



Bridges Out of Poverty Champions for Change Steering Committee
FDRHPO Conference Room
January 11, 2019 2:00 - 3:30 PM

Present: Brandy Burnett, Getting Ahead Graduate
Dawn Cole, Watertown Urban Mission
Max DelSignore, Northern NY Community Foundation
Tracy Leonard, Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization
Joanna Loomis, North Country Initiative
Aileen Martin, Northern Center for Independent Living
Cheryl Mayforth, Jefferson-Lewis Workforce Development Board
Irene Parobii, Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization
Sarah Yerdon, Getting Ahead Graduate

Excused: Cindy Nelson, River Hospital
Stephen Todd, Jefferson-Lewis BOCES
Courtne Toms, Maximizing Independent Living Choices

Welcome and Approval of Minutes

Irene welcomed the group and presented the minutes from the previous meeting (October 12, 2018). Minutes were approved on a motion from Aileen Martin; seconded by Tracy Leonard.

Interview Closet

Sarah reported that in follow-up to a written inquiry sent by Joanna, she was meeting with the Agape Shoppe later in the week to explore the possibility of an interview closet for Getting Ahead graduates.

TASC / Vocational Education Support through BOCES

Sarah highlighted a program through BOCES for adult learners that combines literacy education with vocational preparation. She explained that the goal is to identify 25 candidates for the program, including Getting Ahead graduates. Participants meet Monday afternoons and full days on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Georgia Dusckas of BOCES will present the details to Getting Ahead graduates. Sarah asked the group for ideas on ameliorating barriers, specifically transportation and the cost of lunch. Making the classes available remotely was suggested.

Chery indicated that those under the age of 24 qualify as “out of schoolers”. The Workplace has funding for training to include certification through BOCES and work experience through on-the-job training.

Steering Committee Member Survey

Irene distributed a hard copy of the member survey, explaining that it is also available electronically. She asked the group to make selections for additional committee members, keeping in mind influence in the community and regional representation. Cheryl reported that she had spoken with Teresa Gaffney (Commissioner of Jefferson County DSS) who suggested Tina Robbins as a candidate for membership. It was recommended that representatives also be considered from DSS in St. Lawrence and/or Lewis Counties. Other suggestions for membership include: Lewis County Opportunities (with offices in New Bremen and Watertown) and the Honorable Dan King from Lewis County Court. Members were asked to complete the survey by January 18. Irene agreed to tally the selections and tag by sector and location for further discussion as part of the next meeting.

Getting Ahead Roundtable – Housing Discussion

Those who were in attendance for the GA Roundtable facilitated by Maureen Cean (November 30) agreed that it was an informative discussion on housing / homelessness. GA graduate John Bonventre shared creative ideas for reaching the homeless population with the point-in-time survey. It was suggested that the survey might be more effective if it were decentralized and incorporated input from GA graduates. Tracy suggested that the Bridges Steering Committee consider sending a letter to the Points North Housing Coalition to suggest engaging graduates in 2020 point-in-time survey.

Getting Ahead Graduation

The communitywide GA graduation event on December 5 was thought to be a rousing success with graduates Dena Coleman and John Bonventre offering powerful testimonials. The next community celebration will take place in July, recognizing five additional cohorts (NRCIL, CCE, CAPC, Urban Mission and Carthage Area Hospital). Dawn explained that to date, CAPC and Urban Mission have covered the costs associated with community graduation events; moving forward, it is necessary to seek sponsorship support from other organizations.

Dawn suggested that less emphasis is being placed on creating opportunities to build social capital for the recent GA cohorts. She explained that investigators from the first two graduating classes were pushed outside their comfort zones on numerous occasions through invitations to attend board meetings and special events, as well as meals hosted by groups, such as JLI. Max suggested that this was largely attributable to the number of cohorts running simultaneously (thanks to ESPRI funds). Discussion ensued around the role of the Steering Committee in making networking opportunities available to investigators.

Charter Discussion

Irene suggested that the group consider developing a charter to outline mission, vision, goals, membership responsibilities, etc. She explained that such a document would also be helpful when reaching out to potential new members. Those present agreed and provided input, summarized as follows:

- Membership responsibilities – rotating membership, tied to Staying Ahead; connecting speakers to resources. Show up; report out; act as bridging capital.
- Core initiatives – expand Getting Ahead to Lewis and St. Lawrence Counties. Awareness, community engagement, “evangelizing”!
- Meeting frequency – 6 times / year.
- Meeting duration – limit to 90 minutes.
- Rotate meetings – every other month St. Lawrence or Lewis County.
- Make all meetings available electronically; utilize GoTo Meetings or WebEx.
- Meeting content – focus on core initiatives / what needs to get done; not presentations.
- Ad hoc committees – meet on topics of interest, report back.

- Steering Committee – forum for larger decisions.
- Membership – representative of all 16 sectors; include wording such as “if vacancy in a particular sector exists, we will do everything we can to identify suitable candidate(s) ...”
- Minutes – Dawn and Aileen willing to continue.

SMC Board Presentation

Irene and Dawn made a brief presentation as part of Samaritan’s Boot Camp, focused on Bridges concepts relating to healthcare, population health and ESPRI funded projects. The group was engaged, asking a number of questions regarding the Getting Ahead workshops.

BOP Trainings / Learning Collaborative

Recent Bridges workshops have been made available to Cornell Cooperative Extension, Carthage Area Hospital and the faith-based community in Lewis County.

Irene is working on a training calendar to be shared out to the network.

Tracy noted that the engagement is picking up on the North Country Bridges Facebook page.

Poverty Forum

Don Mesibov (St. Lawrence County) is planning a poverty forum in July. Please forward ideas for topics to Irene.

Race Against Poverty

Joanna shared that plans are well underway for the Race Against Poverty, scheduled to take place on May 18. Three GA graduates (Sarah, Brandy and Tim) are included on the planning committee.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Bridges Steering Committee will take place on March 1, 2 – 3:30 PM at Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization.