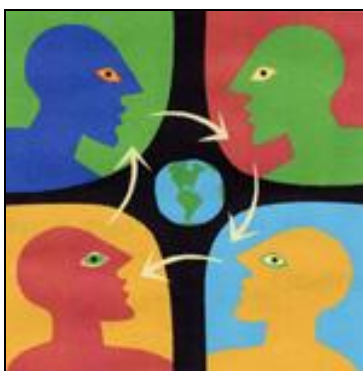


Words Create Worlds®
October to December 2009
Appreciative Inquiry Certified Facilitators



Congratulations to newly Certified Appreciative Inquiry Facilitators (AICF) **Steve Atwood, Susan Matzner, Shyrl McCormick, Kelly Wesp, Nuala C.M. Woodham and Angela Woodward**

NEWLY CERTIFIED AI FACILITATORS

STEVE ATWOOD AND KELLY WESP attended the AIFT in Las Vegas, July 2009 with trainer/facilitators Charles Miller and Kathy Becker.

FOR THE INQUIRY: Steve and Kelly worked with Southeast, Inc. Recovery and Mental Healthcare Services, which is a comprehensive community mental health and recovery services organization that began operations in Columbus, Ohio in 1978. Over the last two decades, Southeast has grown to become a multi-faceted agency employing 360 people. As a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) contract agency of the Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Board of Franklin County, Southeast, Inc. has adopted a mission and responsibility to serve hard to reach, vulnerable populations. Their mission states: "With the belief that all people have the capacity to grow and change, we provide our services to people of all ages, cultures, races, religious preferences, genders, and sexual orientations in order to enhance wellness and recovery, thereby improving families, workplaces, and communities."

A team from Southeast Inc., attended the AIFT in Las Vegas and the core group included the AIFT graduates. Steve and Kelly, in a day long inquiry with the core group, defined the positive topic as "Quality". As they began to plan their inquiry, Steve and Kelly anticipated that focusing on "Quality" could limit the inquiry which would include top level managers within the organization. The focus of the inquiry had participants examine their success and contributions as leaders and facilitators of change.

Participants in the inquiry paired off and conducted 60 minute face to face interviews with each person having 30 minutes to interview his or her partner. After the interviews, each pair reported out the life giving forces that emerged from their interviews.

* Macro Provocative Proposition – Southeast, Inc. is the premier choice for wellness. We exemplify quality and service. We facilitate transformation by our willingness to take risks, our ability to innovate, and our appreciation of diversity and autonomy.

STEVE AND KELLY REPORT: The core group has expressed a desire for a culture change in the organization. Their behavior is being expressed in more congruent ways. For example, individuals are expressing greater appreciation for each other and the gifts or strengths they bring to the process. The group supports each other through the individual and group change processes.

On an individual level, many of the members of the group have reported using AI during performance evaluation reviews, staff development, and supervision. Additionally, many have reported that they are using AI in their personal lives with their families. In essence, the group has decided to embody a holistic orientation to AI and continue to learn from the processes in which they participate.

The group process has contributed to relationship building through ongoing dialogue and discussion. Rather than going through the “steps” of AI and implementing another program at Southeast, we have examined the process, our value system, our beliefs, and our desire for change. As a result, we have moved forward as a group that has shared leadership and shared decision making.



SUSAN MATZNER attended the AIFT in Springfield, MA in 2008 with trainers/facilitators Lane Glenn and Jeanie Cockell.

FOR THE INQUIRY: Susan worked with a team of speech therapists who are part of a large healthcare continuum in New York. The organization includes two community hospitals, a rehabilitation hospital, eight physician practices, community health care and senior living facilities including independent, assisted and nursing homes.

SUSAN REPORTS: She met with the department manager to modify the generic inquiry guide and decided on paired interviews. Susan noted, what many of you do, that the time allotted was not enough for the inquiry to feel complete and that she would recommend in the future to be sure to allot enough time. This inquiry happened over several months as part of the regular monthly meetings. Susan told us, “the staff would get excited about the experience and then it was time to leave. We would pick up a month later and it took precious time to get the group as excited as they had been at the previous meeting. We also didn’t always have the same people at all meetings”.

Due to the size of the group, which was about 10 people, they did not break into small groups for the report out. Susan told us:

“when they started to share stories, everyone got excited and involved. People spoke about how they thought the interview would be corny or hokey but that they were surprised. Virtually everyone who participated in the interview process agreed that the act of being interviewed was highly affirming. People talked about how they are all so busy doing the work that sometimes they forget about the importance of being a speech therapist. People then shared stories and one of the most powerful was a therapist who worked with someone as an inpatient for a few months and then didn’t see the person again until a couple of years later, when they encountered each other at a local mall. The former patient thanked the therapist for their time, their caring and for helping them save their speech capacity”

This group decided to adapt a Toyota Production System tool of team huddles to the department. Instead of waiting for regular staff meetings, the group agreed to get together twice a week at the start of each shift for 5 minutes to provide updates and share information. One of the two huddles would focus on issues that needed to be resolved. The other would focus on what they were doing well.

