

Minutes of the September 8, 2014 Staying Put Board Meeting

A meeting of the Board of Staying Put took place on Monday, Sept. 8 at 4:30 PM in the Parlor at the Congregational Church of New Canaan.

President Tom Ferguson opened the meeting. The minutes for the August Board meeting were approved.

Executive Director Barb Achenbaum reported that August was similar to August 2013, with fewer requests overall, and explained that this is partly because Lapham Center closes for two weeks in August. Special thanks to Tom Towers, Janicke Madsen, and Barbara Biggs for giving so many rides in August. They were among the 36 Volunteers who gave rides to 47 members. The number of technical requests continues to rise and so these requests will be categorized separately from "Home Visit" requests from now on; thanks to Sue Scannell for using her expertise in the tech category.

Kathy Collins is the new face in the office; she is working part-time and is hired to help Assistant Director Donna Simone with member needs and home visits. Kathy has an MBA and is currently working on her degree in Social Work.

Board members are asked to take note of the new members who joined in August and to encourage them to join in any upcoming SP event.

Barb Achenbaum will attend the Village2Village national meeting on Sept. 29 & 30. Former Director Jane Nyce will be a presenter there.

Barb asked the Board to give her their cell phone numbers. She also asked the Board to check that their names are listed correctly on the SP letterhead.

Sally and Kim Campbell celebrated their birthdays in August and asked their friends donate to STAYING PUT rather than bring a present. Thanks to the Campbells' thoughtfulness.

In the category of fundraising: the Board is expected to write personal notes on the appeals, and there are still many unassigned prospects – so the Board is encouraged to look at the list and to write a few more notes to these people. Judy Bentley will set up her home for note- writing and collating & stuffing into the corresponding envelopes with the formal appeal letters.

Lois Sandberg is writing these appeal letters, and it is expected that the final letters will be printed by the first week in Oct. The week of Oct. 6 the Board is invited to come Judy's home to complete the writing, stuffing and filing of the

appeal letters. Thanks go to the entire Board and especially to Judy who not only gives up her home for the week, but also provides food for the whole week. The newsletter, which is being designed by Arthur Congdon, will be sent along with the appeal.

The August Events were attended by 61 different members; There were 5 events (not including Mead Park Friday lunches) with 88 attendees in all. The picnic at Woodway (hosted by Donna Simone) was a huge success, as always, even though the date had to be changed because of the rain.

Treasurer Tom Turrentine reported that August, as usual, was a slow month for revenue. Tom told the Board that Fund reports are done quarterly, so the next one will be in Oct.

Patti Geanakos reported that during her research on office technology, she divided the questions into two categories: 1) hardware and software in the office, and 2) programs for data and contact management. Julius Alexander, who has done work for NCCF, has suggested 2 new workstations for Kathy Collins and Cathy Fitzgerald, and upgrades for Barb Achenbaum and Donna Simone. These will be purchased within the month. Pete Stair and Julius will help with set up and start up.

Meanwhile, the Tech Team - Patti, Sue Scannell, and Jim Cole – will research data programs. A good data/contact management program will increase productivity in the office.

Barb Achenbaum has categorized STAYING PUT membership by how active each of the 330 people are in requesting services from STAYING PUT: 1) those members who use most of the staff's time and attention, 2) regular users, 3) less frequent users (about once a year); and 4) active members who volunteer.

Barb pointed out that it is important to find ways to retain the less frequent users members rather than to let them drop their membership for lack of involvement. Membership and Events committees will address these members and try to include them in programs.

Membership, Events and the entire Board are also reminded to invite new members to events and to plan special events for these newbies – preferably ones that include food! Sally Campbell's welcome dinners are a perfect example of introducing the new members around to each other and to the Board. STAYING PUT will consider starting a "Big Sister/Brother" program for new members. SP does have a questionnaire for new members but it certainly does not take the place of a personal phone call from a current member.

Membership Committee manned tables at Walgreen's and the Farmer's Market in August. Most people were in too much of a hurry to be stopped and "captured" long enough to make it a worthwhile endeavor. The Farmer's Market produced a good list of potential Volunteers. Sue Scannell set STAYING PUT up to share the space with the Sewing Group; shared space works well, as has been demonstrated at the Sidewalk Sale where SP shared the space with Getabout.

Lois Sandberg, who is working on the appeals letters, is always looking for good quotes from members and from Volunteers. The Board is asked to listen to the members when giving a ride for quotables, and to get permission to use them for publicity.

Nancy Helle is working on an article on Volunteer drivers for publication in local papers.

Events Committee has finally realized that all members like to eat, drink and be merry; with that in mind, some Board members have offered to host events at their homes. Attendance at the Coffee in the Kitchen will be bolstered this month by Cynnie Yate's invitation to all the Office Volunteers as a way to thank these marvelous people. (As of this writing, it was a great success, with 14 people.) The Kitchen Bridge event will be changed to include other games to allow for different numbers than just four people. Along with other card games (gin rummy, which can be played by two or plenty more) Scrabble has been suggested. Events Committee is open to suggestions for a better name than "Kitchen Games."

Tuesday, Oct. 23 at 1:30 pm STAYING PUT members are invited to Darien Historical Society to enjoy Babs White's presentation of bridal gowns dating from 1850. This is a fascinating exhibit and a good one to invite new members to join in the fun. Even the name is fun: "Here Come The Brides!"

Events Committee is also working on an outing to the Beardsley Zoo in Bridgeport. Steve Orteig has checked it out and says it is very easy walking and the cost will be \$8. Steve and Larry Brown will talk it up at the next Men's Coffee at the New Canaan Inn.

Cynnie Yates has taken over from the wonderful job that Mitzie Transue has done in filling the Office with Volunteers every day of the week. These Volunteers answer the phones, take messages, and greet people when they come to the office. Cynnie "likes her job!" and finds that people are always happy to help in the office.

The drivers' Thank You Coffee is still given each month because these wonderful Volunteers should be thanked, and they should know that they are part of a really great group of people.

Barb Achenbaum is giving a party on Oct. 2 at 5:30 pm at her home on Weed St. to thank current Volunteers and to encourage potential Volunteers to becoming active volunteers. Invitations have already been sent to the Board and to the Advisory Council.

George Brakeley has offered to start organizing an Archive for STAYING PUT. He has already done some oral history – interviews with Tom Ferguson and Judy Bentley – and will continue with interviews of David Brown, Gloria Major-Brown, and Ellie O'Neill. The amount of written material and news articles is substantial. Patti Geanakos and Pete Stair will investigate ways to store all this information in the cloud. Imagine an organization that's about to celebrate its 8th birthday and already has enough information to have archives! These will be immensely helpful to other towns in starting their own "Village2Village" organizations.

While writing about "Village2Village," it is good to know that Jane Nyce will be a featured presenter at the National Conference in West Virginia.

The meeting closed at 5:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lyn Chivvis, Secretary to the Board

9/16/14