

BLFLI Monthly Meeting

Date: March 8, 2019

Time: 8:00am – 9:30am

Location: Beloit Public Library

GUESTS: Tara Tinder, Bill Flanagan, Courtney Schindler, Hagen Harker, Carol Mishler, Sarah Millard, Roxane Bartelt, Laura Anastasi, Kathy Pohl, Bradley Liggett, Drew Pennington, Roger Kapoor, Nick Dimassis, Jeni Schomber, Shirley Williams, Paula Schutt, Michael Wheeler, Will Anderson

Tara Tinder - Welcome/Comments/Announcements

Tara started the meeting with introductions. She gave a recap about the foundation's small library at the Stateline Community Foundation. Tara announced that Paula Schutt is providing books at the Dirty Dash in August. Tara explained the importance of reaching out to the trusted individuals within the community to maintain the BLFLI long term.

Bill Flanagan - Progress Since Last Meeting

Bill started with an introduction and explained the goal and importance of literacy. BLFLI's goal is to reach the entire community in order for children to be successful in the future. Bill gave an explanation and update about the advisory committee. The goal of the advisory committee is to develop the structure to ensure that the BLFLI lasts long term. The committee is going towards a different route but most importantly the BLFLI needs to have something in place to keep the initiative strong after Bill and Tara are no longer involved. Looking for suggestions to keep the BLFLI grass roots styled, increase and maintained partnerships, and community bound.

Hagen Harker – Corporate Partnerships

Hagen introduced himself (on the board of Beloit 200, owner of Midstates Concrete) and began to explain how there are struggles within the education system. Many times, individuals tend to stay away from topics that they do not know as much about but still need attention within the community. Hagen explained how he is trying to look at other districts and see how they are improving their academics. Hagen is bringing his passion from being born and raised in Beloit to the table to fulfill goals of literacy. Hagen's goal is to be able to learn about the BLFLI and see how he can be a partner with the BLFLI. Hagen explained how it is difficult to gather a group of strong individuals for a board and train them to be successful especially within our community. He said in order to institute change, we have to start with the parents of these children and let them be the voice for change. ACTS program from Milwaukee, WI is a housing program that works with parents and teaches them how to become owners of houses rather than renters. ACTS and the banks have worked together to create a partnership to develop healthy ownership of homes. The Hackett and Merrill neighborhoods will soon be the next direction for ACTS housing in Beloit. This coaching concept will help them to develop autonomy and be able to learn from the ground up. Might be advantageous to place a pin point on one place within the community to focus on improving literacy then move on to the next area using successes and failures to transform actions to ensure the BLFLI is working.

Dr. Kapoor – Beloit Health System

Dr. Kapoor introduced himself and explained his background. Originated in Chicago area and moved here 7 years ago. Dr. Kapoor is working with pediatricians and OBGYN's on integrating literacy into their patient visits. Many times when pregnant women come in for their doctors' visits, they tend to not understand the importance of reading to their unborn child. The neurons in the infants' brain are developing in the womb and can still hear and benefit from early literacy before birth. The health system has given out over 100 books since the beginning of the year. The Colonel Robert Morse Foundation has donated money for the purchase of books to give out to patient base. The Reach Out and Read program has been going well for the past few months. Hagen introduced the thought of audio books for adults who are skeptical of reading. Many times parents and even children have technology that hold their attention more than a book so utilizing technology will be beneficial.

Michael Wheeler – Kerry Ingredients

Michael Wheeler from Kerry attended the meeting as a guest of Hagen Harker. He introduced himself and said he is listening and learning about ways Kerry, and he, can be more involved in the community. Michael has an appreciation for literacy as he was the first in his family to attend college.

Partner announcements, plans, and reports on progress to date

- Welty Environmental Center – Signs are being drafted to be placed to increase literacy in the park. Goals are to not just increase literacy but prompt conversations for parents and their children. Working closely with the City of Beloit to determine what should go on the signs.
- City of Beloit Parks and Recreation – Working with Welty to determine different activities to improve literacy. Working on building programs for the summer and focused on implementing BLFLI at those programs.
- Beloit Public Library – Grants and donors are working to improve the children's area of the library to increase the "wow" factor to draw in children. The library and Community Health Systems are working together to create reading hours to promote the BLFLI. Worked with the library in Janesville to put on workshops to discuss the importance of early literacy to get parents knowledgeable about the subject. Jeni is also the consultant for all 7 libraries in Rock County which could be an advantageous partnership. Have been moving obstacles (even physical) out of the way to focus on the parent child relationship with learn and play activities.
- RSVP – Working on using puppets to improve literacy along with other areas of concern such as drugs, alcohol, and peer pressure. Children are left with puppets that they can use with their peers after the activity. Working on getting the work out to the schools to collaborate but finding difficulties with time constraints with teachers. Kevin from the school district is working with RSVP volunteers to train and coach them to prepare them for reading and teaching about literacy. Looking for more volunteers 55 and older.
- NAACP – Introduction and thanks to Hagen and Dr. Kapoor. Hopes for future technology advancement and consistency within the community. Invited to read for black history month in the elementary schools. Looking to gain volunteers, send to Rachelle and Kevin at the school district. Key program is to assess and develop educational needs such as literacy. Program for doula is still going successful. Early headstart was the first doula community started in the state of WI. It initiated headstart community-based doula programs nationally.
- Headstart – Wonderful progress in programs and self-assessments by partnering with other organizations.
- City Hall – Gave more of an update about the ACTS Housing coming to Beloit aiming for summer or fall of this year. More details to come. Attended a meeting where there was a strong discussion concerning the availability of child care within the community. Might be advantageous to partner with child care places to improve those as well as literacy at the same time. Another idea is that we may need to focus on getting individuals more prepared to become parents. Might be beneficial to contact the school parenting program at the high school to see what skills they are teaching to their children. 600 books have been given away over the past 9 months.
- St. Paul Lutheran Church – Literacy activity on Valentine's Day. Working on baptisms and books program.
- Fire Department – Partnering with Culver's on events (see below). Working with Eagle Scouts to install little libraries throughout the stations. Literacy is incorporated into fire station tours to get them aware of the importance of literacy. Working with Ben from the Snapper's to put on an event where firefighters and police officers will be able to go on the field and read to children after the game. Implementing high school age kids interested in firefighting to the BLFLI in volunteering.
- Family Services – Collaboration with neighborhoods to create two new little libraries.

Upcoming Calendar of Events

- March 21st – Cone with a Cop at Culver's from 5:30pm-6:30pm
- March 28th – Fries with a Firefighter at Culver's from 6:00pm-7:00pm
- April 22nd through April 27th – Rising Professionals YP Week Book Drive

Next Meeting: Friday, April 12th beginning at 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. at the Beloit Public Library.

Please email all calendar events and partner announcements to courtney@statlinecf.com prior to the BLFLI meeting to ensure the meeting occurs in a timely fashion.