Susan reviewed the modification of the generic inquiry guide with Tricia Brown and Maryclaire Hassett who attended the AIFT with her. A good reminder to look to your trainers or other participants at the AIFT to support you.



SHYRL McCORMICK attended the AIFT held at Palm Springs, CA, January 17-20, 2006.

FOR THE INQUIRY: Shyrl's inquiry was with the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur an international congregation of Catholic religious women whose primary mission is education. They were founded in Namur, Belgium in 1804. For them education is undertaken in many forms; the particular focus of the process described here was as their formal educational institutions, i.e. schools and universities that they sponsor. Sponsorship means that they are responsible for the mission and viability of their institutions, even though they themselves may not be functioning there as teachers and administrators. Most of their formal, sponsored institutions exist in the northern hemisphere in the United States, Europe and Japan.

Shyrl was the only lay person in the core group of five including Sisters from various states within the United States. They initially identified that networking would be what they wanted more of. As they began to dig deeper, they shifted the focus from the establishment of a network to the experience of networking, and these questions emerged:

- What new possibilities can we create for the future of Notre Dame education?
- What can we learn from one another?
- How can we support one another?
- What connections among us can we explore, strengthen, create?
- Are there educational endeavors that we could be doing better together than we can do alone?

All participants received a simple process booklet which gave them a 'road map' for the days of their "gathering". The booklet served as a reflection tool with core questions for each day. The theme for the first "day" was "discovery". They modified the Generic Interview Guide and had one-on-one, paired interviews. The questions:

What do we value and prize about our mission of education?

What is most life-giving about our mission of education?

What practices for sharing the education heritage and charism are a source of pride?

SHYRL REPORTS: The core group sought the endorsement and approbation of the congregational leadership for the gathering. "The leadership team liked the idea so much that they asked us to extend the invitation to Notre Dame educators outside of the United States in all of the English-speaking provinces of the congregation which include England, Scotland and Japan. Ninety-five educators responded who represented all levels of education from pre-school to university, province leadership, and the Notre Dame Virtual School (internet classes, resources and connections). All five of the members of this leadership team came to the gathering; their presence and participation gave support to the effort beyond what we ever imagined.

Shyrl has provided us with permission to share this story which you may find on our blog: <http://companyofexperts.net/biz/resources/success-stories/>



NUALA C. M. WOODHAM attended the 2005 AIFT at Malaspina University College in British Columbia, Canada.

FOR THE INQUIRY: Nuala worked with the Community Arts Council of Vancouver (CACV), a large community arts council with a long history of prominence in the art development of that community. As Vancouver matured, CACV needed to redefine its role and in 2000 it adopted a renewed mandate: *'As catalyst, partner, leader and advocate the Community Arts Council of Vancouver is dedicated to developing the community arts and building strong communities through the arts'*. While continuing to *advocate* for all the arts and be a *catalyst* for new initiatives, CACV was radically shifting its focus to the *practice* of art in community – *'the public expression of collective experience'*. Inspired by this mandate CACV launched several original and innovative projects. Among them was 'Means of Production' 2003, which focused on growing and harvesting materials that were then used to create art. CACV developed 'Creative Communities', an online resource directory for public and community art. In 2004 CACV produced a major symposium, 'Addiction in Vancouver: Community, Cultural Identity and Loss', which explored a wider context for society's pandemic of addiction.

Nuala met with Board Members of CACV in August 2007 and posed two questions:

1 What is one of your best experiences with CACV?

2 What is your best outcome for this consultation?

(Absentee members were invited to respond to these questions by phone or email.)

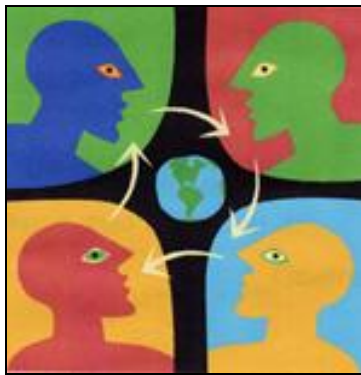
Responses to these questions fell into three areas: relationships with major sponsored projects; organizational development; and community. At the end of the meeting we set a date for the first stage of the inquiry and formed a Design Team. The Design Team met several times and, taking into consideration their own experience and the input of Board Members, developed the following positive topic:

**Increasing CACV's capacity as a catalyst and facilitator
of community cultural development.**

NUALA REPORTS ON HER LEARNINGS ABOUT SELF: I had two personal **best experiences** during this inquiry. The first was hearing the transformative stories that participants

shared in the initial session. I was moved and inspired by the courage, imagination, joy and suffering as stories unfolded and inter-related. My next best experience took place over a longer period of time as I witnessed the energy that the inquiry unleashed and the progress, in steps both small and large, that has been made since we began in 2007.

