

## **NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS**

**Moderator: Michele Higgs**  
**May 13, 2008**  
**3:00 p.m. EDT**

Operator: Good day everyone and thank you for standing by. Welcome to the monthly Neighborhood Networks conference call. Today's conference is being recorded.

At this time, I would like to turn the conference over to Ms. Michele Higgs. Please go ahead, ma'am.

Michele Higgs: Good day everyone; I'm Michele Higgs and I represent the technical assistance team that works with you to address the needs of the various Neighborhood Networks centers around the country.

David Percy is joining me today, and we have David to thank for the speakers who will join us for today's call. I thank all of you for joining us for this month's call in which we tackle the topic "Event Planning: How Events Spread The News About Your Center."

Throughout the more than 1,300 Neighborhood Networks centers around the nation, special events set the tone for the activity all the time. These events could be an awards ceremony, monthly birthday celebration, or just a party to let residents get to know one another. Your technical assistance coordinators often suggest special events to break the ice when you're trying to introduce new activities at your center or trying to let the community know about your center.

Now, before I get carried away talking about our topic, I want to tell you about the new centers that we're welcoming to the Neighborhood today. There are seven. That's Tioga Presbyterian Apartments in Pennsylvania; Center for Community at Billings Forge in Connecticut; Edison Terrace West in Washington; Covenant Manor in New Jersey; Mandela Homes Youth Neighborhood Networks Center in Massachusetts; Evergreen Regency Town Homes Learning Center Community Room in Michigan; Cloverdale Computer Learning and Education Center in Louisiana.

Welcome to all seven centers!

Let me tell you about the resources that are yours through the Neighborhood Networks Initiative. First, there's the Strategic Tracking and Reporting Tool also known as the START business plan. START helps you assess the needs of your residents, determine what resources in your community can help you meet those needs and help you keep track of the partnerships that address them. START is the key to developing partnerships because, when the data is compiled, it creates an organized business plan that strengthens the centers profile as a business entity and makes the center more attractive to potential partners and donors.

START also helps you to examine the capacity of your center and serves as an electronic source of institutional memory for your organization and serves as a foundation upon which you can organize your activity.

Now for more resources...If you have questions about the START business plan or surveys or special event ideas or general questions about the Neighborhood Networks Initiative, you can call the toll-free Neighborhood Networks information line at 888-312-2743. You can also visit Neighborhood Networks at [www.neighborhoodnetworks.org](http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org).

Don't forget about online networking through the Neighborhood Networks online message board. You can share information with other centers, post news, ask questions. Be aware that this is not a "real time" resource, but you can post your information and revisit the board in a day or so to see what kinds of resources or response you have received.

Just go to the Neighborhood Networks Web site at [www.neighborhoodnetworks.org](http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org) and click on the Neighborhood Networks online networking link to the right under the green banner labeled "Helpful Tools." From there, follow the instructions and guidelines to learn how things work or dive right in and click on "Enter Online Discussion."

I also want to remind listeners that a transcript of this call will be made available on the Neighborhood Networks Web site in about two weeks.

And now, back to our topic for today. Party, party, party; no, it's not that easy. But throwing a party once in a while can do a center a lot of good. What other kinds of activities can bring attention to your center and educate the community about your purpose and your mission? Food is the great equalizer, you know. The mayor likes hotdogs just as much as the kids across the courtyard do. You can offer your partner a public "thank you" during the course of an event. You can educate, invigorate, and engage your residents and your community by using special events. But don't listen to me; we've got speakers who are going to tell you all about that.

Our speakers bring a wealth of experience through the development and management of centers and special events. They'll tell you how events can transform your relationship with your community and your residents.

You'll hear first from Clarence Hogan, the coordinator of Jane Addams Hull House Association LeClaire Neighborhood Networks Center in Chicago. He has more than 15 years' experience as a technology instructor for community based organizations, schools, colleges and businesses.

As an entrepreneur he provided afterschool and out-of-school enrichment programs for first to sixth grade students. He will speak to us about building an event around a program and creating events for youth.

To speak with us about working with resources in the community and the specifics of planning events for the senior population, we will hear from Heather Bischoff, senior services coordinator for Green Park Terrace in Indianapolis, which is affiliated with the National Church Residences, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing quality affordable housing for older adults. Heather is a visionary and creative thinker involved locally, regionally, and statewide. She will speak with us about conducting outreach to local and business partners, and marketing and creating events for elderly residents.

