

Leadership Academy Project Abstract
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My goal was to collect oral histories from our residents, along with the history of Homewoods, with the intent of using the stories to bolster community spirit, create a marketable sense of core values, and tie our mission to our day-to-day operations. While I had devised my own structure for collecting the stories, I eventually found that my project was overly ambitious given the time and resources I had available to me.

When given the opportunity to work with another organization who specialized in the collection of oral histories, I decided to put my project on hold. Instead, I volunteered to help facilitate the program, recruiting elders from our community, coordinating meetings and materials, and keeping the peace between our residents and the organization's volunteers, as the volunteers weren't familiar with the norms of the community. I also served as a volunteer, collaborating with a resident to record his stories.

In order to be successful, I had to remind residents, staff, and volunteers about the desirable results of the project, and take responsibility to deal with conflicts and hurt feelings immediately. I also had to encourage the elders participating in the program to stick it out, as they often felt that they didn't have worthwhile stories to share.

The program culminated in a theatrical reading of the stories for a community audience. We participated in a press release for a local newspaper, and as a result the theater was full to capacity. The stories were courageous and honest, and elicited an outpouring of support and encouragement for the participants. Despite not being the program of my design, it fulfilled the original goals of my project.