

# When People Care Enough To Act

Mike Green

with

Henry Moore & John O'Brien

Foreword by

John L. McKnight

Reflections by

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Terry Pickett, Ted Smeaton , & Christine Soto

## A Note On Authorship

This book is the result of two collaborations. Mike Green and Henry Moore developed the approach to doing and teaching ABCD organizing that forms the basis of the book. Mike Green and John O'Brien collaborated in writing the book, which reflects Mike's learning about ABCD organizing. Except in contributions signed by someone else, Mike is the "I" in the book's first person statements.

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### Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Green, Mike, 1947- When people care enough to act : ABCD in action / Mike Green with Henry Moore & John O'Brien ; foreword by John McKnight ; reflections by Dan Duncan ... [et al.].

Includes bibliographical references and index. ISBN-13: 978-1-895418-74-3 ISBN-10: 1-895418-74-7

1. Community development. 2. Community organization--Citizen participation. 3. Communication in community development. I. Moore, Henry, 1949- II. O'Brien, John, 1946- III. Title.

HN49.C6G735 2006

361.2'5

C2006-904652-2

Preparation of this publication was partially supported through a subcontract to Responsive Systems Associates from the Center on Human Policy, Syracuse University for the Research and Training Center on Community Living. The Research and Training Center on Community Living is supported through a cooperative agreement (number H133B031116) between the National Institute on Disability & Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) and the University of Minnesota Institute on Community Integration. Members of the Center are encouraged to express their opinions; these do not necessarily represent the official position of NIDRR.

### Inclusion Press

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[www.inclusion.com](http://www.inclusion.com)

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In the companion DVD, **ABCD in Action**, you can visit five communities that have put the lessons in this book into action, see and hear Henry Moore and Mike Green present the key ideas in this book, and learn about the foundations of ABCD from John McKnight. Visit [www.inclusion.com](http://www.inclusion.com) for more information.

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### John McKnight on ABCD

## Acknowledgements

We want to thank John McKnight who has been our guide to ABCD and our friend for over fifteen years. The ideas in this book were shaped by our experiences with many people: Jody Kretzmann, the ABCD Institute faculty circle of friends, and the people we have met who are seeking practical ways to make things better in their home communities by applying the ABCD approach on “Monday morning”.

We have often talked about how we do this work for our two daughters: Henry’s daughter Morgan and Mike’s daughter Annie. We want so much that they know a community life that is truly good. Each of our daughters has known discrimination: Morgan from racism as an African-American young woman, and Annie from being labeled disabled. We are both now in our later fifties and can see ahead to our lives ending. This makes us both very much aware of the importance of contributing to the emergence of young leaders like our daughters. Time is short and people matter most.

Ten years ago Judith Snow said to Mike, “you have a book inside you ready to write.” Three years ago Jan Fitzgerald said, “You have something to say.” Two years ago, at the first Minnowbrook Inclusion Conference sponsored by the Adirondack ARC, Jack Pearpoint and John O’Brien said, “We will help you write a book and produce a DVD about your work with Henry” This book would not have happened without the collaboration of Mike and Henry to define the ideas. But Jack urged us on to really believe we could do it, and John O’Brien became the book’s conductor, with deep listening, insightful choreography, and constant encouragement as Mike struggled to write the book’s text over the past two years.

Finally, we acknowledge that in every local community ordinary people act with great courage, love and commitment to create a world where human beings can live a truly human life. We draw inspiration and knowledge from their work.

– Mike Green and Henry Moore



# Foreword

This is a book by two of North America's master practitioners of Asset-Based Community Development –Mike Green and Henry Moore. Their work has advanced the field of Asset Based Community Development by focusing on the fact that citizens are the primary asset and activators of assets in local communities.

Citizens are, of course, the producers of democracy. And strong local communities are created when citizens are also the producers of the future. They cannot be replaced. No professional, institution, business or government can substitute for the power, creativity or relevance of productive local citizens. That is why Asset Based Community Development is, in practice, citizen centered community building.

This citizen-centered guide is the work of two great citizens. Mike Green has experience as a businessman, social worker, community organizer and Asset Based practitioner. He has combined all this practice in unique Asset-Based approaches to local organizing and inclusion of people who live at the margins.

Henry Moore's inventiveness as a city official has taught institutional leaders across North America how to **lead by stepping back**. He has shown how to support and nourish local citizen action rather than control, stifle or dominate local citizen efforts.

In this book, Mike Green and Henry Moore point the way toward creating a powerful citizen-centered local democracy that solves problems, welcomes all neighbors and creates a community of genuine care. Following their path will also lead to the discovery of our personal capacity to renew our own lives by connecting ourselves to the riches that surround us. We are, after all, not people half full. We are a people whose cup runs over.

Because Mike and Henry see this so clearly, they are wonderful guides to rediscovering the assets that we can use as we grow powerful as citizens, and our democracy comes alive again.

–John L. McKnight

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