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Memorable Fall GreenRise Moments



[ICA Solar Launch & Share Fair - Watch the Video!](#)

After much anticipation, on September 24th, ICA GreenRise celebrated the launch of 485 solar panels with a fun-filled event. The event, 'GreenRise Goes Live,' included over 30 Uptown organizations, local food trucks, and the Old Town School of Music's jam band. The day commenced with notes from ICA GreenRise building manager Lesley Showers, an impassioned address by ICA Executive Director Terry Bergdall, and words of affirmation and congratulations from City of Chicago's Chief Sustainability Officer Karen Weigert, and Alderman James Cappleman.

Each speaker shared a unique perspective on the event, capturing the significance of the solar project for the ICA's mission through reducing the energy dependence of a landmark building and setting an example of sustainable possibilities within Uptown and Chicago.

After the ribbon cutting, guests and Uptown organizations connected at the share fair. Over 30 organizations spanned various services, including health, social justice, intentional community, and more. ICA staff has already been informed of new collaborations sparked by networking at the event and anticipates many more relationships to follow.

The rest of the day, ICA's office space was open for tours which featured integrated plant

life around the building, a view of the rooftop garden and solar installation, and some of the great conference spaces ICA has to offer. Folks gathered outside for some great food and conversation during the lunch hour, and colleagues and staff celebrated the day with reflection and watching segments of the panels on the evening news!

Since the solar launch, the building has garnered even more attention. During the Retrofit Chicago Commercial Buildings Initiative Reception and Awards Ceremony, the ICA GreenRise was recognized for its solar installation. The following weekend, ICA GreenRise participated in [Open House Chicago](#) in the sustainability trail, and opened its doors to over 800 people. Guests were intrigued by the historic elevator doors, mail chute, and the 7th floor community.



Just Space In the City

On October 7th, members of the Chicago Sustainability Leaders Network (CSLN) and community members from across the city joined in engaging dialogue around the concept of spatial justice. The event, called 'Is it Just Space?', included an interactive panel discussion and small group conversations that discussed the relationship of space, public and private, to social justice issues. The event was collaboratively planned by ICA and Center for Humans and Nature (CHN).



The evening started with small-group discussions, each facilitated to discuss specific challenges regarding space. While the topics were varied, the report backs from each group indicated a common interest in intentionally including communities in urban planning committees and the decision making process. The initial small groups then fueled the direction of the panel discussion which featured Julian Agyeman (Tufts University), Michael Bryson (Roosevelt University), Melanie Eckner (Uptown), and Orrin Williams (South Side).

Book-ending the panel with audience participation created a space for group ownership of ideas and community expertise. In the final discussion, the group imagined furthering the conversation through a series of events and spaces that would be dedicated to greater community ownership of space and decision making.

If you missed the event, but want to stay informed or learn more about dialogues that will follow, sign up for the CSLN mailing list [here](#). If you're interested in being a part of the next steps, email Jenny Hirsch at jhirsch@ica-usa.org



Detroit is Rising with ToP and the Skillman Foundation

The City of Detroit has two mottoes: *Speramus Meliora*, and, *Resurget Cineribus*, Latin for: *We Hope For Better Things*, and, *It Shall Rise From the Ashes*. A year after filing the largest municipal bankruptcy in US history, Detroit's communities are "rising from the ashes" from the bottom up, and Technology of Participation (ToP) is playing a role in promoting community ownership of renewal initiatives.

Earlier this year, the [Skillman Foundation](#) engaged Chicago ToP trainers, Dennis Jennings and Judy Weddle, to customize a [ToP Facilitation Methods](#) training for a group of partners and stakeholders working on a community renewal project in Southwest Detroit.

The group, Vista Partnership, seeks to address long-term disinvestment and economic decline in three neighborhoods spanning a 20-block area. Recognizing residents as the key drivers of change in their own neighborhoods, the project is bringing them together and creating spaces where they can turn their hopes for their neighborhoods into reality.

The project started with local youth leaders and business owners engaging residents in one-on-one and group conversations about the types of developments they would like to see in their neighborhood. The ideas are emerging; for example, one project is developing

empty lots in small scale ways such as community gardens, pop-up art events and musical performances. The ToP training will strengthen the partners' ability to maximize the impact of neighborhood meetings.

Dan Pederson, Director of the Vista Project in Southwest Detroit shared his positive experience using ToP training with a meeting of 40 veterans to develop "Park Rules" for a new park. He found the training to be "invaluable, as within 30 seconds of starting, a couple [members] of the group tried to dominate the discussion...I was able to respectfully listen and then direct us back to the question...We ended up with some great park rules that were created by the veterans present...My training helped to give everyone a voice and it did not shut out the most dominant, but leveled the volume in a way that everyone felt heard."



CTF, Judy Weddle, with participant



Workshop Method Training



Register for a ToP Training Course
Do you want to effectively help a group think, talk and work together? ICA's ToP Training Program provides structured facilitation methods to help you lead.

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Do you need a neutral facilitator? A certified ToP facilitator can help with everything from strategic planning to team building for organizations or communities.

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ICA Colleague Spotlight: Meet Damien Blanchard

How did you find the ICA?

I first learned about the ICA through my colleague, Fara Taylor. I have been here 3 1/2 years and have enjoyed my time here.

What is your role?

I am the construction manager for the ICA GreenRise. Basically, I oversee construction projects within the building; I spent a lot of time researching and managing the solar installation project. I'm also the building liaison for the 7th floor community.

What are your favorite things about the ICA?

I really enjoy the challenges of overseeing projects in a 93 year old building. The building presents a unique set of challenges due to its history and age. I also appreciate the diversity of the people in the building.

What is an interesting fact about you?

I mentor a high school Robotics team called the Chicago Knights.



Profound Journey Dialogue in Phoenix, AZ Nov. 14-16

[PJD](#) is a recasting of the foundational understandings of the Ecumenical Institute (EI/ICA) that motivated thousands to volunteer in efforts around the world, helping to transform lives and

communities for over 40 years. It's an opportunity to reflect on one's journey, pivotal experiences, and calling. It's not just a class, it's an invitation to put ideas and values to work in your life and in the world.



Shadow Rock Church in Phoenix, Arizona is offering a PJD that will explore theological concepts foundational to Shadow Rock's identity and culture. All are invited to join Shadow Rock UCC November 14-16 in Phoenix, AZ. Please contact [Pastor Ken](#) or [Karen Richter](#) for more information.
