

**Minutes from Steering Committee Meeting Written by Katie
Thursday, February 14, 2013 at 11:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.**

Present: George Evans Light, John Harkness, Mayor Parker Wiseman, Katie Lewis, John Breazeale, Ned Browning, Pastor Grant Arinder, Nancy Walsh, Rev. Bert Montgomery, Kimberly Norman (first time for her to attend a steering committee meeting, Lynn's guest), Stedmond Ware, Meggan Franks, and Yolanda Boyd

Moderator: The Reverend Lynn Phillips-Gaines

1. Opening Prayer- Rev. Bert Montgomery
2. Opening Remarks- The Reverend Lynn Phillips-Gaines
 - a. Went around the room and introduced ourselves.
3. Old Business- Lynn made the following announcements...
 - a. We are still waiting to hear from the Episcopal Church about the Seed Money grant. They have not notified Lynn of whether or not they have received our application.
 - b. The 2013 Getting Ahead class is tentatively scheduled for either the week of May 5th or May 12th.
 - c. The Facilitator/Ally Training with Phil DeVol is scheduled for Thursday, April 11th from 8:30 AM till 3:30 PM. Lynn would like for all steering committee members to attend.
4. Financial Business- Lynn announced the following...
 - a. *Starkville Bridges* received a contribution from Sandra Sistrunk in honor of her sister Sheri Sistrunk. The donation occurred after Lynn spoke at the Alderman's meeting on how it was important to get ahead of Poverty in a community. Lynn pointed out that many first responders to individuals in poverty are city employees.
 - b. Jack Forbus spoke with State Farm about obtaining a grant for Bridges Out of Poverty! We will be submitting an application for three possible grants. One of the possible grants would be through social media. The candidates for the grant would be posted on Facebook, and the supporters would have the option to vote for those candidates. Lynn asked the steering committee to tell Jack Forbus that they appreciated his help if they saw him. Also, Lynn invited him to the Community Training event.
 - c. Rhonda Ferguson from Columbus made a donation to SBOP.
5. Current Projects and Needs- Lynn discussed the following...
 - a. Community Training event:
 - i. As of Wednesday, February 13, there are 20 participants registered for the Community Training event. Two of those participants are past graduates (Ericka Gillespie and Sara Moye).

- ii. Lynn asked that the steering committee members make sure that all faith-based communities were reached. Lynn will be speaking at the NAACP meeting on February 14 trying to contact all bi-vocational preachers.
 - iii. The \$50 sign-up fee for the Community Training event has been extended until 5 PM on Sunday, February 17. After that deadline, the sign-up fee will be \$60.
 - iv. All government officials and past participants in the Community Training event will only be charged a \$15 sign-up fee.
 - v. Lynn has been calling people (ex. Buddy Staggers and Tommy Tomlinson). Lynn needs help calling people. She mentioned that when you ask someone to attend, it is best to ask them personally and as if this would be a favor to you.
 - vi. Little Dooey's is handling the food.
 - vii. Pastor Arinder said that Jim Ellis would be paying for two people to attend the event.
 - viii. Lynn spoke to Pinks Dudley, and Pinks indicated that the amount of participants attending the Community Training event may dwindle as everyone who has a heart for the program becomes involved.
 - ix. Lynn spoke with West Point's Robbie Robinson, and he should be attending the Community training event. He is a great center of influence.
 - x. We discussed that the speaker, Jodi Pfarr, needs transportation to and from the Community Training event. Pastor Arinder, Nancy Walsh, and Dr. Harkness said that they could possibly help with transportation. Meggan Franks cannot send a student worker to Jackson to pick up Jodi Pfarr. Katie is going to obtain the concrete travel plans for Ms. Pfarr and contact Pastor Arinder, Nancy Walsh, and Dr. Harkness.
 - xi. Lynn asked who could help with the sign-in table at the event: Meggan Franks, Stedmond Ware, and John Breazeale offered to help. Lynn suggested that we assemble the packets for the participants at the registration table as they arrived.
 - xii. Dr. Harkness said that he would contact people from the vet school at MSU to drum up more participants.
 - xiii. Meggan Franks said that she would be donating donuts and coffee for the event. She will work with Katie on the logistics of setting up.
 - xiv. The sportsplex will be in charge of set up and clean up.
 - xv. Mayor Wiseman said that he would follow up with city employees and inform them that their charge would only be \$15.
 - xvi. Pastor Arinder asked to be sent general informational handouts for SBOP that he could give out to his congregation. Katie was going to send him that information.
 - xvii. Katie was going to check with the sportsplex on when Meggan and Stedmond could set up for the event. They were hoping to set up the evening of Thursday, February 21.
- b. The Bridges Community Soiree is scheduled for Thursday, May 16. We have the support of Taylor Adams and Rhonda Keenum.
- i. Taylor Adams will be doing the commentary.

