



# *The Telescope*

Monthly News Letter of the PROBUS Club of Greater Hartford

March 2017

## **MINUTES:**

Probus Chapter Meeting of February 15, 2017: Minutes @ The American School For The Deaf in West Hartford, CT. Meeting called to order at 6:27 p.m. by **President David Hoff**.

**Ed Peltier** provided a report on the activities of the **Special Needs Grants Program**. He said that there will be 2 check presentations this Friday, February 17th . One will be given to the Bloomfield Public Schools (Pre-School) to provide support and training to 2 teachers. The other will be presented to The Oak Hill School campus in Avon and will be a grant earmarked for equipment purchase. Ed also informed us that A.S.D.'s Annual Founders Day will occur on April 18th and the Special Needs Grants Team will once again be invited to participate in the ceremony.

We also learned that the Team has still not received any response yet from the Hartford Public Schools concerning their interest level in submitting any grant requests. **Michelle LaCroix** from the West Hartford School system may have some contacts we can tap into in the Hartford School system. Michelle, by the way, will be our guest speaker at our March 15th Chapter Meeting. She will update the Probus membership on the status of the **Norfeldt School grant** for music therapy which has been put to good use. We will learn more tangibly how our grant has helped to facilitate some positive results for their students.

Also, Ed suggested that we consider inviting 1 or 2 representatives from all of the schools to date who have received Probus Special Needs Grants to attend our Spring Installation Dinner.

## **Secretary's Report:**

**Charlie Dobrow's previous minutes were approved.** Discussion also ensued regarding the National Probus Meeting Minutes which Charlie also writes up. It was agreed that to expedite the dissemination of the National minutes, which occur 3 times per year, Charlie will write up the minutes within 1 week after any National Probus meeting and not wait for a review of said minutes by the National President, but rather he will be entrusted to distribute the minutes via email to all National Probus reps ASAP. Mark Goldberg will provide Charlie with the appropriate email addresses of all National Probus reps so that he can do this in a timely manner. Additionally, Charlie will email his National Minutes, when completed, to Meyer Frankel for him to distribute the National minutes to all members of our Hartford Chapter via an email blast.

**Treasurer's Report:** **Meyer Frankel** presented his thorough Treasurer's Report. A vote by the membership was taken and the report was accepted. Details available upon request.

## **Membership Team:**

**President Hoff** posed an idea regarding having our Membership Team morph into an Outreach/Publicity/Public Relations team as well. He proposed changing the name of the team from Membership Team to Outreach Team. **Bob Dobrow** from the Membership Team gave a brief presentation with handouts to everyone. He thanked everyone on the team for their hard work and said that he was exceedingly happy with the brainstorming gathering which took place

on January 21st in Bloomfield. **The team is comprised of: Shakela Holley (Team Leader), Bob Dobrow, Alexandra Flowers, Shai Elkayam, Tom Donahue, Mike Barker and Dave Maslin.** They discussed both short-term and long-term goals. Short-term goals were encapsulated as: Grow membership of individuals committed to Probus values, willing to actively participate in activities and contribute to creative programming. Long-term goals were described as: An expanded membership that is diverse, youthful and active. Additionally, the team drilled down to come up with a strategy for potential sources of new members. Also on their agenda when they met on January 21st was the need to have a clear protocol for welcoming of potential new members. Bob summarized what this team is charged with doing, which is seeking to resonate with people (potential new Probus members) who have a passion for helping special needs individuals. It was also mentioned that it will be important to maintain an updated database of potential new members we encounter and their contact information.

**Bob Goldberg** suggested that when he sends out email reminders about the next upcoming chapter meeting it would be nice to include people who were guests at our past meetings, but who have stopped attending our meetings. He would like to keep these old guests in the loop and perhaps rekindle their interest in joining Probus. However, a disclaimer or opt out should also be included so that old guests of ours who are no longer interested in our Probus chapter can unsubscribe from our email correspondence. The Membership Team plans to meet again before our March chapter meeting.

