



# Camden County Workforce Development Board

*Supporting the Development and Retention of a World Class Workforce*

Gregg T. DeBaere, Chair  
Jeffrey S. Swartz, Executive Director

## ABILITIES & LITERACY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES NOVEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2017

### ATTENDANCE – LITERACY COMMITTEE

MEMBERS		3-Jan	7-Feb	7-Mar-17	4-Apr-17	9-May-17	6-Jun-17	11-Jul-17	8-Aug-17	13-Sep-17	10-Oct-17	14-Nov-17
<b>Brahl, Ken CHAIR</b>	Ravitz Family Shoprites	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Abrams, Barbara	Jewish Family & Children Service of Southern NJ		X			X	X		X		X	
Beach, Patti	Camden County One-Stop	X		X								
Dann, Carol	Camden County College	X	X		X			X			X	
Del Vale, Jennifer	Hispanic Family Center										X	
Goodman, Steve	Volunteers of America		X					X	X	X		X
Hale, Dawn	The Arc of Camden County							X	X	X	X	X
Kalitan, Marilyn	Kalitan Consulting	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	
Knopf, Dick	Marketing Professional Services	X			X	X			X	X	X	X
Maguire, Laurie	Camden County One-Stop, Workforce Learning Link					X				X		
Naila Tanczak	DOS La Quinta Inn & Suites					X						
Peters, Annie	Sambulance											X
Powell, Michelle	Camden County College											
Pryor, Regina	DOL-Employment and Training	X	X	X			X		X	X	X	
Rwera, Williams	Ravitz Family Shoprites											X
Rimby, Donna	Clementon Memorial Library									X	X	
Strobl, Holly	Council Women, Clementon Borough							X	X		X	
Welder, Laura	JEVS	X										
Young, Jennifer	Verizon		X				X					
Swartz, Jeffrey S., Exec. Director	WDB			X		X		X	X		X	X
Stubblefield, Lelia	WDB											
Varallo, Kathleen	WDB	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Williams, Leslie J	WDB											

### ATTENDANCE – ABILITIES COMMITTEE

MEMBERS		10-Jan	7-Feb	13-Mar	10-Apr	9-May	11-Jul	8-Aug	12-Sep	14-Nov
<b>Maggio, Jim CHAIR</b>	TFG/Judge Group	X		Snow n/m	holiday n/m	X	X	X	X	X
Abrams, Barbara	Jewish Family & Children Service of Southern NJ		X			X	X	X		
Cipolla, Joe	Jewish Employment and Vocational Services		X							
Davis, Anthony	Mental Services of Southwestern New Jersey		X				X	X		
Deitz, Jeffery	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services					X				
Farber, Dan	Birght Lights USA		X							
Forman, Lois	Bancroft		X			X	X			X
Geoffrey, Taylor	NJ DOL DVOP									
Hale, Dawn	The Arc of Camden County									X
Lombardo, Rick	Target Stores									
Lope, Krista	NJ Division of Vocational and Rehabilitation Services									
Lucas, Angela	Hireability		X	X		X	X	X		X
Newman, Jason	NJ DOL DVOP									
Peters, Annie	Sambulance									X
Pryor, Regina	LWD Division of Workforce Operations and Business Svcs.			X			X			
Schwingel, Laura	Jewish Family & Children Service of Southern NJ									
Tumolillo, Terry	Voice Print									
Walton, Marcie	VOA									
Waltz, Julie	ARC of Camden County									
Welder, Laura	Jewish Employment and Vocational Services									
Swartz, Jeffrey S.	WDB Executive Director					X	X	X		X
Varallo Kathleen	WDB Administrative Assistant		X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Naroden, Eric	WDB Intern									
Stubblefield, Lelia	WDB Administrative Assistant									
Williams, Leslie	WDB Comptroller									

## WELCOME

Ken Brahl, Literacy Chair called the meeting to order at 8:35 am, welcomed attendees and asked for roundtable introductions. Ken said we will conduct introductions again as needed when the Abilities Committee members arrive the for the Abilities portion of the meeting scheduled at 9:00am.

- LITERACY NEEDS ASSESSMENT UPDATE (LNA)

Ken Brahl said he and Jeffrey Swartz, WDB Executive Director made a presentation at the monthly Camden County Mayor's Association Meeting on Wednesday, October 18<sup>th</sup> to introduce the Literacy Needs Assessment and its findings. The Assessment was well received by those who attended the meeting. Ken said a follow up letter will be sent to the Association. Mayor Thomas Weaver and Freeholder Liaison, Jonathan Young were present and were both able to give good reviews on the success of the Literacy Day hosted on October 14<sup>th</sup> at the Clementon Memorial Library. Hopefully we will be able to get other mayors involved with our LNA and initiatives. The LNA has been much more effective than we ever thought it would be. (The LNA is posted to the WDB website. <http://ccwib.com/literacyneedsassessment.html>)

