



**Volunteer Associate Board (VAB)
Spring Meeting
March 18th, 2009**

Minutes

Those present were:

VAB Members

Stacy Fleming, Chair
Chrsitina Budis
Dorothia Colwell
Bill Erickson
Deb Erickson
Reid Henderson
Kevin Hermanick
Craig Labus

Stephanie Lanzotti
Caroline Laviolette
Kristen Lee
Adam Marshall
Tamara McKinney
Emily Moreno
Kimberly Palmisano
Alan Rodriguez
Toni Sauadel

Staff

Mary Ann Mahon-Huels
Jen Boza
Hector Perez
Kelly Ramos
Nestor Rodriguez

Welcome and introduction to the Volunteer Associate Board (VAB)

Chair, Stacy Fleming welcomed everyone to the meeting. For those new to the VAB, Stacy explained that the Volunteer Associate Board exists to foster a long-term relationship with Union League Club Members, Trustees, Volunteers, and most importantly the children of the Boys and Girls Clubs through acts of volunteerism, support, and a focus on personal relationships. Stacy said that she first got involved with the ULBGC through a VAB event and is now a member of the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees governs the ULBGC's operations of the four Clubs and a Camp in Salem, Wisconsin which together serve over 11,168 youth. The Board of Trustees serve on Committees that interest them including; Finance, Financial Resource Development, Programming, Scholarship, and many more. Stacy said that she agreed to Chair the VAB when she became a Trustee because volunteering and directly making a difference with the kids was what drew her to the organization. Stacy said she looks forward to organizing the VAB and increasing events and attendance and reminded everyone that old and new friends are always welcome to reconnect with the kids through the VAB.

Upcoming Events

Award's Nights

Stacy announced that there will be a shuttle van leaving the ULC (65 West Jackson Blvd) at 5:15 and traveling out to the Award Night Dinners at each of the Clubs. Stacy introduced Jen who said that the Award's Nights are held at each of the four Clubs, each Club has their own date and

theme. Internally the headquarters staff will vote for the best themed awards nights and that Club staff will win a prize. Each Awards Night start with a casual dinner and then volunteers, friends parents and guardians join the Club staff and youth in the gym or auditorium to watch the award presentations. Volunteers can sign up to present awards to youth. Stacy then asked Hector Perez to speak about why we hold Awards Nights. Hector reported that kids look forward to Awards Night all year, because they are rewarded for participating in all the Club Programs with a trophy or ribbon. Hector said that the awards are given out to encourage youth to stay involved in the Club program. Some kids will receive multiple awards at the Dinner because they participated in multiple programs. Hector said it's so great to see a six year old barely able to carry their 8 trophies out of the Club. Stacy noted that there was a sign up for all the Awards Nights on the registration table. Stacy asked if anyone had a preference for a date that could be the unofficial VAB Awards Night, there was no preference. Tamara asked what time the shuttle would run. Jen said that the shuttle van would leave the ULC at 5:15p.m. and return to the ULC no later than 8p.m. Tamara noted the VAB brochure should be updated from 7pm to read a return time of 8pm.

After the meeting it was determined that April 22 would be unofficial 'VAB Award's Night' so that new volunteers could attend with other volunteers and begin to build relationships with other VAB members. All other Awards Nights will be open to VAB members who cannot attend the April 22 Award's Night.

Lincoln Park Zoo

Stacy announced that the VAB was looking forward to planning another event like the past event where VAB members joined youth at Millennium Park for ice skating. Stacy said that sponsoring a child for \$10 seemed to work well at the ice-skating event because it was affordable and allowed the youth and adult volunteers to interact in a mentoring relationship versus the alternative of all the kids and adults being divided into two groups. She hoped to use the same concept for future events including Lincoln Park Zoo, stating that while the zoo is free the sponsorship will cover a snack for the adult and child. Stacy also noted that the 4:30pm start time seemed to work well because people were not needing to leave work extremely early to make the events and that time allows the kids to attend the event and make it back out to the Clubs before they close at 6:30pm. She proposed two dates for the event; Wednesday, May 6th or May 13th, no one stated a preference.

After the meeting it was determined that due to an early closing time at the zoo, the event is on hold.

Night of Fabulous Food & Wonderful Wine: Friday, June 5th

Stacy announced that the Chair of the Win Dinner, Martha Jahn Martin would be offering a special \$100 ticket to Volunteer Associate Board (VAB) members; this is a \$75 discount! The ticket price was reduced to encourage VAB members to attend the event for the first time.