We'll also hear from Karen Voiss, resident services manager at Tualatin Valley Housing Partners in Oregon. Karen has been involved in the development, implementation, and delivery of resident programs and activities since 1994. She will speak with us about outreach that takes your event to the next level, using multiple government resources. And she'll also address practical matters that are involved in putting an event together, such as using a task list and timeline.

Finally, to discuss the unifying activities Neighborhood Networks offers seamlessly every year, we'll hear from our own Paloma Costa from our training and special projects staff.

Clarence, can you get us started, please?

Clarence Hogan: Yes, I can. Thanks, Michele. Again, my name is Clarence Hogan and I work for Jane Addams Hull House Association here in Chicago. I operate a Neighborhood Networks center on Chicago's West Side.

Let me just start off by saying that I think this particular conference call is so important because we do such great work. I think you said 1,300 computer centers in the nation, and that's fabulous. Not many people are doing the kind of work that we're doing with the clientele we're doing it with. So, I think, it is imperative that we spread the word about what we're doing.

I'm going to talk first about building an event around a program. We did a digital storytelling program last summer. It was eight weeks long. We got some money from the Chicago Department of Youth and Family Services. The youth created a digital autobiography by using stills, text, and video clips. At the end of the program we had a premiere for the children's work; kind of like movie stars. They were the ones who created the movie. They starred in the movie. They produced it. So we went to our community center, brought all of our equipment. The children invited their family and their friends.

This event helped us so much. The invitations helped us to reach out to people like our alderman, our officials, some of our councilmen, and some of our adults in the community who think that the computer center is just for children. We were able to talk about other things that we do there. Also, our partners got involved. And not just the partner that helped us put the event on but other partners who may not have been directly related with this particular program. We invited them all out. Of course, we invited the media because we were in the newspaper. We were also publicized as a Neighborhood Networks success story. Plus, we invited the greater community because we always want to make sure people realize exactly what we do and how they can be involved.

When we were conducting the program, we awarded each child a certificate because they did such a great job. Also, the parents were there. The parents wanted to see their children get a certificate and a prize, and actually see their child's digital autobiography because usually it contains pictures of them and their family. So that was very exciting. One thing we learned is

that the people love seeing themselves in media. They like to hear their voices; they like to see their pictures. That was delightful.

We had snacks, of course. The food drew a lot of people. So from that one event, we were able to promote what we were doing, make connections, and do a little what I call R&R, recruitment and retention. We talked about other programs and how we wanted this program to lead to other programs.

The digital storytelling premiere actually led us to do our event for this Friday. It's a film festival for teens that is going to showcase our digital cookbook. Our digital cookbook was an intergenerational program we held between our teens and our seniors. So at your event, you can talk about things such as how technology ties everyone together and how you can touch seniors and youth and people outside of your community.

The event also allowed us to make some connections. We ended up getting a success story on the Neighborhood Networks Web site, which led to this conference call and some speaking engagements for Hull House at the Neighborhood Networks RTAW, which was very good. We were able to share our successes and share what we had done; again, from this one event other activities piggybacked and blossomed.

Now, recruitment and retention(R&R), was very, very easy for us for this program again. When it came back up, children came to us and said, 'I want to be in this program.'" They know we're going to have a closing event again this year, so they want to stick around. They want to be in the program. They want to be recognized in a community among their peers and their family like the other children did.

Among the other youth events we have held besides the digital storytelling premiere is the film festival. We're going to feature our digital cookbook, some video challenges made by the

teenagers. They actually held a family feud game, which will be showcased at this event also. We hope to use this event to spark some interest in our intergenerational program. We've got some seniors that are going to be coming over to the site to be a part of the showcase because they provided the recipes as well as the story that went with the cookbook. And hopefully, they'll even bring some of their funding sources. So this is a way for us to showcase some very creative programs with teens and seniors centered on technology.

In the past, we also hosted an outdoor event. We had a march with Street Soldiers, which is a program that holds intervention and violence prevention programs during National Night Out. We got to walk around the community. So the community saw us in a lot of different venues. We were able to show how technology influences us in so many different areas that they may not have thought of like photography, video and many other things.

