

## **Power of Together 2**

### **Meeting Minutes – November 13, 2018**

The November meeting was held at the Union Baptist Church in Mystic at 6:00 pm. This special meeting featured a 30-minute social break after the vote but before the recipient announcement with food/beverages/conversation to celebrate our accomplishments and for members to get to know one another.

Barb Silver opened this last meeting of 2018 by welcoming the approximately 70 attendees, including our new members Chris Morren, Fran Hoffman, Michael & Laurie Blefeld, Tory Christian, Kevin Sisson and Sandy Maniscalco. She pointed out that it was almost exactly 3 years ago that a group of us visited the Niantic Power of Together group and determined to establish this second chapter. There are many other similar giving groups nationwide who also believe in the tremendous impact this grassroots concept can have. Our communities need local help, and we are part of an amazing national wave.

We have had 10 meetings to date and we have given \$87,500 to 10 local organizations. Posters were on display that detailed the 10 recipient organizations. After tonight's recipient is chosen and our donation is made, we will have donated just shy of \$100,000 to local non-profits.

Barb thanked Union Baptist Church and member Sue Morton for tonight's meeting space and all who donated food, including Dog Watch BBQ. We are grateful to the VFW for hosting us for the past 10 meetings and are taking a collection to purchase a Christmas gift for them.

Meeting dates for 2019 are February 12, May 14, August 13, and November 12.

The founders would like to get some feedback from the members on how we are doing as an organization and will be conducting a focus group in the near future to get members' views and input on:

- Marketing/publicity
  - Website help (WordPress)
  - Newsletter help
- Voting process
- Meeting location
- Collection of funds

Chris Shields, a member of PoT2 for two years, introduced Givinga, which is a software platform members can use to make donations and manage their charitable giving. More information will be sent out about using Givinga after the minutes are distributed on November 14, 2018.

Last quarter's recipient was Sophia Sees Hope and Laura Manfre described what the organization did with the \$9,700 they received from PoT2. The funds were used to support attendees at an October conference in Mystic about research, outreach and support for those affected by LCA, a retinal disease causing blindness. Our funds helped provide travel and lodging for conference participants and a field trip to the Aquarium for their children. The families who attended were overwhelmed by the support and knowledge they gained at the conference.

First pitch: Dan Kelley made a pitch for Meet the Needs Ministry CT, a group from St. Andrew Presbyterian Church that helps local residents with home renovation, repairs, cleaning and yard work. The group is comprised of adults and high school students who donate their time and skills to help out their neighbors. The group needs a trailer for their tools and other support.

Second pitch: Lori Calobrisi made a pitch for Safe Futures, a local organization that supports those affected by domestic abuse. Safe Futures operates two 24-hour hotlines, an emergency shelter, and transitional living programs for families working to rebuild lives shattered by domestic violence or sexual assault. Safe Futures also provides counseling and advocacy, case management, court support services, support groups, and educational programs for schools and community groups.

Third pitch: Chris Morren made a pitch for the Mystic Geriatric Institute, a local non-profit that seeks to improve wellness and healthcare for the elderly. They educate caregivers on the needs of the elderly through seminars, conferences and workshops. They have established a model geriatric practice that includes home visits by a doctor and nurse practitioner to serve as a template for other practitioners. For 2019 they seek to develop a program to teach caregivers how to care for their elderly loved ones and the PoT2 funds would pay those who teach the courses.

The group voted and then adjourned to the social for food, refreshments and conversation. Later in the evening it was announced that Safe Futures received the most votes and will be the recipient of our fourth quarter 2018 funds.

We now have two ways for members to make their quarterly contribution:

1. Mail or drop off your \$100 check made out to Safe Futures to: Karen Stone, 217 Noank Rd., Mystic, CT 06355. Please be sure to do this as soon as possible because we would like to present our donation within a week to 10 days of our meeting.
2. Use Givinga to make your donation to Safe Futures online and it will be delivered directly to the non-profit. Follow the instructions emailed to you on November 14, 2018 and opt to pay by credit card (\$3 fee) or direct transfer from your bank account (no fee). Questions can be sent to [support@givinga.com](mailto:support@givinga.com).