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## **Community Matters Kicks Off 2014 with Poverty Simulation** *Designed To Build Understanding of the Challenges Faced by Families Living in Poverty*

Community Matters launched its third year with an eye-opening event designed to let our leaders and coordinators walk a mile in the shoes of families facing poverty.

Hosted by our 2014-15 charity partners -- Crisis Assistance Ministry and Charlotte Family Housing -- the Poverty Simulation included real-life scenarios encountered by persons living in or near poverty. Participants assumed roles of families trying to provide for their basic necessities over a four-week period. The challenges participants faced often changed from week to week.

"The poverty simulation was a lot more impactful than I originally anticipated," said **AmWINS' Josh Ammons**. "I thought it was going to be extremely difficult to accurately simulate the feelings and/or issues associated with the struggles that a large majority of our community faces on a regular basis in the course of a year. While I know what we do does not compare to the real-life hardships that our neighbors often face, the simulation did elicit some feelings of stress, desperation, anxiety, and even anger."

Several volunteers from our partner agencies took part in the simulation as service providers: bank, food pantry, employer, police, utilities and more. Many were participating in the simulation for the first time and were affected by the exercise as well.

Other comments about the simulation from Community Matters members --

**Holly Hill, Lockton:** I was surprised at the effect the simulation had on me. The goal was to plan and think through the responsibilities given to the family, but it became very reactionary. The stress became evident as each week's simulation took place. I walked away from the exercise being more sympathetic to these families and being more appreciative of what I have been given. It is clear that Charlotte Family Housing and Crisis Assistance Ministry are needed now, more than ever.

**Brantlee Green, MetLife:** Our simulation family worked very hard to barely get by with the income we had. What really struck me was that our family was stuck in a terrible cycle of just barely getting by. The mother in my family, age 19, was not able to attend school or obtain job skills, as she didn't have the money for child care. We really had to prioritize and only fund absolute necessities like rent, power and food. All the other non-essential items could not be obtained.

**Keith Brown, PMA:** The simulation was a real eye opener as it showed me how much of a struggle it can be just to find the assistance for the bare necessities. We must remember to be thankful everyday for the ability to take care of our own family, yet we need to also assist our neighbors as well whether it is monetarily and/or by giving of our time.

Thanks to everyone who participated and volunteered at our kick-off event. And thanks to City of Charlotte Risk Manager **Dan Pliszka** for taking photos at the simulation and the follow-up Leaders & Coordinators Meeting. To see Dan's photos, visit <http://dppics.phanfare.com>.

### ***Two "families" from the Poverty Simulation...***



Frankie Honeycutt, Great American; Josh Ammons, AmWINS, Paula Bulman, Wells Fargo; Geoff Amidon, Travelers.



Front, Andrew Chapin, Snyder's-Lance; Ray Sanders, BB&T; Jill Bobbitt, AmWINS.  
Back, Melanie Hudson, Travelers; Angela Blythe, Arrowpoint Capital.

**Dodgeball Tournament Registration Opens Monday, March 3**

Get ready!! Registration for our Third Annual Dodgeball Tournament is less than two weeks away, beginning on Monday, March 3, and running through Friday, April 4. If the tournament is anything like it's been the past two years, it will be a blast! Here are the details.

**WHEN**

Friday, April 11, 11am to 3pm

**WHERE**

Sports Connection, 10930 Granite Street, Charlotte 28273

**WHY**

To support Community Matters' fundraising efforts for Charlotte Family Housing and Crisis Assistance Ministry while having some fun with colleagues across the industry

**WHO CAN PARTICIPATE**

Teams of 8 from local insurance firms and companies...or just groups of friends in the industry. If you don't have a team, sign up as an individual and we'll put you on a team based on your level of play. Must be 18-years-old to play. Entry fee per registered player is \$30.

**WHEN DOES REGISTRATION CLOSE**

Friday, April 4 (or whenever we hit the maximum number of 42 teams)

**HOW ARE FUNDS RAISED**

Each team is being asked to raise at least \$1,000...**and hopefully much more!**

**WHAT ARE THE LEVELS OF PLAY**

Like last year, there will be two levels -- competitive and recreational

**ARE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**

Absolutely, just complete the volunteer form, attached to this newsletter and also available through the website, and send it to Angela Matherly at [amatherly@snyderslance.com](mailto:amatherly@snyderslance.com).