- LITERACY DAY UPDATE

Ken reported that the committee planned and hosted a Family Literacy Day at the Clementon Memorial Library on Saturday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 10am -12noon. Attendees were invited to visit information tables about Literacy services around the county. Their children were given a bag and encouraged to pick out five free books. The books were set up on shelves that were displayed in age appropriate categories. Most of the event activities took place in the community room on the lower level of the library. A story time took place in the library to give parents a chance to visit upstairs and view library offerings. He said the Fire Department hosted a Fire Prevention Day in the building next door on the same day around the same time. That event added a much bigger draw to the Literacy Day. Ken thanked everyone on the committee for their time and dedication to the success of Literacy Day. Donations to the event were provided by "Bags of Books, PNC Bank, TD Bank, Pizza Hut, Rita's Water Ice, Clementon, Res-Care, Clementon and singer/storyteller, Maria Leonetti. He said the original concept for Literacy Day was based on the findings in the Literacy Needs Assessment (LNA). It showed that there are areas throughout the county that are in need of Literacy services. Our goal is to find a way to reach these outlining areas and provide easier access for those in need of literacy and workforce development assistance. Current Literacy services are provided mostly in Camden City and at the Camden County College.

Ken said the program was a phenomenal success. We are able to give lots of books to children with the idea that their parents would also be able to sign up for or find out more information about current services in the county. We were able to register 30 parents and give them a bag with information as well as an interactive bi-lingual math kit that they could share with their children. The event was a great start to polling community residents to see what their real needs are and how we can help. There was a steady flow of participants the entire time. He would like to duplicate Family Literacy Day either at the same location or at another within the County. Steve Goodman, Volunteers of America, suggested contacting Linda Devlin, County Library Director.

Dick Knopf, Private Marketing Consultant, asked about follow up and outcomes. Kathleen Varallo, WDB Administrative Assistant, said that all adults were asked to register their contact information on a sign – in sheet. She said the biggest outcome to the event was the connection of a local group of high school senior volunteers that agreed to host bi-lingual story times in the community room at the Library. They offered to conduct the story hour or book club meetings once per month on a regular schedule. We also donated a corner book display and books that might serve as a backdrop to these story/club meetings. We made the introductions between the two organizations and can only hope that they will follow through and start the program. We can follow up to see if the program is getting started and send out a notice to those parent contacts that signed up. Laurie Maguire, One Stop Learning Link Manager, also signed up 3-4 parents to actual services at the One-stop. She will be following up with these potential customers.

Ken said that if we plan another Family Literacy Day again in 2018, we should definitely look toward hosting it in addition of the fire prevention day or another similar community event. We are not able to provide our own marketing but we can promote a Literacy Day event in conjunction with another event that has the attention of the community. Dick said that we should look into focusing on this particular Library as its location falls directly into an underserved area of the county and because the community was so willing to work with us. It would be a waist to simply move on to another area without making sure we are filling the need for a real regular Literacy Program. We have already established the relationship and recognize that library needs help. It is only open three days per week and is staffed with volunteers.

Ken said that he would like to establish committee goals for 2018 using this Literacy Day concept to continue the good work we have started. Maybe we can build more services at the Clementon Library by establishing a Literacy Volunteers office there at that location. We should be able to establish a plan and present it to Freeholder Young. He attended the event and has been a longtime supporter of the Literacy Committee. Kathleen suggested that we look for funding sources that would underwrite or sponsor 2018 services or programs. She said there are programs of sponsorship through TD Bank and PNC bank. We applied to TD Bank for an event sponsorship. We were denied however they advised us that they would be willing to support a program that had a long term impact on the community. Their funding goals are less geared toward onetime events and more focused on ongoing programs. TD Bank looks for more permanent community development types of programs. An example of an application in Clementon might include an upgrade of their outdated computers and a dedicated Literacy counselor that would be stationed at the Library on a regular basis to provide help with access to TD's online literacy applications and other free workforce or financial skills training. In this type of application, we could use the LNA for reference. We could also help the Library apply for State funds to address some of these issues so that when we do our next event, it celebrates a positive permanent improvement to the library. Dick said we as a committee can make the state connection to these funds and guide the library towards obtaining permanent improvements. Once we understand the process more, we can guide a library such as Clementon through the process. Ken said the library is the perfect place to development permanent improvements to literacy services in that part of the county. Steve said we should go back to the same location in the spring and build momentum.

Ken presented an article to the committee. The article entitled “Baby’s Got Mail: Free Books Boost Early Literacy” was printed on November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017 on the npr.org website.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/11/06/552885008/baby-you-ve-got-mail-free-books-boost-early-literacy>  
The article talks about children getting involved with books from the time they are born. The books are sent to the child every month. Ken said the article falls in line with our committee goals. There was a study, mentioned in the article that proves getting kids involved with reading early on in life will help them develop a lifelong love for reading. The committee discussed the article and that this computer generation of kids is producing lower than average literacy level, test scores for youth applying for county training assistance.

