



Good Morning.

It's an honor and a privilege to be here and speak with you today in this place where so many volunteers do so much good for so many in our community.

I have worked in Lynn for over 20 years. We are a city of Kings named after the first official minister who arrived in the 1600's from Kings Lynn England. We are a city of social change from the famous speech by Frederick Douglas about slavery from the Lynn Commons to Mary Baker Eddy's founding of the Christian Science Movement. We are a city of innovation from the development of a method for mass producing shoes to GE's development of the first jet engine. And now, we are a city of collaboration with 22 Executive Directors of 22 Lynn-based organizations working together as a cohesive group to provide the kinds of services and opportunities that the people of Lynn so richly deserve.

For those who may know a member or multiple members of our group, you can imagine the daunting task of assembling non-profit CEO's, many with years and years of experience, in one room to be part of something bigger than all of us as individuals. Non-profit CEO's are a different breed-we need to be. Many of us are products of the 60's and 70's a time when grass roots social activism created the human groundswell which produced incredible changes in our country many of which are still being felt today. These are independent people all blessed with an innate burning desire to do good. Yet doing good is hard work. It demands perseverance, a rugged individualism, confrontation, questioning, aggressiveness and a constant struggle to remain true to your personal values. We are not easy people because being easy in the nonprofit sector does not work. We are successful yet very independent.

I have had the privilege of serving several meals in this building. Each night, after the dinner preparations have been completed and before the guests enter, the volunteers of that particular evening gather in a circle, hold hands and offer a prayer. The prayer is one of thankfulness for the opportunity to serve, and of hope that some day this place will not need to exist because there will be no hungry men, women and children in Lynn to feed. I remember one night holding the hand of a young male student from Lynn Tech, who was holding the hand of an elderly minister, who was holding the hand of a lawyer, who was holding the hand of a bank president who was holding the hand of his teenage niece. Our circle was comprised of individuals coming together from diverse ages, ethnicities and backgrounds to do something that none of us could do alone. It was about collaboration for a greater good.

I could tell you that the combined membership of the LNPBA provides over 200,000 units of service to Lynn residents each year with programs ranging from day care of our children, to arts

and cultural events to medical care to services for the elders, for the disabled, to education and job training to counseling and support to recreation and after school programs I could expound on what a powerful economic force we are in the Lynn community with combined operating budgets of over \$200 million dollars. Or that we spend collectively over \$100 million dollars on wages and benefits and provide jobs to 3500 Lynn residents, many of whom are here today. I could tell you that we touch the lives in one way or another of each person in this room and every single person who lives in this community. Every single person.

I could (and I just did) but there is one statistic that I do want to tell you about. Over 4000 of you volunteer for our organizations. 4000! People, like many of you in this room, who embrace the idea of being partners in providing services and opportunities, People who understand that by being part of something that is larger than yourself, that you can affect amazing change! Just like the small group of volunteers in the prayer circle in this room every night. Together we are strong. Together we will make a difference. Together we will change the world.

Unlike most of you quicker learners, it took me 15 years of working for a nonprofit in this city to finally get this concept of collaboration. Almost despite ourselves individual CEO's, like me, many of whom have been contributing to this city for decades, finally got the lesson in the year 2002 that all of you had been teaching us for years. Together we can serve the meal. Together we can bring in more day care slots. Together we can teach and educate our immigrant populations. Together we can make sure that our most vulnerable citizens have the care that they so richly deserve. Together we can create an arts and cultural district. Together we can contribute to the economic growth of our wonderful community. It's all about *together*. It all about collaboration.

The above text is the LNPBA President Mark Kennard's keynote address presented on April 20, 2007.