

Non-profits set to share their stories

Written by Louise Ronald Staff Writer

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Sarah Welcome, left, learns about the Society for the Preservation and Use of Resources (SPUR) from SPUR board president Scott Zimmerman and board member Gerald South at last year's All Aboard event.

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Sarah Welcome, left, learns about the Society for the Preservation and Use of Resources (SPUR) from SPUR board president Scott Zimmerman and board member Gerald South at last year's All Aboard event. / Rachel E. Sheeley / Palladium-Item file photo

If You Go

• **What:** All Aboard • **Purpose:** To give interested community members a chance to learn about opportunities to serve on non-profit boards • **When:** 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Thursday • **Where:** Lamplight Inn at the Leland, 900 S. A St., Richmond • **Cost:** Free • **Obligation:** None • **Door prize:** iPad mini • **Participating organizations:** 2nd Chance Animal Rescue, Achieva Resources Corp., Birth-to-Five, Civic Hall Performing Arts Center, Communities in Schools, Community Action of East Central Indiana, Habitat for Humanity, HELP the Animals, Junior

Achievement, Kids Read Now, Open Arms Ministries, Quaker Hill Conference Center, Seton Catholic Schools, Society for the Preservation and Use of Resources (SPUR), Starr-Gennett Foundation, Sunrise Inc., Townsend Community Center, Wayne County Literacy Coalition, Wayne County Special Olympics, Whitewater Community Television, Youth As Resources

Representatives from 21 area non-profit organizations will be on hand Thursday at the second annual All Aboard — an event designed to match people who might be interested in serving on non-profit boards with organizations that need their services.

“It’s kind of like speed dating for board members,” said Rod Waltz, executive director of Quaker Hill Conference Center.

“In a no-pressure setting,” said Jim McCormick, chief executive officer of the Independent Living Center of Eastern Indiana. The event gives potential board members “... the chance to kind of interview the non-profits to see if they would be a good fit.”

The idea for All Aboard grew out of quarterly non-profit networking luncheons sponsored by the Wayne County Foundation. Recruiting board members is “always a hot topic,” at the luncheons, McCormick said, so when he told the group about a similar event in Indianapolis, it quickly generated interest.

McCormick was one of a group of volunteers who worked with the foundation to put together last year’s event.

“It was just extraordinarily successful,” he said.

“It’s great exposure to people who are actually thinking about becoming board members,” said Jim Cohen,

interim executive director of Birth-to-Five, which also participated last year. Cohen said the event gives people a chance to find out about the non-profits and what they expect from board members.

Those who attend are under no obligation to commit to joining a board.

Waltz said he enjoys talking about his organization to anyone who's interested.

"Most (of the people at last year's event) just enjoyed hearing our story and learning more about us," he said. "We had a chance to meet some good people in the community."

This will be the first year for the Wayne County Special Olympics to participate in the All Aboard. Coordinator Lonnie Snow is looking forward to Thursday.

"I think it's just a great way to reach out to the community," he said. "We're always looking for ... new blood, new ideas."

Quaker Hill recruited two members for its board last year, but one has since moved away. Its board has about 10 people now. Waltz would like to have 12 to 16 members.

"To have more members you ... can gain expertise from is good for the organization," he said.

Birth-to-Five is in the process of rebuilding its board, Cohen said.

"If we could get three or four people, we'd be thrilled."

The Independent Living Center recruited two board members last year. The organization won't be looking for more members this year, but still is involved with All Aboard as a co-sponsor with the foundation.

"One of the missions of the foundation is to build a stronger community," said development officer Rachel Hughes. "Strengthening non-profits is one way to do that."

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