- ii. We will follow up with Myles and June Carpenter to see if they will handle the awards/gifts.
 - iii. Lynn suggested that we have a silent auction.
 - c. Speaking opportunities
 - i. Lynn and Ericka Gillespie (GA graduate) spoke at the Alderman meeting in Starkville on Tuesday, February 5.
 - ii. Lynn and Ericka Gillespie (GA graduate) spoke at the Rotary Club meeting in West Point on Thursday, February 7.
 - 1. Carol Haulton (GA graduate) attended the Rotary Club meeting.
 - 2. Lynn looked at the statistics and 30% of our graduates are from West Point.
 - iii. Lynn spoke at the Economic Development meeting in Starkville on Tuesday, February 12.
 - iv. Lynn spoke at the Calvary Baptist Church on Sunday, January 20.
 - v. Lynn mentioned the upcoming Community Training event at the Greater Starkville Development Partnership annual banquet.
 - vi. Nancy Walsh spoke at the Methodist Women's meeting.
 - 1. Nancy said that the women questioned if they were too old to make a difference in the program. Nancy told them that the program needs allies. She left them information. The women also asked if the GA participants were aware of the financial programs through the campus, and Nancy told them that the participants are not aware of those resources and that is what the class helps teach them.
 - vii. Michelle Easterling, new city prosecutor from West Point, has been contacting West Point government and city officials about the upcoming Community Training event.
 - d. We are in the process of hiring the Operations Administrator position for SBOP.
 - i. Lynn is concerned about hiring a full-time position, but most of the applicants would want to move into full-time. Dr. Harkness mentioned that he wants someone that will stay in the position. Meggan mentioned that it could be written into a future employee's contract that they have to raise the funds to cover his/her salary or look for grants to do so.
 - ii. Yolanda Boyd did not think that including the grant writing/fundraising requirement for the position was a good idea. She was worried about that person in the position losing the enthusiasm for the program when having to work to earn his/her pay. Pastor Arinder did not agree with the cost of a full-time staff.
 - iii. Stedmond is going to send Katie the applications for the work-study student position through the MSU campus.
6. Next meeting as a steering committee is **March 21st at 11:30 a.m. at McAlister's**. Next board of directors meeting is **next quarter**.
7. Questions/Comments
- A. Dr. Harkness asked (based on what Pinks Dudley said) what is the life span of the program? Harkness wanted to know if there was interest from impoverished individuals in the program. Lynn said the interest was strong from impoverished

individuals, but it was difficult getting the middle class and keeping the middle class involved in the program.

- B. Lynn, Meggan Franks, and Stedmond Ware discussed if there were conflicts (other on-campus events) occurring on the day of the SBOP Community Training event. Ned Browning pointed out that there was a Professional Women's event being held by Amy Tuck on the day of the Community Training.
- C. The Overstreets will be showing the SBOP video to their outreach group at the Catholic Church in Columbus this weekend (Sunday, February 17).