

## **Born to Read Partners**

### **Meeting Summary: December 6, 2016**

**Present:** Ruth Bay, Carolyn Collins, Kara Gregory, Betsy Hardy, Charlene Lutes, Becky Osborne, Bob Robbins, Andy Schuck, Missy Carson Smith, Sharon Workman

#### **1. Introductions and Welcome New Members**

- Becky Osborne joins us as president of the Rotary Club of Traverse Bay Twilight Foundation, the new 501c3 formed by the Club to accept tax-deductible contributions and grants in support of Born to Read.
- We missed another new member of our group, Paula Jo Kemler, who was unable to join us today due to illness. PJ attended the October 1 Ambassador training and has been a tremendous help to Sharon ever since. A very talented and energetic volunteer, she is assisting Sharon with rebranding and enhancement of Born to Read printed materials, as well as on the ground organizing for the BTR Ambassadors.

#### **2. Read Aloud 15 Minutes 2017 Campaign**

Bob Robbins announced the theme of the 2017 Read Aloud campaign, "From Birth", will focus on the first year of life, which research is showing is the most critical time for parents to have information about brain development and the importance of reading, talking, and singing with their newborns. PSA's for radio and TV as well as printed materials will feature this message in a variety of ways. One poster – Build Baby's Brain with Books – is perfect for Born to Read's enhanced packets for parents of newborns. All of the materials produced by Read Aloud can be printed with the Born to Read logo.

#### **3. Highlights: Born to Read 2016 Progress**

Sharon reviewed our achievements during the past year. In addition to ongoing distribution of Born to Read materials and books to expectant and new parents through Munson Healthy Futures, and TADL distribution of our materials and books, we have significantly expanded community outreach.

- Our Born to Read Ambassador program is growing – we now have 17 volunteer Born to Read Ambassadors. They will start reading with children and talking with parents in January, placed at 2 baby pantries and 1 laundry project. We expect to add another baby pantry this month. In exploring potential sites for our Ambassadors, we have expanded partnerships with organizations serving low-income and migrant families and will be finding new ways to get our message and books to the families they reach.
- We also just received funding from the Youth Endowment Fund of the Community Foundation to establish Born to Read Youth Ambassadors in 4 counties: Antrim, Benzie, Grand Traverse, and Leelanau. Sharon also submitted a proposal to United Way this month. While we don't expect to get the full \$9,500 requested, we are hopeful that some funds will be awarded in support of our 2017 goals.
- Becky announced that the Twilight Club allocated \$2000 to the Foundation and Rotary Charities will match this contribution giving a total of \$4000 to purchase books for Born to Read. The Club and Foundation are also working on a fall fundraiser – READ (Rotarians Eating And Drinking) for books. The event is scheduled for Thursday, September 28, at the Traverse City Golf and Country Club. Please mark you calendars! Also, we need everyone's

help in publicizing the event, getting people there, finding silent auction items, and working at the event. The goal is to raise \$10,000 for Born to Read.

- This year, Born to Read Ambassadors were highlighted in the media, with an article in the Record-Eagle, as well as a story on Channel 9-10 News.

CONGRATULATIONS everyone on an amazing year of progress!

### 3. Goals for 2017

- **Implement and publicize texting services.** Both TADL and Munson Healthy Futures are undertaking very exciting projects to reach parents through texting messages.

Andy described the library's plan to provide weekly text messages with early literacy tips to anyone who signs up through TADL or in the community, such as Born to Read Ambassador sites, Great Start neighborhood centers. The technical system is set up and marketing materials are being developed. Born to Read partners are working with Andy to develop the 52 messages to be sent in the coming year, starting in January.

Betsy summarized the Healthy Futures texting project which is already underway and reaching over 1600 parents. Messages focus on health and are targeted to parents starting early in the pregnancy and continuing until the child is 2 years of age. Frequency of the messages varies with the age of child – from monthly to almost daily, right after the baby comes home.

Andy, Betsy, and Robin Hornkohl are working together to integrate messages and insure there is no duplication, and will be incorporating early literacy tips into Munson's matrix.

- **Enhance Packets for Parent of Newborns.** A work group has identified and is preparing/collecting materials to improve the content of newborn packets, including: Great Start's new 5-One Early Childhood Resource Guide, a booklet of *Nursery Rhymes, Songs, and Fingerplays* (also from Great Start), a list of libraries in the 5-county region, a coupon for a free slice of pie from Grand Traverse Pie (with Dr. Seuss quote on back!), and the new Read Aloud campaign poster.
- **Improve Born to Read "brand" and printed materials.** Sharon is working with PJ Kelmer and Lisa Wiberg, Red Letter Designs, to develop our Born to Read brand – with new logo and complimentary printed materials, such as the envelop enclosing book and information for parents of newborns. In coming weeks, proposed logo and materials will be emailed to partners for feedback. Becky suggested that we come up with a way to recognize all the partners and sponsors of Born to Read, including the community organizations that are hosting our Born to Read Ambassadors.
- **Expand BTR Ambassadors and number of community sites.**
  - Through the Youth Endowment grant we hope to train and place 20-25 high school students in 4 counties to read with children and spread the Born to Read message. In addition, as resources allow, we hope to:
  - Offer at least two early literacy workshops in 2017 to train more Rotarians and community volunteers (especially Spanish speaking) as BTR Ambassadors.
  - Conduct training of Health Futures and Great Start home visitors and parent volunteers who will be Ambassadors as they conduct their visits or lead play groups.
  - Offer family fun/reading events at Migrant Camps this summer, providing free books to those who participate.

- Provide BTR newborn packets and 0-3 books at Ambassador sites and to other organizations serving low-income families (ex. Father Fred, Habitat for Humanity)
- Provide Power Book Bags to siblings of newborns (through home visitors)

#### **4. Year End Tasks**

The following tasks need to be completed in December/early January:

- Munson, TADL, & Great Start submit numbers for July-December 2016
- Convene BTR Ambassadors on 1/7/17 to prepare for placement at community sites
- Get newly branded envelopes and other materials printed for newborn packets
- Select/order books for various populations – Munson, BTR Ambassador sites, bi-lingual
- Set up book storage at Cherry Capital Foods and transport Read Aloud donation from e-Fulfillment
- Assemble 500 newborn packets for Munson, 100 for Father Fred, and 100 for GT Baby Pantry.

**Next Meeting:            Tuesday, March 7, 12-1:30 pm**

At a 5 to One Neighborhood Center - Missy will set this up.  
More info to follow...