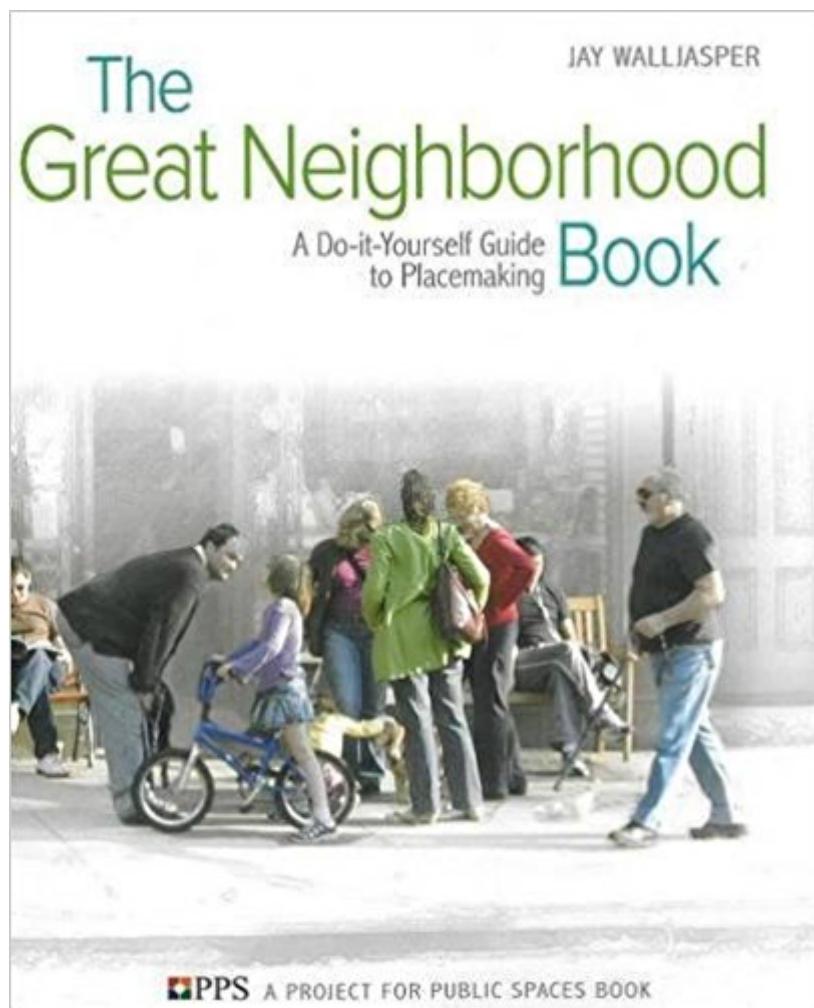


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The Great Neighborhood Book: A Do-it-Yourself Guide To Placemaking



Synopsis

Abandoned lots and litter-strewn pathways, or rows of green beans and pockets of wildflowers? Graffiti-marked walls and desolate bus stops, or shady refuges and comfortable seating? What transforms a dingy, inhospitable area into a dynamic gathering place? How do individuals take back their neighborhood? Neighborhoods decline when the people who live there lose their connection and no longer feel part of their community. Recapturing that sense of belonging and pride of place can be as simple as planting a civic garden or placing some benches in a park. The Great Neighborhood Book explains how most struggling communities can be revived, not by vast infusions of cash, not by government, but by the people who live there. The author addresses such challenges as traffic control, crime, comfort and safety, and developing economic vitality. Using a technique called "placemaking" — the process of transforming public space — this exciting guide offers inspiring real-life examples that show the magic that happens when individuals take small steps and motivate others to make change. This book will motivate not only neighborhood activists and concerned citizens but also urban planners, developers, and policymakers. Jay Walljasper is a senior fellow of Project for Public Spaces (PPS), whose mission is to create and sustain enriching public places that build communities. He is a former editor of The Utne Reader and currently executive editor of Ode magazine. Inspired by European cities, The Great Neighborhood Book highlights practical solutions for the revitalization of North American cities.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

null (2007-04-09)Abandoned lots and litter-strewn pathways, or rows of green beans and pockets of wildflowers? Graffiti-marked walls and desolate bus stops, or shady refuges and comfortable seating? What transforms a dingy, inhospitable area into a dynamic gathering place? How do individuals take back their neighborhood? Neighborhoods decline when the people who live there lose their connection and no longer feel part of their community. Recapturing that sense of belonging and pride of place can be as simple as planting a civic garden or placing some benches in a park. The Great Neighborhood Book explains how most struggling communities can be revived, not by vast infusions of cash, not by government, but by the people who live there. The author addresses such challenges as traffic control, crime, comfort and safety, and developing economic vitality. Using a technique called "placemaking"-- the process of transforming public space--this exciting guide offers inspiring real-life examples that show the magic that happens when individuals take small steps, and motivate others to make change. This book will motivate not only neighborhood activists and concerned citizens but also urban planners, developers and policy-makers. (2006-11-06)

