

## TELLING GOOD HARWOOD STORIES

Our work comes alive through the stories we share. Becoming better at telling stories helps people more easily grasp the value that Turning Outward adds. We use stories with this general pattern:

- There was a situation that existed that took someone down a path
- Through Harwood's support in Turning Outward, we went down a new path with new choices
- We took actions that led to new, positive outcomes
- If not for this alternate path, this would not have happened

The purpose of using this pattern is to illuminate that we have the power to inspire through sharing stories. Remember to keep it simple. The more details we use, the more we lose people. Here is the basic format to use when creating a story:

- [Who we are]
- [Where we are located and what we do]
- [Path we were on]
- [Different choices we made]
- [How the practice directly affected those choices; i.e. what tools or elements of the Harwood practice guided us in making different choices?]
- [The impact; i.e. what happened based on the choices and alternate path we got on?]

An example:

### **United Way of Kern County**

- Located in Bakersfield, CA, commercial farming region (America's "salad bowl")
- They were planning to roll out a big new agenda to the community
- Realized instead that they needed to focus on making their current efforts more relevant to the community
- They realized this because of the Stages of Community Life – knowing they were a Waiting Place community changed their thinking. Then through doing community conversations they learned that people felt isolated and disconnected from things that could help them. They realized they could make small changes to their Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program – creating a mobile center, relocating some sites, and doing some better communication with their volunteers so they felt more interconnected.
- They lost their biggest funding partner that year, but they made these changes and actually saw a 54 percent increase in the returns they were able to file, which represented thousands of dollars back in the pockets of low income families. People now feel more connected, including volunteers. Volunteer numbers are going up and people are saying that UW is their place of choice for volunteering in this program.