

***Power of We Consortium***  
**Leadership and Practice Committee**  
**Minutes for June 22, 2011**

**Present:** Susan Moriarty (Action of Greater Lansing), Dennis Neuner (VOA), Peggy Vaughn-Payne (NWI), Katie Ellero (AmeriCorps), Serg Ruiz (VISTA), Justin Sheehan (CLR), Peggy Roberts (PWC)

**AmeriCorps\*VISTA and AmeriCorps State reports:**

Katie Ellero, AmeriCorps State Coordinator, reported that the Michigan Disability Rights Coalition awarded the Including Our Neighbors grant to The Garden Project, one of the PWC's AmeriCorps sites. 12 additional raised garden beds will be constructed throughout Lansing so all community members have access to the multiple benefits of gardening.

Three new summer AmeriCorps State members have begun service at the Ingham County Land Bank, Fenner Conservancy, and South Lansing Community Development Association.

Peggy reported that since Mary ZumBrunnen has left her position as VISTA coordinator, Peggy has assumed those duties. There are 5 VISTA members currently serving, and all will be finished by November. The Corporation has not yet informed the PWC whether its application for a new 5-year grant will be granted.

**Capacity Building Program:**

Peggy R. and Peggy V-P gave a brief overview of the work currently being done with the 4 organizations chosen for the Capacity Building Program: NAMI – Lansing; Hometown Housing Partnership, Inc.; Fenner Conservancy; and St. Stephens Community Church – Greer Learning Center. Each organization has completed their organizational assessments and are now working with mentors on the completion of their capacity building “product”.

**Connections Survey:**

Serg provided copies of the Connections e-bulletin survey that was issued in May. Of the 288 people who receive the electronic e-bulletin each month, 42 persons actually completed the online, 5-question survey. Highlights include:

- 92% were satisfied or very satisfied with the layout of the e-bulletin
- 92% were satisfied or very satisfied with the practicality and usefulness of the information presented
- 33% found the PWC Training section most useful, and 30% found the Online Resources section most useful
- 35% found the Celebrating Our Nonprofits section least useful

Serg also provided data as to how many people are opening the email each month (around 71), compared to the number that receive it (around 281). Justin Sheehan stated, in regard to the difference between the number of newsletters sent and newsletters actually opened, that the PWC name is still seen whether or not the newsletter is read. Justin also stipulated that the numbers may be skewed – because emails may be previewed instead of opened. Katie Ellero suggested the number of opens is still a good result. Interest in a calendar and contact information of PWC coalitions was expressed by Peggy Vaughn-Payne and Justin. Peggy Vaughn-Payne said that she would check the newsletter for such information before navigating to the PWC website. Susan Moriarty agreed, stating that it is quite confusing to find information on websites through navigation and there should be easy access in lieu of

overload. Justin proposed adding links to the newsletter that would redirect to specific pages, such as coalition information, “What’s New,” meeting calendars, etc. Serg will work on this.

It was also suggested that Community Legal Services have its own regular blurb/link in each e-bulletin.

### **New Legal Resources for Nonprofits**

Justin Sheehan, J.D., Statewide Program Director for Community Legal Resources, announced that the branch office of CLR is now open in their new Old Town Lansing location (107 E. Grand River Ave.). CLR provides pro bono legal services to eligible nonprofit organizations. Justin himself has previously provided a brief workshop for LPC members in 2010, and a large workshop for nonprofits as well.

Justin provided a description of CLR as a law arm for nonprofit organizations and as a great, although underutilized, resource. Justin also offered to contribute a periodic article to the newsletter about potential legal issues and other pertinent features. Justin is interested in designing a legal in-take clinic in a format yet to be determined. The scope and prioritization of legal topics will be explored in order to meet nonprofit needs. LPC members offered that their legal needs tend to center around HR issues (unions, grievances, hiring/firing, etc), property/leasing issues, donation issues, and corporate governance.

CLR’s open house will take place on Wednesday, June 29<sup>th</sup> from 3:00- 7:00 and all are invited.

### **PWC’s Web-based Capacity Building Resources:**

Peggy projected the PWC website onto the screen to show the work being done by Jim Zachs on the Capacity Building pages of the site (<http://powerofwe.org/capacity-bldg/>). The pages are divided up into the 5 capacity building areas and contain narrative, links to documents and sites, and other resources that might be of use to nonprofit organizations. The site is still under construction but is useable as is.

Jim asks that LPC members review the site and provide him with guidance as to what other information should go up. Suggestions included:

- Provide information as to whom new capacity building information or resources could be sent (Jim?)
- Add a legal resources page/link.
- Link the Capacity Building section of the website to the e-bulletin

The consensus was to wait until the website capacity building section is further completed to consider any more changes/additions.

### **Power of We Consortium Updates:**

Peggy informed the group that this year’s financial sustainability campaign to assist with the maintenance of the PWC’s infrastructure was moderately successful. Several organizations made a financial contribution and or increased their contribution (founding members) from previous years. The Investors Steering Committee will be considering the approach to the 2011-12 campaign.

### **Sharing of Resources: Need It or Got It?**

Susan from Action of Greater Lansing indicated she needs a domain name for their website and doesn’t know the best way to proceed. Serg offered that he uses dreamhost.com and has had good

success in obtaining free domain names for nonprofit organizations with which he is working. Serg can provide additional technical assistance if needed.

Peggy Vaughn-Payne of NorthWest Initiative reported their Farmer's Market will open on Mondays from 4:00-7:00 and they are looking for farmers, artisans, and folks with community gardens who wish to sell their wares. Let them know or refer them to NWI.

**Nonprofit Development Center**

Peggy updated the LPC on efforts to move forward this initiative. The planning committee meets next on July 21<sup>st</sup> at which time it is hoped an executive summary will be ready to take to various potential partners to explore interest.

*Next meeting of the Leadership and Practice Committee is September 28, 2011, 10:00-12:00*