

April '23 MEETING MINUTES

Merrill Enrichment Center Committee

Meeting was held on April 20th, 2023 at 2:15pm

Merrill Enrichment Center Conference Room – 303 N. Sales Street

Present: Rick Blake (Aldersperson-via phone), Gene Bebel, Sharon Harvey, Teresa Baker, Rose Akey, Sharon Anderson, Jennifer Clark – via phone. **Absent:** Laura Bertagnoli (Chair)

1. Opening

- a. Director Mrachek called the meeting to order.

2. Consent Items

- a. Motion by Blake second by Anderson to approve March '23 minutes. Motion carried.
- b. Motion by Akey second by Harvey to approve March/April '23 vouchers. Motion carried.

3. Public Comment

- a. Baker shared she received immediate positive feedback on our first bus trip!

4. Operations

- a. Director shared date of May 6th for our spring craft show and noted this would be our last Spring Craft show. MEC staff is looking into new, fresh offerings to draw in new crowds. Baker noted she got the Show flyers in all three housing authority buildings.
- b. The MEC May newsletter was distributed in the Gleason area inside the April 20th Foto News. We will be tracking to the best of our abilities how many people this brings to the Center.
- c. Director provided update of endowment fund research with hopes to have completion no later than the end of this year. Director met with Chamber Executive Director Clyde Nelson to discuss the possibility of running under the Chamber. He directed me to a few other resources to make the best decision for the Center. Finance Director Unertl shared that fiscal reporting would need to be given to Kathy annually for reporting. Bebel shared the River Bend Trail had their own account at Incredible/River Valley Bank. Unertl stated this is not an option for the MEC due to WI State Statues. Director will continue to research best options for the MEC endowment fund.
- d. Our new check in system hardware is on its way. Staff has two more trainings to complete in May with hopes of going live by June. Director shared the many benefits of the system including faster check in for participants and reporting features. Baker shared questions she had been asked relative to our punch cards and how they work. Director explained and discussed possibly detailing this in our next newsletter.

5. ADRC

- a. Jennifer Clark joined via phone. No updates this month.

6. Discussion

- a. 2023 Goals were discussed. We have already reached a few of our goals;
 - i. Extending our reach with newsletters going out to the Gleason area and another planned for fall
 - ii. Improving our check in system as discussed above, eight evening offerings in the first quarter of this year and plan for more.
 - iii. The MEC, Library and Park&Rec are working together on combined offerings for our community. The MEC hopes to recruit volunteers to work with P&R summer playground 4-5 graders on a variety of activities.
 - iv. We are also working with Lincoln County Administrative Coordinator Renee Krueger on future intergenerational opportunities. (Handout included). Bebel and Anderson discussed the possibility of a day care in the empty wing of Pine Crest and thought it would be a good idea. Baker shared the hospital she worked at in Florida opened a daycare and absenteeism went way down. There are many benefits to combining young children with seniors in the same location. Anderson expressed concern about having qualified staff to oversee the program as youth can be challenging. The MEC will try to help be the bridge for this in hopes that our community will embrace the possibilities.
- b. Director thanked Rose Akey for her many years of service, dedication, and support of the MEC. Bertagnoli shared her sentiments as well, thanking Rose for her time, efforts, and contributions', stating it has been an honor and pleasure working with her.

7. Adjournment

- a. Motion to adjourn by Harvey second by Baker.

The next meeting date is **May 18th 2023 at 2:15pm at the MEC.**

Vouchers will be available for review 10 minutes prior to meeting time.

Respectfully submitted

TMrachek

Tammie Mrachek, MEC Director



THE POWER OF INTERGENERATIONAL CONNECTIONS

reference: Generation American Society on Aging

The power of intergenerational connections can transform individuals and communities.

Limited social interaction can affect an individual's mental, emotional, and physical health, potentially leading to adverse health outcomes.

Having sufficient social interaction can *positively* impact one's quality of life.

Connecting with others across generations adds another layer of benefits. **Young people and older adults have an opportunity to leverage intergenerational**

relationships to improve cognitive function, increase empathy, and live longer lives.

Everyone's first intergenerational experience occurs early on in childhood, often between children and parents or legal guardians. Those fortunate enough to have an extended family may often have intergenerational connections with grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Within the family unit, these relationships are imperative for the transfer of knowledge, traditions, and storytelling from one generation to the next.

Because many families are no longer in the same city or state, creating these opportunities within our community is more important than ever.

MEC and Partners are creating intergenerational opportunities

1. Summer playground (offered by Park & Rec) would like to partner with the MEC. We are looking for adults who would like to spend 1-1.5 hours a week with local youth (4th-5th graders) on a variety of activities through the summer. Activities include arts & crafts, a variety of games (cards, cribbage, checkers, etc.), baking/cooking, sewing, painting and more. We welcome any ideas you may have!
2. Child Care Shortage -Presentation by Renee Krueger, Lincoln County Administrative Coordinator.

There are a number of organizations and community members who have come together through a facilitated process to address local issues with child care capacity. Through this process, we have identified one of the most significant barriers for providing sufficient child care slots and extended hours is staffing availability. In brainstorming solutions, an idea was brought up about working with child caring agencies on job sharing opportunities. One example of this is working with the schools and early childhood curriculum to create a school cooperative placement. Another idea might be having retired community members who are interested in a few hours a day to fill needs or on-call circumstances. Our DREAM UP! Group is hoping to create an opportunity through the MEC to discuss this with our community members to see if this is something that would be of interest.