Then, we held a barbecue once, which was just a fun event. We gave out hot dogs and hamburgers. People stopped by and received information. People signed up for classes, asked questions, and were able to say, "I didn't know you guys did this. I didn't know you did that." They took a tour of the building because we wanted the people to see that what we offer here is not just for children. It's not just for adults. It's not just for seniors. It's not just for people looking for jobs; it's for everyone.

Further, we think that these events you hold can actually be the perfect opportunity to get out and let people see what you're doing; not just your constituents but, your alderman, your councilman. Maybe you'll gain new partnerships with other community-based organizations.

Michele Higgs: OK. Thanks so much, Clarence. This sounds like so much good information here. I love the whole idea of recruitment and retention and how the programs that you've put together bring yet more young people in.

Clarence Hogan: Yes.

Michele Higgs: Thanks a bunch; with that, I think we're going to go to Heather. Heather, are you there?

Heather Bischoff: Yes, I am.

Michele Higgs: OK. Thank you.

Heather Bischoff: Well, first of all, I want to thank everyone listening for making this a priority. These tools are just priceless and I just think you should be commended for taking advantage of them because I'm sure you're all very busy.

What I'm going to talk about are some of the things that I do with my center. My property is a 54-- unit apartment building for people 62 and older. The average age of our residents is probably 75 to 80. So they're a little bit older.

The types of events that we host, and we've been doing events for a long time, include: open houses, health fairs, flu shot clinics and different health clinics, anniversary celebrations, and holiday celebrations. We've also done some things for the veterans.

We determine and develop our ideas by using surveys and focus groups, talking with other people about Neighborhood Networks centers or just people in our community, other service coordinators, and of course, the residents.

We identify the resources by using our resident support because we can't do anything without the backing of our residents, our community partnerships, and of course, our volunteers.

We market our events through our community partnerships. We allow them to market to the people that they reach, which is a great way for us to reach people through simple yard signs, fliers, newspaper ads, Web sites, and of course, our residents.

One of the things that I really wanted to talk today about is our health fair fundraising. We did it last year and that we're going to be doing it again this year. The whole idea was developed from something that people had done in the past at other senior facilities like ours. We knew we also needed to raise money. So we thought, well, why reinvent the wheel when this is already there, so we just combined the two.

What I wanted to do was give you a timeline to make planning events a little bit easier. So six to four months in advance we determined what the event would be. Then we determined how many vendors we would be able to fit in the space. We knew that we wanted to have a health fair fundraiser and that we could set X number of vendors in the space that we had available. Then we decided how much money we wanted to raise, divided it up by how the number of vendors we were hoping to get, and that's how we came up with the donation price for our vendor tables.

Then we looked at the schedules of different events that were going on in our community so that we wouldn't plan our events on the same day. That way, we would get the most people to come to our event. We also looked at what other people did in terms of how long the event would last. Would it be something that we wanted to do for two hours, five hours, or all day?

Then, we identified our vendors. What community partners did we want to support our event? I always go to my community partners, before I go to anybody else, because a lot of times, especially with a health fair, everybody will jump on the bandwagon. So we approached our partners first.

Then, we determined who does the event serve? Will it serve only the Neighborhood Networks center residents or is it a community event? In our case, this was a community event. Then we developed our fliers and our vendor forms. That's what we did six to four months in advance.

At three months out, we went to our partners and they were really excited about what we were doing. We shared our vision with them as far as what the event was going to be and our goals. Honestly, I just told my partners, "We're going to be doing a health fair and we're trying to raise money for our resident activities and, when residents need something we want to be able to have money that we can help them with stuff," and everybody told us yes. We actually had to turn vendors away because we didn't have enough space for all of them.

After we determined our vendors and then, because it was a health fair fundraiser, we determined what screenings and what types of services we wanted to offer. Two months out we followed up with our committed vendors. It's at that time that you would want to recruit more vendors if you need them just to make sure that you can fill the space, especially if it's as limited as ours. Then, when you're recruiting you can determine if you need additional sponsorships. We got sponsorships for our yard signs. In addition, we served lunch at our health fair. We also got sponsorships for some more elaborate health screenings like the cholesterol screening and bone density screening.

