

HUNGARIAN AMERICANS TOGETHER

On June 26th and 27th 2008, the second in a series of conferences was held to discuss and exchange ideas on the future of the Hungarian American community in the United States of America. The conference was co-sponsored by the William Penn Association and Bethlen Communities. It was hosted at the Bethlen Communities, Ligonier, Pennsylvania.

The aim of these conferences is to openly discuss the issues that face our community and how to solve them. These conferences should not be construed as an attempt to develop another umbrella organization but only to bring together the leaders of our community for a series of meetings to unite as one in an attempt to solve our most pressing needs; that of passing on to the next generations the language, culture, social, historical and religious heritage of our ancestors and to preserve these achievements, here in America, for generations to come.

Attached are the minutes of the June 26th-27th Conference along with an Executive Summary. Included in both attachments is a list of deliverables, which the conference has decided are important issues to be accomplished prior to the next meeting.

The third conference is scheduled for October 10th and 11th 2008, in New Brunswick, New Jersey. The Hungarian Civic Association (the umbrella organization of New Brunswick Hungarian organizations) and the Hungarian Reformed Federation of America will serve as co-sponsors of the third conference. The Conference will be Co-Chaired by Dr. August J. Molnar, President of the American Hungarian Foundation and Dr. Balazs Somogyi, Chairman of the Hungarian American Coalition. Mr. Imre Lendvai-Lintner, Chairman of the Hungarian Scouts Association Abroad, will serve as Conference Moderator. The conference is scheduled to begin at 10:00 am, and will be convened at the American Hungarian Foundation Museum and Cultural Center, 300 Somerset Street, New Brunswick, NJ.

On Friday, as an added event, the choir of the Great Church [Nagy Templom] of Debrecen will perform at the New Brunswick Hungarian American Athletic Club. Dr. Attila A. Kocsis, pastor of the Magyar Reformed Church of Perth Amboy, NJ, will serve as the coordinator of this concert. Additionally, a dinner will be served prior to the start of the concert at the club.

For information regarding this conference and accommodations please contact Dr. August J. Molnar at the following:

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Respectfully,

Stephen J. Varga
Chairman
William Penn Association

Reverend Imre A. Bertalan
Executive Director
Bethlen Communities

Executive Summary:

1. The aim of the conference is for an open discussion on the problems facing the Hungarian American community and possible solutions.
2. An update was presented to the participants on the results of the April 2008 meeting stressing that the meeting was a beginning of working together. There are currently a number of identified and non-identified at-risk elements in our community.
3. The conference defined those at-risk items which affects the domestic Hungarian American landscape. The Bethlen Communities indicated that a study was conducted determining what the Hungarian American community expects in the future. It was suggested that this study and/or other studies conducted be made available to the conference.
4. Challenges affecting the Hungarian American community were discussed. The major areas of concerned are:
 - a. Attracting the attention and interest of the next generation.
 - b. Communicating with them on there level.
 - c. How to keep our organizations relevant.
 - d. Networking to the “New Youthful Hungarians”.
 - e. Influencing parents to get children involved.
 - f. Strengthening the communication infrastructure within the community.
 - g. Using technology efficiently.
 - h. Develop case studies to determine the needs of the Hungarian American community.
 - i. Creating an environment to foster interest of ethnically diversified Hungarian.
 - j. Lack of Hungarian cultural studies at American universities.
 - k. Scholarships are not designed to develop investments in the Hungarian American community.
5. The conference developed a list of important needs and tools to deliver results:
 - a. Educational – Youth networking, Scouting, Multi-generational tools and programming.
 - b. Cultural – Museums, Language programs, Dance Groups, Choirs.
 - c. Social – Clubs/Lodges, Central community website (www.TheGulyasPot.com).
 - d. Fraternal/ Charitable – Maintaining institutions, Insurance, Safety Net.
 - e. Business Community – Networking.
 - f. Development – Fundraising.
 - g. Virtual – Linking websites, Computer literacy – central site for community-social-historical-educational-archiving.
6. Andrea Lauer Rice from Lauer Learning discussed in-depth the topic “The Will to Pass On”. Her “Pass it on...” strategy, first developed in 2007, centers on the development of multimedia educational tools for children of all ages to teach about culture, history and language, while finding ways to engage so-called “at risk” elements within our community. One concept to reach the youth and gain their interest is through technology (video games, websites, social networking tools, graphic novels, etc.). See

www.LauerLearning.com<<http://www.LauerLearning.com>> to access the complete “Pass it On...” strategy and white paper. Additionally, Andrea introduced the GulyasPot website, which could serve as the major clearing house and communication tool for the Hungarian American community.

7. The conference discussed the possibility of developing a Hungarian American Heritage Month in 2009. A survey will be distributed among the Hungarian American organization and community requesting input on the development of a Hungarian American Heritage Month.

Deliverables:

- Any organization that has research on needs or make-up of Hungarian American community should share it with the group. Please bring this information to the next conference.
- Lauer Learning to immediately begin work on Kis Majom DVD series as a language and cultural learning tool for infants and toddlers as well as their parents.
- All organizations register at www.TheGulyasPot.com and inform their membership about this tool, also designate someone within organization to regularly input upcoming events on site.
- All organizations that have scholarship programs send information and a downloadable application form to Gulyas Pot to begin building a listing / network of these resources / opportunities.
- Expand the list of potential participants and keep as many organizations informed of the “Hungarian Americans Together” meetings. Provide them with the reports. Determine those with the greatest need, who would potentially travel from the west coast or other regions to ensure their future. Identify potential funding sources.
- TheGulyasPot.com community outreach – Andrea Lauer Rice to coordinate with Atilla Kocsis, Digital Phenom on podcasts, and with Laszlo Hamos, HHRF, on map functionality.
- Hungarian American Heritage Month, Andrea Lauer Rice to poll community leaders to decide on exact month, Max Teleki to research next steps on how to officially designate month to be HAHM by US government.
- All organizations that have scholarship programs send in information and a downloadable application form to Gulyas Pot to begin building a listing / network of these resources / opportunity.