**President Hoff** offered another suggestion which would be the creation of an “Event Team” to come up with new ideas for chapter events. He envisions events such as a social, a dinner/dance, a golf outing, bingo night, etc... Perhaps some of these events would be fundraisers, some would be done just for fun to socialize amongst ourselves, and other events could be done in conjunction with/for our client population. **Bob Goldberg** again suggested a banner or sandwich board signage be put together with a perpetual list of some of the key places and organizations our Probus chapter has donated to. This running tally would serve as a great P.R. piece for us to display at Probus events. Discussion ensued regarding producing a monthly Bio, on a rotating basis. This would be a brief feature highlighting a different Probus member from our chapter each month. It could appear in our Telescope newsletter and/or in an Annual Report if we choose to publish one. This bio would spotlight one individual Probus member and he/she would in a few paragraphs describe their attraction to Probus, their story if you will. **Shai** suggested that a form or sheet could be created so that when it is your turn to be spotlighted you would have a template that you could fill out and then add anecdotal information as you see fit.

#### **Client Sporting Events:**

**Bob Goldberg** reminded us to mark our calendars for the Annual Client Picnic which will be on September 10th . He also mentioned that inclement weather cancelled a couple of recent events planned for the University of Hartford women’s basketball games. Bob is also considering working with his contacts in the Athletic Department at U. of H. to try to secure free popcorn for those attending future games. Bob also let us know that this Saturday, February 18 th there will be a Probus presence at the Lady Hawks game at 2:00 p.m. with some clients expected as well. And there will also be a Senior Night game honoring Seniors on the team on Sunday, February 26th. Bob finished his report by mentioning that there will be a hockey game at the XL Center coming up soon, watch your emails for more details soon.

**Our Annual Balloon Sale at the West Hartford Memorial Day Parade is slated for Monday, May 29th.** It will be an early day for all of us and a great fundraiser. More details to follow soon.

**Hal Levy announced that he would like to do 2 back-to- back Crown Supermarket Solicitations** this spring in conjunction with Passover. He will try to solidify with the supermarket's owners for us to set up a Probus donation table on April 2nd and April 9th. Hal will distribute volunteer sign-up sheets at the March meeting for members to man the booth.

**Raffle:**

President Hoff will email and call Michael Croll to ascertain the status of the Raffle application with the State of Connecticut since the deadline is fast approaching and Michael has missed some recent chapter meetings.

**Installation Dinner:**

Discussion ensued about our early June Installation Dinner where we cap off the Probus year and install our slate of officers for our new year. We learned that David Maslin will be traveling during the early June time frame so we need to move the Installation Dinner date. Suggestions were made to hold the dinner in May on the 23rd or in Late June. The consensus seemed to be with going with the May 23rd date because in late June people may be on vacation (e.g. the teachers who received the Probus grant money who we plan to invite to our Installation Dinner will either be on vacation then or in the final few days of their school year). Intermingled with our discussion about securing a new Installation Dinner date was the concern that since we couple our **Raffle** with the Installation Dinner, would there be time enough to pull off the raffle if it occurs in May? The Raffle application must be submitted and approved and each member needs some time to sell his/her 20 tickets. One suggestion brought up was to consider doing the Dinner and the Raffle at separate dates. Perhaps we could do the Installation Dinner on May 23rd and the Raffle next Fall in October. More on all of this will be known once President Hoff speaks with Michael Croll.

It was mentioned that Michelle LaCroix from the West Hartford School system has agreed to be an advisor to our Special Needs Grant program.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, **Charlie Dobrow Secretary**

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# Thank You letter to the Probus Club of Greater Hartford from Oak Hill School

