

Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness

SUCCESS STORY

DALLAS, TEXAS

Building Managers as Community Managers

Contributor: Kathy Czorniak

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When Kathy Czorniak attended the Dallas Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness in May 2009, she was serving as the General Manager for Stemmons Place, a large commercial property in the Medical District that houses 2,500 tenants, including the offices of Parkland and Children’s Hospitals. Although she knew her neighbors, she credits the Summit for deepening her relationships with them. “As a result of the Summit, we became more aware of how we could help each other,” Czorniak says.

The Summit created a new, mutually beneficial partnership

As a building manager, Czorniak was familiar with the police in her urban, industrial neighborhood. A more robust partnership was born when Czorniak was faced with increasing theft in her building. She approached the Dallas Police Captain she met at the Summit, and together, they developed a solution that was mutually beneficial. An “eye in the sky” surveillance camera was installed outside of the building, which improved police capacity to fight crime. Additionally, an empty office space was converted to 24/7 police presence, providing an extra measure of safety and security for her tenants.

Meta-Leadership and thinking differently

“As building managers, we are often focused primarily on our building and our job. Meta-Leadership made us look at the property more as a community,” she remembers. “I started thinking about how my tenants were not only ‘my community,’ but also a part of the larger neighborhood. “How bad would it be if our building was affected by a major city crisis, like a major flu virus outbreak or weather-related disaster?”

Continuing to apply Meta-Leadership

Although Czorniak has transitioned to a new position and works as Senior Property Manager in the Park Cities, an affluent suburban community, she has continued to employ the lessons of Meta-Leadership. Czorniak was recently faced with an increase in panhandling by homeless persons at the corner of her building and reached back to her partners to build a solution. Working with the police, the City’s business liaison, the Homeless Outreach Center, and the Neighborhood Association, a plan was developed that balances the need for peace and safety on the streets with a compassionate response to the needs of the homeless.

“The Meta-Leadership Summit was a great eye-opener for me,” Czorniak enthuses. “I was so impressed with the planning that Dallas was doing; it made me feel proud and safer because it was clear that they were planning for emergencies. Now, I try to do the same for my building communities.”

The Meta-Leadership Summit for Preparedness empowered business, government and nonprofit leaders to act together in times of crisis. The five-year initiative connected 5,000 business, government and nonprofit leaders in 36 communities. For resources and more information about Meta-Leadership visit the [CDC Foundation Meta-Leadership Website](#).



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