies, or fruit. I was assured some members would bring something and it was one

more thing I couldn't worry about bringing since I knew I'd be setting up the exhibit all day and have no access to refrigeration. I thought it was a reasonable ask.

A surprising number of families from Prescott elementary came to see their child/children's artwork. For some, it was their first time visiting downtown Scranton for a First Friday event and they were very excited to visit the other venues and see what the city had to offer on this monthly event. I was pleased that this exhibit would expose families in the area to First Friday Scranton and thought that was a great success in itself for engaging with the community.

Sharon and Michelle walked around the exhibit space, occasionally talking to visitors. Michelle was interactive with guests and outwardly friendly with people. She even prompted a few families to take pictures of their children near their art pieces. There was an event next door to the demo space that had a saxophonist playing music outside which drew people into our space to see what was displayed. To many, they were surprised at the children's artwork once they entered. A negative of the demo site was that as the sun started going down, there was no way to let the public know that we were open. The space did not have lights or electric to the first floor in order to light up the area which made people wonder what was happening inside before entering because it either looked shut down or like we were closing up.

Michelle and Sharon had left for the evening around 6:45 pm. At around, 7:30 pm I determined that it was too dark to continue to welcome visitors into the space. The crowds outside also decreased because of a looming storm over head with dramatic gusts of winds every so often. The challenge of breaking everything down, was not only

the impending storm and darkness of the space to see but that I was alone. Truthfully, it felt terrible and personally defeating.

I had to dismantle all the set up the exhibit, including the prints on the canvas partition I used to hang the bulk of the artwork. I was using the partition the next day at the Green Fair and needed the surface to blank. The gusting wind made for a challenge when I was loading up the cargo van, which was parked in the Bogart Court area. It started raining only as I was loading up the final materials of boxes and supplies I had brought for setting up. I visited Jamie at the Velvet Elvis where she acted as a consoling ear about me having to close up the exhibit alone.

She was so kind and considerate by asking if I needed help with anything else. She noted that even though, at that moment, it felt terrible to be alone after organizing and setting up an event all day that it would give me something good to write about in my recommendations to Friends of Lackawanna. It is also the exact reason that despite everyone's extreme exhaustion after the Green Fair the next day, I was persistent with our team of organizers to go out for drinks. Celebration is so important, even if it means you won't be home for another hour or so and were working all day.

## Photographs from the First Friday Event:



Attendees at First Friday exploring the exhibit.



Mixed media collages out of recycled paper from Prescott Elementary and submitted by Mrs. Annie Conflitti.  
The red wall is the partition that I purchase in order to hang the artwork.



Ms. Lori Ryan, instructor at Skyview Apartments after school program standing near the recycled themed artwork of the students.



Mrs. Annie Conflitti, teacher from Prescott Elementary and her family posing above their daughters' artwork. Release form for photograph on Page



Sculptures by the children's STEAM program at the Everhart Museum in Scranton which were brought by local artists, Michael Sorrentino.



Student from Prescott Elementary proudly showing their artwork to their relative.



Michelle Dempsey and Sharon Cuff stand next to the FOL banner hung on the window of where the exhibit was being held. Other items on the table include the donation jug, a paper on FOL's work, and a bag of jelly beans.

### NEPA Green Fair: May 5, 2018

The NEPA (Northeastern Pennsylvania) Green Fair was the first annual fair of its kind in Lackawanna County. It focused on the growing environmental movement locally and benefitted two organizations who both support protecting the environment but also the health and well-being of the community: Friends of Lackawanna (FOL) and Citizens for a Healthy Jessup (CFHJ). The Fair was also part of a 5K for Clean Air which was a race that started the festivities for the day and allowed the fair to generate donations and raise funds for FOL and CFHJ. The race started at 9:00am and the fair started at 10:00am and ran until 4:00pm.

The early phases of planning and logistics were not essentially part of this project and were completed mostly by Allison Petryk. Allison worked in securing the site where the event would take place, the guidelines for vendor fees and applications, and gaining major sponsors for the event such as: the PA Sierra Club, PA Food and Water Watch,

Peace and Justice Center in Wilkes-Barre, PA and Sustainable Energy Education Development Support.

Allison formed a NEPA Green Fair Committee which met intermittently in the fall before the initial plans were established for the event. The group continued to meet throughout the months of January through May in order to continue to help plan the event. Some members of this planning committee were members or active supports of the benefitting organizations, FOL and CFHJ, along with friends of Allison and other members. Allison's partner Bryan Dewey was also a leader in planning and organizing the event.

### **Partnerships Developed**

*Below are a list of partnerships that were made for the event through the volunteer work and outreach to community members:*

#### Exhibitors:

1. Friends of Lackawanna (benefitting organization)
2. Citizens for A Healthy Jessup (benefitting organization)
3. Peace & Justice Center (sponsor)
4. PA Food & Water Watch (sponsor)
5. Penn State Ext. Master Watershed Program- provide educational activities and demonstrations
6. Lackawanna River Association - rain barrel display
7. Lackawanna State Park Complex- rain to drain activity

8. Lackawanna County Environmental Education Center - interactive hands on display and workshop and summer camp information
9. Lackawanna County Conservation District- interactive activity on how macroinvertebrates indicate water quality and provide information and tips for water quality testing
10. Lackawanna County Sustainability Office/Recycling - recycling and vermicomposting information
11. PA Native Plant Society- educational posters, brochures and other handouts promoting increased use of native plants in landscapes
12. Action Together NEPA - voter registration, postcards, and list of events or involvement
13. Put People First PA- raise awareness around universal healthcare and provide action steps, postcards, and ways to get involved
14. Scranton Rocks- all ages rock painting activity (free)
15. Eco-Art with Nicole and Kyle – all ages activity where participants create a collective collage and write a wish for the environment

Vendors:

1. Trinity Solar – Solar panel Company
2. Journeys End Farm – Farm camp activities for children and workshops for families

3. Bear Creek Organics – organically grown, edible landscaping plants, including fruit and nut trees, bushes, and native and medicinal perennial flowers.
4. Metta Physical Fine Reiki Infused Goods - Traditional Reiki, aromatherapy, crystal healing, sound therapy and personalized Herbal and Essential oil products.
5. Eco Jarz – Mason jar accessories and earth-friendly reusable products
6. Nearme Yoga-Providing free yoga throughout the day, as well as vending a unique assortment of boutique goods, coffee, juice, tea, and Buddha bowls from their newly opened Nearme Café in Moosic.
7. Brandt Chiropractic and Wellness Center – Free massages and adjustments
8. Renewal By Andersen - A green leader in window replacement! Their products are energy efficient, made from sustainable and recycled materials, and are built to last for decades
9. Sustainable Soap Shop- soaps, honey, and homemade beauty products
10. LulaRoe with Katie Lane – clothing sales of LulaRoe products
11. Moji Life - Flameless, cordless, wax free non-toxic fragrance device
12. Artwork by Sam Kuchwara and Rachel Corby – art display and sales
13. Holistic Nutrition by Maria Petrillo- educational information and consultation
14. HaleBoppCometArt- nature inspired jewelry and art