Kathleen said she will include a link to both the PNC “Growing Up Great” and TD Bank Literacy Programs in the minutes. Both organizations expressed interest in working with the WDB in 2018 to help further our Literacy Committee goals. Jeff met with Lisa Folk, PNC, Community Development, South Jersey Representative. They talked about the LNA and PNC involvement in our upcoming programs. He said Lisa was very interested in lending their support. She said that as a Workforce Development Board committee, we have to keep the focus on helping Camden County Residents with training and job development.

(PNC Growing Up Great) <https://www.pnc.com/en/about-pnc/corporate-responsibility/grow-up-great/sesame-street-learning-resources.html>

(TD Bank Literacy Programs) <https://www.tdbank.com/wowzone/index.html>

Ken and Jim Maggio, Abilities Chair, agreed to table the December meeting and begin in January with their regular separate meetings. We will discuss and set 2018 goals at each committee’s meetings.

Ken concluded the Literacy portion of the meeting and turned the lead over to Jim Maggio to conduct a recap of the “Dispelling the Myths” event that was held on Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup> at the Jewish Federation Commons Building, 1721 Springdale Road, Cherry Hill, NJ 08003.

#### ● ABILITIES COMMITTEE UPDATE

Jim began by thanking everyone who volunteered for and promoted the event. He said the turnout was good; however we did not draw as many employers as we had hoped. Kathleen said that more employers registered but did not end up showing up at the event. Jim said the panel and speaker gave great presentations that were full of very useable information. He asked the committee for their feedback about the event.

The committee discussed the event and agreed that although the information was valuable and important, the program was very long. All agreed that the next event could include just a panel discussion or a main speaker but having both makes the program longer than needed and becomes too much information. They also discussed ways to involve more one on one interaction with the panelists at their exhibit tables so an employer could ask more direct questions that pertain to their respective businesses. The exhibit tables included information that an employer might not think of when listening to the panelist’s presentations.

Lois Foreman, Bancroft, expressed concerns about why employers are not showing up to for the event. She said we worked so hard to develop an extensive list of employer contacts but it is not translating into attendance to

the event. We have made a concerted effort to target employers but still seem to be getting more training providers than employers. Kathleen said she was very encouraged by the amount of employers that signed up early on for the event but then at the last minute they cancelled due to other commitments. The committee agreed this is hard to control. Ken said there were so many events going on in the month of October centered on the National Disabilities Awareness Month that it may have effected attendance. Jim said the 11 employers that attended were definitely interested in expanding inclusive hiring programs or starting new program in their company. This means the program accomplished its goal and had a positive outcome. The event did not attract the numbers of employers we hoped for. Angela Lucas, JEVS, said her organization hosted a business card exchange event during the summer and did manage to attract a good number of employers. The event took place at the Camden County College. It was a much shorter event that included one speaker and information tables. Lois suggested making the event more of an honoring of employers who have created successful programs instead of a "how to do it" program might be a better approach. Ken said that he picked up some valuable tips such as installing a speaker system to accommodate hearing impaired and that maybe if we focused more on giving tips to employer about how to accommodate employees with different disabilities it might provide a better draw than dispelling myths about hiring. Kathleen said one of the topics she picked up from Deb Dagit's presentation was the idea of an employee accommodations plan. She thought that giving a Human Resource Manager tips on creating an accommodations plan for employees would be a good topic because it is a new idea. We could address topics that an HR manager would have to find out about and how best to incorporate new policies into the company's system of hiring.

The idea of offering continuing educations credits for the attending the event was mentioned. The committee discussed this idea and agreed to contact the Camden County College Continuing Education Department about creating a course description for the program and getting it approved for credits. The committee also discussed the idea of running mini workshops or break-out sessions on subjects such as tax credits for inclusive hiring programs or creating an accommodations plan. All agreed that honoring a successful employer would be a better draw to the event. The committee also discussed changing the location of the event to a hotel or college venue. All agreed that more sponsorship funds would be needed to host the event at a hotel.

Jim thanked the sponsors of the event. Bancroft, JEVS, Bright Lights and the Jewish Children and Family Services. He said we will also look to get a better outcome for this year's video. Kathleen said that Whiskey Run has not yet given us a price for editing the video.

Jim wrapped up the meeting by asking committee members to look into or bring information about some new approaches to the next in January. We will discuss these ideas and set our 2018 goals at the next meeting as well.

NEXT MEETING: The Literacy Committee will meet on Wednesday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 at 8:30 and the Abilities Committee will meet on Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 9:00am the WDB office.

Submitted by

*Kathleen Varallo*, Administrative Assistant