

COMMUNITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 22, 2008

Present: Linda Korte, Mike McCreary, Jann Nance, Kathleen Pierson, Denise Snodgrass, Becky Welch, Doug Williams (Chair).

The meeting was called to order at 1:40 pm by Chair Doug Williams.

The minutes of the July 14, 2008 meeting were approved.

Mike McCreary reported on Blue Ridge Naturalist (BRN) program that he had met with the Finance Committee on the program's revenue gap and potential new marketing initiatives. He will have more to report on this later. For purposes of classes offering continuing education units (CEUs), Mike reported that he now has access to teachers in the area directly through an email database. He is hoping for better turnout for CEU classes next summer and may offer more than summer courses to teachers if email surveys suggest support for them. He will also explore a pilot online workshop for CEU credit.

Denise Snodgrass reported that the Reuter Center had twenty volunteers working on a beautification project at Johnston Elementary School in Asheville for the United Way Day of Caring on September 4, 2008. Denise noted that the service project allowed members of NCCCR to work together and was relatively easy to organize and to obtain commitments from members.

Denise Snodgrass also initiated a discussion of the Smith Barney Intergenerational Computer Literacy program. The program is in its eighth year this fall and has been sustained by annual grants from Smith Barney of \$10,000 a year. In the past, this has supported two series of courses (beginner and advanced) and a staff director with paid UNCA undergraduate teachers. NCCCR volunteer mentors became involved as the program developed, and the role of these mentors continues to evolve. This year Smith Barney granted only \$5,000, and, with Patti Cameron's departure, Mike Honeycutt is organizing the program.

Three volunteer mentors were present at the meeting and offered their observations and suggestions regarding the program. The class participants have a wide range of abilities and goals that are varied and divergent. Because it's hard to "teach to the middle," the more skilled participants are held back by those less skilled, or the less skilled are lost behind the more skilled. The class material was often too complicated, presented too fast, and included no follow-up or review. The courses should be well defined so that participants can select the appropriate skill level. Participants in the beginner course should come early to the first session, so that their skill levels can be assessed. The class material should be simplified, and each class should review the material from the prior class. Denise agreed that the curriculum should be basic, and once it is mastered, participants should be directed to computer classes in the College for Seniors, for which

scholarships are available. Denise will pass on the Committee's suggestions to Mike Honeycutt.

Finally, Denise reported that the first two sessions of the Leadership Asheville Seniors class have gone well and that this fall's class includes a service learning project, which will be at Manna Food Bank.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Williams, Chair