



Metropolitan Board of the Chicago Urban League

Empowering Communities and Changing Lives since 1983

January 2010

MetroBoard
2009-2010
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Message from the President

Greetings,

Welcome to the Winter 2009 edition of Empowerment. While the work of the MetroBoard never ends, winter begins MB's busy season. In January we hosted our largest fundraiser of the year: Winter Heat. This was our fourth annual Winter Heat Ski Weekend held in Lake Geneva, WI. February and March will bring some of our MetroBoard signature community service projects - Teen Summit, MB Lab, and Project Etiquette.



As each of you enters this inevitable season of reflection and pursue your goals and action items for your life for 2010, I encourage you to evaluate why you are here as members of MetroBoard. It is important that we remember our shared purpose of promoting volunteerism, developing potential leaders, improving the community and strengthening the Urban League movement. Whether you are a new MetroBoard member, an active member fully engaged in the day to day workings and activities of MB, or a member who has been unable to take an active role at this time in your life, we are all joined together by this shared mission.

On January 1st we entered the midpoint of our fiscal year, and the beginning of a new calendar year. I ask each of you to decide 'what role will I play in this mission?' Although our collective work as an organization sustains this mission, each of you is asked to support our mission individually. How do your actions promote volunteerism? Where are you toward meeting your 25 hours of service with MetroBoard? How is your work as a volunteer improving the community we serve? What more can you do to help develop future leaders in our community? How can what you do promote the Urban League Movement? As you answer these questions for yourself I will reflect on them personally and for this organization. I ask that each of us be reminded that we are a part of an organization that has served the Chicago community for over 25 years. Remember that standing with each other serving on programs as a collective unit we have the power to really make a difference. "To whom much is given, much is required;" over this holiday season I hope we can all decide what role we will take in serving this community which requires us all!

Yours in the Movement,

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What Have You Done For MB Lately?

By: Yolanda Douglas

In September, President Angela Brooks delivered the annual State of the Metropolitan Board of the Chicago Urban League address. Being a new member to MetroBoard myself, the timing of the speech couldn't have been better. The part that resonated most with me was how our organization has completed over 2,500 service hours for the year. "What an accomplishment," I thought, until she described how the 2,500 hours was amassed.

MB has 343 members. Approximately 75 members earned more than 10 service hours and about 25 additional members earned between zero to nine service hours. So, less than half of the membership attained "enough" service hours to meet our annual goal. What these numbers tell me is we have an incredible op-

portunity to surpass last year's goal.

A minimum of 25 community service hours for the year is all the MB requests its members complete. The majority of the community service projects are on Saturdays with a few on Sundays or during the week. The Community Service Committee has a plentiful and diverse mix of projects in need of volunteers. If you are interested in education, there's the MB Lab for Boys and Girls and various tutoring projects. If you are feeling like a Top Chef, you should consider preparing a meal for Southside residents who frequent the Living Room Café. Given the state of the economy, another worthy endeavor is the Adopt a Family program where MB tries to make holiday wish lists come true for deserving families.

In return for our contribution of time, energy and resources that we give to MB, we in turn are provided a forum where we can develop our leadership skills. If you feel there is a need MB should address or have alternate volunteer opportunities and are willing to lead the project, you should contact Community Service Committee Chairs Kelly-Ann Vassell and Terrence Simmons at service@metroboard.org.

There are numerous ways for you to earn service hours. All you need to do is make the decision to commit just a few hours of your life to make a lasting impact on someone else's. For 2010, let's soar past last year's goals and be vital advocates for our communities so that we can all be proud of how much MB can accomplish together.

Advance Your Career Through MB Mentors

By: James Webb

On January 28th, the Personal and Professional Development Committee (PPD) will kick off its Professional Mentorship Program exclusively for Metropolitan Board of the Chicago Urban League members. Mentees who are interested in receiving support and assistance in furthering or switching their careers will be paired with seasoned professionals with five or more years of experience in the fields of finance, law, management, education, non-profit and science.

After the initial face-to-face meeting,

the MetroBoard member can expect to correspond with said mentor at least once a month via phone, e-mail or an in-person meeting. To meet the individual needs of each mentee, the program will utilize a tiered approach that caters to his or her current career level. Entry-level or new professionals can expect to be paired with first-level mentors, first-level professionals with mid-level mentors, and mid-level professionals with senior-level/executive mentors. MB hopes to partner with our parent organization, the Chicago Urban League, to broaden our pool of mentors.

A professional mentoring relationship is mutually beneficial to both mentee and mentor. Mentees can gain new ideas and contacts and get help in developing their strengths, among other positives. In the same respect, mentors can also gain new ideas and contacts, as well as develop their coaching and counseling skills as a result of the relationship. If you are interested in participating in the Professional Mentoring Program as a mentor or mentee, this event is one you will not want to miss! For more information, please contact Andrea Horton at ppd@metroboard.org.



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“We Make A Living By What We Do, But We Make A Life By What We Give”

By: Krista Hayes

MetroBoard members give their all during September Serv-a-thon

The September 2009 Serv-a-thon, spearheaded by Community Service co-chairs Kelly-Ann Vassell and Terrence Simmons, involved an array of events targeted at helping a diverse sector of the Chicago community.

