



Halfway There On Team Registrations for Dodgeball Tourney

21 Teams Signed Up To Date

- Thanks to the companies with teams at the end of week 2 of sign-ups: Travelers (5), AmWINS (3), The Hartford (2), Arrowpoint Capital (2), ACE, AIG, Great American, Hedrick Gardner, Hull & Company, Keystone, Liberty Mutual, Lockton and McNary.
- Still leading in team fundraising is Adam Mathis' AmWINS Submission Impossible team with \$1,250. But Geoff Amidon's Travelers Dodging Divas team is moving up at \$1,030. And right behind in 3rd is Dave Stasis' AmWINS Rescission Period at \$990.
- Swimmer Insurance's Matt Frazer remains #1 among individual fundraisers with \$910 raised to date. Coming in 2nd and 3rd are Cameron Annas with the Granite Insurance Agency at \$580 and Adam Mathis of AmWINS at \$550.

Three more weeks to register your team! Visit dodgeball.kintera.org or www.communitymatterscharlotte.org.

Eat Great Calamari at Dressler's Restaurant and Support Community Matters!!!

Looking for a fun night out that also benefits Community Matters? Dressler's Restaurant is sponsoring 'Calamari for Community Matters' at its locations in Charlotte and Huntersville. For every calamari dish sold, the restaurant will donate \$1 to Community Matters. So our mission is to fill the restaurant with calamari eaters as often as possible. Good food, service and now a contribution to the community. Thanks to Jon and Kim Dressler for their generosity and to Dan Pliszka for making this happen.



[The Metropolitan | Charlotte](#)

Reservations: 704.909.6295

Lunch: Mon-Fri 11:30am-2pm

Dinner: Nightly 5pm

[Birkdale Village | Huntersville](#)

Reservations: 704.987.1779

Dinner: Nightly 5pm

Why 'Community Matters' Matters: A Message from Steering Committee Member (and City of Charlotte Risk Manager) Dan Pliszka

We asked Dan how he came to be involved with Community Matters -- and our partner agencies, Crisis Assistance Ministry and Charlotte Family Housing. Following is his response:

It is hard for me to put that answer in very few words. For many years, I was chasing various career goals and dreams. For the most part, I reached the goals I had set, but I still had an empty feeling. I was content where I was career-wise, but something was still missing.

One Saturday morning, I received a phone call informing me that my best friend had passed out while driving his car down Fairview Road in front of Southpark Mall. He was taken to the hospital where they did a CAT scan. In a few days, he was having brain surgery, was diagnosed with and eventually succumbed to brain cancer. As you might imagine, during his treatment and struggle to survive, he and I talked about a lot of things. We jammed what was left of his life into a few short months. One bright morning, as he was being prepared to move to hospice; we ruminated over the question – “What is this brass ring we are chasing?” In other words, we were questioning the meaning of life and we didn’t find the answer. It was then that I made up my mind to change my life.

My job at that time was stressful, had me traveling a lot and working long hours. I was exchanging my life for a paycheck. I enjoyed what I was doing, but I wasn’t fulfilled. Soon I had the opportunity to return to the best job I ever held and jumped at the chance to resume the role as Risk Manager for the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education. Sure, I still have some long hours and challenges, but I don’t travel day in and day out and I get to sleep in my own bed and get to see my wife and dog most nights.

Part of changing my life was a search to become part of the fabric of the community. My strong commitment to Community Matters was a slow process. I was encouraged to join Community Matters by one of my former students from UNCC. I couldn’t resist Sarah’s invite (or was it a directive) to be a part of something new. So I volunteered, but pretty much stayed in the background as an observer. Being somewhat selfish with my time and my person, I always figured that donating money was all it took to make a difference. I participated, but not with full vigor. I did a few things to raise money. In the summer of 2012, I walked 120 miles and raised \$4,100 for Community Matters. I was engaged, but I still wasn’t committed.

Not being fully engaged or fully disengaged, I was in a funny place. Community Matters was finishing its engagement with Safe Alliance and I considered quitting. Then, after missing several Steering Committee meetings, I learned that Crisis Assistance Ministry was one of our potential charities. That lit a small fire within me because Crisis has been a favorite charity of my wife

(Molly) and me. I now became apprehensive about which charity would be chosen as I had not participated to the extent where I would have an influence over the decision on our next charity. I had to wait and watch.

When I came into my office on Wednesday, October 9, 2013, I had no excuse. There was an email to the Steering Committee indicating that the Community Matters Nominating Committee had chosen Crisis Assistance Ministry and Charlotte Family Housing as our charity partners. That pushed me off the fence. I had to commit. I had to commit because Crisis Assistance Ministry meant a lot to my family. Molly has been a friend with Carol Hardison for years and we both admire Carol's passion for serving the community. Many might not know that Carol had a very successful career with Duke Energy and traded that for helping the community. I'm guessing she may have gone through some feelings similar to mine, but I have not discussed that with her.

Now I come to Community Matters with my full support and energy and want to help Community Matters "knock the ball out of the park." Because I still harbor some of that "it is easier to give money than to dedicate time" feeling, I chose to step up to head up fund raising. Yes, my primary purpose for the next two years will be raising money, but I have also begun to volunteer my time in other ways and it is a GREAT feeling. I recently had the opportunity to volunteer at Charlotte Family Housing as an overnight host and a couple of weeks ago helped a family move into a new residence as they recover from homelessness and am still helping them.

The recent poverty simulation further opened my eyes regarding how many in our community need help. We need to count our blessings and fortunes and reach out to help our fellow man. I recently saw a quote by the Dalai Lama that says: "Our prime purpose in this life is to help others. And if you can't help them, at least don't hurt them." For the next two years (at least) I choose to primarily do the former and will try not to do the latter.

Take account of your position in life. Can you spare some time and some money? We need both. We need money to further the cause and we need time and volunteerism to get things done. Won't you please join us?

Dan Pliszka