

10/7/16

Community Building Meeting

Attendees: Karen Arnold, Cathy Hicks, Jim Ramish, Melissa Pappas, Julia Hupperts, Jesse Thomas, Roxanne Sands, Mary Puente, Leona Eishen, Erick Clark

The meeting started with a welcome and the reading of the minutes from the September meeting.

What is the importance of sharing?

Jesse asked for feedback on this.

Several people said there was no sharing at their Resident Council meeting. Some hi-rises don't even put community building on the meeting agenda.

Including everyone is a very important reason to share information and other things. Keeping information just between a few people and keeping others out of the loop can cause a multitude of problems.

Getting ideas from more residents is another good reason to share.

Sharing helps build understanding an community. It can let people know they aren't alone in what they are feeling or experiencing.

Sharing makes collaboration easier.

Sharing helps people feel accepted. It invites people into the group/circle.

A question was asked about how to include more people and get them to come to meetings and events. Talking to people can be a big help. Invite them to come to the Resident Council meeting or building event. Let them know they are welcome.

Interest sharing:

An interest survey was handed out. Doing the survey will hopefully help us learn what residents are interested in and what type of activities they would like to have. Interests on the survey include things that could be done right at the hi-rises like a craft group, and things organized elsewhere such as a trip to the Science Museum or Festival of Nations.

Surveys can be copied and distributed at your hi-rise.

The transportation issue was brought up again. That is always the sticking point when events are being planned.

There are a lit of options out there such as Metro Mobility, bus, train. A lot if places can be easily reached by public transportation.

Having a craft sale was mentioned. Unfortunately, the PHA rules have been changed to forbid bake sales, craft sales, rummage sales, etc. (The craft sale prohibition likely has to do with concerns about bedbugs.)

Another big issue with fundraisers is dealing with the cash taken in. Some hi-rises do ask for donations for coffee or using the printer and the money received needs to be carefully accounted for and proper paperwork filled out.

Coffee sales are allowed. Food sales are discouraged. (Any food sold must be commercially made and individually wrapped.)

There also needs to be buy in from the Resident Council before any fundraiser is undertaken.

Definition of Diversity:

A handout about this was passed out. The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These can be a broad number of differences such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability status, political beliefs. It is exploring these differences in a safe, positive, and respectful environment. It is about understanding and accepting each other and letting everyone's unique voice be heard.

All hi-rise events:

What type of event to have was discussed. How to plan the event and communicate with the hi-rises was mentioned. Putting up flyers was suggested. The event could also be publicized on the PC website and in the Community Insider would also be good.

Finding a venue is another issue. The Wellstone center charges for use of their space. Hi-rise community rooms wouldn't be big enough. The family site community centers were suggested. Also the MLK center and Wilder. St. Paul Parks and Rec facilities were also mentioned as were private park and rec facilities. Feelers could be put out to see what options and facilities are available. Jesse could look into the parks and MLK center. Landmark Center was also mentioned. That might be pricy though.

Obtaining the needed funds was the next issue discussed. Asking for a donation from each hi-rise was suggested. (\$25 per hi-rise was suggested) The Presidents Council would receive the donations and handle payment as is done for the Officers Recognition event.

Food at the event is another consideration. That would depend on the location chosen and the funds available.

The events being considered are a multi cultural fashion show or a Black History event. A craft show is also being considered. (So is a Presidents Council open house. This would introduce people to the various committees and volunteer options available.)

Comments and Concerns:

Getting people interested in being on their hi-rise board was brought up. A lot of hi-rises are having trouble filling all the officer positions. Fallout from previous boards can be a big problem. Residents see all the issues/infighting and get turned off on stepping up and serving because of that. (Feeling that they don't have a voice can also lead to that discouragement.) Having a meet and greet might encourage residents to come down to the community room. (Food always gets people to attend.)

Everyone operates from a different mental state/ is in a different "place". The thing we need to do is to accept people where they are and make them feel welcome. Gossip, judging, backbiting never do anything but draw people apart.

Having game night was suggested as a way to bring people together. The only issue with that is that that type of event doesn't encourage people to step outside of their comfort zone/ circle of friends.

Having a punch/stamp card where residents could collect points for different things like attending meetings/events was suggested. Points could be redeemed for some kind of prize after a certain time. The card could possibly be made to look like a passport.

Prizes could be things like gift cards.

How points would be given out needs to be determined. Also, who would be responsible for giving them out.

Next meeting: November 4th