February 24, 2017  
Mr. Meyer Frankel  
Probus Club of Greater Hartford

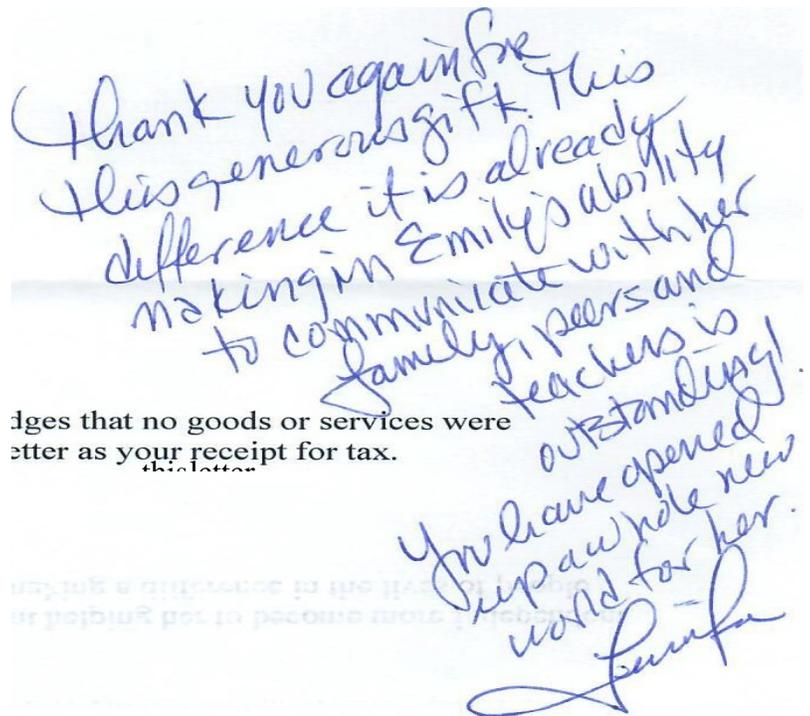
Dear Mr. Frankel,  
On behalf of the Oak Hill Board of Directors I want to thank the Probus Club of Greater Hartford for the generous grant of \$500 given on February 17, 2017. This grant will be used for the purchasing of one iPad along with cover.  
Oak Hill School offers a 12-month community-based education program for day and residential students. The school program serves students with moderate to severe challenges, and students with multiple disabilities. Most of our classrooms are located within community environments allowing for best integration opportunities.  
This gift has made all the difference in the world to our student helping her to become more independent in her daily life. On behalf, of those we serve thank you for making a difference in the lives of people with disabilities.

Sincerely,  
Sincerely,



Jennifer Meligonis DeJohn  
Director, Grants Management

cc: Ed. Peltier



Thank you again for this generous gift. This difference it is already making in Emily's ability to communicate with her family, peers and teachers is outstanding! You have opened up a whole new world for her.  
Laurie

Indicates that no goods or services were received as your receipt for tax.

Our Mission: Oak Hill sets the standard, partnering with people with disabilities, to provide services and solutions promoting independence, education, health and dignity.

The Connecticut Institute for the Blind, Inc. (dba Oak Hill) is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit corporation

## Thank You letter to the Probus Club of Greater Hartford from **American School for the Deaf:**

March 1, 2017  
Probus Club of Great Hartford  
11 Croydon Drive  
West Hartford, CT 06117

Dear Mr. Frankel,

Thank you for your recent gift in support of the American School for the Deaf. You empower us to educate and prepare young Deaf and Hard of Hearing students to participate fully in the world around them. Your financial gift now, on the occasion of our 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, is an acknowledgement that education remains key to a productive life for every child.

The mission of ASD has not changed in the past 200 years – serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing infants, youths and their families in the development of intellect, and the enhancement of the quality of life through specially designed instruction, remains at the core of our philosophy. As a donor you become a part of the ASD community. You help to give our students what it takes to think, question, decide, dream and achieve – not just in a classroom, but in the world.

With partners like you, we accomplish miracles for students and families. It is your support that keeps ASD relevant and capable of utilizing today's resources, in order to nurture the whole child – intellectually, emotionally, physically and socially – so they can focus on their potential and opportunities for their future.

Thank you for partnering with ASD to give our students futures in which they are...**All ways able.**

Sincerely,

Jeffrey S. Bravin  
Executive Director

Date: 02/15/2017

Amount: \$1,000

Purpose: Support of Two Grants: PACES Program and Physical Education.

**Reminder: The Next Probus Meeting:**

**Date: Wednesday March 15, 2017**

**Time: 6:00 PM**

**Location: American School for the Deaf  
139 N Main St, West Hartford, CT 06107**

**Speaker: Michelle LaCroix from the West Hartford School system**

**An Easy Fund Raiser**

**Occasion Cards**

As you know, the Probus Club is 100% committed to helping those that, for no fault of their own, cannot help themselves. One of our fundraising events that we sponsor is the ability for us to be able to accept contributions to honor, praise, memorialize or make a special acknowledgement to someone who is either in our presence or in our memory.

By you making a contribution to the Probus Club, our very own Bruce Stanger will process your contribution; inform the donee that a contribution was made to Probus to recognize him or her and for the event that is being recognized. Also, an acknowledgement will be sent to you, the donor, to thank you for your charitable contribution to the Probus Club. As always, 100% of donations to the Probus Club are used exclusively for charitable purposes.

