

10/01/2017

This event started at 9:30am with socializing and a free, delicious, hearty breakfast. [REDACTED] suggested we move the chairs to form a circle, and we did so. We then participated in a soft belly breathing meditation exercise led by [REDACTED] to help get everyone in the right mindset. [REDACTED] laid out his vision for the community through three “lenses”. 1.) We watched a video of an interview with [REDACTED], who was the sole survivor of a suicide bomb attack in Iraq and who now lives with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). 2.) [REDACTED] said he thinks of our community as a “Time Bank”, where the currency is service hours. He pointed out that when we give of ourselves, not only are we helping others, but we’re helping to take part in our own enrichment. 3.) His third lens was that the community is ours to make.

[REDACTED] spoke next, and while she wears many hats, a main focus of her job is to evaluate the success of the community and to provide numerical evidence to stakeholders and donors to show that the community is thriving. She does this through a variety of techniques, but the ones most relevant to residents are the “Community Connections and Volunteer Log” which we are required to complete and hand in to [REDACTED] at the end of every month, and the Resident Survey. If you have not yet received a survey, [REDACTED] will be in touch with you soon to provide one. These are crucial elements in the success of the community, and these metrics tie in to what [REDACTED] had to say next.

[REDACTED] spoke next, and she said that “my job is everyone’s job”. What that means to me is that as members of this landmark community, we are all responsible for the reputation of the community, for our own wellness, and for giving back. Additionally, she said that we can do some of our own grassroots fundraising. An example would be having a birthday party and asking that instead of gifts, all guests make a money donation to the Bastion 501c3 nonprofit organization. There’s a new webpage at <http://www.joinbastion.org/> for creating your own fundraising page. Every little bit helps. [REDACTED] indicated that she is working on obtaining funding for Phase 2 (estimated cost: \$4.5 million), as well as for operating expenses such as staff payrolls. She said there’s going to be an “Evening of Appreciation” for community members on 11/09/17.

Next, [REDACTED] opened with an inspiring quote by Marcus Aurelius to the effect that human beings are formed by nature to benefit others. He said that when you fulfill your 6+ hours of service each week, that could mean different things to different people. You could, for example: provide meals, rides to those without cars, a listening and sympathetic ear, or pick up trash around the community. He highlighted the upcoming 10/20/17 mindfulness class and weekly Mind-Body skills group

classes which will begin on 10/04/17. He ended with a “call to action”, encouraging residents to give of themselves and get involved.

Community members present thanked the staff for the work that they do, and we gave them a round of applause.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this event! If you were unable to attend this one, please come next time and bask in the warmth of the community.

“The Community is Ours to Make” by Susan Lutz - 05/01/25

On September 16, 2017, Bastion held its first community meeting, wherein [REDACTED] laid out his vision for the community through three “lenses”. 1.) We watched a video of an interview with [REDACTED], who was the sole survivor of a suicide bomb attack in Iraq and who now lives with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). 2.) Dylan said he thinks of our community as a “Time Bank,” where the currency is service hours. He pointed out that when we give of ourselves, not only are we helping others, but we’re helping to take part in our own enrichment. 3.) His third lens was that the community is ours to make.

[REDACTED], social worker, also spoke and opened with an inspiring quote by Marcus Aurelius to the effect that human beings are formed by nature to benefit others. He said that when you fulfill your 6+ hours of service each week, that could mean different things to different people. You could, for example: provide meals, rides to those without cars, a listening and sympathetic ear, or pick up trash around the community. He ended with a “call to action,” encouraging residents to give of themselves and to get involved.

All of this is still relevant today. Even though Bastion does not require service hours, it is encouraged, and many neighbors give. Bastion neighbors have done some very thoughtful and helpful things including: Donated household items to new residents/neighbors, put out/returned trash cans to the curb, given rides to grocery stores, doctor appointments, etc.

One neighbor even made Easter baskets for another neighbor’s kids. This is just a small sampling of what goes on at Bastion. I also wanted to discuss the concept of reciprocity. Reciprocity is fundamental to fostering healthy relationships and communities, where mutual support and the exchange of energy contribute to a balanced and nurturing atmosphere. In relationships, reciprocity can manifest in various ways: generalized reciprocity refers to giving without expecting an immediate return, balanced reciprocity

focuses on a fair exchange, and negative reciprocity indicates an unequal interaction that may result in feelings of resentment or burnout.

There is also the idea of paying it forward. This refers to the notion where the recipient of a good deed chooses to extend kindness to others instead of returning it to the original benefactor. This practice is also known as serial reciprocity. For instance, if the organization has assisted you with a financial matter, you could express your gratitude by performing a kind act for a neighbor.

Circling back to what [REDACTED] said, the community is still ours to make. The new Veteran Wellness Center stands as a symbol of a fresh start. It is an opportunity for us all to reflect, and come together, pooling our talents and resources, to enhance the brilliance of this community. By working collaboratively, and by prioritizing reciprocity, we can ensure that Bastion shines even more radiantly than it already does.

“Bastion Feels Like Hope” by Susan Lutz - 09/01/25

When interviewing former occupational therapy intern [REDACTED] for the Bugle, he expressed beautifully, “Bastion feels like hope.” This profound sentiment resonates deeply with me.

I find myself experiencing that same sense of hope each day I take steps toward my goal of becoming a web designer. It’s a hope that fills my heart every time Malik calls out to me with an enthusiastic “Suuusssannnn!” I sense that hope in abundance when I witness the warmth of people embracing one another, during our many events, and as we forge new and lasting friendships along the way.

The new Wellness Center stands as a beacon of hope and renewal, a place where the essence of Bastion’s magic can be shared with other veterans. We will have the opportunity to share Bastion’s magic with other veterans, and offer them hope as well