

Margie Dumas
Community Innovator

There's
power in
Possibilities



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hello!

Hello, Cìao, Bonjour, Shalom, Hola. No matter the language, "Hello" is a welcoming word. At Possibilities, we want you to feel welcome. You could say that we are in the welcoming business. With years of research and experience, Possibilities program is full of meaningful ways to communicate "We are glad to see you. You are a part of our community."



When you think of people in your life, usually the ones who helped you create meaning were those who welcomed you and were glad to have you be a part of their own lives. At one point in our society, we would never have thought about if people felt welcomed and a part of community. Our communities were close knit and did not change very much.

Possibilities

Connecting People. Changing Communities.

Today, we have neighbors who move often and relatives who live thousands of miles away. Where do we go to feel safe? When do we learn and practice

values and principles that create healthy communities? Where do we get motivation to be the change we want to see in our world? For hundreds of Oklahoma City residents, the answer is Possibilities. We welcome you and hope that Possibilities feels like a place called home.

Why Possibilities, Inc?

Possibilities connects people to change communities. This may or may not sound like a big deal to you. Think about the last time you watched the news or read your daily paper. There are stories upon stories of how we, as people, have trouble living and working together. Whether it's a family, school, neighborhood or other type of community, we are often bombarded with stories of people living in fear, anger and isolation. It can be easy to doubt people and our communities. Imagine that you are on losing sports team and you are playing the best team in the league. It's easy to say, "Let's go beat this team." But, in our minds, we still see ourselves as a losing team.

In the midst of these stories, there is a little building located at 621 NW 20th Street in Oklahoma City where groups of very diverse people gather, work together and help our community become a better place to live. Possibilities helps build a winning spirit in people. No matter what has happened in our lives, when we are willing to try, we can accomplish things we thought were not possible. People walk into Possibilities and all of a sudden they are laughing, telling stories and listening to people share the changes they are making in the community. Through connecting with others, individuals start seeing themselves as a person who can make a difference.

At Possibilities, we commit to you and people like you who want to make this world a better place. We teach tools that build confidence, help people work with others and achieve community change. We walk side by side with you and help you go to work on your dreams for community. Connection is our most powerful tool to create change that is supported from within.

POSSIBILITIES, INC.

621 NW 20th St. • Oklahoma City, OK • 73106 ❖ PO Box 60254 • Oklahoma City, OK • 73146
405.525.3131 ❖ www.possibilitiesinc.org

President's Message



"The last year has presented many challenges for the not-for-profit sector all over the country. Oklahoma, while less affected, is by no means immune to the impact. I am proud to say that the dedicated staff of *Possibilities, Inc.* has been more than up to the challenges they have faced, and proactively employs creative methods to support their work.

Now, more than ever, it is essential that our organization continue its highly successful community building work. Communities in our city are feeling the pressure of the economic environment, and need the mentoring, training and support to lead their neighborhoods, schools, communities and businesses through these trying times. Because *Possibilities'* focus is on **lasting change**, our program by necessity is long-term in nature. Funding received is deployed into current projects for our latest community innovators, but perhaps more importantly into support of the community work of those who have already been trained by *Possibilities*. It is this support that allows community changes to become permanent, rather than requiring assistance from various charitable organizations again and again.

Many of you have devoted your time and financial support to our organization over the years, and for that we are most appreciative. Please join in the continued support of the lasting work being done by *Possibilities*, so that we may facilitate ongoing community development and provide assistance to those who care enough about Oklahoma City to lead others in the improvement of the places where they live, work and play."

Lucy Fritts

American Fidelity Assurance Company
President, Board of Directors

Values & Principles

Dignity

We believe in the worth of each person.

Participation and Inclusiveness

We believe local people have the solutions to local problems & every person is a part of the solution.

Growth

We believe success and failure give opportunity to learn.

Responsibility

We believe people support what they help create.

Service

We start where people are and join their journey.

Trust

We believe people function best when they feel safe.

Integrity

We believe our success depends on our actions matching our words.



