



EVALUATION IN WHAT SPIKE LEE CALLS "CHIRAQ"

Giving Up Evaluator-Centric Control & Getting Better Data on Chicago's South Side

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American Evaluation Association Conference 2015



The Chicago Zoological Society (Brookfield Zoo) was awarded a 4-year National Science Foundation (NSF) grant to expand on an existing partnership with Eden Place Nature Center, located in Fuller Park– a severely under-resourced neighborhood on Chicago's south side.

Complementary elements in existing Zoo and Eden Place program portfolios have been strategically aligned and fine-tuned to increase **community-wide engagement in environmental science**.

For the evaluation to successfully elevate authentic community voices in a neighborhood pained by a long history of inequity and injustice, **we had to do something different**. We committed to **community inclusion, professional development, and capacity building**.



Photo credit for circular photos: Eden Place Nature Center

How might evaluators change our practice to provide greater equity & access into our field?

Could this lead to the most beautiful & meaningful data yet?



"Homicides in Chicago, Illinois have surpassed the death toll of American special forces in Iraq."
–Spike Lee's 'Chiraq' movie trailer

Photo credit: <http://www.deadlineitd.com/na/2013/04/13/deadline-x-blindfolks-72-hour-nightmare-in-roseland-chiraqyummy-collaboration/#>



Photo credit: Kate Livingston

Recruited from the community, brought on as interns, put through a comprehensive training program, given the tools, transitioned to independent contractors, offered ongoing professional development, & **set up for success**.

SCIENCES
Community
Ambassadors:
data collectors
from the
community
and for the
community



Photo credit: Kate Livingston

Live or work in Chicago?
Hire this team!
Live or work elsewhere?
Find your Ambassadors!



Photo credit: Kate Livingston

Preliminary data shows 70%+ of participants feel **more comfortable with science** and 85%+ feel **more connected to their environment**.



Photo credit: Amelia Howard



Photo credit: Troy Livingston

Next steps?
Co-interpreting data, presenting findings, & taking results back to the community.