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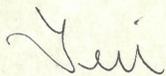
Dear President Albound,

Just a personal note to thank you and your Board for supporting the Leave No Child Inside community initiative. Because of your involvement, the initiative has built a strong base for continued success. I've enjoyed working with you over these past two years, and will miss the continued interaction as I am retiring from the initiative.

But I retire with great expectations for LNCI. The new leadership is outstanding, with great energy, commitment and really sound ideas for the future. Your continued support of them and the LNCI message is encouraged.

The enclosed documents—the completed comprehensive plan and the Capstone Project Summary—capture what you helped LNCI accomplish. I wanted to be sure you had hardcopies to read and share with others.

My very best wishes to you,



**bcc: Board of Trustees**

# Leave No Child Inside Consortium of the Greater Barrington, Deer Park, and Lake Zurich Area

## *Current Assessment and Recommendations for the Future*

### UIC Capstone Presentation May 4, 2010

#### **Executive Summary**

Richard Louv's 2005 book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*, sparked a nationwide movement to 'leave no child inside.' The Leave No Child Inside Consortium of the Greater Barrington, Deer Park, and Lake Zurich Area (referenced in this report as simply the LNCI Consortium) is one of over sixty local grassroots initiatives across the country that has launched a campaign to connect children with nature.

In the fall of 2009, the Consortium submitted a Capstone project proposal to the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs' Department of Public Administration. The overarching goal of the proposal was to help assess whether there is a need for the Consortium to exist beyond the completion of its 2009-2010 Comprehensive Plan.

From December 2009 to May 2010, four Master of Public Administration (MPA) students worked with the Consortium to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the current organizational structure and to determine what enhancements are necessary if the Consortium chooses to continue. Throughout the project, the Capstone team examined whether there a need for the Consortium to exist beyond May 2010 and, if so, make recommendations on how it should be organized.

**Procedure:** To accomplish this task, the team conducted face-to-face and phone interviews with 46 of the 65 Consortium members. Using a combination of a closed-ended questionnaire and an open-ended interview, the Capstone team gathered valuable data to help assess the members' current perceptions of the Consortium and the possibility of continuing beyond May 2010.

Using the data collected, the Capstone team conducted a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis to scan the internal and external environments of the Consortium. Further, the team completed case study analyses of three LNCI efforts in the greater Chicago region and of the Barrington Area Council on Aging. To help the Consortium modify its organizational structure, the Capstone team provided an overview of two different organizational frameworks for the Consortium to

1. **Engage member organizations.** A majority of Consortium members feel that there are two primary benefits of participating in Leave No Child Inside: opportunities for collaboration and assistance with raising awareness about the importance of getting kids outside. The inclusive nature of the Consortium and the diversity of organizations involved are also important to Consortium members. As such, the Capstone team recommends that the Consortium continue to engage its member organizations and utilize their knowledge, skills, and resources.
2. **Amend Consortium structure.** Although Consortium members are enthusiastic about the initiative's continuation, many members face time constraints that prohibit or hinder their involvement in the Consortium. To address this concern, the Capstone team recommends that the Consortium structure be amended to have fewer meetings and to enable members to participate to varying degrees, some more formally on subgroups and some on specific projects as needed.
3. **Streamline subgroup structure.** The subgroup structure should be streamlined to avoid duplicate roles, promote better communication, and foster opportunities for collaboration among different communities and sectors. The Consortium should consider reducing the amount of subgroups by establishing levels of involvement. Members could engage formally through subgroups or informally through specific projects.
4. **Create a coordinating body to foster collaboration.** In addition to subgroups, there is a need for a coordinating body to foster collaboration among the subgroups and to drive the overarching agenda of the Consortium. This group should contain representatives from the subgroups and at least two leadership positions: chair and vice-chair. The leadership positions should be filled by the individuals who are most interested in steering the future direction of the Consortium and are committed to helping the effort grow. A succession plan for leadership should be put into place. The Capstone team recommends that the leadership positions rotate every other year, so as not to overburden any one person or organization.
5. **Find sponsorship (fiscal agents) for programming.** To pay for collaborative projects, the Capstone team recommends that the Consortium identify member organizations that have the capacity to act as fiscal agents on projects when needed.
6. **Identify partner organizations with insurance capacity to sponsor events.** Similarly, to address liability concerns, the Capstone team recommends that the Consortium identify organizations that have insurance to cover collaborative events. This may mean sponsoring Leave No Child Inside activities and programs at existing community events or building on the programs and activities on member organizations, rather than having individuals plan events.
7. **Clarify the goals and mission of the Consortium.** Thirteen percent of interview respondents feel that the goals and mission of the initiative should be clarified. This is something that the coordinating body should address to help focus message and efforts of the members.