Dodge Ball Volunteer Form.docx

**ARE SPONSORS NEEDED**

Absolutely. For information, contact Angela Matherly at [amatherly@snyderslance.com](mailto:amatherly@snyderslance.com).

**HOW DO I REGISTER**

Through our website at <http://dodgeball.kintera.org> beginning March 3. Or link through our Community Matters Website at [www.communitymatterscharlotte.org](http://www.communitymatterscharlotte.org).

**Space is limited to 42 teams so register as soon as you can.** Event T-shirts are also available for \$12 each -- make sure you order one when signing up.

***...And New This Year - Power Players!***

To keep the game fair, there will be no all-collegiate teams competing in the tournament this year, but make sure you stick around for the special collegiate exhibition match during the intermission.

However, if your team is in need of a POWER PLAYER(s), we have a solution for you! For a team donation of \$100, you can augment your team with a young, athletic collegiate power player. Please contact Angela Matherly for more details at [amatherly@snyderslance.com](mailto:amatherly@snyderslance.com).



Last year's prize for best-dressed team at the Dodgeball Tournament went to Wells Fargo.

## Volunteer Opportunities with our Partner Agencies

There are numerous volunteer opportunities available with Charlotte Family Housing and Crisis Assistance Ministry for the coming year. These range from providing meals, working in the Crisis Assistance Free Store, providing shelter support with Charlotte Family Housing and many others.

Attached is an overview of possible opportunities with contact information; this form is also included on our website. If you volunteer at one of the agencies -- by yourself or with others (colleagues, friends, family members) -- please let the agency contact know you are with Community Matters. We would also love to get any comments and photos from your experience to include in a future newsletter or on the website. Just send the information to [kedar.bryan@arrowpointcap.com](mailto:kedar.bryan@arrowpointcap.com).

If anyone has questions or needs help planning an event, please contact Vonni Davis at 704-553-5018 or [vonni.davis@AIG.com](mailto:vonni.davis@AIG.com).



2014 Agency Volunteer Opportunities.pdf

## Company Fundraising: Travelers and Arrowpoint Capital

The Travelers Community Matters Committee has already conducted two fundraising events to support our two new charities. According to **Geoff Amidon**, employees paid to wear their favorite team jerseys and enjoy a potluck lunch with games prior to both the Panthers playoff game and the Super Bowl. The office has raised \$788 so far through the two jersey days. Travelers also has a chili cook-off event planned for later this month to continue its fundraising efforts on behalf of Community Matters.

Arrowpoint Capital kept the holidays going into January by raffling off four gifts that various departments received in December: Sullivan's Steak House certificates, a Zen Massage gift coupon and a case of beer from a private brewery. Staff enthusiastically purchased raffle tickets for \$1 each for a grand total of \$460 - a great way to start the new year for Community Matters.

Let us know about your fundraising activities. We can then pass ideas on to other Community Matters companies.



Enjoying the pot luck lunch at the Travelers Jersey Day are, from left, Phil Capling, Tom Rosie and Robert Burns.

## Valentines From Our Teen Program

Our Community Matters Teen Program kicked off the new year by taking part in a Valentine Party at Charlotte Family Housing's Plaza Place shelter. Not only did the group make Valentines with the kids, decorate the house for the holiday, and bake cupcakes and cookies, but they also assembled welcome packets for the new residents. Special thanks to Teen Program advisor **Andrea Neill of AmWINS** for organizing the event and to **Tom Lott, AmWINS**, and **Rick Juraschek, Liberty Mutual**, who donated many of the supplies for the welcome baskets.

**Next up...**On **Saturday, March 22 from 9-11 am**, Community Matters teens will work at the Crisis Assistance Ministry "Free Store," located at 500-A Spratt Street, Charlotte, NC, 28206 at the intersection of Graham Street and Statesville Avenue. The Free Store provides donated clothing, household items, furniture, and appliances at no charge to families in need. Our volunteers will sort and inspect donations, hang items and stock the Free Store, and assist as needed. A member of the Free Store production team will help the group sign in, give a brief orientation and overview of the agency. We can have a maximum of 20 volunteers so sign up as soon as possible if you can attend. To volunteer or to learn more about the Teen Program, contact Andrea Neill at 704-973-4141 or [andrea.neill@amwins.com](mailto:andrea.neill@amwins.com).

***...Invite your teens to be part of this program. And show them how the insurance industry - your industry - is changing lives in Charlotte.***



Community Matters teens join with some of the kids at Charlotte Family Housing to make valentines.