### Food & Drink

1. Terra Preta - Farm to table food, sustainably sourced, vegan snacks all packaged in 100% compostable materials
2. Highlands Kitchen - Uses produce from their own gardens to make delicious food. They sell fresh juices, raw salads, brunch wraps w/ homemade tortillas and their own eggs, gluten free baked goods, and granola bars.
3. Kimchi Dude - Raw, health foods including their famous kimchi
4. Hot Diggity Dog- locally made hot dogs and sausages

### Workshops

1. Ecological Landscaping by Bear Creek Organics
2. Composting & Intro to Gardening by the Greenhouse Project
3. Waste Reduction by the Lackawanna County Office of Sustainability
4. Birds of Prey Presentation by the Endless Mountains Nature Center
5. Life Cycle of Gas by the Energy Justice Network:
6. Solar 101 by the Sustainable Energy Education Development Support
7. Pollinators by the Lackawanna Backyard Beekeepers

### Music:

1. Steve Werner
2. Sara Hulse
3. Dave Brown of the Dishonest Fiddlers
4. Charles Havira

5. Sweetnest
6. Rich Janov

The event also included a plethora of local donations of basket raffles. The range of items consisted of children's clothing to activities, gift certificates to local bars or restaurants, gift certificates to grocery stores, local brewery features, gift certificates to local yoga studios, salons, and spas, and passes for local attractions such as Roba's Tree Farm, Montage Mountain Water Park and Ski Resort, and Settler's Inn Bed and Breakfast.

A donation of reusable grocery bags was donated by Price Chopper grocery store which were given out to participants who purchased 10 tickets for the basket raffle. The donation provided a great incentive to purchase more tickets at zero cost for event and provided fair goers the opportunity to explore another way to take care of the environment and reduce their waste.

### **Reflection on the weeks and days leading up to the event**

The week or two before the NEPA Green Fair was very busy for me getting ready with the other activities and the First Friday Exhibit which was the day before the fair. So naturally, it was also busy for those who had helped plan the fair and who were the leaders of implementing. It had seemed though that in March and April there was a lack of collaboration and presence of volunteers to help Allison and Bryan with last minute preparations. Allison hosted a basket wrapping party for the donations we received which was the last final meeting of the committee and any volunteers. It was a nice celebratory way to also commemorate how close we are to the event. The setting was relaxed with some pizza and wine.

After that, it was the hustle. Allison basically confided in me that they didn't have much help in going forward and that anything I could do would be greatly appreciated. It was a delicate balance, but I realized and knew that the volunteers were limited for the day of the event as well as the days leading up to it. I volunteered to take care of transporting a variety items to the event early in the morning Saturday, which I picked up and loaded into my cargo van after the First Friday event.

The week before we were making signs to direct fair attendees for parking, tent spots, water stations, and workshops. On Wednesday before the event I was still creating a professional looking sign which acted as a central menu for fair goers to see the workshop times, yoga class schedule, and music performance listings. I borrowed a large a-frame board from my workplace and had it printed at a local print shop, all of which I also picked up on Friday while getting ready for my First Friday are Exhibit.

We desperately needed ways to display our signage, so I reached out to Mandi from FOL who actually lives down the street from me (something I didn't discover until this project). I thought Mandi might have FOL campaign signs steaks, the H-frame type you would put political campaign signs on only FOL's message was the word Landfill with a strike through it:



Landfill yard sign from Friends of Lackawanna.

Mandi did have a bunch of H-stakes which she let us borrow for the Green Fair in order to adhere our poster-board signs to. This is where my partnerships of the events and projects really came through. Mandi had been one of the most accessible members of FOL and I found that she was always willing to help and stayed in constant communication with me.

Leading up the event I wanted to create an art piece that was a somewhat personification of a landfill called *Trashy the Hut*. I had every intention of trying to make this, *Trashy the Hut* but when it came down to it I found it was more important to dedicate time helping those who needed it within my own partnerships. Allison had been doing a majority of the work herself, which sadly said something about the organizations benefitting from the Green Fair and their lack of integral involvement of organizing such a large event.

*Trashy* became overwhelmingly difficult to complete and work on by myself, as I extended myself to Allison and Bryan in the final weeks before the Green Fair. I felt as if my partnerships would've suffered if I was too narrowly focused on completing *Trashy*, which already seemed like an impossible task due to my inability to produce enough trash to cover a large massive interactive creative like I had originally imagined in my mind. It was mostly Dunkin Donuts cups, a few chip bags, and tons of cardboard which is easily recyclable.

In reflecting upon *Trashy*, I think I would've been better to collaborate with my partners on it. Allison and Bryan were supportive and excited about the idea, but I didn't want to ask for their assistance in building it because I did not want to burden them in what was an extremely time for them. Allison also had planned to do a compost station,

which she never got to. In reviewing their skill-set I do think they lack some of the creative energy, which I gladly brought into the partnership and organizing for the event.

The compost station was such an important initiative to bring to the Green Fair. It demonstrated a commitment to fair's mission and would engage community members in re-thinking waste, especially in the setting of large events. When Allison disappointedly brought it up to me the week before the even that she wanted to do a compost station and never got around to it, I jumped at the opportunity. It was a light-bulb opportunity for me to still do a creative interactive activity at the event, other than the children's craft I did. The frame I had originally made for *Trashy* could be used after all. I just needed to cut it down to be one side and make it into a type of frame, like a free-standing sign.

I crafted the signage and instructions for the compost station and was so happy to add a creative, waste-reducing activity to the event. It went with my capstone project very well too, and made me feel a bit better that I didn't achieve my goals of making *Trashy*. I think there is a future for *Trashy*, but it definitely needs to be a collective and collaborative process for building it.