At two months out, I began to promote this event to the community by lining up newspaper ads, going to the local senior centers and placing something in their newsletters and giving our partners fliers so that they could promote this.

One month before the event, again, I followed up with my vendors to make sure that we were on the same page and asked them if there was anything that they needed. Then we also talked about payments, to make sure that everyone understood that it was a donation. We asked people for a tax-deductible donation of \$100 per vendor table. Everybody was fine with that because it

made their company look good to support a nonprofit. So it was a win-win situation for everybody.

We began, at that point, to advertise to our residents and really get our residents excited. We started the internal marketing and letting everybody know to bring their family, their friends. We even told people whoever brought the most people would win a prize.

One month out I also secured other advertising by hanging fliers out at senior centers, libraries, pharmacies, churches and anywhere in your community where seniors might go.

We also secured the supplies that we would need such as tables and chairs, door prizes, vendor bags and lunch. We made sure that everything was donated. We didn't have to pay anything for this event.

One week in advance, we followed up with our vendors making sure they had everything they needed. We gave all of our vendors free lunch. We continued to promote the event to our community residents. We put our yard signs.

The day before the event we followed up with the vendors to make sure they knew where to go and what time to be there, what time to set up, and what time people would be arriving. We made up our vendor supply kits. My experience is that it's a very nice treat to provide them with a supply kit. It would be just a little plastic baggy that would have a pack of gum, mints, a pen, and maybe some sticky notes, things that people might need that they forget to bring with them. It's just a little thank you that we give them for supporting us.

One day before, we also start writing out the thank you cards to all of our vendors. Plus, we set up the area for our health fair. Also, get a good night's rest.

The day after the event you want to mail your thank you cards. Review your vendor evaluation forms. In our case, every single one of our vendors agreed that they would like to do this again. So we were very excited about that. Then we sent a thank you card to all of our residents. We sent a blanket flier just thanking them for their support and for taking the time out of their schedules to support the events.

Then, we started to plan for this year's event. Hopefully, that is helpful for all of you. We've done lots of different events. This event was really successful because it brought a sense of community into our building.

Thank you for your time.

Michele Higgs: Heather, I have to tell you, thank you. Also, this is scary. I was trying to take notes throughout your presentation, and this is a lot of work. I know I didn't get everything, but I have about three-quarters of a page here with just individual points. But this is very exciting and really good to have because this just shows us how much work goes into one of these events.

Heather Bischoff: Yes, and it's just so much fun. I think, you know, when you said at the beginning "party, party, party," it's a lot of hard work, but its well worth it.

Michele Higgs: Great, great, great. Well, you all stay put and I'm going to ask Karen to speak with us about taking things to the next level.

Karen?

Karen Voiss: Hi, good afternoon. I'm just really impressed when I listen to everyone talk. It's kind of like a lot of the same things that I'm hearing. Unfortunately, unlike Heather my event is two weeks

out so we're not sending out the thank you cards just yet. But we've done a lot of different events.

We have a lot of onsite family events, youth events, community events. This upcoming event is probably the largest community event that we have ever held. This is related to Tualatin Housing Partners. We are opening a new 128-unit housing project with multiple financial partners and multiple community partners because all of our properties have strong computer based learning centers on them. So we want to make sure that we involve the individuals.

One thing that's really critical is that usually mayors, city council members, the governor, the director of housing, and county commissioners are really busy. Heather hit it on the nose when she said you have to get on their calendar early if you want them to speak or participate in your event. The project that we're building has both county and city money in it. Over the last year, I invited the mayor and the county commissioners to come and tour the project and talk about the programs, activities, and the housing itself as it was going through construction so that I could get them involved.

If you don't have that direct connection with your city council or commissioners or state officials in your county, one of the things that is really helpful is to talk to friends who may know someone or ask the other people that you work with to make that connection. That personal connection is really important; if they see your logo, or they hear about your program, when they get the invitation to participate in your event they'll recognize you, and that makes it really a lot easier to get them to be involved and engaged.

