

Progress/Interim Report
New Mexico Community Foundation Grant/Community Involvement Fund
May 1, 2015

Background

The League of Women Voters of Oak Ridge received a grant for a program entitled the Environmental Management Education Initiative. The League of Women Voters of the U.S. has long standing positions on promoting the management of natural resources; promoting resource conservation and stewardship, environmental protection and pollution control, air quality, energy, land use, water resources, waste management and nuclear issues. This grant is allowing the League to take action in our community on these issues.

We proposed to educate the community on the environmental management process, valid risks to public safety, and realistic expectations for remediation and reuse. We will also inform local residents on how to have their voices heard.

We are partnering with two non-profit organizations who have similar programs and goals in the management of the environment: Tennessee Citizens for Wilderness Planning (TCWP) and the United Unitarian Church of Oak Ridge.

We have also recently experienced the abrupt resignation of the designated project director, Jan Lyons.

We have interviewed and accepted a new project director, Ms. Natalie Landry, and we have developed a path forward. Ms. Landry has an extensive educational and career background in environmental issues. She also has extensive experience in developing class material and teaching both young students and adults. We do not anticipate this change to influence either the scope, budget, or schedule of the Grant.

As stated in our grant application, we have two distinct parts of this project. The UUC-OR will plan, organize, develop, and execute a six day camp experience. Ms. Landry will plan, organize, develop, and execute adult classes, seminars, and a field trip for the Citizen's Academy with the assistance of TCWP.

In our path forward, we have decided we will not have an overall project director over both aspects of the project. Rev. Tandy Scheffler and her team will be in

charge of the Rainbow Camp. Ms. Landry, in conjunction with TCWP, will be in charge of the Citizen's Academy. Both will submit their costs directly to the LWVOR for approval which, in turn, will be submitted to the LWV of Tennessee Education Committee for payment. The elimination of an overall project director will allow us to stream line the implementation process and have additional funds for implementing initiatives.

Rainbow Camp

The UUC-OR sponsors an annual Rainbow Camp which brings together youth from across ethnic, socio-economic, and religious groups to study diverse viewpoints and cultures. The Camp typically has approximately 70 children-grade K-8 and approximately 20 high school counselors. This is supplemented by adults volunteers who provide the planning, instruction, activities, and field trips. Priority is given on camp registration to assure a balanced mix of race and background. This year's camp will be held June 15-20, 2015.

The theme of the camp is "Los Guardians de la Tierra" - Guardians of the Earth. It will be geared to K-8 children who will be our next generation of citizens.

By partnering with the UUC-OR Rainbow Camp, this year's program will place emphasis on environmental issues and the need for environmental management to preserve our planet.

Current plans include:

Daily activities that emphasize the environment through games, stories, and arts and crafts related to safeguarding the planet.

Daily Trips to local city parks. The campers will have lectures on the environment, spend some time cleaning up litter, eat lunch, and play. The emphasis being that good stewardship for our recreational and natural places requires keeping these spaces clean for use.

Day Long Field Trip. The campers will take a day-long field trip specifically visiting the Bull Run Steam Plant which has utilized the latest technology to provide for both energy and low emissions. A picnic and play time will be included.

Cultural Diversity and Emphasis. Each day, the campers will study a different country, its culture, and its success stories in the area of good environmental stewardship. The countries selected are Mexico (due to the large number of campers with relatives in Mexico); Kenya; India, and Peru. Heroes/Heroines have been identified from these countries and their contributions to saving the environment. This will be highlighted with stories, songs, and dance. Visitors from

the represented countries will be invited; videos shown; and native dances will be taught. Environmental songs, arts and crafts, and an “Artist in Residence for a day” will be part of these segment.

The UUC-OR-Allies for Racial Equality: This shared ministry group whose focus is establishing relationships and allying with the wider Latina/Latino community has offered their volunteer services to the camp. This may include providing camp transportation for families who need it; hosting the Saturday Closing Ceremony potluck; and having a fundraiser for camp scholarships.