### **Reflection: NEPA Green Fair/5k for Clean Air, Saturday May 5<sup>th</sup> 2018**

The event space was held at a very large park area, The Blakey Recreational Complex in Peckville, PA. The park hosts a football field and baseball field for the Valley View School district but also hosts part of the Lackawanna River Heritage trail. It was a beautiful spot to host the Green Fair and 5k, yet it was very spread out. The 5k started

promptly at 9:00am and was a good 10-15 minute walk to the main area where the tents and fair were.

This made it slightly difficult in the beginning of setting up for the day. I could've considered myself lazy, but I did manage to make three trips around the park in the cargo van to drop off various items I needed to place around the event. Putting the signs up took more time than allotted due to the various entrances/exits of the park. There were also multiple parking lots which made it difficult to direct or control traffic and parking. There were only three volunteers with me to do some of the set up and I needed to manage them wisely because of the expansive layout of the park. Once you sent a volunteer off to do something, they might not be back or able to find you for a good fifteen minutes. Also, not everyone moves fast or take their own initiative and likes to work closely with guidance from an organizing leader which is important when working with volunteers on the day of an event who have not been part of the planning previously.

It also made it challenging to communicate with the other volunteers and people at the 5k area, but luckily Bryan and Allison appointed each other at both points to manage the influx of vendors, musicians, and runners in the beginning. Sharon Cuff from FOL arrived around 8:00am to assist with the registration for the runners which was a huge help because of the number of runners showing up and limited number of volunteers. She was the only person from FOL who arrived at the event early to help.

Around 9:00am I saw Mandi from FOL walking around the park area with her children. We greeted each other and she asked if I needed any help with anything. At the time it was very confusing to divide up tasks to any new volunteers but I would later call

on her assistance. Shortly after the race a small number of vendors showed up to set up. This was great to figure out the map and order of the vendors as the first arrived acted as a sort of landmark, it was mostly food vendors but the solar panel guy, from Trinity Solar, was stoked and set up a professional display of panels in his tent. It was very eye-catching and he was also willing to lend me a few hands to vendors with their tents.

This was something I made sure of, no matter how chaotic it felt, to assist and offer to help vendors as they arrived. It's almost common knowledge that even if you release a map of the event, people are still going to come to you and ask you where they need to go. Memorizing the map was not something I prepared for, so those first arriving vendors really helped me get some of the order down. I decided affirmative answers and trusting my instincts with setting up was better than trying to ask or waiting to hear back from Allison and Bryan.

I always felt like we all worked in complete partnership leading up to the event and on the day of. There was a solid commitment and trust with another that I know they would always support something I did and not question or judge my input, which is why I took the stance of just directing and acting as a leader on the day of the event. Even though I made partnerships, connections, and helped plan the event I felt that I was always going through Allison and Bryan as the true leaders and organizers of the event. I wanted their guidance and approval in order to make sure it complied and stayed true to the event which was their conception.

Naturally, I do find myself to act as leader in social settings and in particular to events and programming with the public. So even if I didn't previously feel like I was a leader in organizing the fair, I shined as a leader on the day of the event and was integral

part to all the last-minute details and necessary logistics. There was something also very relatable and mutual about being in a partnership with Allison and Bryan that I didn't experience with FOL and the events I planned with them. Perhaps it could be that we are in the same age bracket but there is also an elitist feeling to FOL, as a group. I am not alone in these feelings as Bryan once jokingly stated to me that it often feel like "cool kids club".

I set up the basket raffles along 4 long tables within the pavilion space. It was a great presentation with an abundance and variety of baskets and gift certificates to local businesses. The pavilion space was very windy though as it acted as a wind tunnel and it was a bit breezy that day. The plan was to have attendees purchase raffle tickets and place them in a paper bag for the prize they wanted. The bags were not going to stick well with just duct tape on the bottom. We needed to improvise. There was a bucket with a bag of birdseed for one of the prizes to a local garden center. I knew there was river right in the park and it would be perfect to put the rocks in the bags to keep them from ripping off the table.

I approached Mandi from FOL, who by that time was standing near FOL's table area. I asked her if she could go to the river and get some rocks or maybe ask some of her children or friends' children to do it. I couldn't be sure of how the rocks were collected, but I'm almost certain she rounded up some nearby children to collect them. She ended up getting a good amount of rocks, which we put back in the river at the end of the fair.

The most difficult part of the day for me was acting as an organizing leader for the fair while also trying to run a station for an art activity with children and all ages.

Luckily, a co-worker of Allison's was interested in doing a children's activity for the fair, so she connected me with Kyle Congdon and we developed a great friendship in planning an activity. We met a few times to discuss our activity which was to be a tree collage where participants could trace their hands and put a wish on it for the earth. It would be simple and easy, but allow fair goers to reflect and leave a wish for that day.

Kyle was a great support in knowing that I was also helping with organizing the event. He created the tree out of recycled cardboard and borrowed coloring materials from his workplace, since he works in a child-care center. During the fair he managed the tent so I could attend to other duties around the fair. Often times I would look up from what I was doing and check on him, feeling somewhat guilty that I wasn't spending more time at my activity.

About two hours after the fair was started, I retreated to my station with Kyle and helped him with the activity. His partner showed up so I told him to go visit the fair and take a break for an hour since I had left him alone so much during the beginning after setting up. It was a nice break for me as well, so I had a snack and hoagie I had packed for the day. The situation of our tent was across a large grassy area, a bit away from the other vendors so it also gave me a nice perspective.

Every so often I would see someone standing for a while at the composting station before making a choice on how to proceed. It was exciting to observe this from afar and if I was a little closer I would've been able to observe what people put what compost/trash where. Towards the middle of the day I needed to empty out the buckets of the station as the trash bucket was overwhelmed with meats and non-compostable take out containers. A large amount of the compostable materials from the Terra Preta,

food vendor, was also needed to be emptied to make room in the buckets. It was an interesting balance.

The overall day was just beautiful and I felt serene at about 2:30pm when the fair was winding down or perhaps when I was just feeling my exhaustion setting in. The music was a great addition and really opened the space up for visitors who may have just been walking their dog in the park but decided to see what was going on. I continued to keep my eye on the interactions between the compost station and the trash bin next to it. I ended up putting up a huge STOP sign on the trash to redirect people to the compost station.



Above: Compost Station with three buckets for Compost, Compostable Containers/Utensils, and Waste. The poster has facts about the benefits of compost and ways to reduce your waste.