Metropolitan Board members were asked to participate in activities ranging from construction to job fairs. The month of service kicked off with a dozen MetroBoard members accruing over 60 service hours at the United Negro College Fund Walk. Next was Habitat for Humanity, led in collaboration with ACCESS, a Jewish young professional organization.



“We particularly enjoyed that event because we were able to make a measurable impact in the life of a complete stranger. We all left the Habitat house that day feeling a sense of accomplishment,” says Vassell.

The annual Adopt-a-Family project teamed MB members with 30 kids in helping pack school supplies in backpacks. The bags were later delivered to the families adopted by MB who had requested help with purchasing school necessities.

Ending the month on a high note, MB teamed up with Mt.



Pisgah Church Community Center, Geoffrey Watts of the Garfield Park Workforce Development Center and MB member, Alva Winfrey to host a job fair which was attended

by more than 150 job seekers.

The event also offered resume critiques and mock interview sessions.

“We wanted to bridge the gap between the companies who were hiring and the people who needed jobs. Although, the fair and workshop were small, we were happy to help the job seekers in the community. It takes all of us sharing our resources and talents to make the community a better place,” commented Winfrey.

Serving the community and helping those who are less fortunate, hungry and struggling creates character, triggers humbling experiences and of course, shows MB members how much fortunate we are. Those who participate in community service through MetroBoard know that taking care of one another is the key to effectively unlocking a door to creating change in America.



2010 Employment Trends

By: Sandra C. Davis



The new year has always been a time for self reflection. Every year people pledge to change for the better. Getting a better job has always been a popular New Year's resolution, but with the current national unemployment rate at 10.2 percent, this goal is even more pressing. If you are looking for a job in 2010, you are going to have to transform the way you think—traditional job search and employment customs do not apply. Ira Wolfe, noted hiring and workplace trends expert and president of Success Performance Solutions (SPS), believes the recession caused a paradigm shift within the workforce.



Other experts agree. As unemployed professionals navigate this difficult job market,

several conventional employment practices and theories have been radically revised to fit these hard economic times. Here are a few tips to get you started in 2010:

1. Know what employers are looking for: According to the U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Outlook, employers are looking for people with experience in the medical field and with technology expertise. To position yourself as the best candidate for a job, develop in-demand core competencies. Here are a few of the fastest growing occupations:

Computer software engineers, applications

- Desktop publishers
- Personal and home care aides
- Medical records and health information technicians
- Physical therapist assistants

- Audiologists
- Occupational therapist assistants
- Veterinary technologists
- Speech-language pathologists
- abuse social workers
- Special education teachers, preschool, kindergarten, and elementary school

2. Get a part-time or temp (contract) job: Are you an expert in your field or have a valuable specialized skill?

Then get a part-time or temp job. In 2010, companies with limited budgets will still need experienced professionals. By being flexible, job seekers can make money, network and hone their skill set. One of Wolfe's 2010 Employment Paradigms is the idea that people should seek multiple part-time or temp (contract) positions. Robert Half International Inc., the world's largest staffing firm, has seven different divisions that address the needs of skilled professionals looking for limited-term



employment.

3. Expect a promotion and/or a raise:

If you are exceeding your sales goals and meeting every deadline, (i.e. you are making your company money), then expect a promotion and/or a raise. Full-time employees should request a pay increase, while part-time or contract workers should request full-time employment. In this time of economic crisis, companies are conserving their resources and spending money only on people or things that they are certain will succeed. "Expect a promotion and/or a raise based on your proven performance, only. Do not expect a tenure-

based raise or promotion," says Wolfe. In 2010, proven results = \$\$\$\$!

4. Seek out smaller companies and firms: In the coming year, don't just apply for positions at companies on the Fortune 500. Consider small companies that may offer more opportunities for employment. Research conducted by CareerBuilder.com, reveals that many laid-off workers have found employment with smaller companies and firms. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, small businesses employ 50 percent of all workers in the U.S. and account for most of nation's new jobs. These small firms offer job seekers several perks like minimal bureaucracy and personal acknowledgment.

5. Get your old job back: As the country slowly recovers from the economic crisis, many companies that have previously laid off workers will look to hire as their bottom line improves. Reach out to your former employer, call your contacts at the company and ask how the business is doing. In the past, only progressive career transitions were valued. Right now, having a good rapport with former colleagues and employers is one of the greatest assets any job seeker can have in 2010.

Are you ready to get a job in 2010? First-time unemployed professionals may find it intimidating to begin their job search. Start here: <http://www.rhi.com/JobHuntReadiness>. Robert Half International and UpMo have developed a practical job search readiness self-assessment. Begin 2010, with the right tool and strategies to get the career you want.



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General Body Meetings
held the 2nd Thursday of
each month at 6:30 p.m.

Not a member yet? If
you're looking to get
involved with Chicago
inner city outreach
initiatives, while building
your personal and
professional network, then
we're glad you've found us!
Visit us online to download
our
membership application.
Feel free to also attend
one of our meetings.

Are you interested
in writing for the
newsletter and/or
contributing in some
capacity? If yes, contact
the editor:
editor@metroboard.org

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NOW ON SALE

IN 2009, OVER 400 YOUNG PROFESSIONALS
FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY FELT THE

WINTER HEAT

WILL YOU BE LEFT IN THE COLD?

JANUARY 22-24, 2010
GRAND GENEVA RESORT
LAKE GENEVA, WISCONSIN

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of the Chicago Urban League

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