Details for the Wine Dinner are not yet announced but Jen reported that Martha is working on many things and this dinner is going to be outstanding. Stacy announced there was a sign up for those interested in receiving an invitation at the registration desk. Event sign up will also be available online through www.ulbgc.org/vab. Stacy said she first attended this event before becoming a trustee, as a volunteer. Alan Rodriguez noted that attending this event as a volunteer or as a guest is enjoyable, it is a great classy event. Those interested in volunteering can contact Jen at j.boza@ulbgc.org.

Fall Open House

Stacy announced that the fall open house, which is much more informal and includes a cash or signature bar, would be scheduled again this year as an annual event. The event will feature displays of photos and opportunities to become involved with the ULBGC through the VAB. The event will present attendees with the opportunity to socialize with each other and staff. There will be event sign up sheets, informal speeches from her, staff, Club Director and a Youth of the Year. She asked the group if they would prefer a date of Wednesday September 9th or September 16th, no preference was given.

After the meeting it was determined that the Fall Open House will be held on September 9, from 5:30 – 7p.m.

Brainstorming

Stacy asked for feedback on the following event ideas:

Camp Day

Jen said that Camp Day is an annual event where supporters and friends of the Club join our youth at our beautiful 257-acre Camp in Salem, Wisconsin, which is just an hour outside of the city. Our kids will decorate the Camp this year for the theme Holiday, with Camp Day activities including a program by our kids and lunch. For people interested in extending their time at Camp, we are offering additional VAB activities from 1-3pm where interested people can sign up to attend any of these activities. The complimentary shuttle vans will leave the ULC to head to Camp at 9am. Following the end of the regular program, the first return shuttle will leave Camp at 1pm and will be back by no later than 3 p.m. Following the conclusion of the VAB activities, a second shuttle will leave at 3:15pm returning to the city no later than 5:30pm. Stacy asked if anyone had a preference of activities that should be offered from 1-3pm. She mentioned some ideas including swimming/boating, high ropes, arts & crafts. Emily Moreno suggested that there is a high active/energy activity such as high ropes, medium level activity such as swimming or boating and a low active activity such as arts and crafts. Stacy asked for someone to explain high ropes to the group. Jen explained that there are several large wooden poles that are climbed, once at the top you are harnessed in and zip line from one pole down to the next. It was mentioned these are often used for team and leadership building activities. Stephanie Lanzotti also suggested taking a nature hike or walk as one of the activities.

Volunteer Van

Stacy said that many times it is much easier for us to go out to the youth than for the youth to come out to us. She said that many people have begun to share an interest in volunteering at the Clubs but due to work schedules and the Clubs closing at 6:30pm as well as transportation individuals are not able to make it out to the Club. The idea of the Volunteer Van was born as a solution to this problem. If individuals would be able to get off work and down to the ULC by 4:30pm which has worked well in past events, the van would take them out to the Clubs. Jen informed everyone that the Clubs are open Monday through Friday. Stacy added, unless there is a special event, which occurs sometimes on the weekends. Jen said individuals interested in attending those special events could sign up for the Club Happenings email list which announces opportunities to volunteer out at the Clubs, the sign up was available at the registration desk. Stacy said that the Board President, Mike Kiss had a vocational initiative planned for this year to help introduce youth to many career options, noting college was not a reasonable option for all of the youth, some would go into trades. She said that the idea of doing a career day with the volunteer van where volunteers go out and spend 45 minutes talking to the youth about their career had been brought to her attention, she herself had gone out to talk about her career in publishing as one of her first activities with the ULBGC. She said out of the small group listening to her there was one youth that was so interested in publishing, which made it all worthwhile. Everyone agreed this option should be looked into. Nester Rodriguez was asked if anyone had spoken to him about careers and he reported that there was a day when a man came out to the Club and talked to 6 youth about engineering. Nester said he had never known engineering was a career because he had never been exposed to anyone who was an engineer. He gave the field some serious thought after hearing that speech.

Basketball Match/Girls Dance

Stacy presented the idea of having the ULBGC youth come to the Union League Club. The ULBGC would invite Club One Dance instructor and dance class members to teach a dance to volunteers in the ULC Dance studio while other members and volunteers enjoyed a basketball game on the ULC courts. Some present suggested adding a more interactive mentoring element to an event like this to deepen the impact.

After the meeting it was determined that due to scheduling conflicts this event would be postponed.