The other piece is developing your plan. So again, six to nine months out, taking a look at what it is that you want to do and choose a date. Now, when we chose our date for this particular event, I called back in December for a May 29th event and got to be first on the mayor's calendar. He was the most important person to get a commitment from since the project that we're working

with was built in the city. Although the county and the city and the state were all involved, I wanted to make sure the mayor was going to be available. We got on the calendars and lined up our speakers back in December.

From there, we developed a task list and worked back from the date. So, first, find out who is speaking at the event and outline that piece. Next, we identified activities. We worked with a lot of the community partners to determine the kinds of activities. This property has multiple courtyards. We wanted this event to not only be a ribbon cutting ceremony but an opportunity to conduct outreach to the greater community and allow people the chance to visit an affordable housing project. We wanted them to look at the programs and activities, meet some of the residents, hear from county and city officials and walk away, hopefully, with a really positive feeling about what it is that we're doing in the community.

It also helps to secure more recognition for our overall organization. So we develop a plan in our task list and we identified what we wanted to do in our five court yards. We wanted to have quilt squares where people could sign the quilt and decorate a little square. Then afterwards, we'll take that square and put it together and hang it in the community room.

We wanted to have a scrapbook for the opening so we're having photos taken and people will have a scrapbook page that they can make. We're going to have a couple of tables that feature the affordable housing issues in our county and we're going to have someone from our park district there. So we started working with those people early on trying to identify what they need.

For each courtyard and each activity we developed a page. The page outlines the person in charge of that courtyard and that activity. We identified the volunteers that have lined up and are committed to help with the activity. Next we identified the needed items for that Activity.

We determined the cost of each item so that I know what it was going to cost me per event plus for the overall agenda. We also thought about how many tables and chairs we would need. That way if I wasn't there that day it wouldn't really matter because we have everything together in a book and someone else could make the phone calls and make sure that everything happened. Using the book also allowed us to work with our other staff so they understand the plan for getting the tables, chairs and supplies to the site at the time that we need it.

Also, because we had developed this relationship with our partners, we made some calls and the city of Beaverton is paying for our sound system and our awnings. One of our partners that is financing a portion of the product gave us \$1,000 towards the event, plus they're producing our brochure, our program, and they're handling all of our media releases.

That's really nice if you're a small organization and you don't have a lot of staff for support. I know you get a lot of that support from Neighborhood Networks and different kinds of ideas and resources. So those are the kinds of resources that really are helpful at the time that you're planning because there's so much happening.

Let's see, I've got a long list here. U.S. Banks is also a partner. I contacted them and they gave us another \$780 for envelopes and invitations. Because everybody is so busy, about six weeks out we sent out a save-the-date reminder to our e-mail contacts.

Then we worked on making invitations. It was just fun to be able to do it. It saved us a lot of money there.

At the event, we will have banners thanking the people that sponsored the event. I don't know if any of you have thought of this, but the different utility companies also like to get recognition. So our gas company, Northwest Natural Gas, is bringing their cart and they're providing all of the hot

dogs and drinks and popcorn. So that's another partner that had the ability to participate in our event.

We want to make sure that we thank our partners. Besides the banners that will say thank you, we'll recognize people with certificates for their help in the project and inviting them back for future opportunities.

We also developed a mailing list of everyone and we keep it updated. That's really important to help you get started. It's amazing how those e-mails, mailing lists, and people's names change. There's nothing worse than sending an invitation to someone with the wrong title or finding they've long since been gone. So that was a piece of our task list that we were able to take care of early.

This particular event is not just about the project and the work that we're doing but it's also an opportunity to reach the greater community, and reach people that wouldn't normally participate.

We've got two groups of children performing from the local school. So we're hoping that will include their parents, and bring them to the event. We're hoping for sunshine, but this is Oregon, so one of the things we had to plan for was ordering seven pop-up awnings in case of rain.

So that's how we work on our events. Thank you so much.

Michele Higgs: OK. It sounds really exciting. I do want to mention a couple of things that I hope folks took note of. One was that the utility companies can be tapped for their assistance with these kinds of events. In your case, Karen, you have them furnishing the refreshments. Also, there's another point you made and that's to be sure to keep your address list updated. Because like you say, there's nothing like addressing someone by the wrong table, or spelling their name wrong or getting their department wrong.

Additionally, by bringing in the students you bring in the parents. All parents want to applaud their children when they're tap dancing in front of hundreds of people. So that's a great idea for getting them involved.

