

LEADERSHIP bismarck-mandan alumni association

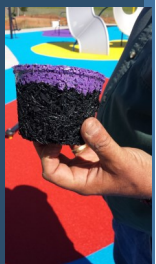
PROJECT UPDATE—UNIVERSAL PLAYGROUND



A wonderful thing has finally taken shape in Mandan, ND. **The Universal Playground** is now open for play! When we last covered this amazing project, the group behind the playground had almost hit their goal of \$500,000, having raised \$400,000.

The fundraising continued through the spring and summer. Though the ground-breaking was held May 4th, funds were still being collected until they had every cent of the \$500,000.

Along the way the group came across a few challenges, but still managed to keep the project on schedule. A minor impact on the construction of the playground was the weather. Severe storms and heavy rains delayed workers from pouring concrete and making headway on the poured-in-place rubber surface, which is **the largest poured rubber surface in North Dakota!**



Granted the funding process seemed like a breeze, Andrea Fonkert, LBMAA graduate and Universal Playground project member, remembers, "There were times we weren't sure if we would be able to meet our fundraising goal in time to start construction in the early summer, but the community support was incredible and a few of our committee members went above and beyond with their fundraising efforts, pushing us to the end."

Even though September 3rd was the grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony, people of every size, and age began to play on the equipment once it was put up. Red-orange barriers meant to keep everyone out was hardly noticed by those who had been watching the construction for weeks and were too excited to wait.



Since the opening of the park, hundreds of children and their families have begun to enjoy its layout. Universally designed for all to enjoy, this project has become a universal gateway for all to connect, as well as learn from others and understand that everyone is unique.

The roots of the Mandan Universal Playground can be traced back to a Leadership Bismarck-Mandan field project started by members of the **Class of 2014**. **Andrea Fonkert, Amber Haman, Michelle Walker, Josh Wiens, Sandi Himmelspach, Jordan Hatzebuhler and Karl Liepitz** collaborated with Mandan Parks and Recreation to launch the Universal Playground. Thanks to more than **50 sponsors**, and contributions from Mandan Parks and Rec. the project exceeded it's goal of \$500,000. What started as a Leadership Bismarck-Mandan field project in 2014 is now a reality for children across the community.

If you are interested in finding out more about this project, updates, or more knowledge as to what exactly a Universal Playground is, please check out at, <http://www.bismanplay.com>

FEATURE MEMBER

Andrea Blowers
Class of 2012
Communications Supervisor
Basin Electric
Power Cooperative



What does the first 60 minutes of your day look like?

I love being organized. I take the first few minutes of the day to plan it out. I also really love being efficient.

What was your first job?

I have degrees in art and communications so my first job out of college was managing an art store. I really took advantage of the opportunity to explore all kinds of art mediums.

What would someone be surprised to know about you?

One of my life goals is to learn to play the drums.

What project, or achievement are you most proud of?

I'm most proud of participating in the Brave the Shave event in 2015 as a shavee. I shaved my head, donated 17 inches of hair and was able to raise more than \$13,000 to help find a cure for kids fighting cancer.

How have you been involved in the community?

I've been a big supporter of the Brave the Shave campaign since Basin Electric started it in the Bismarck-Mandan community in 2008.

How could others become involved in that service?

<https://bravetheshave.coop/>

Favorite quote?

What do we live for, if not to make life less difficult for each other? - George Eliot

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LUNCH AND LEARN: RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION



On December 9th, members of three organizations, joined together to discuss recruitment and retention of employees in North Dakota. Representing small business, Eric Walth - Rock 30 Games; major employer, Michelle Miller - KLJ; and State of North Dakota, Jason Sutheimer - ND DOT.

With almost 20 guests attending, this LBMAA sponsored lunch meeting proved to be a topic that is on the forefront of many employers minds. While some believe only certain industries are having employment issues, the truth is that on every level employers in North Dakota are facing the same issues.

Tactics and strategies to gain interest in potential candidates were discussed in regards to how technology may help, or even how help with establishing housing and childcare can drastically sway a candidates decision to not only take a new position, but move to North Dakota.

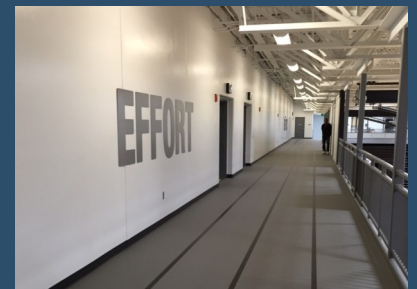


LBMAA TOUR—LEGACY HIGH SCHOOL

November 23rd members of the LBMAA gathered at the ever impressive Legacy High School. As principal, Tom Schmidt, escorted LBMAA members around the 289,000 square foot facility, attendees couldn't help but notice all the interesting features that presented themselves at every turn.

Garage doors roll up in most rooms so that more space can be utilized. Lab courses have large windows so passersby can peek in on cool hands-on learning experiences. Private work stations provide smaller studies creating a quiet more personal setting. Students hungry for some knowledge are free to access one of the Saber Learning Centers for help with homework, as well as the massive library, or Learning Commons as it's called, to digest as much information as they can.

If your interested in learning more about Legacy High School and other awesome stuff they have, you can contact them at: 701-323-4850. Take a look at their handbook by clicking [here](#). Or visit , <http://www.lhs.bismarckschools.org/legacy/>.



2016 CHAMBER ANNUAL DINNER

Date: 1/14/2016 • Time: 5:30pm - 9:00pm
Location: Bismarck Event Center, Hall B



JANUARY MEMBERSHIP MIXER: UNIVERSITY OF MARY

Date: 1/21/2016 • Time: 4:30pm - 6:30pm
Location: University of Mary Butler Center – 505 S. 7th Street, Bismarck



LUNCH AND LEARN FEATURING SISTER KATHLEEN ATKINSON

Date: 1/26/2016 • Time: 11:30am - 1:00pm
Location: Gary Tharaldson School of Business, Rm 212 – U-Mary



LUNCH AND LEARN FEATURING ANDREAS WIDMER

Date: 2/23/2016 • Time: 11:00am - 1:00pm
Location: Gary Tharaldson School of Business, Rm 212 – U-Mary



FEBRUARY MEMBERSHIP MIXER: KLJ

Date: 2/25/2016 • Time: 4:30pm - 6:30pm
Location: 4585 Coleman Street, Bismarck

The new year has arrived! 2016 is going to be an excellent year, what goals or “resolutions” are you making this round? Plan to stick to them? Well an easy trick is to start small and work you way up. By that I mean, don't overcrowd, or overstress yourself about accomplishing 10 different things over the course of the next year. Maybe begin with a handful of easily maintainable goals to gain momentum, and slowly work on ONE main objective. If that one thing is your main focus, chances are you will complete that goal before the year is over, leaving room to begin, or shift focus to another achievement.

For any suggestions, ideas, or general criticisms on the LBMAA Newsletter, Please contact David Leingang at DavidLeingang@outlook.com