Above: Trash can with sign for visitors to look at the composting station first before throwing away. It reads: *Stop! Making waste, Make Dirt! Check Out Our Compost Station, To the right!*

Kyle and I dismantled our station a bit earlier than the rest of the tents and vendors due the fact the influx of participants had died down and that I also would need to step away again in order to help with the clean-up and closing of the event. I was amazed at the limited amount of trash or debris that was left behind from the fair as we were checking park area and space. I literally did not pick up one piece of trash, nothing! I helped vendors dismantle their tents when is easiest when you have more people to do it. The comradery was really evident as I saw other vendors helping one another and assisting in taking tents down.

I didn't even see any FOL members leave or say goodbye to them, which was a shame as I thought that they would be one of the last groups to stick around. At the very end it was just a few of us volunteers and I decided it was important that no matter how tired we were to try and get some drinks or food to celebrate. Only four of us went to a local bar and restaurant. We were all starving so it made sense to treat ourselves to some food right away. I made sure to do a cheers when everyone got their drinks and commend Allison for all her hard work and talk about how successful the event was.

I can't even begin to explain how exhausted I was and how exhausted everyone else looked, not to judge them but we were all up late preparing for the day and had been working extra hard all week. Yet, it was so important to unwind and do some celebrating with the core group of organizers. Allison had said all week "I'm going to get you drinks after all this", every time I would come through with another task completed. I continued to respond "no matter how tired we are, we're going for drinks after". We both knew how important it was for our partnership, friendship, and hard work.

## Photographs from NEPA Green Fair/5k for Clean Air



Runners for the 5k for Clean Air starting out the race.



NEPA Green Fair set-up with vendor tents and pavilion to the left. Green space in the middle was left open for yoga classes and for fair-goers to play and relax in.



Kyle assisting a child put up their traced hand and wish for the environment on the tree collage.



Michelle Dempsey from FOL addresses the Green Fair attendees and tells her stories and thanks the community for the support.



The musical group, Sweetnest, performs in the Pavilion space. Basket raffles can be seen in the background.



An example of one of the many workshops and workshop spaces.



Scranton has a group called "The Hugging Army" where they just give people free hugs. They showed up to the event just to use some of the free space and engage people in conversation and surround them with hugs.



Glamour shot of me and my Composting Station after setting it up.



Birds of Prey Workshop and Presentation by The Endless Mountain Center. The woman in the back of the frame, with the pink/red shirt can be seen holding a native hawk.

## Themes of Recommendations

This project was not comprehensive to address the organizational structure of Friends of Lackawanna but merely to recognize and review recommendations for the group's community organizing work as best seen in the types of public engagement activities hosted, sponsored, and benefiting the organization. However, I will address the organization's actions and structure in ways that it relates to my project's intention and reflection that may have allowed me to experience and be part of the organization's work during the capstone.

Through the reflections already noted in this body of work, I have developed four general themes that address the challenges and achievements of the community engagement work that was done. The themes are also specific to the type of work I wanted to achieve in order to increase public awareness for the organization. The themes also demonstrate the vision of this project through the types of events and activities carried out. I will discuss each in reference to the project in the next sections. In an attempt to highlight the key points of each theme I have separated them into sections, even though there is much cross-over that happens through community organizing work. The themes for the engagement strategies centered on:

- Partnership Building
- Community Building
- Youth Engagement
- Public Relationships and Public Engagement
- Framing Issues: Reframing Organizing for Context

## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** *Increase and expand partnerships in order to create and develop shared interests for future issues and the current issue of the landfill.*

When I had first began speaking with FOL on their weekly conference calls, I asked them what type of connections they had with community members who participant in public events or in the public area. They stated to me that they “really don’t have many connections” which was a very direct way to put it. I ensured them that they had to have developed partnerships along the way, trying to be a positive as possible. I figured it would be a good idea to outline my plan for the project and different engagement activities and share it with them in order assist in recalling any partnerships they’ve had or people they know. I assured them that sometimes just knowing the names of people would help to point me in the direction I needed go for planning the Teen Workshop and First Friday art show.

The group was in previous contact with the super-intendant from Mid Valley School District. However, the response and feedback from him was more formal and compulsory at best. At the time, the group had just recently participated in a session held at the high school to share findings with the public from a health assessment done by the Department of Health (DOH), Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), and the DEP. The feedback I received from them about this event being hosted in the public high school was that it was not publicized at a great capacity, even though FOL did request the release of publication to go out to families in the school

district by the super-intendant. They informed me that this event was not publicized by the school until the day of the event instead of weeks or a month prior.

Throughout the planning of my activities for the project, I did contact the super-intendant and school board as well as teachers in the Mid-Valley and Dunmore school district. I did not get a single response from anyone. Due to the nature of the project being a few short months I needed to move forward from this but noted it as being a lack of partnerships on behalf of the schools with public organizations and community initiatives. I even went to the school during a school day and was somewhat briefed on how busy the principle was and was prompted to leave my information and flyers for the events I was doing at the secretarial check in area.

This does demonstrate a need for youth engagement in community activities and civic responsibility on local issues. Although there might be a lack of partnerships that exist between FOL and the school districts, it encourages the support for creating such events and activities where youth can create spaces of meaning. Regardless of FOL's current mission against the landfill expansion, the platform for engaging youth is aligned with a mission that focus on a community's resilience for a better future.

Building partnerships across different sectors, with diverse institutions and actors, and community members is crucial for a grass-roots movement. If it is not clear in the reflections, FOL had under-established connections with both the Throop Civic Center and the Dunmore Civic Center. Even though the Throop Civic Center was more open to sharing their space for the sake of my project and the youth activity I was to provide in collaboration with FOL, the director of the facility was aware of the group and already had established her perspective on them. As for the Dunmore Civic Center, the

director was more closed off and less interested in my project as it was in collaboration with FOL. This presents the opportunity for further partnership to build scaffolding with community members and bridge connections for more civic participation with the communities.

Relationships, just like partnerships, are a vital part of community organizing work. Public relationships function as multi-level, transactional interventions and at the core of developing a sense of community for organizing.<sup>35</sup> The social aspect of community organizing could be understood as a way to build one's social network, connect with others, and make friends. Yet, the idea behind public relationships is that they can be much more intentional and prove that by creating respectful, civil relationships it can enable trust to be built for the broadening and expansion of support across various partnerships.

In *Cultural Democracy*, Graves explains that our community connections can define us. The grounding and growth through building relationships helps us become more socially aware and can create trust and agency in our own different communities.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, a precedent to continue working along with various partners, with differing views or even some of whom are skeptics would push us further for community engagement. FOL could experiment with the relationships that are challenging to their mission or perhaps are skeptical of their mission to develop working partnerships to create and develop shared interests for future issues or even develop further understanding of the social divides within the current issue of the landfill. Through this,

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<sup>35</sup> Christens, Brian D. 2010. "Public Relationship Building in Grassroots Community Organizing: Relational Intervention for Individual and Systems Change." *Journal of Community Psychology* 38 (7): 886-900.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid Graves, James Bau. 2004. *Cultural Democracy*.

organizers can ask, listen, and explore to help develop partnerships and continue working in the realm of shared problems as a community.