Thanks so much, Karen.

We're going to talk now about Neighborhood Networks Events, and I'm going to ask Paloma to talk.

Paloma Costa: Hi, I'm Paloma Costa. I work with the special projects team at Neighborhood Networks on trainings and conferences and also Neighborhood Networks Week.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with Neighborhood Networks Week, it has been around since the year 2000. The first Neighborhood Networks Week was planned as a five-year observation for Neighborhood Networks. Neighborhood Networks Week consists of local centers planning events all around the country. The centers also participate in national events that in the past have included Web casts, essay contests, and poster contests, which we're also having this year.

There are a variety of different local events planned nationwide. They include open houses, grand openings, fairs, community outreach days and everything in between. So if you haven't picked a date for an event that you're planning, I encourage you to plan it during Neighborhood Networks Week this year, which is going to be held August 4 through 9. So there's plenty of time to accomplish all of those steps that Heather was talking about between now and then. I know it sounds like a lot of work but we are here to help you. Every year we publish an Event Planning Guide, which is mailed to all the Neighborhood Networks centers and posted on the Neighborhood Networks Web site, which has a variety of resources to help you with planning your event.

Heather had a lot of great ideas and shared a lot of great information in her timeline. We have our own set of timelines in the Event Planning Guide. We have a “steps to success,” which starts with identifying an event committee and hosting an event all the way through to sending thank you notes and recognition certificates.

Also, to tie in with what Karen was talking about with getting different neighborhood stakeholders involved, we have a whole section on “getting the word out.” That includes our own timeline of media tips and steps to getting media attention and press for Neighborhood Networks events.

There’s a lot of information available for Neighborhood Networks Week events, and local events overall. But there’s even more detailed information and resources for specific ideas for Neighborhood Networks Centers to participate in. So we’ve put together some toolkits for special events. Some of them include “Do It for You Day, Know Your Neighbor Day and Get Connected Day.”

Now, Do It for You Day is a day of self-sufficiency and learning and workforce development. So for that day we have resume templates, cover letters, mock interview questions, and other resources.

Know Your Neighbor Day is a day to get the community together. It includes open houses, grand openings, award ceremonies, and block parties. We have a variety of fliers and templates to plan those events.

Get Connected Day is a technology day. So we have URLs for teaching tools for sample lesson plans for Internet and computer skills. We have a computer skills checklist. Plus we have an Internet safety scavenger hunt.

The Events Planning Guide is a great resource for planning an event. Whether it's your first event, or whether you have events all year long and participated in Neighborhood Networks Week in the past, we are here to help. So if you have any questions I would encourage you to give us a call on our toll-free line, which is 888-312-2743.

Michele Higgs: OK. This sounds good. Thanks, Paloma. Did you have something else?

Paloma Costa: One more thing. I know we're talking about local events, but getting involved in national events is a great way to participate in Neighborhood Networks Week. We're having a poster contest this year and the deadline has been extended to May 23. This competition challenges residents to design artwork pertaining to this year's theme, which is "Providing Resources and Producing Results". There's additional information on our Neighborhood Networks Web site. But you should mail all entries to 8403 Colesville Road, 10th Floor, Silver Spring, Maryland, 20910. There are four age categories: 6-12, 13-17, 18-64, and 65 and older. We can't wait to get your posters. We're looking forward to receiving them.

Heather Bischoff: May I say something about the poster contest?

Michele Higgs: By all means.

Heather Bischoff: This is Heather. My residents participated in the poster contest a year ago, and they had the best time ever. They got together a group of women; the subject was building communities, connecting neighbors or something like that, and they just had so much fun working on it. They were just so proud that they designed this poster. We actually made a color copy of it, framed it for them, and hung it in the building. It really did bring them together and it was such a wonderful experience. So if you haven't participated in the poster contest in the past, I would highly encourage you to check it out.

Paloma Costa: Every resident who participates will receive a certificate. In addition, the first, second and third place winners will be posted on the Neighborhood Networks Web site. Finally, one of them will be chosen as the overall winner; that poster is printed so that's a great opportunity for residents.

Michele Higgs: That is terrific. Anything else? OK, thank you much. With that, I thank all of you for contributing today and I'm not going to stop right now. I'm going to ask Jodie, if we have anyone on the line with questions?

