



The DC Metro Business Leadership Network

2014 Annual Report

**Letter from the
Chairman of the Board
Donnielle DeMesme, Golden Key Group**

January 2015

Dear DC Metro BLN Members and Friends,

I have had the distinct honor and pleasure to serve as your Board Chair overseeing a great year of growth and success. I am pleased to submit the following 2014 Annual Report.

Donnielle DeMesme

OVERVIEW

The DC Metro Business Leadership Network is an employer led non-profit that uses a business-to business model offering education, training programs and resources to change attitudes and address concerns of businesses so that they learn how to proactively include and utilize people with disabilities in the workforce, marketplace and supplier diversity.

The DC Metro BLN is a 501(c) 3 established in 2006 and a member in good standing as an affiliate of the US Business Leadership Network (www.usbln.org) and serves as one of its pilot affiliates for incorporating innovative ideas and programs for replication on a national level.

Organization and Administration

The DC Metro BLN staff consists of an Executive Director/CEO, which is funded in part grants, membership dues and program fees. The current Executive Director brings extensive experience from both a BLN and USBLN® perspective as well as a business perspective and has been engaged with building BLNs across the US. Her vast business network and tireless efforts to create a strong sustainable BLN have resulted in many accomplishments in 2013. C5 Consulting, LLC, a woman owned and disability owned and operated firm, serves the role of staff and C5's Founder and Managing Partner, The Hon. Katherine McCary serves as its Executive Director/CEO.

Gala Reception Scheduled for September 17, 2015

At the Annual Meeting, the Board formed a 2015 Gala Reception Committee as a fund raising event. The Gala Committee has confirmed a September 17th date and location for the event at SunTrust Bank, 1445 New York Avenue.

Partnerships

While Business drives the DC Metro BLN, its Partnerships are critical to success and sustainability. These partnerships help promote programming, grow membership, and provide member resources and community outreach. Key partners include the National Youth Transitions Center /National Veterans Center Collaborative (NYTC), Greater Washington Internship Coalition, , Mid-Atlantic ADA Center, National Organization on Disability (NOD), Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD), Bridges from School to Work, AAPD Emerging Leaders Program, AAAS, EARN, WRP, Student Veterans of America, and Corporate Immersion. Located in DC, the BLN has developed strong relationships with ODEP, VETS, OFCCP, JAN and EEOC- key resources for members. Partnering with Northrop Grumman's Operation: IMPACT, SHRM chapters and Industry Liaison Group (ILG) Chapters has strengthened member growth.

Programming | Our Year in Review

Looking back on 2014, we focused much of our programming efforts on growing the organization thro content rich programming. In addition to our regular programs and webinars, we held incredibly special events: our 3rd Annual Wounded Warrior Symposium; our 2nd Annual Disability Supplier Program in collaboration with the USBLN® DOBE Certification team; the 2nd Annual Community Partner event; and, our 1st Annual Assistive Technology and Accommodations Symposium and Expo. We thank our membership, leadership, and especially our program hosts- all of whom helped to ensure sustainability for 2014. As with all non-profits, we are constantly looking for additional funding sources and welcome potential funders for 2014. In addition to sponsoring such as exciting events as those listed above, we will discuss the following in our 2014 Annual Report: our various committees, youth outreach, annual meetings, our newly created advisory board, and office space, and our 2014 Finance Report.

Committees

We have robust committees that focus on three specific areas of transition: Youth, College, and Wounded Warriors. In 2014 our College Committee was just getting off the ground. By December, this committee had grown to include college and university career and disability services offices, and young professionals. We are excited to see the committee grow and are holding a Disability Summit in January to address topics that challenge all stakeholders in increasing employment for college graduates with disabilities. A second virtual career fair is planned in February and we are again working with COSD and have offered the career fair to all USBLN® affiliates.

Youth Outreach and Career Fairs

In 2014, we partnered with School Talk and other National Youth Transition Collaborative members to participate in three high school career fairs in Fairfax County, Washington DC and Montgomery County. We continued our relationship with the *Project Search*

internships at several federal agencies, holding two events at the US Department of Education. We also held two virtual events; one for *College to Career* in partnership with Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD) and a second delivered to local high school students considering college. Much of our youth work was made possible through grants from the National Youth Transition Center.

Annual Meeting

In our Annual May meeting, we elected new officers: Donnielle DeMesme, as chair, Kia Silver Hodge as vice chair, Sue Werber as Secretary and Will White, as assistant treasurer. Ellen de Bremond, was reelected as Treasurer. At the meeting, we elected Board members, formed a GALA Reception committee and an Advisory Board.

Our 2014-2015 board:

- Michelle Crabtree, Hyatt
- Denyse Gordon, CACI
- Andrea Hall, CSC
- Mirelle King, Lockheed Martin
- Michele Magana, Booz Allen Hamilton
- Eduardo Meza-Etienne, SSB BART Group
- Evelyn Miller, Raytheon
- Anne Rader
- Michael Wall, EY
- Myra Wilder, Marriott International

Advisory Board:

At the Annual May meeting we also formed an Advisory Board that supports our work and includes disability subject matter experts as well as corporate members. The Advisory Board:

- Ron Drach, Drach Consulting, LLC (Chair, Wounded Warrior Committee)
- Vinece Pastor, Blue Sky Consulting, LLC (former Board Chair)
- Dinah Cohen, Dinah Cohen Consulting, LLC (CAP Director, retired)
- Rich Luecking, TransCen (retired)

- Jim Hammond, Deloitte
- Tara Dunlap, General Dynamics

Membership

In 2014, we added a new level of membership: Executive two year memberships: Diamond and Gold. In 2014, we had the following employers commit to the Executive level: Marriott International, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman and General Dynamics.

Office Space

The DC Metro BLN now has offices at the National Youth Transition Center, at 2013 H ST. NW, Washington, DC. The space was donated by TransCen, and shared by TransCen and Bridges from School to Work- both DC Metro BLN members.

2014 Finance Report

Funding streams include grant, membership, foundation and programming income. Ending Bank Balance - \$33,739.00

In Summary

The DC Metro BLN is strong and vibrant as a direct result of these well-developed and mutually beneficial partnerships. As it continues to grow, the BLN is constantly seeking new partners with which to build relationships that serve the Business Community. The BLN also sees the impact of changes to 503 necessitating providing business members with linkage partners and resources to assist with compliance requirements.

Contact Information

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