

Perspectives

Contents

1

- Letter From Your Agent

2

- Collaborate...Don't Just Delegate!

3

- Volunteer in 2011

4

- What to Expect in 2011

Dear Tarrant County Friends and Partners,

Winter is on the horizon and 2011 is just in sight! It has been a busy couple of months – The semester with the Christian Women's Job Corps is now over, the 2010 C-LEC Conference held in September was a success, the Career Seeker Toolbox Series has been welcomed by multiple audiences, and numerous sites are planning to implement their Walking School Buses for the 2011 spring semester. There's much work to be done and your Urban Development Program Area Committee is no exception – they have met and made decisions about programming for the upcoming year, while also starting the planning process for next year's C-LEC conference! This issue greets you with some articles touching on timely issues pertinent to our communities, as well as an introduction to our 2011 programs. We are always looking for ways to improve upon our work and welcome all of your input and suggestions. Enjoy your Perspectives!

Please remember to visit us at our new and improved web site found at <http://tarrant.tamu.edu> under the Urban Development section to find regularly updated information, including a community calendar of events, a video of the Walking School Bus pilot project, and a link to "Access Tarrant's Urban Scene", a blog brought to you by your Urban Development CEA (<http://tiny.cc/urbanscene>).

To join our mailing list, receive more information, make an appointment to meet with your CEA, request an event to be placed in our community calendar, or express interest in our programs, contact:

Sonia Benavides
Admin Asst - Urban Development
817.884.1946

Websites:

<http://tiny.cc/urbanscene> (UD-BLOG)
<http://Tarrant.tamu.edu> (COUNTY WEB PAGE)
<http://buildingconnections.tamu.edu>
<http://www.tcre.org/>
<http://www.texasleadership.org>
<http://communityeconomics.tamu.edu>
<http://nacdep.net>
<http://www.tarrantcounty.com/eTCRI/site/default.asp>

Urban Development

Tel 817.884.1946

Fax 817.884.1941

P.O. Box 1540, Fort Worth, TX 76101 - 1540

500 Taylor St, Suite 500; FW, TX 76196-0123

<http://tarrant.tamu.edu> (web)

AgriLIFE EXTENSION

Texas A&M System

Improving Lives. Improving Texas.

Tarrant County

Collaborate ... Don't Just Delegate!

In an effort to “partner” in and around the advancement of a community, we often delegate tasks to others in a spirit of “partnership”. In essence, trust does need to exist in order to delegate with the certainty that each task will be accomplished for the greater good. However, collaboration, which goes beyond partnership, seeks to embrace a spirit of mutual gain and the common good. It does come with its share of challenges, though...collaboration requires shared ownership, vision, decisions, leadership, and responsibility.

Multiple entities will be unable to seek to work toward a larger mission if the vision is not shared. Each player must see themselves in that goal in order to be personally invested in it; this creates a personal gain and a personal interest in the success of the venture. However, this creates a need to have shared ownership and decision-making capacity. There's a difference between washing someone's car for pay and washing your own car for the purposes of personal enjoyment. There's a different motivation in each and there's a different level of commitment to the quality of the work in each. Collaborating in a common effort is no different. But, it requires everyone to be willing to share that ownership and it requires everyone to have a voice in the ultimate decisions made. Remember, we function one way when we are delegated a task and another when we choose a task from a list of options.

Now, none of this can be brought to complete fruition if all are not willing to also take personal responsibility and share the burden of leadership. Often, we expect to reap the benefits of hard work without being a part of the process that created the success. As such, it is an absolute necessity to be willing to lead, supervise, and manage when needed, while also being willing to follow, contribute, and work at the forefront when your team depends on it.



“It is the long history of humankind (and animal kind, too) that those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed.”

~ Charles Darwin



Collaborate ... Don't Just Delegate!

Continued . . .

In an effort to highlight a team that embodies true collaboration, I thank my Urban Development Program Area Committee for their tireless efforts in sharing their vision, sharing the leadership, sharing the decision-making, taking shared ownership, doing the behind-the-scenes work, and accepting personal responsibility for the overall success of the programs provided through the Urban Development department here at Texas AgriLife Extension Service – Tarrant County throughout the 2010 calendar year. I look forward to working with you into an adventurous 2011!

The Urban Development Program Area will be highlighted during this year's Volunteer Luncheon being held on December 9, 2011!

