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Michael Jacoby Brown
training & coaching

*Helping organizations achieve their goals
through recruiting and motivating others*

Organizer's Edge ▶

Making Politics Local in New Hampshire

If "All politics is local" as Thomas P. ("Tip") O'Neil said, then why am I canvassing in the Presidential elections in New Hampshire every four years? I live in Massachusetts. Well, as Massachusetts voters know, the Presidential elections in MA are a done deal: the Democratic nominee always wins.



New Hampshire is a "swing state" and only an hour's drive north of Boston. So every two or four years thousands of MA Dems go to New Hampshire to make a difference in the election for President (and Senate and Congress).

[The New Hampshire Dems](#) couldn't be nicer. They have coffee, bagels, donuts, pizza, clip-boards and walk sheets. They are happy to see us invade. We have made a difference in many close races.

And as I've gone door in door in New Hampshire - in trailer parks, McMansions, down rural roads -- I've found some great people - people who would do more than just vote for the Democratic nominee **if someone only asked them**. They are not so hard to spot. They have that spark in their eye. They know their neighbors. They might host a neighborhood "coffee" if someone asked them. Some would go canvassing. I've often put a "star" next to their names, but there is no plan for follow up. And the

NH Dems only ask the MA canvassers to find the Dem voters, not to identify potential volunteers.

Go Local!

So, it struck me: Wouldn't it be better if the NH Dems asked the MA canvassers to ID the Democratic voters, AND and to identify potential local leaders? And then have a local NH leader follow up with them?

That way, soon it would be *New Hampshire neighbors* asking their New Hampshire neighbors to vote -- not us out- of- staters.

So I asked a friend, Jackie Weatherspoon, a former NH State Rep. what she thought. She referred me to Larry Drake, the chair of the Democratic Party in Rockingham County, in southern New Hampshire. Larry recently retired from a career with the Federal Gov't. He is the volunteer Chair of the Rockingham County Dems. He liked the idea. He then introduced me to the NH State Democratic Party Political director. They are focused on local Dem Committees, town by town. It's a big job. (There are 400 State Reps. in NH; each paid \$200 a year. Plus lots of local Town elected officials.) They welcomed the idea.

The Follow Up

It would not be so hard to train all those wonderful NH volunteers and staff to show the MA volunteers how to identify a local NH leader/ volunteer while they go canvassing, **and** then have a local NH leader follow up with those identified. You might find one or two a day. Multiply that by the thousands of MA volunteers and you have the potential to find thousands of new local NH volunteers willing to visit their neighbors.

No insult to all us MA volunteers who dutifully make the pilgrimage up north. But if "all politics is local," then let's go local. Let's find those NH locals who want to do more than just vote.

Coming soon...

It's great that we in MA have a place we can make a difference in important elections every two or four years, and it would be even better if we could find local NH people who would do more if someone would follow up with them. With leaders like Larry, we are on our way.

Feedback Welcome

We want to hear from you, your reactions, ideas, what is at the edge YOUR "envelope." Just go to...

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Michael Jacoby Brown Story

Who else you will hear from.....

We are just starting, but so far you can expect to hear what the following people are thinking:

Jessica Tang: Boston Teachers Union, AFT

George Luse of the Mass Teachers Assn,

Scott Reed with the PICO Network, ,

Cathy Howell, in Oregon and El Salvador, formerly with the AFL-CIO,

Caesar McDowell of the Interaction Institute for Social Justice,

Diana Bell of Community and Labor United,

David Hernandez of the California Education Assn,

Attica Scott, State Rep Louisville, Kentucky

Bob Van Meter with the Local Initiative Support Corporation in Boston,

Walter Davis, of the Tennessee, Health Care Coalition.

Debra Askenase, of Community Organizing 2.0,

Deb Fastino, of the Coalition for Social Justice in New Bedford, MA,

Rebecca Gutman, with SEIU-1199,

Tim Dean, of SEIU-1199,

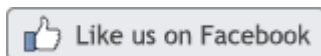
Mary Ochs, long time organizer in Los Angeles
and others, hopefully, including YOU

Other Useful Links

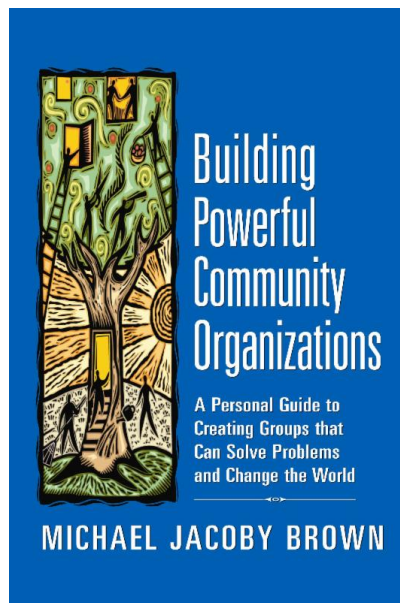
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