

Born to Read Ambassador Meeting Summary

June 24, 2017

Present: Sharon Workman, Stephanie Bransdorfer, Margaret Alexander, Ruth Bay, Irene Cotter, Jackie Kendall, Lorah, MacIntosh, Joan Sheard, Jan Warren, Wayne Workman

Getting Better Acquainted

The Ambassadors paired off and spoke to each other as an icebreaker. Sharon passed out the current Ambassador Contact list. It was noted that Stephanie was not on the list. She will be added. Name correction needed for Jacquelyn (from Jacqueline). There were short around-the-table introductions.

Progress and Lessons Learned

Sharon shared highlights from the BTR Celebration on June 8. The program listed the progress so far, broken down into categories. She thanked all the Ambassadors for the tremendous work done so far.

We discussed the Born to Read presence in the community and how to have a consistent and recognizable “brand” by wearing the Born to Read swag when on duty as an Ambassador. Name badges, sashes and/or hats were passed out.

Next were highlights from Stephanie’s project. Stephanie started as the Born to Read Community Liaison on June 1. Her first project was interviewing all 22 Ambassadors. Stephanie shared an overview of some responses to the interview questions: overall the Ambassadors commented that the program is positive and enjoyable. Connecting and interacting have been the best part. There is lots of enthusiasm about expanding and improving the program and our outreach with reading to children.

Summer Planning

Ambassadors reviewed the July, August and September schedules and confirmed their assignments. Stephanie will be contacting the other Ambassadors and finalizing the summer schedule. Copies will then be distributed to all Ambassadors.

Sharon reviewed three new projects that are underway this summer: the Youth Ambassadors project, distributing books & materials to organizations serving migrant families in the area and the scheduling of fall workshops to train more Ambassadors.

Enhancing Our Work

We brainstormed as a group on a couple issues: how to engage children and keep their attention and ways to approach parents and share information.

Here are the collected ideas: the Ambassadors agreed on potential obstacles or factors to be mindful of while on duty. The cultural background/socioeconomic status of families we are serving could present itself as a barrier (a culture of poverty). What are the best ways to make the connections with parents regarding reading? Make the parent feel adequate;

people need to feel safe. One idea was to implement the BTR program for a certain length of time then do a follow up study of the children served to see if a difference was made. Ambassadors are finding that clientele varies from site to site which should be taken into consideration when placing Ambassadors. We want the best environment for each Ambassador. How far Ambassadors are willing to travel is also a consideration. Some of the sites are rather far. Are our expectations in line with the BTR mission? We reviewed the mission as noted on the BTR website.

Additional Comments:

Northwest MI Health Services has a grant for a migrant oral health program, which is being supported by Unitarian Universalist Church. This could be a potential collaboration opportunity. PoWeR! Book Bags is doing great work in the community. We are partners with PBB. A weak spot in the Ambassador training was identified: practical behavior and practices at the Ambassador sites.

When books are low (half full), please notify Stephanie. Her email is vistasteph@gmail.com and telephone is 231-409-7505.

It is important to communicate with Sharon or Stephanie if you not able to keep your commitment. If you have a partner at same time/place, please inform them as well.

We discussed Ambassador Site documentation. We would like to simplify this process. The essential data to capture are: # kids and parents each visit, # new kids and parents each visit, # books distributed each visit. There will be a committee for Documentation System Improvement. Ruth Bay volunteered to help Stephanie. Thank you, Ruth!

A final reflection: we are carrying the Born to Read message by wearing a name badge, hat or sash, and giving a book and bookmark to each child, along with a "I'm Born to Read" sticker.

Mark your calendars! Next meeting is Saturday, September 23, 2017, 10 am - Noon