Other: T-shirts, banners, and re-fillable water bottles with the NMCF logo are being contemplated.

Citizen’s Academy

The Citizen’s Academy will be geared to newer community residents who are younger adults and demographically diverse. The Citizen’s Academy is scheduled to be held in September 2015.

Work to date includes: Established a webpage link on the LWVOR web site; established a group Facebook page specifically for the project; reviewed Site Specific Advisory Board documents for course content; adult course draft outline; assessed various software possibilities to make web page interactive; course syllabus draft; and reviewed TEC, DOE, and EPA public involvement approaches.

Grant Funding

To date, we have spend \$3814.00 (from December 2014 through February 2015) out of our \$19,930. Costs are broken down as follows: December: \$514; January 2015: \$1362.50; February 2015: \$1937.50.

The LWV of Oak Ridge executive committee of the board of directors has decided to not pay the March voucher to Jan Lyons. This was \$968.50. The basis for the decision was the lack of supporting information to justify the costs.

The bulk of costs for the Rainbow Camp will occur in the weeks prior to and during the camp. Likewise for the Citizen’s Academy. We do anticipate an increase in expenses in the immediate future for the new project director as a new schedule and budget is developed and scope of work defined.

Grant Publicity

We submitted a news release to area newspapers on receipt of the grant. We wrote about receiving the grant in the co-president's report (and monthly updates) of the LWV *Voter* -which has widespread readership.

An article on the grant will appear in the LWV of the United States website. We also had an e-blast via the "memo to members" article which is sent to a wide distribution list. (I am sending these electronically).

We have a FB page "Oak Ridge Environmental Management Education Initiative". Due to the resignation of the project director, this group page will be moved from its current location to the LWVOR FB page. The LWVOR website for the grant will also be under the care of the new director.

For both of our sub-projects, it is too early for extensive publicity. Rainbow Camp publicity will begin the later part of May. We will cover the weeks' events via news releases. We envision starting the publicity of the Citizen's Academy in July/August and the events as they occur.

Both will have newspaper and radio coverage. We will have banners and t-shirts with the UUC and NMCF logos. We will have an op-ed on the classes taught at the Citizen's Academy.

Path Forward and Evaluation

Due to the resignation of Jan Lyons, we developed a path forward.

As stated above, Rainbow Camp is in excellent shape. The organizing and planning have been virtually completed. UUC-OR is in the process of developing a budget for the grant. We anticipate being able to supplement their volunteers with a modestly paid day artist- in-residence; assist in scholarships for families who can not pay; course material; transportation for the field trips, banners/t-shirts with NMCF logo, etc.

The Citizen's Academy has more planning work to be accomplished. We have had meetings to establish preliminary milestones and discuss the scope of work to be accomplished.

In order to develop the best curriculum possible, our near term milestone will include contacting local agencies (including churches) for contact information of our targeted audience. In discussions with these agencies and also the targeted audience themselves we will be able to address their concerns about living in a community with legacy waste; their language skills; course material that they would like to see; formats that would appeal to them, etc. We will be offering a

balanced view of the Oak Ridge legacy including the need for juggling remediation for commercial use and/or remediation to protect our rich natural resources.

We are currently planning on several evening classes and a round-table type of seminar.

In June/July, we will be completing the syllabus for the classes and engaging speakers. Logistics of the classes will be done and our publicity will begin in earnest.

Expected costs above that of curriculum planning and implementation will be transportation and snacks for the day long field trip for the Academy to an environmental/remediation sites. There will be hand out materials (perhaps bilingual); translation, if necessary; and room rental, if required. If our target audience needs childcare to be able to attend, we will plan for that also.

Respectfully submitted

Mary Ann Reeves, Co-President of the LWV of Oak Ridge

and

Pat Bryan, Co-President of the LWV of Oak Ridge.