



**Friday, October 27, 2023**  
**Beloit Public Library**  
**9 -10:30 a.m.**

**Present:** Jessica Austin (SCF), Laura Anastasi (RSVP), Nick Dimassis & Amy Mitchell (BPL), Debbie Fischer (Youth2Youth 4 Change), Sam Freitag (Adaptive Alliance), Andrea Heckner, Lara Hermann (Nutrition & Health Associates/WIC), Kayla Oestreich & Staci El-Amin (Community Action), Brenda Plakans (Welty Environmental Center), Lisa Sandoval (Head Start/Early Head Start), Robin Stuht (SDB-Homeless Liaison), Michelle Weirich (Blackhawk Technical College), and Jody Wittnebel (The Youth Unite/The Castle).

### **1) Welcome & Announcements: Tara Tinder, Executive Director, SCF**

Tara shared that we are still accepting reservations for the Foundation's 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration on November 10<sup>th</sup>, honoring Dr. Bill Flanagan as the Bridge to the Future Award recipient. Anyone wishing to attend should confirm immediately with [Jamie@statelinecf.com](mailto:Jamie@statelinecf.com). Community Impact Grants will be open for applications starting November 1<sup>st</sup> and closing December 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **2) Program Updates: Bill Flanagan, Chair, SCF Literacy for Life**

Bill reiterated his vision for sustainability of SCF's literacy efforts in our community and is encouraged by conversations with Beloit's City Manager as well as ongoing work for a pilot project proposal with Senator Mark Spreitzer. Together, these commitments are steering us in the right direction!

### **3) Basics Insights Updates: Jessica Austin, Director of Early Brain Development**

Statistics:

- 217 families have signed up for the texting service
- 21 formal contract partners (corporations & NPO's)

Continued efforts are being made to increase BASICS partnerships throughout Rock County, with major focus on spreading the word of the Insights texting program. The best messenger is naturally YOU! Feel free to reference the page on SCF's website for more information: [THE BASICS ROCK COUNTY!](#) QR code sheets were distributed at the meeting and are available in reproducible form. With very few confirmed examples nationwide (or globally), we are aiming to position Beloit as an official Early Learning (Inclusive) Community using the updated literacy model ages 0-5.

**\*How does an agency initiate collaboration?** Direct communication with the Director of Early Brain Development (via [Jessica@statelinecf.com](mailto:Jessica@statelinecf.com) or completed form on The Basics page) will be the first step in obtaining necessary materials for client sign-ups, including parent trainings and establishing your agency dashboard to track information. There is NO cost involved to you or your clients!

**Partner Reports:** Please contact individuals directly for specifics. A few highlights include:

- **Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)** (Anastasi): Laura is currently serving as interim director while they accept applications for a new Executive Director. The foster grandparent program and mentoring programs are seeking volunteers ages 55+ to help in local classrooms.
- **Beloit Public Library** (Dimassis & Mitchell): With a new campaign and the addition of the Discovery Place (still 2 years out), renovations are being planned to dedicate 25% of the entire library to kid's space. The goal is for caretakers to be able to sit side by side with the children.
- **Youth2Youth 4 Change** (Fischer): Students are assembling hygiene bags and adding notes of encouragement. They have returned to repair work on Little Free Libraries. A mental health grant was awarded for efforts with after school programming at Merrill and Stateline Boys & Girls Clubs.
- **Adaptive Alliance** (Freitag): They are happy to volunteer and support nonprofit literacy work! A touching story was shared from the Hackett book bags they created and delivered to students.
- **Andrea Heckner** (Former SDB Admin & Literacy Coach): She remains active as an early literacy advocate while on leave, watching her twin granddaughters (a product of the childcare crisis)!
- **Nutrition & Health Associates** (Hermann) They are extremely grateful for the Basics Insights program and are seeing firsthand its added value to our community.
- **Community Action/Janesville Learning Center** (Oestreich & El-Amin): Kayla will be the program manager for the new family living center at the former Royce Elementary (opening 2025). Staci has worked with Community Kids for 12 years and will assist in leadership moving forward. They currently have teaching openings as well as daycare openings (not under age 2) and will provide transportation for students to 2 Janesville schools. Janesville P4J numbers are down. Hours for Community Kids program will be changing from 5am-6pm (formerly 9pm). See the online Gingerbread fundraiser via Facebook. COVID funds have returned until 2025.
- **Welty Environmental Center** (Plakans): Collaborations are ongoing with Even Start and the Fatherhood Initiative program with high schools and Community Action.
- **Head Start/Early Head Start** (Sandoval): A point was made that the title "BASICS" could be misinterpreted by participants in low-income family work. They are working to overcome fatherhood stereotypes for more inclusive engagement by offering 2 monthly activities, birth - 3.
- **SDB – Homeless Liaison** (Stuht): Homeless teen & family numbers are 400+, the highest in recorded history for the district. Although there is no current housing solution, there are resources available, including funds from a federal grant to provide additional staffing support for students.
- **Blackhawk Technical College** (Weirich): Inter-generational enrollment is increasing, putting a new look to the community on Early Childhood program graduates. Currently 21 students are doing field work. Michelle & Kayla (Community Action) presented together to an audience of 100+ at the state WECA (WI Early Childhood Association) conference earlier this month. Reference was made to the [Brain Architecture Game](#) by Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. This tabletop game experience was designed to build understanding and community engagement based on the powerful role of experiences on early brain development.
- **The Youth Unite/The Castle** (Wittnebel): They recently offered an information music session at Merrill Community Center. Son Johnny helps with the after-school programs, now expanded to various community organizations, including churches, banks, as well as BIFF (Beloit International Film Festival)! The Castle awaits transformation of 3<sup>rd</sup> floor into an early education center.

**Calendar:** The next Partner meeting for December 15th at 9 AM was cancelled. Meetings for 2024 have not yet been announced but will return to the Community Room space.

 **BUILD A BRAIN, BUILD A LIFE, BUILD A COMMUNITY!** 