METRO DETROIT YOUTH DAY

By the time I had arrived in 1989 as a volunteer, a lot of ground work and organizational development had already been accomplished since Metro Youth Days 1982 inception. After the 1989 Youth Day event when nearly 5,000 youth attended and having assessed the organizational structure, its mission, intent and outcomes ascertained there was a lot of room for capacity building, activities expansion, community collaborations and partnerships. Clearly there was a need for organizational development skills and volunteer staff coordination as well as team building. The following 1989 planning and event activities, and after a meeting with Founder / Chairperson Ed Deeb I was added as a volunteer Co-Chairperson and Event Coordinator beginning in 1990 and until today. This year’s event has been canceled as a result of COVID-19.

From 1990 and by the year 2000 Youth Day exploded and experienced unparalleled growth and development along with garnering the enthusiasm and partnership with an additional 80 community based organizations and corporate sponsors by leveraging my expertise, community relationships, resources and experience in building teams and bridges. Attendance rose each year and by the year 2000, attendance began to exceed 20,000.

Much of my consultation focused in the area community relations, staff organizational development and merging of systems and increasing volunteer recruitment which went from a 200-300 individuals to over one thousand annual volunteers. Community involved increased significantly. Each year my expertise and assessment was key in the prior year’s debriefing. Although Metro Youth Day was a one -day event with two other small kick-off events I created and coordinated planning typically began in early December the previous year and meetings with an Executive Planning Committee that exceeded 80 individuals ensued monthly and increased by weekly until said event. Between Executive Committee meeting’s Founder / Chairperson Ed Deeb and I met consistently to coordinate a host of activities. Although I was not directly involved with fundraising indirectly I was responsible for making ask, generating momentum and excitement throughout the community. Needless to say funding increased each year from 1990 until well beyond 2014-15.

During my tenure as hands on consultant Metro Youth became Michigan’s largest and longest running Civic Event, won numerous City of Detroit, tri-County and State awards and was honored with a Presidential Point of Light award.

Much of my consultant services/work involved “bridge building” in the area of relationships between various cultures, normally competitive organizations, entities and personalities to ensure the event represented diversity inclusion. Secondly I was instrumental in helping the organization with “timelines”, scheduling and goal setting that fit its customer base and volunteers. Lastly my work/consultation included being a solutionary and visionary to sustain viability in an ever changing society and economy.