

**Metro Area Mayors' Committee
For People with Disabilities (MAMC)
Location: Fryn' Pan, Main Avenue, Fargo
March 13, 2008**

Present: Tammy Stuart, Ron Sandness, Mary C. Tintes, Rikki Tragetan, Amanda Noce, Terry Romine, Tom Thompson, Kati Langlie, Ellen Dunn, Jeannie Krull, Paulette Ness, Mark Breitbach, Judy Siegle, Laura Eberhardt, Steph Fridgen, Steve Pederson, Lori Johnson, Jeff Anderson, Kathy Circle, Camille Jorgensen

Co-Chairs presiding: Tammy Stuart

The minutes from February's monthly meeting were approved by consensus.

Treasurer's Report – Paulette Ness

Checking: \$4,235.04

GT grant: \$4,257.61

Savings: \$1,216.86

Total: \$9,717.30

Deposits: \$750.00

Speaker – Business & Development Director for Fargo-Moorhead Community Theatre – Sherry Shadley

Sherry indicated she works with the Lake Agassiz Arts Council (LAAC) a regional arts council representing 54 arts organizations and individual artists in Clay County, MN, and Cass County, ND. She chairs LAAC's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Committee, which works proactively to explore ways to make the arts more accessible for people with disabilities. The ADA Committee, which was established three years ago, conducts ongoing accessibility assessments (known as walk throughs) in buildings and venues in the community that are used for arts-related events.

Sherry reported that the North Dakota Council on the Arts (NDCA) also recently received funding to create and organize the North Dakota Statewide Forum on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities. Ms. Shadley was one of nine people in North Dakota who were recruited by NDCA to serve as a committee member on this new initiative.

Sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and National Arts and Disability Center (NADC) at the University of California, LA, the purpose of these statewide forums are to support the planning and implementation of activities that: (1) assess the education and career needs and barriers for artists and arts administrators with disabilities; and (2) develop and implement strategies to overcome barriers and advance careers in the arts for individuals with disabilities.

This grant has enabled NDCA to organize the North Dakota Statewide Forum on Careers in the Arts for People with Disabilities, which will be held in Bismarck, ND, on April 7, 2008 at the Kelly Inn. Participants in the statewide conference will be provided with resource materials that will enable them to market themselves and their art, apply for local and regional grants that help subsidize the costs of producing their art, and receive educational training that nurtures their growth and development as professional artists. The registration fee is \$25, which covers the costs of meals. There are some scholarships available. If anyone is interested in attending the conference, please contact Sherry directly.

Sherry explained that the Fargo-Moorhead Community Theatre (FMCT) is considered the vanguard arts organization on ADA compliance. FMCT provides programming that is inclusive

of the entire community, and a number of specialized services that enables people with disabilities to become actively engaged in live theatrical experiences. FMCT's audiences are served by the most accessible facility in the Red River Valley region with space for more than forty wheelchairs, and immediate access to the lobby, exits, and loading zone. All of FMCT's administrative offices and backstage work areas are also wheelchair accessible.

In addition to providing American Sign Language interpreted performances for people who are Deaf, FMCT also offers Audio Described performances for people who are blind or those who have low vision. By providing a verbal description of the visual elements of a performance, Audio Description creates a new wealth of information for the visually impaired, while opening windows into new and exciting activities. Quickly growing in popularity, Audio Described performances allow FMCT to achieve a new level of service for its patrons who are visually impaired, while bringing a new service to the Red River Valley Region. FMCT's professionally trained Audio Describers also provides tactile tours both on the stage and backstage so that people who are blind can explore the costumes and the set before a performance. FMCT also makes Assistive Listening devices for patrons who are hard-of-hearing.

FMCT established its STAR Program in 1999 as a way to provide people in the community with greater access to live theatrical performances. Initially, the STAR Program enabled economically disadvantaged children and adults to attend FMCT's Preview Night (which serves as the final dress rehearsal) performances at no charge. Through its commitment to cultural diversity and accessibility, FMCT expanded the eligibility requirements of the STAR Program in 2005 to include children and adults who have emotional, social, physical, and developmental disabilities; children in the foster care system; and people from minority communities or those who are international refugees. Since then, participation in the STAR Program has skyrocketed! Over a three-year period, the number of organizations and agencies involved in the STAR Program jumped from 10 participants to 23. Each STAR Program participants receives 10 free tickets to each Preview Night performance, which are then passed on to their clients.

FMCT now distributes nearly 2,000 free STAR tickets each year to the clients of the following organizations and agencies: Community Living Services; Creative Care for Reaching Independence; Freedom Resource Center; The Social Connection; Fraser, LTD; Dakota Boys & Girls Ranch; Connections of Moorhead; Red River Human Services-Activity Center; Perry Center Christian Maternity Center; Sundance Riding Therapy; Access of the Red River Valley; Big Brother/Sister, Divine House; Family Link; Fargo Social Club; Friendship, Inc.; Heartland Industries, Inc.; Midwest Community Residential Services, Inc.; Professional Association of Treatment Homes; Sister's Path/ Social Connection and Svee Home.

Contact Information:

Sherry Shadley

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MAMC Awards Luncheon – Tom Thompson

Tom announced the winners of the MAMC awards.

Outstanding Citizen of the Year:

Janet Jorgenson

Teacher/Educator of the Year:

Sheri Dennis

Advocate/Placement of the Year:

Scott Fredrickson

Healthcare Professional of the Year:

Brad Arett

Entrepreneur of the Year:

Peter Sinner

Employers of the Year:

Taco John's
Hornbacher's
Holiday Inn

Universal Access:

NDSU Bison Connection
Lutheran Church Christ King
Mexican Village

Distinguished Service:

FM Rotary Clubs

Tom indicated there is a need for more nominations in the future. Dialogue was exchanged about having example nominations next year. Tom said there was still a need for presenters and volunteers. A volunteer sheet was pass around with signup opportunities.

Dialogue was exchanged about updating the banner that is displayed behind the mayors. Tammy made a motion to update it. Mark seconded it. All were in favor and it was passed to spend up to \$100 on updating the banner.

C.O.P.P. – Tom Thompson

Tom indicated there was no news to report.

AT Expo - Jeannie Krull

The AT Expo will open at 11:00 to allow for set up time. Volunteers are still needed; an email will be sent to follow up on volunteers. A PBS movie will be shown during the event. Other organizations are able to borrow the movie for their own showings.

Announcements

- Judy announced that Inclusion Ministry Network is hosting a Youth Rally on May 2nd. It is a disability youth group. It will be held at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd from 6:30 – 8:30pm.
- Ellen announced that a Transition Fair will be held at SouthHighschool on April 8th, from 4:30 – 7:00pm. There is no cost to attend. MAMC does have a booth.
- Laura announced Adult Prom will be held at the Courtyard by Marriott on March 28th. It is a 21+ event that includes alcohol and a live band. It costs \$30/person. It is an event to raise money for transition.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Noce