Presentations

Senior Club Director, Hector Perez

Stacy introduced Hector Perez who is the Club Director for both of our Humboldt Park Clubs, the Barreto and Lafayette Clubs. Hector thanked Stacy and started his presentation by stating that he himself was a member of the Union League Boys and Girls Clubs many years ago. He said that the Club gave him hope. He was living on his own at the age of 15 when he first walked into the Club, where for the first time in years adults were actually concerned about him. Hector said he is proud now to be the Club Director at two facilities. He said he was pleased to be announcing the next speaker the organization's Youth of the Year, Nestor Rodriguez. He said Nestor is the first Youth of the Year out of the Lafayette Club who will compete at a regional level in Springfield next month and that he was very proud of him.

Jen said that each year all four Clubs go through their entire membership and select one youth that embodies the essence of what the Union League Boys and Girls Clubs stand for, (the mission of the ULBGC is to promote the social, moral, vocational physical and educational development of at risk youth residing in Chicago). Then those four youth are invited down town and present their speeches to a panel of judges, who select one winner to represent the organization for the year and in the Boys and Girls Clubs of America Midwest Youth of the Year competition. Nestor will be attending that competition in April, after he returns from he will land in Chicago but not even return home, he will instead travel to midway airport and board another flight to Atlanta where he will attend the National Keystone Club Conference. Keystone is a leadership Club program that teaches youth the importance of volunteerism, basic business and leadership skills, Nestor is the President of that Club at Lafayette.

Nestor Rodriguez

| Shared his story:

As a fifth grader, he was looking for something to do after school. He asked around and two kids, 17 and 18 years old (respectfully) invited him to hang out at their apartment. He didn't want to say what they were doing, but said that we could probably guess.

He knew it wasn't the best idea but he had no where to go. So, he started asking other kids around him, where they were going after school. They would all say they were going to the Club. He wondered what going to the Club meant and asked classmate, they said, "You know the Boys and Girls Club."

He went with some classmates to the Club and he said that to be completely honest, he did not like it when he first went. He said that because there were all of these rules, and he got in trouble for not signing in on his first day, he thought the Club was not for him and left.

He kept hearing other people talk about the Club so, he decided he would come back (to the Club). He said that it was actually the staff being "cool" that convinced him to stay. He said that at first, they would just mess with him and ask him things like "Hey what's that?" when he would look where they were pointing, he said he would be confused say, "What? That's my backpack." And we would both smile. He said that doing stuff like that was kind of stupid but also nice. They kept asking him things and paying attention to him and he started going to the Club one

day a week. Then, he started coming around 2 days a week, 3 days a week, then after a while 4 days a week until eventually, he was at the Club everyday.

He said that one day while he was up in the gym playing basketball, Hector (the Club Director) grabbed him by the arm and said "Nester, come here." He said Hector told him there was this scholarship called Daniel Murphy Scholarship that he wanted him to apply for, and he gave him the application. He said he filled out all the pages and gave it back to Hector. Then they (Daniel Murphy Scholarship Committee) called and asked him and his mother to come down for an interview. He said that his mom and I go to this nice place and there are all these people dressed in suits and he and his mother had to go into rooms for separate interviews. His mom, does not speak English well, she could understand what they were saying but when it came time to respond she was not able articulate her thoughts, and she was in this room by herself with 4 trustees and a translator. He said he was nervous himself, in a room with 2 trustees. He and his mom switched and then they had me meet the President.

Afterwards, they gave him the scholarship that enabled him to attend St. Pats High School instead of Clemente, which has one of the highest dropout rates in the nation.

He said that he is proud to report, he will be attending graduation on May 27, 2009. He is also really proud, to announce that he has been accepted to Loyola University beginning in the fall. He said he does not know what he would have done if the Club had not come into my life, if he had not been given all of this opportunity through the Club. Those two guys that he was hanging around with before he went to the Club, one of them are dead, lost his life to violence and gangs. That was the track he was on before I came to the Club.

He said he went from nothing to do to now having a plate that is so full. He is going to be going down to Springfield with Mary Ann and Hector to complete with the other Youths of the Year and then coming back to Chicago but he can't go home, he has to go right to Midway to catch a plane to go to Atlanta for the National Keystone Conference because he is the President of the Keystone Club. He said that even though he has a lot on his plate right now but he is very happy and proud of his accomplishment and looking forward to the many opportunities that, he can see his future holds.

Deb Erickson asked Nestor what his top two favorite activities were that he had done with adult volunteers at the Club. Nestor reported that there was an event where board members came out to volunteer at the Club. He said they were painting the gym and the Keystone Club members were in charge of organizing the volunteer jobs. He said at first he did not feel old enough to be giving them directions but they respected and listened to him. He said his other favorite event with volunteers was going to a Haunted House.

Stacy thanked everyone for attending and said the event dates and specifics would soon be posted on the website www.ulbgc.org/vab.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:38p.m.