



## Local Site Coordinators on Being a Local Site Coordinator

**Jane Fogg, Des Moines:**

“I’m a connector, an organizer, a broker who takes an opportunity from Casey and interprets it to the local folks.”

“The ability to carry the spirit and message of Making Connections is the most important element to performing the work well.”

“There will be a time when the site coordinator role no longer exists, and if I am successful I will work myself out of a job.”

**Fred Blackwell, Oakland:**

“I want to make sure that all the folks who are consultants or staff members working on Oakland Making Connections have a feel for what’s going on and a sense of continuity.”

“Essentially the way things are working out now, I have a lot of STL responsibilities without being the STL. Bart is still the person at the foundation who is ultimately accountable for the delivery of Making Connections work in Oakland.”

“I don’t think Making Connections would be where it is without somebody on site to tend to the day-to-day matters, to give people access to the foundation, to give the foundation access to key stakeholders, to have a more significant day-to-day presence. It would take a lot longer without a local site coordinator. The role is absolutely critical.”

**Cec Ortiz, Denver:**

“Surround yourself with smarter people. You need a diverse group of people around you that don’t just talk to you the way you would talk because that is what is critical for new ideas.”

“The answer sometimes is not the answer when you walk in. It’s part of building the relationship. You must go in very humbly with all of your limitations as an initiative.”

*From interviews conducted with site coordinators during Spring 2003*

**REFLECTIONS**

on Making Connections





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**Shannah Kurland, Providence:**

“We have a lot more room than I expected to decide how this project works. We have the chance to shape Making Connections on the ground. We can influence the operations, and that helps determine what the content is.”

“The lead with ideas, not with money part... ironically, I think it's the people without money who've picked it up the most.”

“The partnerships—that's hard. A lot of the Phase One strategy was like dating, taking people out to dinner on a grant-making level and getting to know them.”

**Theresa Fujiwara, White Center:**

“It's part of my job to interpret what the community wants because, in the bigger picture, that's what Making Connections wants to do: empower the local community.”

“The whole racism factor is just insidious in all this stuff. If you don't hit it head on and you're working in a multi-ethnic community, you won't really get at true community building.”

**Lena Hackett, Indianapolis:**

“You have to have respect at all levels of the community. You can't be a newcomer... you have to be able to pick up the phone and call folks.”

“It can be very tempting to follow the path of least resistance when implementing the work rather than working through the neighborhood politics and culture. The long-term benefit is much stronger when the neighborhood's time frame and pace is honored.”

“While the Foundation says it wants to do its work differently, we are all learning what it means to actually do it differently. When people are pressed to get their work done they do it the way they've always done it. It takes a lot of time and energy to change the way you work.”

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