**Recommendation 2:** *Ongoing partnerships can further organizing strategies and support. Activities such as workshops, meetings, or events which are repeated can help foster relationship building, civic engagement, and help expand connections for community members.*

The struggle with the Teen Workshop for myself, was having to plan a workshop for just one occurrence. I originally had the idea that the Teen Workshop would be a vital part of the project as a reoccurring, series of workshops. I was open to the idea of doing it with different participants each time, as that was not something I could control but I had the vision that teens would be interested enough to attend two or more of the workshops.

FOL was concerned with doing more than one teen workshop, which created some resistance between myself and the group on a few conference calls. I decided to revisit it as an issue during the months leading up to the April Workshops. I had even reserved two dates for the Throop Civic Center in case they changed their interests. The problems with having multiple, repeated workshops could be due to a number of factors for the organizers of FOL: time and energy, other commitments, other events FOL were engaged in such as the First Friday event and the Green Fair, or simply the uncertainty about the success of the workshop.

As an experienced program organizer, myself, I know about this uncertainty of hosting new events or programming and whether the outcome will be successful or if

anyone will show up. This is the core reason why a reoccurring event may interest more attendees and continue to gain public attention through word of mouth, past attendees, or multiple opportunities for the public to attend or be involved. People love options and a reoccurring event gives them that, it is a clear invitation to be engaged with the community and their individual needs.

Past FOL activities have also been systematically an example of what I feel is a condition of local organizing, where events and activities happen once. Commitments to community organizing are seen through constant ways in which community members are engaged and given the opportunity to engage with one another. It allows for more collaboration, social networking, and further innovations to reach the public and spread awareness. As a strategy, it creates a more focused target to work on through capacity building in order to elaborate more objectives and activities to reach new goals.<sup>37</sup> In the case of the Teen Workshop with FOL, their focus on the strategy for getting a group of youth to lobby in Harrisburg clouded the first steps that need to come with community organizing, which was to get local youth engaged with their organization first.

This practice also seems to operate too narrowly in self-interest for the organization, rather than collective efficacy. Demonstrating open, accessible, and ethical practices in relational foundation building can instill community organizing with sense of value for one another and the community as a whole. Connecting through a foundation of shared power, transparency, cultural sharing, and socially interactive partnerships will be more meaningful and sustainable. Reoccurring events and

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<sup>37</sup> Staples, Lee. 2016. *Roots to Power: A Manual for Grassroots Organizing*. Third edition. Santa Barbara, California: Praeger, an Imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC.

consistent public presence develops social relationships through public spaces, which can also encourage place-making, capacity building for your organization, and defining the issues in a connected way through collective meaning which creates a sense of ownership and belonging.<sup>38</sup> As an organization it demonstrates reciprocity, accountability, and a commitment to sustain civic participation.

**Recommendation 3:** *Utilize conflict, public disagreement, or skepticism as a way to engage and earn understanding. Redefine community power through trust, compromise, dialogue and reflection, and collaboration.*

The actions and work of community organizing can separate agendas but in order to achieve mass civic participation, we need to develop a sense of community to reclaim power and be empowered. Peter Block, in *Community: The Structure of Belonging* states that “citizenship as the willingness to build community gets displaced by isolationism in any form.”<sup>39</sup> Isolation keep problems private instead of sharing them with others as a platform for self-efficacy but also collective-efficacy. By bringing ourselves together, as community members, we may begin to reflect on our own ideas as they reflect the common good. A connection to others and their own personal issues is what forms the social glue to act as a collective, on the behalf of the greater good.

In order to engage with opposite perspectives or skepticism as a community organizer, you must be open to change and reflection within your own perspective in order to understand the diverse convictions and identity of different community

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<sup>38</sup> Borrup, Tom, Partners for Livable Communities and McKnight Foundation. 2006.

<sup>39</sup> Block, Peter. 2008. *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. 65

members. It is part empathy part agitation, but can help to personalize the issues and arouse past fears, indignation, or possible misunderstanding about the issue. <sup>40</sup>

Motivating your organization and others to seek understanding of an issue that is facing the community, no matter what the different viewpoints, encourages breadth for persuasion and even collaboration.

It can dismantle perceived power struggles and empower community to redefine themselves. In *Cultural Democracy*, Graves' conviction that "Every community is a divided community. The fractures can be based around politics, class, belief-or simple own personality clashes" <sup>41</sup> can push us to think further about the way we interact and are with one another and the importance of community building through shared power and self-defining, together.

This idea of working together to redefine our communities and ultimately the power structures within it starts with civic participation where the self-interests moves into collective interest.<sup>42</sup> Building trust with one another as neighbors and bridging connections such as "*our children go to the same school*" or "*my parents grew up here*" helps a community learn its shared interests and therefore share in meaning. These types of networks can also function as a collaborative ownership, where the connections develop the drive in a community to better itself and make a difference in the daily life of our collective and future (children). <sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Mondros, J. B. and S. M. Wilson. 1995. "Organizing for Power and Empowerment." *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*. 22 (2): 145.

<sup>41</sup> Graves, James Bau. 2004. *Cultural Democracy: The Arts, Community, and the Public Purpose*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.

<sup>42</sup> Ohmer, M. L. 2007. "Citizen Participation in Neighborhood Organizations and its Relationship to Volunteers' Self- and Collective Efficacy and Sense of Community." *Social Work Research* 31 (2): 109-120.

<sup>43</sup> Borrup, Tom, Partners for Livable Communities and McKnight Foundation. 2006.

