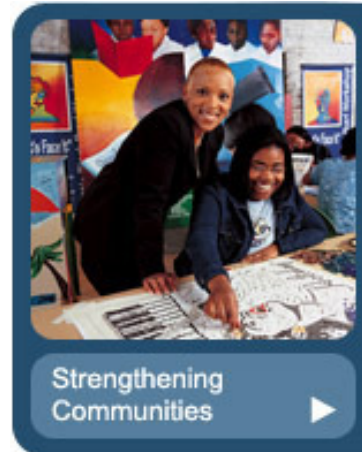


Jan Piercy & ShoreBank: Momentum Out of Stillness

Change agents in the social sector are driven by a passionate commitment to helping others. But to make the greatest difference in the world around us, we also need to take excellent care of ourselves.

The Opportunity Collaboration provides a space for reflection, renewal, inspiration, and transferring hard-earned wisdom to the next generation.



CHICAGO: “I’ll be frank: The Opportunity Collaboration retreat is not the kind of meeting ShoreBank usually attends. We’re working in low-income and poor communities in the U.S. and the developing world. To take several days off in a beautiful place? The optics are all wrong. If not for Mary Houghton (ShoreBank’s President) being honored with the Collaboration Award, we wouldn’t have gone,” reports Jan Piercy, Executive Vice President of the first and largest community development financial institution in the United States.

“I did it as a personal vacation. I had recently suffered a major personal loss, but had jumped right back in to work. I was carrying an immense sadness, and need to grieve. The Collaboration was a chance to unwind. For people who drive themselves very hard and travel to some very difficult places, the opportunity to spend relaxed time in a peaceful place, be present with yourself and with others, can be a touchstone in otherwise hectic lives.”

For Jan, a sense of personal renewal was a key outcome, but not the only valuable aspect of the Opportunity Collaboration: “It was an opportunity to be with some people I’ve known and respected for a long time, but to be with them in a different way. The value of the experience was in direct proportion to the caliber and relevance to our work of the people who were there. The colloquium conversations in small groups also facilitated connecting well with delegates I had not met before.”

Think of OC as beginning before the trip itself. Use the website, use the other delegates. Reflect on how you’d like to use the time.
--Jan Piercy

“The setting creates an unhurried kind of interaction. You’re in a remote location, and you’re there together over an extended period of time. You can get to people. At most conferences,

you're in sessions all the time, but at Opportunity Collaboration, you're co-creating the content all the way through with the people around you. The quality of relationships that were established was different. You can see people over and over at a conference and have a friendly connection, but not be in a *relationship* with them. I think the experience will be even better for people going back a second time. They'll understand what's possible, and I have a feeling partnerships and brainstorming of new ideas will really start to take off."



"The event was very important for ShoreBank, as well. Three people from ShoreBank companies attended, and it worked very well as a "Noah's Ark." You'll get even more out of the experience by having a couple of people attend, bouncing ideas back and forth. We shifted our thinking about our own organization, and have been able to bring that back home. We also attracted some new banking clients!

"I'm 62. I'm at a different point in my life and career than younger colleagues. What I'm going for is being – as a therapist friend of mine puts it, "a non-anxious presence in an anxious world." I think I achieved this at the Opportunity Collaboration. I want to support younger colleagues as they're going through the ups and downs of being working parents, or maintaining personal lives while doing challenging international development work. I keep a photograph of an ocean view from the Opportunity Collaboration campus on my desk where I see it daily, and can mentally return to a time and place where insights come more easily. You can become more open to new possibilities when you take a step back from the daily fray."