Operator: Certainly. Ladies and gentlemen, if you do have a question about today's program, please press star one on your telephone keypads now. If you're using a speakerphone, please be sure your mute button is turned off. We'll take as many questions as time permits and proceed in the order in which you signal us. Once again, that is star one to ask a question.

We'll go now to Larissa Metzger.

Larissa Metzger: Hi. Yes. I was wondering when the new Event Planning Guide would be out?

Paloma Costa: It should be mailed to you within the next few weeks and it will be posted on the Web site, as well.

Larissa Metzger: Is it available on the Web site right now?

Paloma Costa: Not yet.

Larissa Metzger: OK. Thank you.

Paloma Costa: There is an Event Planning Guide from last year available. If you scroll to the bottom of the Neighborhood Networks Web site, there's a section where you can access archived materials for training conferences and Neighborhood Networks Week.

Larissa Metzger: OK. Thank you.

Paloma Costa: If you're going to start planning now, feel free to use the 2007 version.

Larissa Metzger: OK. Thank you.

Michele Higgs: Thanks much, Jodie.

Operator: Yes, we'll go now to Sharon Leary.

Michele Higgs: Hello.

Sharon: Hi, this is Sharon from Winnebago County Housing Authority. For the Event Planning Guide, you mentioned that there are the sections, Get to Know Your Neighbor and Get Connected. Are the fliers downloadable? Can we edit them and use them?

Paloma Costa: They're downloadable and there are actually blanks where you can add your center name and the information about your center.

Sharon: OK. Great! The other last question I had was about the poster contest deadline. I mean you have to have your things in by May 24?

Paloma Costa: The entry should be postmarked by May 23.

Sharon: May 23. OK. All right. Thank you.

Paloma Costa: Thank you.

Michele Higgs: Great, thank you.

Operator: Ladies and gentlemen, as a reminder, that is star one to ask a question. We'll pause for a moment to allow everyone a chance to respond.

And we'll go now to Jenelle Westbury.

Jenelle Westbury: Good afternoon to everyone.

Michele Higgs: Hello.

Jenelle Westbury: I am calling to find out if I could contact the person who had the health fair because I am in the midst of hosting a health fair. They have so much information that I'm sure there's something in there I'm missing.

Michele Higgs: Probably. Jenelle, why don't I do this? I can make that connection for you. I think that was Heather.

Heather Bischoff: Yes.

Michele Higgs: And we'll see to it that you get her information.

Jenelle Westbury: Thank you so very much.

Michele Higgs: OK, thanks.

Jenelle Westbury: All right.

Operator: And ladies and gentlemen, as a final reminder, that is star one to ask a question. We'll pause for just one more moment.

We'll go now to Pat Bartholome.

Michele Higgs: OK, thanks.

Pat Bartholome: I have a question about the health fair. We do a lot of health fairs here. I work at a housing authority in Kansas City, Missouri. I guess I was interested in the concept of health fairs as fundraising. You've got a profit margin in there some place, if you're doing a fundraiser. I was interested if Heather could describe what she was actually selling. Or was she actually raising money or did it all come before the event from the vendor's donations? Thank you.

Heather Bischoff: Yes, that's a good question. All of the money came before the event because we asked vendors to be a part of our health fair if they would give us a donation of \$100 for a vendor table. We also got other donations because we were having a health fair. For instance, local universities and other partners that couldn't participate gave us a donation. I hope that answers your question.

Michele Higgs: OK. If the caller has hung up we have a question sitting right here.

David Percy: Hi. This is David from Neighborhood Networks. Karen, I wanted to ask if you had used tracking, perhaps during the event or afterwards to figure out the event's impact or maybe if you had done a follow-up survey. I think, Karen, you had mentioned that at one point.

Karen Voiss: Heather actually was talking about doing a follow-up survey. I think that's a really great idea, especially for partners like the county and city people that have been working with us and asking people if it was something that helped. Because our event is not just about us; it's also spreading the word about affordable housing and what's happening in our area.

So, I think, it's really important to use and get feedback. We do it for a lot of our events. We're finishing up an Independent Living Program (ILP). Each session has some kind of an activity and we do a survey to determine if we met everyone's needs. Are there things that they would like to see changed? Do they have ideas? I think bringing people together and getting their ideas really helps expand the possibilities. By getting their feedback, they may think of something you may not have.