Consider the Probus Club when honoring or remembering someone special.

Bruce Stanger can be reached at:  
Attorney Bruce Stanger  
433 South Main Street  
Suite 112  
West Hartford, CT 06110

The check should be made payable to The Probus Club and forwarded to Bruce along with the information necessary for a proper acknowledgement. Thank you for supporting The Probus Club.

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**PROBUS NATIONAL MEETING: MINUTES** December 18, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. at Friendly's Restaurant, Wethersfield, CT Meeting called to order by **President Mark Goldberg** at 9:25 a.m.

Members in attendance included: **Steve Blotner, Steve Klein, Dean Smith, Charlie Dobrow, David Hoff, Stu Gordon and Mark Goldberg.**

The September, 2016 National Minutes were accepted and approved.

**Dean Smith presented the Treasurer's Report**, as of December 16, 2016, where the Treasurer's Report Balance Sheet was issued and reviewed by those in attendance at today's National meeting and accepted. There is currently \$972.12 in our Operating Fund checking account. A copy of the full Treasurer's Report is available to any Probus member upon request.

We also learned that we, the National Probus body, recently applied for Non-Profit postage rates.

Next we discussed the merits of having a National Archive. Discussion ensued and **Mark Goldberg** said that he would like each Connecticut Probus club to save their monthly meeting minutes for historical purposes. We also conversed about using a "Drop Box" storage in the cloud for our National Minutes, etc.

The clubs in Hartford and New Haven must visit the website of the CT Secretary of the State via a company called Concord. The reason for this is to ensure that both clubs have in fact paid their \$50 annual fee to be registered for taxes with the State.

#### **Old Business:**

A reminder that there will be a Statewide Probus Meeting in New Haven on May 15th . Mark your calendars now. Details and an agenda for this important meeting will be forthcoming.

#### **New Business:**

**David Hoff** spoke about the concept of a National Membership Team. This would be a more collaborative approach plugging in other statewide Probus members to help promote Probus' presence on a larger scale. Given that we have lost some Probus clubs in Connecticut, this may be a way to spark or rekindle involvement amongst the ranks. Currently, we have 75 members total from within our 3 state chapters.

Discussion ensued regarding possibly moving our **National Meeting** gathering site closer to New Haven once in a while. Instead of always meeting in Wethersfield, some members feel that an occasional National Meeting in Meriden or New Haven proper may help to increase participation at the National Meetings. One of our National reps will scout out viable restaurants in Meriden/Wallingford/North Haven/New Haven and report back his findings. Stay tuned for more about this in the near future.

We also debated what National's role is, or should be, with regard to listening to the New Haven chapter's membership/participation challenges. Should National help to inspire and guide New Haven, and how should we serve as a sounding board for them to be effective for them?

Additionally, discussion ensued about potentially starting Probus Clubs in Pittsburgh, PA, South Carolina and Florida, and how this can actually take seed and flourish.

Continuing our discussion on the topic of expansion and revitalization of chapters, we heard from **Steve Blotner** who stated that he would like to spearhead the revamping of a chapter in either Worcester, MA, Marlborough, MA or Waterbury, CT. All 3

geographies are fertile grounds for Probus to take root. After some spirited debate, it was agreed that Steve would focus his efforts on the Waterbury, CT environs and New Haven. He will speak with **Roy Lukacs** at the New Haven Chapter to brainstorm and see how we can marshal our resources here at National for this project. Mark Goldberg added that our thrust should probably be in assisting New Haven's chapter to gain strength before we establish a new chapter in CT. Steve will serve as our "Chairperson For Connecticut Probus Club Renewal".

A few other topics were briefly discussed by the group today. 1.) Should public relations on a National level be undertaken? 2.) What happens to the finances of a club that folds? Are they put into escrow? Do they revert back to National (e.g. "escheats")? Our next National Probus Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, March 26, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. It may occur not in Wethersfield, but rather at a restaurant in the Meriden/Wallingford area. To be determined. Mark Goldberg will email all National Probus members in advance of the meeting with locale and driving directions. Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted, **Charlie Dobrow Probus National Secretary**

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Meyer Frankel, Editor

The "Telescope" is the monthly newsletter of the Probus Club of Greater Hartford.