

Producing Leaders through Community Media Slide Notes (for NYLA)

1. Producing Leaders through Community Media

Administrators and facilitators of libraries and community media centers, are responsible for creating just spaces for people to access community, resources, education and opportunities. We are simultaneously managing operations, performing direct-service, confronting systemic injustice, and evolving to bridge the growing economic and digital divide. How do we cultivate a culture of empowerment, creativity and equity within our roles and relationships in ways that impact systems-level change?

How does PhillyCAM cultivate and promote shared leadership that inspires equity and civic engagement and meaningful dialogue within/across diverse groups of people?

2. Community Engagement is not a Speech

Community Engagement doesn't fit into a 1-hour, 1-way speech. It's relational/relative, conversational, and aspirational. During this session, I share some ideas for us to review, explore, and apply here together based on what's working at PhillyCAM. The goal is to offer concepts and connections that you are inspired to take back to your workplaces after this session.

3. Focus - Mindfulness Exercise

There's an African proverb that states: "resistance creates resistance". Recognize moments when you want to instinctively pushback on an idea. Conversely, notice when you feel inclined to agree with an idea or sentiment during a conversation. I encourage you to be curious, attentive, and open-minded. Set an intention for yourself to find something of value that you can take with you from this session into your libraries after the conference.

4. Wherein lies the power?

Growing and developing communities is an imperfect process. You only have control of yourself. You can't change systems overnight and you can never change other people.

5. About Me

My background, my identity politics and the navigation of my own life experiences influence my practice for connecting people and ideas in ways that inspire the evolution of human consciousness and the elevation of our social well being. I've been called a synergist, opportunity engineer, and visionary. Ultimately, I believe that free people free people.

6. You Are the Work

The work, any work, in service to building and supporting community is both an extension of and a reflection of yourself. It's a practice of becoming, of giving and receiving, that cultivates a world of relationships through and beyond yourself. It's messy, complex, nuanced, and oftentimes intangible and near impossible to manage. Know what your own lens, bias, motivations, and values are to develop a meaningful and impactful network of relationships built on authenticity, trust, and empathy. Spend a few minutes now reflecting and sharing with each other what brought you into this work and what keeps you going? What's your why?

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Share out: What was that experience like? How did it feel to share/listen?

7. About Us

PhillyCAM Info Session Video is hyperlinked

8. Quarterly Community Events

PhillyCAM hosts 4 annual events to support member engagement throughout the year.

Members are encouraged to participate in the planning process and volunteer during the event.

March = Annual Member Meeting

August = Summer BBQ

October = Cammy Awards

December = End of Year Holiday Party (*pictured*)

9. Organizational Memberships and Partnerships

Philadelphia Defender Association - Participatory Defense Hubs and Socio Bios

- Train the Trainer classes for Hub Coordinators
- Production Services for intro video

10. Connecting, Convening, Amplifying Youth Voices

Organized a city-wide showcase event and mobilizing platform for over a dozen organizations that support/train youth media artists and youth activists. Select organizations, based on their programs and initiatives that cultivate youth leadership and youth agency around social impact goals, were invited to conceptualize, plan, execute, and host this one of a kind engagement event at a local theater venue.

11. External Partnerships

We connect and convene with emerging and leading artists, teachers, leaders and technologists on various projects. For example, we see our annual involvement in Philly Tech Week as a way to democratize media and technology by increasing and broadening accessibility to immersive or emerging storytelling tools.

12. Always be Learning

Education and training sit at the center of all we do. Developing and transferring skills precedes all of our produced and distributed content. We recruit youth for classes and special projects, interns and co-ops from local colleges and universities, and train and hire our own members to help produce on in-house and external PhillyCAM programs.

13. Producers' Retreat

Our member producers in both TV and Radio attend annual full-day retreats, respectively, to increase skills and understanding of member resources, network and strengthen relationships, share feedback with staff, and co-facilitate interactives and breakouts.

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14. Feedback and Decision Making

Be intentional and strategic about the quality of your questions. We asked the TV Producers these 4 questions during an activity in their retreat. It resulted in plenty of valuable ideas for which we then review and assess for strategic alignment and capacity and recruit members to help shape and implement the process.

15. Annual Year in Review

Each year we highlight our milestones and accomplishments in a compilation video, sort of like a yearbook or lookback to memorialize our year together and invigorate our next year of co-creation and innovation.

16. Civic Engagement

PhillyCAM is celebrating its first 10-years! Here we are being recognized by the City of Philadelphia with a proclamation. We love helping people exercise their right to freedom of speech and expression with each other through the power of mass media. Storytelling shouldn't be monopolized. Cheers to 10 more years!

17. Community Engagement is a Continuum

This work is about shared ownership. Refrain and avoid making decisions about policies and programs without involving the people who will be affected by these systems. Meet people where they are to increase understanding and remove barriers.

18. Relationships Influence Systems-change

It's been said, "Expand the Definition of us. Shrink the definition of them." Community engagement is about cultivating a culture of empowerment where people consider themselves leaders in community that value co-creating toward shared and equitable outcomes. This work is a dynamic and sensitive practice that wavers between quantity and quality, tangible and intangible, pacing and progress and is never without an element of tension and conflict.

19. Inquiry is Key

Suggested questions for you to adapt and bring back to your libraries. Take the time to be clear on intentions, goals, and debrief on what's working and where the challenges are. Is your library aware of and responding to the needs of the local community? Is your library adding value to its community members while stepping up to support the need for access, equity, and justice throughout America? Identify if what is actually happening (both the intended results and the unintended results) is helping fulfill your libraries mission or if it's an uninformed or outdated system that's reinforcing systemic and institutional oppression.

20. It's Nothing Without Love

May the basis of our work and the consequence of our impact be love. Love is a creative energy force. It's being and space and practice all at once. Our evolution as a community and society is related to our willingness to allow love in all areas of our lives and hearts. To love the parts, love the whole, and to love throughout and in between.