Bridging social capital helps community organizations develop opportunities to connect others who may not necessarily be connected, forming meaningful interpersonal relationships. When facing conflicts in organizing, confrontation should be developed as an end not means without first seeking to build collaborative relationships across diverse community members, actors, and those revered to be in power. <sup>44</sup> In order to be representative of a community organization, you must be open and willing to engage with whom you might have conflict with. It can even further demonstrate a redirection of power, with compromising to meet your opposition to resolve an issue. Fostering such relationships can also contribute to the development of a shared, deliberate democracy. <sup>45</sup>

**Recommendation 4:** *Increasing youth engagement and youth actors for a movement that examples the commitment of the organizational mission of protecting and caring for the future of the community. Engaging youth has other benefits such as participation across more networks, sustaining shared values, and longevity for the actual movement or organization itself.*

In starting the project and proposal for the capstone, I knew that I wanted to focus on engaging more youth activism and youth involvement for organizing with FOL. My perception on a present age gap inspired me to think about different ways and approaches that FOL could engage youth community members. The benefits behind an art exhibit for First Friday and a Teen Workshop were multifaceted. An art exhibit would increase partnerships and expand on the type of engagement the organization

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<sup>44</sup> Christens, Brian D. 2010. "Public Relationship Building in Grassroots Community Organizing: Relational Intervention for Individual and Systems Change." *Journal of Community Psychology* 38 (7): 886-900.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

might be familiar with. It would also encourage a presence for the issue in a public space and celebratory fashion by making children's artwork the main draw in which community members would be interested in learning more about FOL's work or expand the awareness for the group through their own type of civic engagement.

The Teen Workshop's mission was to also increase and continue a partnership with local school districts, community members, and local civic centers that have been un-reachable. It was also to instill the commitment of leading youth to be more civically engaged, concerned members of society, and equal contributors to the community. I wanted teens to know that their voice matters, which is why the title of the workshop was "*Your Voice*."

A large portion of the opposition of the landfill expansion is based on protecting and caring for the future of our community, which is referenced to being our families and children. Therefore, it is vital to engage all members of society and acknowledge the youth's awareness and insight on the civic agenda. By engaging youth in community organizing it creates spaces alternative to their schools where they can explore and rediscover self-identity and collective identity. It connects them to the outside world as well and can help them relate to greater local issues to even global issues by sharing their stories and working as a collective to be responsible to humanity and the planet. <sup>46</sup>

Engaging youth has multiple benefits to community organizing. It can draw in new families, parents and guardians, and can easily generate interest in your social initiatives. Helping to improve conditions for youth, demonstrating a consideration for

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid, Christens, Brian D. 2010.

the future of the youth, and instilling a sense of civic duty for children is something other community members, partners, organizations, institutions, and businesses like to support.<sup>47</sup> Building a base of initiatives specifically geared towards engaging and providing opportunities for youth to express themselves and create meaning and impact in their communities are ways that organizing can shift biases, gain support, and also recognition.

Keeping youth as active collaborators with other adults may also inspire them to do the same with their peers and parents or guardians and family members. It can help build skills for confidence, problem solving, and develop a passion for different causes. Which is why group work with teens and adults was the platform for the Teen Workshop I implemented. I wanted to reinforce and illustrate to FOL how working together as a community means including all ages and meeting others where they are at. Building a base of teen and youth volunteers to act as leaders would also be a great way to inspire others to become involved and would increase awareness of the organization as a way for youth to become involved in the civic agenda and communities where they live.

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<sup>47</sup> Borrup, Tom, Partners for Livable Communities and McKnight Foundation. 2006. Pages 95-102.

**Recommendation 5a:** *Develop different ways of framing the issue in reference to context and community. Increase public awareness and access to these various forms of framing on the issue.*

**Recommendation 5b:** *The importance of focusing on one singular issue may deter involvement, engagement, and can shorten the sustainability of the organization.*

Framing is comprised of different dimensions that can illustrate a current sociopolitical context, local cultural defining, and variables in the way a community functions in its identity and practice. Framing is defined as “the act of filtering or bracketing reality to guide attention.”<sup>48</sup> It is important utilize different methods of framing for mobilizing communities into action and participation. Without carefully and strategically framing an issue it can lack social momentum for support and can even become lost or misunderstood, triggering one’s own interpretations that people bring through their own means of communication, language, beliefs and ideas. This is why framing with context, intent, and objectives in mind is a vital part to organize communities and influence ideologies to build a movement.<sup>49</sup>

The idea behind framing for public engagement first developed in planning the Teen Workshop. I made it evident and crucial when planning and collaborating with FOL that the teens would decide what issues they wanted to work on for the workshop. Re-framing and looking at issues in a holistic way can increase support for your organization. It can help develop a multifold platform for organizing. For FOL, the

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid. Giorgi, Simona, Jean M. Bartunek, and Brayden G. King. 2017. *A Saul Alinsky Primer...*

<sup>49</sup> Lakoff, G. 2010. "Why it Matters how we Frame the Environment." *Environmental Communication* 4 (1): 70-81.

opposition of the landfill expansion is focused mainly on increasing oversight and policies for industry that can threaten the local prosperity as the county is deemed an environmental justice zone. Through the designation of Lackawanna County being an environmental justice zone, FOL focuses on environmental degradation, local human health, and economic and community well-being.<sup>50</sup>

The focus of this issue of KSL's Phase III expansion is not necessarily understood by the public. I know, myself in working on this project, even was not clear at the organization's target for opposing the expansion. With the target being the DEP in order to increase policies and prevent the expansion from happening it is evident that public engagement is needed to also target the DEP in order to truly represent and act in the interest of the public. Therefore, it could benefit FOL to make this clear by encouraging actions or directing public action that is focused strictly on calling on the DEP.

Success can be generated by the cohesion of imperative goals, which FOL's overlying mission as an organization has but their public understanding lacks coherent messaging in the tasks needed to achieve their ultimate goal of preventing the landfill expansion to happen. It is important to have multiple frames but in the context of immediate action, the narrower the messaging the better it will be understood to the public at wide.

The use of framing also presents itself within the organizational structure and mission. With FOL being a community focused, driven, and centered organization they must review the structure in which they seek to achieve their overall goals and

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<sup>50</sup> Friends of Lackawanna. Harms Benefits Analysis. June 26, 2015.  
[https://issuu.com/friendsoflackawanna/docs/friends\\_of\\_lackawanna\\_harms\\_benefit](https://issuu.com/friendsoflackawanna/docs/friends_of_lackawanna_harms_benefit)

objectives. Working on policy, court proceedings, and a legal framework is one way that the organization has carried out action for their goals but they have had a significant number of short-comings when it comes to the mobilization and public engagement of their issue.

This prevents others from perceiving their mission and objectives clearly. It can also illustrate a type of power or acting in self-interests as opposed for the good of the community, which transforms how the issue is framed by the public. Self-interest and power are synonymous with each other in organizing as Alinsky determines in *Rules for Radicals*.<sup>51</sup> If either are not used appropriately, or the framing of their issues and messaging is not clear it can contradict an organization's means to bring communities together to share power and find common ground.

