



**Friday, November 13, 2020**

**Virtual Meeting: 9-10 a.m.**

**Present:** Bill Flanagan, Tara Tinder, Rachelle Elliott, Erin Conway, Nick Dimassis, Debbie Fischer, Andrea Heckner, Gloria Heiss, Jan Knutson, Sarah Lock, Ana Montoya, Drew Pennington, Lisa Sandoval, Shirley Williams, Melody Wirgau and new member, Yusuf Adama.

### **Welcome and Announcements from Tara Tinder, Executive Director, SCF**

A reminder to all that the Foundation is accepting applications for the Community Impact Grants November 18, 2020 – January 19, 2021.

#### **1) Business Partnerships: Bill Flanagan, BLFLI Chair**

Thanks to everyone who signed up for the free, virtual CivicCon presentation on closing the achievement gap by Dr. Ronald Ferguson on November 6. If you missed out, here is the link to view: <https://vimeo.com/476520777>.

Once again, Bill is enthusiastic to share updates about adding the business community and health systems as the next pillar for the success of our literacy initiative. He referenced conversations with David McCoy, President and CEO of First National Bank as well as Quint Studer, new owner of Beloit's baseball team and one of many impactful speakers at the [Family Services Virtual Fundraiser and Forum: "Build Resilience."](#) Dr. Ferguson, Beloit College alum Carolyn Heinrich, Ph.D. and Quint all remind us to keep the faith, that everything we do matters. Despite COVID-19, we are on track and impact is still occurring.

Tara noted that a very exciting development is in the works to strategically place ads on community billboards with Lamar using the tag line that Quint is graciously sharing: "Build a brain, build a life, build a community." The Foundation is also in the early stages of creating brain bags that include a book, resource materials, brain development information as well as a rattle or other serve & return toy for the baby. These will be provided to new parents by the health systems with their regular follow-up appointments and services.

#### **2) Literacy Updates: Rachelle Elliott, Director of Early Literacy, SDB**

Rachelle reported on the growing concern for healthy, developing children amidst the virtual instruction caused by the pandemic. These include grip strength (not holding writing utensils but instead tech devices, cognitive milestones, SEL (social and emotional learning), and role play/imagination pieces. She provided a useful website: [healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) and emphasized looking at the ages and stages links, particularly the 3-5 years old group. A new [Even Start Family Literacy Facebook page](#) was launched, please support/like!

#### **3) Partner Reports:**

- **Jan Knutson (St. Paul Soup Lunch Bunch)** They have been serving up to 125 meals weekly and books are flying out of their Little Free Library. The team is also looking to combine advent with literacy and create calendars that would include community service.

- **Lisa Sandoval (Early Start/Head Start)** They are doing virtual home visits (parent centered meetings) as well as some drop offs. In April, their Little Free Library was installed and focuses on materials for birth – age 5. However, it is definitely underutilized.
- **Erin Conway (UW-Extension)** She wanted to bring the [YES](#) (Youth Emotional Stability, Rock County) program to our attention, which is an outcome of funneled back funds and has a 2020-2021 suicide awareness/prevention mini-grant opportunity for the public.
- **Gloria Heiss (UW-Madison student/Literacy Advocate)** She is meeting on November 30<sup>th</sup> with SDB administration to discuss use of a van for 2 months next summer as a book mobile for the community. The hope is to impact 1,500 kids with 2-3 book giveaway per student and incentivize reading with parents. Targeting specific neighborhoods with lower reading scores (Brooks Park area was suggested) is part of the goal.
- **Shirley Williams (NAACP/Community Advocate)** She suggested including Mercy Health and other birthing programs in the area for the initiative. The NAACP is pleased to have partnered with certain area schools to adopt a class and provide literacy support.
- **Melody Wirgau / Andrea Heckner (Principals, Todd Elementary, SDB)** They continue to prepare bags for family pickup, which include books. Rachelle offered 7 new titles for 4K that could be added. Melody joined the Family Promise Board and looks forward to collaboration.
- **Ana Montoya (Community Health Systems, Inc.)** There are chronic dental issues caused by lack of nutrition and no visits (going on 8 months of COVID-19). As regular distributors of books, she invited Gloria to participate in their periodic giveaways.
- **Drew Pennington (Director of Planning and Building, City of Beloit)** City Hall remains closed to the public, so their bookshelf is untouched. Urban planning has set a baseline where early childhood centers are located. As we look to market our initiative, he reminded us that while bus wrapping is an effective yet costly option, posting public service announcements inside the bus is free of charge! Bus routes are also changing to accommodate the Gateway, which would extend our range of visibility.
- **Sarah Lock (Director of Strategic Communications, City of Beloit)** While events are not possible now, Parks & Recreation is looking at virtual learning after the success of the downtown story walk a few months ago. Coordinator Nicole Yost will sponsor a joint Winterfest effort with the Library, handout bags will repurpose books left over from another event. Through United Way, Alliant Energy is sponsoring a [Born Learning Trail](#), located in Beloit and Janesville.
- **Debbie Fischer (Youth2Youth 4 Change)** The youth volunteers continue to provide book readings on their Facebook page in English and Spanish and are distributing used books to the local Little Free Libraries. A new podcast on mail delivery workers is on their website. Historical signs are being placed around the community, such as the eagle sign at the park on Bluff Street. The key focus group is 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. Student volunteers are also distributing hygiene products, socks and blankets to further the impact of a \$1,000 discretionary grant from the Foundation assisting with food for the over 250 homeless students in our community. Lastly, thank you cards are being sent to frontline workers and teachers in Beloit and Janesville. Erin offered her 4-H volunteers to help!
- **Nick Dimassis (Beloit Public Library)** The library has been open since the end of June. Some interactive spaces have temporarily been removed due to the pandemic. They are seeing an increase of newer visitors to the children's area as a result of the Beloit Literacy Council offices re-locating opposite this section at the end of August. They continue to offer curbside book delivery. Some of their space has been reserved to help with virtual access and tutoring for SDB students.
- **Yusuf Adama (Community Activist)** Invited by Gloria Heiss, he is grateful for the opportunity to join the group and be an advocate for literacy in our community.

**4) Calendar:** Next virtual meeting date is Friday, December 18th. RSVP required!

Minutes respectfully submitted by Jamie Gurholt on 11/25/2020