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CHAMPIONING THE POWER OF POSSIBILITIES



Uniting people in disadvantaged communities to generate lasting, positive change - that's a noble goal. It's also the daily mission for the Possibilities group. That's why Chesapeake is a proud sponsor of the "Unlimited Possibilities" luncheon and the organization's tireless works. Their recognition as a model program nationwide is no surprise, because they continually make the implausible possible.



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Mission:

To strengthen the ability of people to work together for community change.



A Brief History of Possibilities

In response to the goal of “strengthening families through neighborhood based systems, *Possibilities* originated as an initiative of Central Oklahoma 2020, a 1994 planning process led by Leadership Oklahoma City, the Oklahoma City Community Foundation, and more than 90 citizens from all walks of life. Established in 1995, largely due to the efforts of founding president, Linda Lambert, *Possibilities* has become one of Oklahoma City’s leading sustainable community initiatives, having evolved into a unique organization that builds capacity in individuals and groups “**to strengthen the ability of people to work together for community change.**” *Possibilities* builds local community initiatives and facilitates citizen-managed projects in declining areas to create a sustainable Oklahoma City. *Possibilities* specializes in engaging citizens at the grassroots level where the power of cooperation, creativity and community can be leveraged to create lasting change. *Possibilities* is recognized as a model program among only 31 acclaimed sustainable communities initiatives across the nation (Portney, 2003).

Possibilities works where communities make an invitation for partnership and it is a good fit for the mission. Historically, work has centered around the inner-city of OKC within 95% low-to-moderate income areas. *Possibilities* partners with over 40 schools, neighborhood associations, business districts and other civic groups to improve their communities.

Oklahoma City’s inner-city neighborhoods have problems consistent with urban areas across the nation such as poverty, crime, declining properties and struggling schools. Rather than helping low-income residents take on economic and social challenges, the very policies put in place to tackle problems lead to dependency on external resources and expertise (Hilderbrand, 2002). *Possibilities* specializes in engaging citizens at the grassroots level where the power of cooperation, creativity and community can be leveraged to create lasting change.

Each year, *Possibilities* trains 20-40 grassroots leaders in more than 40 of Oklahoma City’s most challenged neighborhoods. More than 160 people have completed *Camp Possibilities*, the organization’s intensive, annual, yearlong training program. These trained leaders continue their grassroots efforts, creating stronger families, safer neighborhoods and economic growth throughout Oklahoma City communities. *Possibilities* provides ongoing support to trained leaders to carry out community change initiatives in their own communities.

Possibilities is a United Way partner agency.

Say "hello" to North Highlands/Estes Park

The North Highlands/Estes Park Neighborhood in NW Oklahoma City historically has been plagued by crime, often achieving the highest crime rate in Oklahoma City. Gang violence, drugs and poverty are prevalent. Possibilities Community Innovators are not strangers to these issues; in fact, program graduates have tackled similar issues on the NE side of Oklahoma City. Through relationships built at Possibilities, Community Innovators worked together to replicate a successful 1st Annual Picnic in June with the motto, "Come meet a neighbor and make a friend" to kick off a neighborhood association membership drive.

The event was held in the neighborhood park, and organizers worked all day to set up the event. The day was very successful, attracting more than 300 people of all ages. Attendees enjoyed hotdogs and other snacks. Kids played in a moon walk, got their faces painted, played in the water park and signed up for a local football league. Adults enjoyed music, met their neighbors, played dominos and were introduced to and invited to participate in the neighborhood association.

To some, an event like the picnic may seem nice, but rather insignificant. However, for this community, this event

held quite a bit of significance. This community picnic took place among several homemade memorials in the park, silent reminders of lives lost from violence. Police officers, firefighters and residents interacted in a peaceful environment, without the trauma that usually accompanies such visits. A gang task force made up of ex-gang members attended the event, sending a strong message to all that this gathering was nonviolent, helping to identify any potential trouble and helping keep the event safe. Feeling safe in the neighborhood park is something that many take for granted, but is not commonplace for all neighborhoods.

The impact of that June day could be felt by all in attendance. Neighbors' meeting neighbors, residents and children feeling safe while playing in the park - seemingly simple occurrences such as these help people to begin to discover what is possible for their community. This event marked a beginning for these residents. They are creating the community changes they desire, and they are doing it themselves.