Framing within context can also deliver different messages to different groups as well. In the context of engagement with families and youth, FOL can demonstrate the framing for their overall mission to protect local communities and ensure the ability for all members to thrive and prosper, together. This where FOL could practice a balance of reframing the opposition of the landfill to encompass ideas around protecting the environment or taking care of the health of community members. FOL could also provide insight and knowledge through public engagement about smaller, related issues that threaten a community's agency or cause it harm.

Lastly, framing is conveyed through language and in the context of social movements it can be slogans or phrases to convey meaning for an organization's mission

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<sup>51</sup> Alinsky, Saul David. 1989. *Rules for Radicals: A Practical Primer for Realistic Radicals*. Vintage Books ed. Ed. New York: Vintage Books,53.

and the issue. ‘Repertoires’ are very much part of social movements and FOL has coined the phrase “*Don’t Dump Our Future*” to represent their mission. I do believe the use of this framing can encompass both the issue of the landfill and also uphold the movement’s vision for a better future for the community. Although such ‘repertoires’ can permit social movements from being ‘multivocal’, to employ different meanings,<sup>52</sup> they can create distinct identities for an organization and their mission.

### Conclusion

My initial vision for my capstone project involved planning and implementing ideas such as public performances, especially around the creation of an art performance piece, *Trashy the Hut*. Trashy was to be a personification of a landfill, which could be mobile and start the conversation in a very public space about the community’s landfill and our own wasteful habits. *Trashy* wasn’t a new concept but was something I would often think about when reading about the opposition against the landfill expansion and news from city council meetings. What if I just showed up to these countless meetings, posing as a big pile of trash? This was the combination of artists and activist that was influencing my work and plans.

The project ended up being more about the processes of creating and uplifting partnerships through community organizing (and the arts in general). While my original vision was to create separate pieces of art, which would engage community members by my singular instruction, I eventually discovered that I could not act effectively to certain create aspects of this project alone. Planning and coordinating with different partners

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid. Benford, R. D. and D. A. Snow. 2000. *Framing Processes and Social Movements*.

became clear indicators of how engagement on the ground works. I learned that the aspects of the work can only move forward with the help of others.

My failed attempt to create *Trashy* was a combination of weighing what my time away from collaborative projects might do to the rest of my team's work. It also demonstrated a greater need for group engagement in creating future ideas, art performances, and demonstrations to be at the very beginning of conception of a project. Envisioning exercises would have been a great way to engage my partnership for sharing future visions and establish a sense of commitment or interest in my project or the work of engaging the public under FOL's mission.<sup>53</sup>

I found that my purpose and intention for my project's goal to community organize for FOL and provide interactive, engaging events took precedence over my own personal goals, like that of *Trashy*. I was focusing on building partnership for FOL through the project events that I forget to build partnerships for myself in order to achieve a goal of mine that clearly would've been impossible to accomplish alone, especially given the short duration of the project.

In reference to the struggles I had in developing more support for myself, I tried to balance myself as a community worker navigating through the various partnerships I was creating for the project and FOL. The project encompassed three different activities, which was a lot to balance and even made FOL overwhelmed. Some of the lack of support that I felt from FOL was due to the difference of limited commitments to various events I was planning. Often because I was operating solo, I would seek FOL's

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid. Borrup. *The Creative Community Builder's*. 2006. 188-200

approval, opinion, or input on the planning of each event or partnership I was building. This structure created a different dynamic of working together that was more top down, even though I did feel like I had the agency to carry the project in the direction I had originally intended and not deviate from any original plan too much.

This imposed leadership from FOL was presumably due to a few variables: I was not active in their group before and they knew I was doing this as part of a school project, FOL's members were too busy to take on more action focused roles, or this is how the organization functions with partners or how they are unaware of how to fully collaborate with partners. I think it could very well be a combination of all these factors after reviewing and reflecting on my experience and the experience of building partnerships from outsider and from within the FOL perspective.

I do believe that it impacted the organization to see what it takes to put on a First Friday event, as something they were highly interested in and have always wanted to be involved in. Most of the work though, was done solely by myself which represented a lack of commitment to community organizing on a grander sense for the organization. It seemed like the opportunities to help and assist with the project, planning, and implementation often came very late before an event was about to happen. Although I felt supported morally from FOL, I lacked active support in implementing and disassembling the events, as best demonstrated by the sad lonely clean-up of the First Friday event that I experience.

My project's themes and reflection on those themes about the work I did demonstrates this constant involvement that is necessary for successful community organizing. It's not something you do on the side or when you have free time, as an

organization and representative of a movement, you are constantly working at networking, building partnerships, and sharing your story to frame the issue. I do believe that the members of FOL have this, but only to the extent that it operates within their close knit circle.

The type of leadership I felt when working directly with FOL was different than when I worked on the NEPA Green Fair with Allison and Bryan. The leadership was shared and our partnership involved much more open communication and trust with one another. This trust also translated in the responsibility and accountability we each had in making the NEPA Green Fair successful. We relied on one another as a team. I found that with the First Friday exhibit in particular I did not receive this same feeling of accountability from FOL's members for the event. However, I did feel support and encouragement for the Teen Workshop, as several FOL members came or stayed the entire time of the program.

With the landfill expansion proposal still being in limbo and FOL's work on this issue, they need to build more partnerships and continually work on engaging the community. I do question the sustainability of the organization in reference to once the decision of the landfill expansion is made. I have only been in contact with the organization a few times after my project's events have ended and there has been no talk about planning for future opportunities together. At times, I was wondering if this was the direction that they wanted their organization to take or not. The group's impact on policy and zoning appeals to prevent the expansion from happening is a very important aspect contributing to the civic agenda and betterment of your community. I just question their intent and commitment to being a community organization bigger than

the issue of the landfill and being thoroughly, publicly involved with community thereafter.

The sustainability of FOL relies on the transition from landfill to other environmental justice issues in the greater Scranton area. In order for the movement on the opposition of the landfill expansion to also become a transformational effort to community policing on public policy and city ordinances, community building is vital. Block explains that engagement for community is crucial in developing the conversations and shifts to make a community restorative, as a “possibility to be lived into.”<sup>54</sup> Therefore, public engagement and collaborative partnerships are needed to build a resilient community that choose possibility over problem solving.<sup>55</sup> Creating structures that bring together community members to have conversations in defining, sharing, and healing.

