

GALA Meeting Minutes
June 9, 2009
Noon lunch/1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. meeting

Members Present: Carla DuBose, Daphne Greenberg, Judith Griffin, Ryan Hall, Laura Hauser, Billie Iazard, Victoria Kingsland, Debbie McIntyre, Paige Pushkin, Meghan Welch
Guests: Jackie Taylor, National Coalition of Literacy /Dollar General, Miranda Gonzalez-Brown/LAI Intern

Welcome and Grant Update:

Paige Pushkin shared that in January many of us attended the National Coalition of Literacy/Dollar General Conference and as a result of that conference, LAI applied on behalf of GALA for a \$5,000 grant. Daphne and Billie agreed to be partners. The grant was approved, and one of the requirements was to develop an outcomes chart which included the following GALA specific steps:

1. Improve alliances within GALA--invite more people to GALA: have a meeting in Oct.
2. State Conference to get more adult literacy folks involved.
3. Develop an increased visibility by GALA--host a legislative breakfast in January
4. Raise awareness by letter writing campaign.

Goal: Where do you want your advocacy to be in one year?

Jackie Taylor shared the following general thoughts:

- She reminded us that this grant is not the end all/be all. We need to be thinking about GALA in general.
- Policy change can take a VERY long time--5 to 10 years! Need to think of it in tiny steps at a time and measure progress in terms of these tiny steps.
- We are the advocacy leadership for now! Need to create a tight infrastructure, so that we can move forward on all the steps.
- We were reminded of our mission and vision:
 - Mission: to increase awareness, support, and funding for adult literacy needs and efforts in Georgia.
 - Vision: a literate Georgia with accessible learning opportunities for all adults.
- We watched a video of advocacy in Texas. They made a YouTube video of what they accomplished in one year after a Dollar General Conference. They asked for a 20 million increase in funding! Students/teachers/advocates attended their event. They met first as a group to get ready. Then met with legislators. Then had a rally on the capitol and had all kinds of guest speakers (mayor, business, etc).
- We discussed what we hope a video of GALA one year from now would look like.
 - At the end of one year, we would have 2 successful events and we would be assessing them. The 2 events are the session at the Oct. state conference, and the January legislative breakfast. It was suggested that these 2 events are integrally related. Success in January hinges on getting people involved in Oct.
- Our goals for year one:
 1. By the end of the year, we are known as THE advocacy group in GA for adult literacy. GALA is known throughout the state.
 2. State Legislators have the knowledge of the strong connection between economic development and adult literacy.
 3. We will have identified who are our potential champions are in the legislature
 4. We will have established an internal infrastructure!
 5. We will have created a Statewide network with regional groups (and we all meet once a year).

Advocacy Outcomes: What results do we want to see?

- Our ultimate goal is shift in social norms. So if we strengthen organizational capacity, strengthen alliances, strengthen base of support, improve policies, change our impact-we will have a shift in social norms!

Strategic Plan: How are you going to get there and by when?

We looked at a model Mothers Against Drunk Driving used to communicate their strategic plan and adopted it to fit GALA's needs. It looks like:

Overall Goal/Impact: Increase literacy in Georgia.

Long-term Outcomes:

- increase awareness,
- increase support,
- increase funding

Short-term Outcomes:

- improve policies;
- build a base of support (increase adult literacy alliances, increase allies with legislatures, businesses, family literacy groups, religious groups);
- increase knowledge of issues/programs; capacity of GALA (infrastructure).

Activities:

- Hill development;
- Oct. Conference;
- Letter Campaign;
- Organizational Structure

Key to everything: Message development

Key Components:

1. Leadership/Infrastructure:

- Identify key officers
- Educate selves on how to organize
- Research other advocacy groups
- Ask for mentors from other states
- Examples from Jackie:
 - Nominate executive officers (Pres, VP, Secretary, if money-Treasurer);
 - Form task forces to focus on topics that are priorities

2. Messaging and the Ask:

- Develop fact list
- Develop elevator speech
- Create a hook (based on health, family, work, etc)
- Focus on Return on Investment

- We need to know our ASK!!!! Need to assign someone for the ask who is talented at this kind of thing! Have very specific answers with conviction and clarity. Also know our audience (for example some legislators care about health, others business, etc). We also need to have one major overarching ASK-what do we stand for. All others "asks" fall under this one big ASK.

- Targets: Call key staff people to find out how process works. Have a good relationship with someone (like Stacy Abrams). Find out timeline, who we need to talk to and when. What do we need to focus on, etc. What are the key committees?

- Building Our Base: Thanks to Ryan for creating our email list. Now need to also create email lists for our alliances and a regional and statewide email list.

- Be a clearinghouse on information. One person is the point person. In Tennessee, they have district points of contact.
- Increase contacts with legislators and with coalitions like Family Connections.
- Thanks to Ryan, we already have website for our materials-need to continue to develop this.
- Create hooks with health literacy, financial literacy, family literacy, civic literacy, etc.
- Seamless response system-maybe one person per county.
- Educate, Advocate, Lobby:
 - First big roll out=Oct, then January
 - Maybe another big roll out = March when we educate how to advocate in a BIG conference with LOTS of different adult literacy folks in GA.
 - Have Warner Robbins talk to group in Oct. Warner Robbins is doing education/advocacy/lobbying
 - Piggy Back on activities that already exist to educate/advocate/lobby!

Action Planning: Implementing grant and other key activities

Next Steps and Follow Up

We established 4 taskforces:

1. Improve internal alliances: This committee will work on the October State Conference event which will be a concurrent session on Thursday after the GED luncheon. They will also created a plan for recruiting participants and determine the content of the session. They already have a meeting scheduled for Wednesday, June 10th; their follow-up meeting will be July 20th at noon at TCSG. The committee consists of: Billie, Carla, and Debbie.
2. Increasing external Visibility of GALA; This committee will work on the legislative breakfast. They need to set a meeting and Paige needs to email Sherry and inform her of her position on this committee. The committee consists of: Victoria, Emily, and Sherry.
3. Messaging: This committee is responsible for the Letter Campaign, Fact sheet/messaging, elevator speech, and the ask. It consists of: Laura, Ryan, Debbie, and Meghan. Their next meeting date/time/place is to be determined.
4. Nominating Committee: This committee is responsible for determining the leadership structure of GALA as well as the overall statewide structure. It consists of Paige, Daphne, and Judy. Their next meeting date is July 6th, 1:00 p.m. at LAI. They plan to research other advocacy groups, determine GALA's needs, write job descriptions, and present their plan for approval to the full group at the July 20th meeting. They will accept nominations for leadership and prepare the group to vote by the next full meeting of GALA.

The meeting was closed at 4:00 with a huge thanks to Jackie and the group for their enthusiastic participation. Our next meeting is:

1:00 pm on July 20th at TSCG