


"That was the thinking," he said. "Maybe even the cornerstone of that plan".

And yet, within the City of New Orleans' Comprehensive Emergency Management plan, there is little indication of how this strategy might have been implemented. Given the chaos that followed Katrina, it's fair to ask if the strategy was implemented at all. Was it just assumed that people would help? Was there a coordinated effort before the crisis hit to involve citizens and to prepare them to help each other following the hurricane?

Many communities around the world are recognizing the importance of community engagement in preparing citizens for disasters like the one New Orleans is facing.

There is no room or time for blame, but we can begin to articulate unanswered questions. In this spirit, Tamarack is creating a web page dedicated to questions we have about the New Orleans disaster and the ensuing community collapse.

On this page you will find questions we have, links to articles and stories we have found of community engagement and emergency preparedness, a bulletin board in which you might pose your questions or thoughts about community breakdown and links to some agencies that are helping in this time of need.

 [New Orleans – What happened?](#)

By: Paul Born

Disaster Avoided

Community Engagement & Emergency Services

At first glance the cities of Seattle and Brisbane would seem to have little in common with the barangay of Talba, in Central Luzon, Philippines. The three communities are more alike than a cursory glance would deem - all three communities are planning for disasters, and how to avoid them, using community engagement techniques.

Each has a community engagement strategy that involves citizens helping each other when disaster strikes. The premise of such a strategy is that if neighbours and citizens are prepared to mutually help each during a disaster, lives can be saved and property damage will be minimized.

SDART (Seattle Disaster Aid and Response Teams) is a neighbourhood-oriented approach to emergency preparedness based on the belief that a cooperative effort between a city and its citizens is the only sure way to prepare for major disasters. The basic premise for SDART is that during the first 72 hours after a major disaster emergency services will be unable to respond to most calls for help. "Experience proves that people will naturally assist one another when disaster occurs. In order for this assistance to be timely, however, citizens must be organized and know beforehand how they can contribute to the overall disaster response. SDART is designed to promote this neighbourhood organization and preparedness." [More...](#)

Queensland Government Department of Emergency Services (Brisbane, Australia) has a community engagement unit whose job is to create a comprehensive and coordinated approach to identifying and meeting the needs of communities around emergency services. Through information sharing, response seeking, community input into planning and cooperative decision making and planning the unit hopes to create better and more timely responses to disasters. [More...](#)

The barangay of Talba, in Central Luzon, Philippines has recognized that by involving citizens in disaster management families living in disaster prone areas are better able to cope with the impact of, and recovery from, the after effects of a disaster in a shorter time. In 1995 a volcano destroyed the village of Talba. While the government communication system failed to give proper warning to residents, the parallel warning system the community had developed warned residents on time to vacate the area and avoid any loss of life. Community resources such as privately owned small boats, jeeps and trucks were used to move the village's population to safety. [More...](#)



[on emergency preparedness & community engagement](#)

By: Paul Born

Local Housing Heroes

What do a labour union, local government and a housing shelter have in common? In Ontario's Niagara Region, the answer is an eagerness to address a serious affordable housing shortage and a willingness to work together to do it.

Opportunities Niagara was instrumental in connecting the local partners which include CAW Local 199, members of the Niagara Homelessness Committee, and Bethlehem Projects of Niagara (a multi-service organization that provides transitional housing and life skills programs for low-income people trying to improve their lives).

Using a collaborative framework the partners worked together on a plan to build an affordable housing complex. Their collaborative partnership, and the significant donation of skilled labour by CAW members, helped to ensure that Bethlehem Projects received 40 of the 150 affordable housing units allocated to the Region by the federal and provincial governments, and unleashed considerable time, energy and resources to a good cause.

Niagara's success in receiving government funding can be directly attributed to the innovative and powerful network of business, nonprofit and municipal government leaders who worked together to actively supporting poverty reduction and affordable housing efforts, and the ability of Opportunities Niagara to broker their partnership.

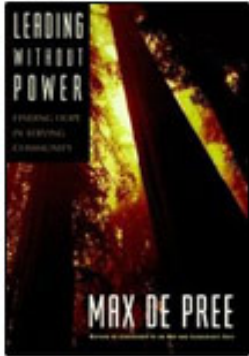
 [Read the full account of Opportunities Niagara's central role in this exciting initiative that brought together such diverse partners.](#)

Related Links:

- [Opportunities Niagara](#)
- [Labour's involvement with Opportunities Niagara](#)

By: Sharalynn Krahn

Leading Without Power



Max De Pree has an impressive track record. He is chairman emeritus of Hermann Miller, Inc, a member of Fortune magazine's National Business Hall of Fame, and a recipient of the Business Enterprise Trust's Lifetime Achievement Award. He has served on a variety of non-profit boards and is a member of the advisory board of the Leader-to-Leader Institute, formerly the Drucker Foundation. With forty-five years in the corporate world and almost as many in the nonprofit, he is one of the most influential corporate and voluntary sector leaders in North America.

All the more reason to read his book, *Leading Without Power*. De Pree speaks from experience.

De Pree argues that at a time when trust in leaders of traditional institutions – the stock market, government and large corporations – is being shaken by scandals and lack of integrity, people can still find meaning, trust and hope through work in the non-profit sector: improving schools, running community centers, maintaining churches, and so on.



We cannot master the "how to" of effective leadership, he says, without also being clear – and living out – "who" leaders must be. These characteristics include, among others, truthful, relational, accountable, competent, tolerant, driven and hopeful. The style of servant leadership he describes is relevant to almost any type of organization and is critical in non-profit organizations where shared values and commitment to community, not economic incentives and power, fuel and guide people's efforts.

Leading Without Power is well written. It's to the point. It's inspiring. While you may not agree with everything De Pree writes, you will consider *Leading Without Power* well worth reading.

Related Links:

- [De Pree Leadership Centre](#)
- [De Pree on Creative Leadership](#)
- [More on leadership](#)

By: Mark Cabaj

Finding Nemo



“First we go out, and back in. And then we go out a second time, and back in.”

Finding Nemo opens with a tragic incident in which Marlin the clownfish loses his wife and family, leaving Marlin to become an overprotective single dad to his son Nemo.

Marlin and Nemo have a close relationship, but the father’s concern for his child’s safety means that Nemo’s life is punctuated by rules that discourage curiosity and treat others with suspicion. When Nemo is captured and taken far from home, Marlin is forced to break his own rules when he ventures out into the ocean to save his son. He’s also forced to engage in community – he comes to rely on the kindness of strangers, to trust in their abilities and good intentions, and slowly, he begins to come out of his self-imposed exile and to open up his heart again.

This tale is fun, smart, and heartwarming. Marlin and Nemo are both pushed to their personal limits and find themselves exploring new terrain. Their separate journeys actually bring them closer together. Each gains a new appreciation for the importance of friends and community and a better sense of life and what it means to live.

Finding Nemo teaches us that if we don’t allow ourselves to take risks, reach out to others, make mistakes, and explore life, we hinder our ability to advance and achieve in life. It’s a tale of love, adventure, support, and growth for kids of all ages!

Related Links:

- [More movie reviews from Tamarack](#)
- [Mom's review](#)

By: Laura Antal