Framing an environmental justice movement within the context of Cultural Sustainability represents the work of community organizing where a community seeks to achieve, practice, and maintain or sustain their identity and power. The concepts between community, culture, and the environment provide a rich and diverse approach to the complex work of cultural sustainability. The intersection of environmental sustainability and cultural sustainability can be practiced through the balance of interactive community connections and personal narratives that uphold the value for framing an environmental issue. Understanding the power of local knowledge in order to help communities generate and use this knowledge is the process of community

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<sup>54</sup> Block, Peter. 2008. *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. Page 53.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

organizing.<sup>56</sup> Gatherings, often involved in movements, provide citizens the opportunity to explore interventions and collaborate on proactive solutions to make their community better and to define or redefine their values, identity, and the framing of an issue.

The recommendations of this project could help FOL rethink their tactics and structures for developing more partnerships and possibly inspire them to engage the public at a very timely occasion as the community awaits the DEP's decision for the landfill's proposal. It is my hope to contribute to the longevity of this organization, as I would like to see FOL expand its mission, membership, public engagement and become a foothold for which community members find ways to utilize the power of their collective voices in order to influence policy. I believe that the greater Scranton area could benefit from an environmentally focused organization, such as FOL, to continue working together to better communities and the environment through civic action and participation.

Although FOL have certainly led the movement of the opposition against the KSL expansion, there is something greater needed for the community in order to organize, mobilize and begin acting on the injustices happening in their own community. Leadership can be important, but more importantly is a leader-full movement that is representative and reflective of community members to build new frameworks for confronting the issues that most impact them. When community organizing is rooted in responsibility and commitment, the power and autonomy of individual community

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<sup>56</sup> Jobin-Leeds, Greg, Rinku Sen, Antonia Darder, and AgitArte (Organization).2016. When We Fight, We Win! Twenty-First-Century Social Movements and the Activists That Are Transforming Our World. New York: New Press. Page 137-145.

members transforms into interdependent communalism.<sup>57</sup> As Block states, “The world does not need leaders to better define issues or to orchestrate better planning or project management. What it needs is for the issues and plans to have more of an impact, and that comes from citizen accountability and commitment. Engagement is the means through which there can be a shift in caring for the well-being of the whole, and the task of leader as convener is to produce that engagement.”<sup>58</sup>

This project’s goal was to develop and implement various ways to engage citizens and community members in order to demonstrate the power of collective gathering and community building through partnerships for Friends of Lackawanna. There is power in numbers and unshakeable power in community. Leading one another, together, is how community members can overcome injustices and maintain the gratification that civic participation can offer a collective body. By working through partnerships and public engagement with one another it can instill one with the commitment and accountability willing to care for all, as a whole, without any expectations or promise of reward.<sup>59</sup> The reward is in the belonging and building of a community, in order to progress and sustain.

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<sup>57</sup> Block, Peter. 2008. *Community: The Structure of Belonging*. Page 54.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* Page 87.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* Page 71.

## Glossary of Acronyms

ATSDR- Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

DEP – Department of Environmental Protection

DER-Department of Environmental Resources

DOH- Department of Health

CFHJ- Citizens for a Healthy Jessup

FOL- Friends of Lackawanna

KSL- Keystone Sanitary Landfill

NEPA- Northeastern Pennsylvania

TPOA- Throop Property Owners Association

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Promotional Flyers and Materials for Events, created by Nicole Guzenski

# YOUR VOICE

## YOUR STORY YOUR COMMUNITY



A Free Teen Workshop to talk about issues that are affecting you and your community. Learn how to use your story and art to share your message.

**Sunday April 29th**  
**1:30-4:00pm**

**Throop Civic Center**

500 Sanderson St. Throop, PA 18512

**Free  
Pizza**



Friends of  
Lackawanna



**Register by April 22nd**

**Text or Call**

**570-483-8345**

**YOUR VOICE**  
**YOUR STORY**  
**YOUR COMMUNITY**

**ABOUT  
THE  
WORKSHOP**

This is a free workshop for teens to work on issues that are affecting them and their own communities.

The workshop will help students to narrow down issues, using what they know and experience in their communities. They will learn how to develop their own stories and amplify their own voice to raise awareness and interest on the issues that are the most important to them.

Using narrative techniques, art, and collaborative skills students will learn how to develop ways to engage others in generating solidarity and compel action.

For more information or to get involved, please contact  
Nicole Guzenski  
[nguzenski@goucher.edu](mailto:nguzenski@goucher.edu)

# Earth & Art

Frist Friday Scranton • May 4th

5pm at Bogart Court



An Art Exhibit about Community,  
the Environment, and our Future.

featuring artwork from children and teens,  
interactive displays, and actions steps for protecting  
the Earth and keep our communities sustainable.



Friends of  
Lackawanna

# Call For Artwork!



## Earth & Art

An Art Exhibit  
about community,  
the environment,  
and our future.

Frist Friday Scranton

May 4th ~ 5pm

Bogart Court

# Call For Artwork!

Submit artwork made by children or youth for a May First Friday Exhibit centered on the environment. Submissions can be 2D or 3D. Artwork could be made of recycled materials, collages, paintings/ drawings of nature. Please no large pieces (preferably under 11x14) and no heavy frames or objects.

Indicate the child's name, age and title of artwork.

Submit By: Saturday April 28th



Friends of  
Lackawanna

Drop off at: The Velvet Elvis  
523 Bogart Court, Scranton, PA  
18503

Questions or problems  
dropping off?  
contact Jamie at 570-878-1722

## Consent Forms for Photographs

GOUCHER  
— college —

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I Anne Conflitti, hereby grant to *Nicole Guzenski* the following rights in connection with the photographic materials for use as part of the work surrounding the capstone project proposed by *Nicole Guzenski*.

As a parent or guardian of, Jean Marie + Lucy, I hereby consent to the use of photography taken during this capstone project to use as a part of this research project. I further understand and grant permission to *Nicole Guzenski*, a student in the Masters of Cultural Sustainability program of Goucher College.

Additionally, I grant *Nicole Guzenski*, at no cost, the right to produce, present, and display research collected as part of her graduate school portfolio for the sole purpose educational use.

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Parent/Guardian Signature Anne Conflitti Date 6/19/18

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570-561-7580

Goucher Student Signature Nicole Guzenski Date 6/19/18

Printed Name Nicole Guzenski

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As a parent or guardian of, Daniel + Matthew King, I hereby consent to the use of photography taken during this capstone project to use as a part of this research project. I further understand and grant permission to *Nicole Guzinski*, a student in the Masters of Cultural Sustainability program of Goucher College.

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ACCEPTED AND AGREED

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 Parent/Guardian Signature Daniel King Date 6-20-18  
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