NUALA'S WISH FOR THE INQUIRY: Was to “experiment with AI processes in a complex, multi-organizational environment with deep-set issues”. **I learned** that it takes considerable courage for an organization to ‘bare its soul’ in an inquiry and I need to spend more time up-front introducing key concepts and processes, raising the comfort level of participants and creating more buy-in.



ANGELA WOODWARD attended the 2008 training in Kentucky with trainer/facilitators, Charles Miller and Jeanie Cockell.

FOR THE INQUIRY: Angela worked with a core group to define the positive topic, and to conduct paired interviews with shareholders of the organization that she worked with. We do not have permission to share this story in detail. Angela worked closely with her core group.



DO YOU HAVE ARTICLES TO SHARE?

We are looking for articles written by you for our blog. If you have an article, success story or case study, we would love to publish it on our site. We will give you full credit and use your by-line.

WORDS CREATE WORLDS – LOOKING FOR A PAST ISSUE?

You will find all past issues of Words Create Worlds, our 20th anniversary edition and stories of success on the Resources section on the [Company of Experts Blog](#). Let us know if you have a case study or success story that we may want to profile on our blog! We invite you to explore the blog and our changing website. If you would like to be a contributor to the blog, please let us know.

BRINGING TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS TO YOU – ONLINE

Company of Experts now offers workshops and trainings online! By offering customizable training solutions, cost efficient learning and training on demand, you will have the same great workshops as our face to face trainings and workshops in an online format, saving you time and money. We have partnered with Fintelo (a learning management software), which opens new doors for the Company of Experts, providing us the opportunity to design and deliver quality online programs; We can support your current staff development services.

WEBINARS AND ONLINE: The Company of Experts strength comes from those of you who influence others in a meaningful and thoughtful way. We are offering webinars that hold the same standards as our face 2 face trainings and workshops. We strive to provide timely, outcomes based and affordable learning options. If you are interested in becoming a presenter for a future webinar or online workshop, please contact [Kathy](#), I would love to hear your ideas!

We are planning our Summer and Fall 2010 and believe it or not – our Winter 2011 schedule and are looking for locations for our programs listed below. If you have recommendations, please let us know.

Appreciative Inquiry Facilitator Training (AIFT)

Our successful four-day program designed to train facilitators and more. Please visit the Center for Appreciative Inquiry for more information:
<http://centerforappreciativeinquiry.net/>

Leadership Development Institute (LDI)

A series of one-half day programs offered on-site to your leadership team. A two-day leadership program based on appreciative inquiry is also available:
<http://leadershipdevelopmentinstitute.net/>

Department Chair Institute (DCI)

The DCI has outstanding content and has received accolades from participants:
<http://departmentchairinstitute.net/>

If you would like to talk about a program on-site or if you would like to attend one of the trainings, email Kathy@companyofexperts.net or call us at (702) 228-4699. We are looking to add to our schedule currently under development.

The AIFT schedule is updated as new trainings are added. We invite you to visit our new registration page: <http://register.companyofexperts.net>. You can check out all of current offerings and register online!

Book on Appreciative Inquiry

This is the best collection of AI cases I have seen - what a gift!
Gervase Bushe, Simon Fraser University Vancouver, Canada

Stories of Positive Change in the Community College: Appreciative Inquiry in Action written by Nancy Stetson and published by the Company of Experts, Inc is now available as a soft-cover book and as a download. Nancy captures AI in action and produces outcomes using the stories of community colleges that can be applied to other organizations as well. For more information or to purchase this new book, visit <http://www.companyofexperts.net>.

To Purchase the following videos used in the AIFT – mention “Company of Experts” when you call/contact these companies for special pricing!

Celebrate What’s Right with the World. Contact: Richard Gaynor, Star Thrower Dist., Saint Paul, MN 55101, 866.236.3050 | 651.209.1075, richard@starthrower.com.

Power of Words. Contact: HelenDuBois, Sales Consultant, 800.421.0833, Ext.166 helen.dubois@crmlearning.com.

Wishing each of you hope, health and happiness.

Kathy Becker, M.A., AICF (Appreciative Inquiry Certified Facilitator ©)
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