Project for Public Spaces (PPS) has worked for 30 years in over 1,500 communities in 47 states and 24 countries to create and sustain public places that build communities. PPS was founded to build upon the pioneering Street Life Project of writer-sociologist William H. Whyte, and has published over 14 books and studies.

The Great Neighborhood Book has good ideas, but it seems like very little effort went into making it readable, eliminating redundancies, or expanding the case studies. It reads like a power point lecture from a library seminar. A few bullet points, a few paragraphs, a source citation, and that's all you get. It keeps pounding away on urban, urban, urban, as though all readers live in the same type of neighborhood. And the book is decidedly anti-car and snobby about people's choices for where to live. If people choose to live in suburbs, why should an author call that "sprawl?" Plenty of great neighborhoods in rural and suburban areas, too. I believe that sprawl is natural, cyclical, and good. Some ideas that I have participated in for making neighborhoods great were not included in the ideas, but the book works to get creative ideas flowing, so I will add some great, workable ideas of my own here:+ Meet the bus: even if you don't have kids in school, meet the school bus in your neighborhood on Friday afternoons and welcome kids home by name.+ Doggie fashion show+ Bike parade where children decorate their bikes and awards are given+ Teen to tot read-along+

Preparedness classes+ Broadway musical sing along movie nights (or Disney musicals) - project the movie on a blank wall and set up seating+ Saturday morning walks: like a Volksmarch in Germany, set up a 10k route with a refreshment station midway and a cookout or sandwich share at the end. Provide booklets for completion stamps and a neighborhood shirt. The book does not much mention the benefits of:+ undoing zoning restrictions and historical site designations to free up entrepreneurialism+ the importance of private spaces (backyards) and cul-de-sacs for outdoor gatherings and play+ the idea to co-op purchase big items as a group: firewood, mulch, patio furniture, paper goods. Have them delivered and distribute to participating neighbors+ fruit and vegetable co-ops like Bountiful Baskets+ the benefits of homeschooling to reintroduce absent children into daytime activities and promote mentoring across generations+ neighborhood disaster preparedness: when to shelter in place, when to evacuate, who has needed skills, cooperative survival.+ rapid evacuation routes - the requirement for much wider freeways to assist in quick escapes+ bright bright lighting, and sidewalk level lighting, to reduce crime and stumbles+ installation of sidewalk trashcans for litter - with regular city pickups scheduled

Great book, informative and inspires you to improve your neighbourhood by doing small actions. I highly recommend it if you want to do your part in making your community a better place.

Just as described; arrived quickly.

It's a good introduction for placemaking and PPS work.

The book was informative on what is necessary in bringing a community together. However I was looking for something that would explain more of the philosophy behind how this came about and why it works. The book would be informative to someone working in the field of community outreach. I feel that it lacked more information about Placemaking and why this type of approach works better than other approaches.

This book is geared towards neighborhoods that benefit from a retail area being nearby. I live in a subdivision of 380 homes so it really did not help me as much as I would have liked.

Very helpful resource. One can pick it up and start from anywhere. Very pertinent to a variety of projects and neighborhoods/towns/cities large or small.

Written by Jay Walljasper, a Senior Fellow of the Project for Public Spaces, The Great Neighborhood Book: A Do-It-Yourself Guide to Placemaking is a how-to guide for local communities to improve the quality of life for their residents through building shared bonds. From creating great places to hang out (a park with few hidden spaces and scattered vendors selling refreshments is more likely to deter homeless people and drug dealers from using it), to reducing crime (ordinary people's eyes and physical presence on the street are much more likely to deter crime than iron bars on windows), foster economic vitality (promoting locally grown/cooked/made food is kind to the environment as well as the local economy), and much more. Drawing heavily upon real-life examples in communities that made a measurable positive difference, The Great Neighborhood book blends practicality and inspiration into an uplifting whole and is enthusiastically recommended reading for concerned citizens, neighborhood watch groups, and municipal boards, among many others.

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