

Continuing the Conversation

Workgroup Summary

Workgroup Name: Personal Psychology

Convener: Jane Smiley, Resident of Plymouth Harbor and Harry E. Hobson, President/CEO
Plymouth Harbor

Host: Jane Smiley and Harry Hobson

Group Participants: Harry Hobson, Jane Smiley, Hope Byrnes, Bob Carlson, Julie Cotton, Dave Goodrich, Caryl Lenahan, Gordon Okawa, Nancy Schlossberg

Summary:

The consensus of the group was that today we needed to define “Personal Psychology” within the context of the Institute for the Ages (Institute). The three key words associated with “Personal Psychology” are: *Identity, Purpose* and *Connectivity*.

Much of the discussion focused on how “newcomers” or those who have resided in the Sarasota area for many years can better connect with the greater Sarasota area. For our purpose and ease of discussion, we focused on newcomers to Sarasota and how these people can most effectively become acquainted with the many resources we have to offer. It was our opinion that once we discuss it at a local or county level, we can push it to a larger landscape. We asked how do they:

1. Satisfy their sense of purpose in a new community (i.e. perhaps this purpose relates to their current / former career or avocation)?
2. Identify the array of community resources that are of most interest /beneficial to them (i.e. the arts, human services, lifelong learning, research, marine-related interests)?
3. Connect with these resources effectively?

Ideas were generated ranging from establishing an Institute sponsored website to another form of “physical boutique” that could serve as a “clearinghouse” to acquaint people with our massive array of community resources.

The conversation then progressed to the question of, “Are we aware of the many quality (to some extent world-class) resources Sarasota has to offer? Several examples were cited. A concern was expressed that as we develop the Institute, we must make sure that we not overlook this local “inventory” of community assets. One opinion expressed was that to maximize the success of the Institute development, we must make every effort to identify these resources early and help them develop a vested interest of involvement.

Next Steps:

1. Create a SIA-sponsored taskforce to indentify relevant resources.
2. Employ “action applied research” to determine how to best connect with these programs and /or services. Part of the process would be to see how these resources are currently interconnected; and, to identity redundancies, missed opportunities and prospects for collaboration.
3. Schedule a meeting involving the key people of these organizations for strategic positioning (team development must happen sooner than later).