

ADOPTED DAKOTA CENTER STRATEGIC PLAN*

Mission: Dakota Center's mission is to provide a safe community atmosphere engaging Dayton neighborhoods and people of all ages in programs that educate the whole person.

Vision: Developing character values for life

Fund Raising theme: Building Character, Connecting Community

Objectives:

1. Develop an effective, diverse Board of Directors committed to meeting community needs, that can set accountable policy for a changing environment, generate resources, and prudently guide the organization to fulfill its mission. Seek Board members on the basis of influence, affluence, and leadership.
2. Build a capability to obtain financial and other resources to meet growing needs in a difficult economic environment. Build delighted supporters and volunteers who will respond compassionately to opportunities and needs.
3. Be known as an organization that enthusiastically collaborates and cooperates with neighbors and other organizations to accomplish the most benefit for the community.
4. Provide programming that encourages and enhances job opportunities, economic and academic success, health and nutrition, recreation and social interaction, and stimulates artistic expression.
5. Meet an increased demand for services due to the closure of other community facilities that used to provide education and recreation.
6. Constantly improve our management of staff, volunteers, resources, and facilities to maximize safety, efficiency, and effectiveness. Keep position descriptions, procedures, rules, policies, and staff training up to date.

DC Strengths:

1. We have enthusiastic users -- families, youth, seniors -- with concrete evidence of client benefits extending over many years.
2. We have some outdoor space for expansion and some outdoor facilities—garden, game area, parking space.
3. Experienced staff for day-to-day operations
4. We have a small core of loyal supporters and a willingness to encourage others.
5. We have a building, some endowment, and diverse sources of income.
6. Awareness is growing of our contributions to the community.

DC Weaknesses:

1. Insufficient funding to properly support programs without neglecting maintenance, repair, and depreciation needs.
2. Ailing HVAC: cold in winter, hot in summer.
3. Deferred and neglected maintenance.
4. Crowding, overuse, and scheduling problems with facilities, particularly our gym.
5. Inadequate attention to long-range program planning due to hectic daily demands.
6. Inadequate public relations (publicity) and marketing.
7. Less than optimum outreach to the community.

DC Opportunities:

1. Favorable reputation as a family-oriented safe haven, responsive to community needs for more than 44 years. New initiatives welcomed. Need better outreach.
2. Collaboration with House of Bread, Richard Allen Schools, other supporting agencies and organizations. New affiliations welcomed.
3. Make better use of sources for augmented staff: interns, AmeriCorps, volunteers, and business partners.
4. Unrealized grant opportunities: DDDi, special program support, new programs.
5. Can step up fund raising and cultivation of supporters with an experienced development director. Regular publication of newsletter makes new friends.
6. More emphasis on development to gain bequests, gifts, supporters, and the conduct of a better annual fund drive.
7. If Dayton does not become wi-fi ready soon, set up a neighborhood wi-fi network.

Threats:

1. No financial operating reserves, just-in-time funding, bad economic times ahead.
2. Deferred maintenance, neglect of investment.
3. Some sources of funds shrinking: United Way, Human Services levy, private gifts, and foundation support.
4. Aging population of loyal financial donors without development of new stewardship.
5. Overworked Executive Director: development function neglected.

Obstacles:

1. Board quality improving but not fast enough. Members need training.
2. Inadequate development guidance and execution due to insufficient funds.
3. Increasing demands for shrinking charitable funds may cause competitive scramble. We must tell our story more effectively.
4. Insufficient funds to hire needed staff, especially for new and critical programs.

Strategic Plans:

1. Conduct a major fund raising campaign feasibility study to plan a successful drive for additional funds. (Postponed: Reconsider in November 2009.) Promote donor visits to the Center.
2. Study, evaluate, and prioritize program element improvements for the computer center, transportation, communications lab, and other programs.
3. Recruit & hire an **experienced** Development Director (DD) to administer a future comprehensive fund raising campaign (Operating and Capital funds, Annual Fund. The DD will take charge of DC publicity and marketing. The person must research and write effective grant applications. The person will also plan outreach activities to organizations, supporters, and the community. The outstanding recruit will work hard and become equipped to move up.
4. Build a more committed and responsible Board. Replace inactive members who habitually fail to attend meetings or are otherwise too busy. Replace them with energetic individuals with a passion for our mission and vision, who have access or influence over resources, and who can lead. Energize committees and hold them responsible for results.
5. Undertake a realistic staff evaluation at all levels. Provide additional training where needed and replace where necessary. Update position descriptions, work rules, employee handbook, procedures, and policies.
6. Adapt or develop a computer database to yield measurements of achievement in all programs as a result of enrollment, progress metrics, and reporting.

Action Recommended:

Board members are asked to review and revise this adopted plan regularly, make suggestions, and adopt revised strategic plans at regular Board meetings.

* This Dakota Center Strategic Plan was adopted by Board vote on 5/26/09. It incorporates the strategic imperatives of 2002, an unratified plan of 2006, a DRAFT plan of 7/29/2007, a revised DRAFT plan of 2/25/2008, and a board retreat planning discussion of 11/8/2008. Areas for ongoing improvement include: Outreach, Planning & Policy Co-operation, and Leadership training.

-- Roger Brucker
Board Member