

Power of Together 2 - New London County, CT

Minutes: April 18, 2017

The fifth meeting of Power of Together 2 was held at the Mystic VFW on Tuesday evening, April 18, 2017.

It was our largest gathering yet, with approximately 81 folks attending including members and guests. 62 member votes were cast for the three proposed organizations, from which the Boys and Girls Club of Southeastern Connecticut (BGCSECT) was chosen.

With the addition of 5 new commitment forms we are now at 101 members. Deb Fountain, founder of Power of Together SECT in Niantic, submitted a commitment form to become our 100th member. We will be submitting checks totaling \$10,100 to BGCSECT, but with matching donations, the total donation amount could surpass that. Stay tuned.

Barb Silver-Holt opened the meeting with a recap of our donations to date, which are \$4,400 to MASH, \$5,700 to the Groton Public Library, \$8,300 to The Giving Garden at the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center, and \$9,750 to the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center. Our contributions over the past year total \$28,150!

Rachel Seery-Hersant, the volunteer coordinator for the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center, reported to the group on the wonderful programs our January 2017 gift of \$9,750 is supporting. The funds are a big help in PNC's efforts to provide a safety net of food, energy assistance and other basic needs programs for those who need them. These programs include transportation for seniors, congregate meals, an emergency food pantry, a weekender backpack food program for children, supplies for babies and pets, and a clothing closet.

Following this, three presenters were randomly selected:

1. A Good Laugh, Inc. was presented by Gigi Little. Her non-profit's mission is to provide humor to those affected by illness, injury, depression or trauma. Because laughter truly is the best medicine, her goal is to spread the healing power of humor to those in need. A Good Laugh, Inc. has supplied comedy DVD collections to those with

- cancer and has produced and sponsored free comedy shows for local groups.
2. Community Speaks Out was presented by Susan Charette. This organization's goal is to foster greater discussion and acknowledgement of opiate addiction in the area. As far as Community Speaks Out is concerned, the more public the conversation, the better the chance that something will be done to curb the over prescription of pain medication, improve treatment options and availability and erase the stigma of addiction.
 3. Boys and Girls Club of Southeastern Connecticut was presented by Jay Johnston. Their mission is to enable all young people to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens. Boys & Girls Club of Southeastern Connecticut provides youth and teens with a safe place to learn and grow, ongoing relationships with caring, adult professionals, life-enhancing programs and character development experiences, and hope and opportunity. They have after school programs for boys and girls in kindergarten through 12th grade that include STEM mentoring, promoting healthy and safe behaviors, and leadership development.

The group voted and the Boys and Girls Club SECT received the most votes. A check will be presented to BGCSECT in the upcoming weeks. We will announce the total presented and the date in a subsequent email to the membership.

During the vote count, a brief "Annual Meeting" was held. Barb announced we have grown from 43 members in April 2016 to over 100 members in April 2017. We are including in our name "New London County Connecticut" to better describe our area of influence. We are focused on worthy causes in both New London County and the Westerly area. In time, as we grow, we may divide into two groups focused on these two geographical areas. We are working on a web site with the help of member Larry Yakitis and he has secured for us the domain name www.poweroftogether.org. We plan to include information for our members, and links to other Power of Together chapters. We have recently distributed a list of many of the local non-profit organizations in our area with web site addresses to help members research worthy causes. This list will be updated regularly and will be posted on our web site.

Barb pointed out that we are part of a large network of groups throughout the US and Canada whose members pool their resources in helping local worthy causes. She mentioned three of their web sites, www.poweroftogethersect.org, www.100peoplewhocare.org and www.100whogive.com and suggested we might want to look at those for inspiration.

Our meeting dates for the rest of 2017 are: July 11 and October 10.

Thank you to every member who has so generously donated!

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Stone

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