Heather Bischoff: We conducted a vendor evaluation to see if they felt like it was worth their time, if they liked the idea of giving a donation, and if they would participate again. We asked if they felt like they got any benefit out of it. We also took surveys of the people who participated after they went through our health fair.

Clarence Hogan: We did some surveys for a couple of our events, specifically with the residents, to make sure that they enjoyed the process as well as what they would like to see changed. But we also surveyed the people who just kind of roam through. And then we had some people call back to say they were involved in this program and would like more information. One of the things we asked them is, "How did you find out about us? How did you know about us? What event did you attend?" That way we know which events are attended mostly by non-residents, too.

David Percy: That's great.

Michele Higgs: That does the trick. So these are used to tweak upcoming events, determine what works, what doesn't, and what can be changed.

OK, Jodie, have we anyone else out there?

Operator: It appears that we have no further questions. So Ms. Higgs, I would like to turn the conference back to you for any additional or closing remarks.

Michele Higgs: OK. You guys know better than to give me time to work with because I start asking questions and moving things around here. Number one, I wanted to thank all of you. I wanted to thank Clarence, Karen, and Heather for contributing this afternoon because it's been a very informative call.

But I also have a question for Clarence. My question is about digital storytelling, something that we technical assistant coordinators get quite a number of questions about. Because I know you were using it for the youth, is there some other use for that technique?

Clarence Hogan: Well, actually, Michele, I got the idea for the digital storytelling program from an RTAW that I went to in San Diego or maybe it was a Neighborhood Networks National Conference. I think Thaddeus was leading that session. He had used it with adults. At the event that we did in the summer, some adults were asking questions so I asked them if they would be interested in doing something like this. They see it as something for children, but I know we can tweak it.

We can change it for adults as well as youth because everybody has a story to tell. We can do autobiographies or stuff about cooking because that involves the seniors. The digital cookbook is part video, part actual book. And the seniors don't share their recipes, they share their stories and how they got this recipe from their great grandmother. So we have a part where we can deal

with seniors and adults. Right now, we're holding a program very similar to digital storytelling, just with teenagers.

So you can tweak it for any group of people you want.

Michele Higgs: I just imagine the digital cookbook is extremely special.

Clarence Hogan: Yes. We plan to premiere it this Friday at our event. Then we think we're going to take it over to the senior building and have a special screening for the seniors.

Michele Higgs: Terrific, terrific. Thank you much. Jodie, I'm going to ask you again if we have any other callers on the line.

Operator: And ladies and gentlemen, as one final reminder, that is star one to ask a question. We'll pause for just one more moment.

And it appears that we truly have no further questions.

Michele Higgs: OK. Then with that, I'm going to close out the call for today and since we just have a few minutes left and that's for me to tell you a little bit more about what's going on with Neighborhood Networks. Just to remind you of the resources available to you through the Neighborhood Networks Initiative, if you have a question and it didn't get in during the call you can go to the Neighborhood Networks Web site and post it on the Neighborhood Networks online message board where staff or your peers will see to it that your questions gets attention.

Of course, you can always call the toll-free Neighborhood Networks information line with questions at 888-312-2743, or view the resources and current information on the Neighborhood Networks Web site at [www.neighborhoodnetworks.org](http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org).

The next Neighborhood Networks Regional Technical Assistance Workshop is coming up July 9 through 11 in San Francisco. There will be a two-day grantwriting session preceding that workshop. The brochure is available on the Web site for your review, at [www.neighborhoodnetworks.org](http://www.neighborhoodnetworks.org).

Our call on June 10 is on the topic of "Organizational Development – Knowing Who You Are and What To Do." That call will tackle some of the issues that centers face in running a center. So bring some sharp pencils and prepare to learn how you can hone the image and activities of your center by assessing your capacity. Please save the date, mark your calendars.

Thanks to all of our callers for joining us today. Thanks, Karen, Heather, Clarence, Paloma, and David. Take good care, everyone. And we'll talk to you next time.

Operator: This concludes today's conference. We appreciate you joining us today. And hope that you have a lovely rest of your day.

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