



Friday, February 26, 2021
Virtual Meeting: 9-10:15 a.m.

Present: Bill Flanagan, Tara Tinder, Rachelle Elliott, Katharine Clark, Debbie Fischer, Mary Ellen Fuentes, Gloria Heiss, Jan Knutson, Theresa Morateck, Drew Pennington, Brenda Plakans and Shirley Williams

1) Welcome and Announcements from Tara Tinder, Executive Director, SCF

In late March, the 4 billboards (2 in English/2 in Spanish) will be up around the community and now an additional one will start May 12 on I-43 entering Beloit. We are working on creating a personal book for future brain bag inclusion. These bags will be distributed at various locations, including the BHS Birthing Center, OB-GYN offices, Pediatrician offices, Nutrition Health Associates and Head Start, to name a few. Grant applications have been submitted to Alliant Energy, Beloit Rotary and the Women's Fund to help cover the costs of the bags, books, toy and other supporting materials. Tara also reached out to BMHS alumni Jim & Shirley Caldwell via their foundation to see if they might express an interest in helping to fund our initiative. Lastly, for interested nonprofits, there will be another round of Community Impact Grants from June 1 – June 30, 2021.

Tara also mentioned a new taskforce to serve our growing homeless population, of which 312 are students. Family Promise, also supported by SDB leader Melody Wirgau (TODD Elementary), has received grants to help address this issue. The Stateline Literacy Council is hoping in tandem to step up service to adults and with perk of Rachelle on their board, assist with ABE (Adult Basic Education), including citizenship literacy and GED support. All this work is unfortunately very time consuming!

2) Updates on Business Partnerships: Bill Flanagan, BLFLI Chair

Thanks to everyone who contributed towards the historical complication of our initiative as well as Tara's leadership and energy on the brain bag campaign, which has been second to none! Partners have our permission to share the final draft and use to advance your own work. Data from this piece, along with other input, will be printed in the BDN and the Stateline News, as we hope for some widespread circulation among local media in return. Along with the billboards and the brain bags, the power of the Literacy for Life initiative will be in the forefront. SDB is a pillar and Rachelle's involvement is critical to our mission to prepare young minds before they get to the classroom.

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

New resources were shared within Read Aloud website: [2021 Calendar](#), and the [21-Day Read Aloud Challenge](#) with the theme "Bloom Where You Are Planted" (scroll down on the toolkit link for PDF's available in English & Spanish). Rachelle knows that with return to the classroom for students, there will be new challenges, such as the issue of masks for young learners (the inability to see their teachers mouths for pronunciation cues). However, a small price to pay to restore some instructional normalcy! Moving into summer, she is encouraged by the bookmobile grant and asks that nonprofits who would like collaborative opportunities to reach out to Gloria Heiss to get on the calendar. Additionally, please help circulate the [Bookmobile Internship Flyer](#) and [application link](#).

3) Partner Reports:

- **Gloria Heiss (UW-Madison student/Literacy Advocate)** Her goal in March is to connect with more community partners to establish the bookmobile calendar as well as to review the applications for the intern position. Collaboration with the Welty Center and the schools is already underway! As her work is supported by 2 grants, the next challenge will be to ascertain which local agencies can sustain the bookmobile long term.
- **Katharine Clark (Beloit Public Library)** The library is definitely onboard to establish dates with Gloria and to promote this via their summer reading program calendar.
- **Jan Knutson (St. Paul Soup Lunch Bunch)** “To go” meals have fluctuated with the weather, but their book cart and Little Free Library has noted 50 books for kids taken in last 2 months.
- **Brenda Plakans (Welty Environmental Center)**– They are trying to sync their timeline this spring and are excited that Big Hill Adventure Camps are in the works! Brenda received a shout out for her BUGS bags that were such a hit with the children during the pandemic!
- **Mary Ellen Fuentes (ELL @ Todd Elementary, SDB)**– She commented on how well received the virtual WELTY programs and the yoga & mindfulness after school programs are for the educators and young learners. Books in the Bitmoji classroom have also been popular!
- **Theresa Morateck (ED of Teaching, Learning & Equity, SDB)** As a recent hire, she is looking forward to collaboration. Currently she is piloting reading programs, seeking a stronger phonics foundation. Her vision of literacy will include conversations with parents and community groups.
- **Shirley Williams (NAACP/Community Advocate)** New officers for the Beloit NAACP chapter were announced, and New Zion Baptist Church continues to have an active food pantry and to support families with books for children.
- **Drew Pennington (Director of Planning and Building, City of Beloit)** City Hall is still closed to the public, and he clarified that although playgrounds are technically closed, parks are open.

4) **Calendar:** Next virtual meeting date is Friday, March 26, 2021 at 9 a.m.