2010 Urban Development Program Area Committee

Debby Kratky, Chair
Sue Matkin, Vice Chair
Anita Jones, Secretary
Dr. Angel Ilaraza
Lylette Pharr
Lucy Carrion-Barnes
Carlos De Anda

Cathy Young
Bill Russell
Rebecca Barksdale
Steven Townsend
Farzana Mughal
Linda Juarez
Herb Garcia

Volunteer in 2011!

Last year, we addressed the benefits of volunteering your time – personal, professional, and community-wide perks. It is something we often think of, but rarely have or make time for. However, I challenge you to pledge to find those creative ways to give of yourself! Let's consider some unique ones:

January is National Mentoring Month

According to the Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Texas, there are over 3000 children that remain on a waiting list for mentors; sometimes, for years. Can you imagine that? There are actually youth asking for mentorship and not enough adults willing to provide it. In addition, there are more young men seeking mentors, but more adult women offering their mentorship, creating a shortage of available mentors for young men and the creation of more non-traditional matches such as Big Sisters for young men. Did you know that there are approximately 10 million children who have an incarcerated parent in the United States, making them 70% more likely to follow in those same footsteps? (Amachi) With just one hour per week you can talk by phone, attend a sporting event, go out to eat pizza, or simply "chill" around in the park throwing a Frisbee. This one hour per week, four hours per month, and 48 hours per year (about the same as one week of work), can make a difference that lasts a child's lifetime. You can make a difference as a mentor; in their lives and the life of your community. Seek out your local agencies, faith based communities, and non-profits that oversee mentoring programs and give of yourself today. You'll have a huge return on your investment of time!



Your Neighbors in Need

In Tarrant County, we have an overwhelming asset in the form of our most wise; our cherished seniors! However, a large number of them live isolated and in need of the very assistance that we often take for granted; friendly visits, yard maintenance, minor home repairs, transportation, grocery shopping assistance, etc. Imagine...you can help your elderly neighbor avoid those code violations by simply mowing past your own yard into theirs; you can help an elderly neighbor receive their proper nutrition by simply adding their short list of items to your own when you go grocery shopping; you can even help your elderly neighbor avoid medical concerns by simply offering a ride to/from their regular check up that can serve to prevent future complications; you can also help ensure their safety by simply offering to change that doorknob that's loose or offering to change those light bulbs that no longer work; you can even provide a friendly phone call or visit to help your neighbor feel cherished and valued. There are a variety of agencies that offer oversight of the volunteers that serve in these capacities. Seek out your local agency today and become a force of change and hope in your local community!

You see...you don't have to travel far and wide to make a difference. Right next door, across the street, down the road, and around the corner is as far as you have to go to find ways to make a lasting impression for life!

✿ ***"Wherever a man turns he can find someone who needs him."***

~Albert Schweitzer



What to Expect in 2011!

Walking School Bus

This new program is designed to engage schools and communities serving children and families. It is an organized program that encourages the increase of physical activity through participation in a route based walk to/from school. Because our state doubles the national average in childhood overweight and obesity rates, we seek to engage communities in fun and creative ways to embrace a culture of wellness, while contributing to community wide safety. To learn more about implementing a Walking School Bus at your site and how to engage as a volunteer, please call your Urban Development department.



Career Seeker Toolbox

This new job readiness series helps participants focus on the necessary steps to acquire a position within their chosen career. It is designed to engage groups in a series of experiences that takes them from the preliminary steps (resume writing and career exploration), to the initiation (interview, salary negotiation), to the practice and retention (work ethic, workplace communication, time management). Partnership and collaboration with other area organizations is welcomed and encouraged. If you are interested in learning more, please contact your Urban Development department.



Tackling the Tough Skills

This offering focuses on five key elements that contribute to individual success. Through this educational and interactive experience to addressing attitude, responsibility, communication, problem solving/decision-making, and preparation for the workplace, participants seeking to make a significant personal change, prepare themselves for their future through the development of self. The sessions are intended for adult and older youth audiences (17 and older). Contact your Urban Development department to learn more.



Building Connections

We will continue to offer the BC leadership series modules while adding two exciting components: train the trainer opportunities, and a one-day professional development conference (The Community Leadership Empowerment Conference or C-LEC) where pre-registration will be required. The individual modules will be offered to staff groups seeking professional development and may require a per-participant fee. Call your Urban Development department to schedule a series for your staff or for more information.



For more information about these programs please contact your:

Urban Development Department

Tel 817.884.1946

Fax 817.884.1941

smbenavides@ag.tamu.edu