



Executive Director's Report December 5, 2022

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Date: December 5, 2022

To: L.E.A.P. Board of Directors
From: Shelley Smith, Executive Director
Re: Executive Director's Report

1. **Head Start:** Please refer to the Director's Report for program related updates.
2. **Career and Family Services:** Please refer to the Director's Report for program related updates.
3. **Program Director – Head Start/Early Head Start:** Please refer to the Director's Report for program related updates.
4. **Outreach and Fund Development:**
 - a. Zac Lapoint excels at outreach and has been working diligently to increase L.E.A.P.'s visibility in and around Washington County. He has developed a strategy for 2023 including: social media strategy, parameters and resources to ensure consistent branding (internally and externally), event and tabling schedule, and fund development. On Giving Tuesday, a video was released to Stewart's Shops throughout Washington County, detailing L.E.A.P.'s programs and including a direct ask for financial support.
 - b. I have increased my activity in the Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce, building relationships with leaders of other agencies and local businesses. Chamber activity has produced connections that may lead to event sponsorships, community partnerships, and direct donors.
5. **Project Management:** Almost immediately after assuming the Executive Director position I realized that some form of project management would be an asset to L.E.A.P. I

researched, requested demonstrations, and received quotes for several project management platforms. Microsoft Project, an add-on to Office 365, presented the most seamless integration, a user friendly experience, and the best price. I have signed an agreement with StoredTech to add Microsoft Project to our existing platform and look forward to implementing this process into our workflow.

6. **Directors and Executive Leadership Team:** Consistent staff shortages have left us underspent on our grants, and have created an environment in which existing staff must perform extra duties, be flexible to ensure coverage, and overall carry a larger load. These staff members are valuable and devoted. We are working to bolster a culture of support and appreciation, striving to communicate to staff that we recognize their tremendous value and are here to care for them while they care for those we serve. We were thankful for the opportunity to use the funds available to provide an incentive to staff. The directors met to determine the parameters, then worked with Zac Lapoint to create a video announcing the incentive and expressing gratitude for the exceptional work the staff does every day. The video was released to staff on Giving Tuesday.
7. **Annual Retreat/Training:** A full day Board Retreat and Training Day was held at WorkSmart Coworking and Meeting Space, on Monday, November 7, 2022. The primary goals of the retreat were to present the foundation of the strategic plan the Executive Leadership Team has been working on, give all an opportunity to know one another better, explore Conflicts of Interest, and determine the committee preference of board members. The retreat was facilitated by Brian Bennett of Wingman Tribe. Brian has provided a report with his observations and recommendations which you will find in the Board Portal.
8. **Merit-Based Compensation Proposal:** The materials regarding the merit-based compensation proposal are with the ad hoc committee. On Thursday, September 29, Deb Antonelli of Delark HR Solutions met with the committee to answer questions and address concerns. When the committee has completed their review, they will have input to share with the full board.
9. **Board/Committee 2023 Schedule:**
 - a. I have drafted a proposed 2023 Board and Committee meeting schedule. This schedule reduces the number of full board meetings annually to 7 Propose, leaving 4 months available for committee meetings, and 1 month break. This tentative schedule can be found on the Board Portal and will be finalized after the January 9 board meeting.
 - b. In January I would like to propose an amendment to the by-laws shifting the board meeting date to later in the month. This will enable directors to present data for the month immediately preceding the meeting thus giving the board more current data and reducing the amount of time spent in updates.

- 10. Board Vacancies:** We currently have 2 board vacancies in the public sector. NCAP has recently released a statement indicating they will be more aggressive in enforcing board composition compliance. It is my goal to fill these 2 vacancies by the January meeting so the candidates may be voted upon at that time. I recognize that this is an aggressive goal, particularly considering the holiday season. Knowledge of the political landscape of Washington County is not one of my strengths. I would be thankful for input, guidance, and warm connections from any of you possessing the knowledge I lack.
- 11. Committee Composition:** I have worked to ensure all committees are full and have appropriate representation, taking into consideration the committee preferences expressed at the Board Retreat. The Proposed Committee Plan is available on the Board Portal for your review. I welcome feedback, concerns, and questions.
- 12. 9 Month Thoughts:** It has been almost 9 months since I came on board at L.E.A.P. I have taken some time to ruminate on this time, to learn from it, and to strategize for the future. There is a lot to learn in a Community Action/Head Start/Workforce Development agency, and I believe I have only scratched the surface. I am thankful for a very capable team of directors and assistant directors – thankful for their knowledge and expertise, their support and patience with me as I learn, and the individual personal strengths they bring creating a diverse and strong executive leadership team.