

The North Iowa Diversity Appreciation Team (NIDAT) met on Wednesday, July 9, 2008 at City Hall in Mason City. Those in attendance were: Cecilia Lopez Demorotis, Darshini Jayawardena, Rev. Jack Gannett, Dan Gapinski, Linda Woodcock, Lahoma Counts, Libby Lembke, Hilleri Jennings, Elaine Olson, April Concepcion, Mary Hamiel, Jane Ginapp, Darcy Skellenger, Hal Minear, Steve Tynan and Dixie Lamoreux.

With many new people in attendance, Jane started the meeting with introductions.

In the absence of Joy Drennen, Jane reported that our bank balance is \$1737.14.

Jane shared the flier that has been used for early publicity of the "Lunch by Central Park" event that will be held on September 19th. Cecelia agreed to take some of the fliers to the festival that will be held at Holy Family Catholic Church on July 19th. Jane will be updating the fliers with the new vendors and it will be translated by Cecelia, Darshini and April into Spanish, Greek and Filipino. Hopefully we will have them by the next meeting or soon after for distribution.

Our event has grown and it looks as though this year it should be bigger and better than ever. It is being held in conjunction with the River City Festival and that looks to be a good opportunity for NIDAT. We presently have eleven food and drink vendors as well as about seven ethnic exhibits (Spain, Mexico, Sri Lanka, India, Philippines, Greece, Germany) and the information fair that is being headed by Deb Clites of the local Human Resource Association.

We will be using ticket sales again to purchase food and tickets will cost \$1 each and then vendors do not have to provide change. Customers just pay with the tickets and vendors turn in their tickets at the end of the day and are paid by NIDAT. In the past we have sold tickets at the north end of the street but will sell at the north and south ends both this year. This means we will need to have more start up cash and two bank bags to keep money in. Hilleri will be able to get us a couple of volunteers to sell tickets and Linda and Elaine will also be selling them.

Tables will be the big deal and Elaine is going to check with the fair grounds and see if we can get all of the tables we need from there and not have to go to several places to pick up tables. This would be much easier and Dixie will line up the Affordables truck to transport them for us. Dixie originally spoke with someone from Trinity Lutheran Church but since we will be needing more tables than what they have, if we can get them all from the fairgrounds we will definitely do that.

The next issue was the electricity and Mary said that she will be able to arrange that with Dennis and Don Higgins. Lack of electricity has always been an issue for us so this will be a great help. Jane will need to know what vendors will not be needing electricity so they can be set up accordingly.

Elaine is going to speak to Mark Suby about getting picnic tables and garbage cans for us to use. She will also talk to the MC Police Department about getting the cars off the street for us on the morning of the 19th and closing Federal Avenue between State Street and 1st Street.

The time of the event is from 11 until 1:30 and NIDAT representatives will be there by 9 am and vendors about 10 for set up.

Dan Gapinski will be providing the sound system for the day and will be doing various little announcements throughout the event that will plug the vendors as well as NIDAT. NIDAT will have bookmarks with NIDAT information including our web address that will be available that day.

Jane will be contacting the Health Department in case they want to inspect the “for profit” vendors.

Jane and/or Dan will be doing publicity interviews with local radio and hopefully television before the event. Libby is setting up September 16th for an interview with KCMR. We will also be trying to get Globe Gazette and KIMT-TV coverage. The Thursday “Preview” section of the Globe is free. Hal Minear will contact Tim Fleming from the radio stations about some free publicity. Jane has prepared a Power Point presentation for Cable channel 4 to run from August 1st through September 19th. Lahoma will try to add some pictures from last year’s event at the start and at the end of the presentation.

Jane will need vendors to contact her with their menus and what items will cost so she can make signs for each of them.

This was a really good meeting with lots of different and much needed input that it takes to make anything a success. Hopefully it will all pay off for us in September with a very successful event.

One last item discussed was the “Night Out Against Crime”, an annual event sponsored by the Mason City Police Department. It will be held on Tuesday, August 5th in East Park. NIDAT will have a table there and Jane will be working the table for the Iowa Radio Reading Information service (IRIS), so Dixie will check on working the NIDAT table that night. Time for this is 5 to 8 PM. We will try to have the IRIS and the NIDAT and the GIRL SCOUT tables close to each other so that Jane and Dixie and Darcy can all help each other out.

Our next meeting will be at 4 pm on Wednesday, August 13th.

Respectfully submitted by Dixie Lamoreux, NIDAT Secretary