

SPOTLIGHT

Brian Slocum

Vice –President, Resource Development Chair



One might ask how a senior consultant and project manager for an IT company found himself on the board of an organization that provides daycare and early childhood education to underserved communities, but it just goes to show it takes a village.

After high school, Brian Slocum continued his education at Lawrence University, a liberal arts college in the heart of Wisconsin. Now he lives in Wilmette, IL and has been working as an IT consultant for more than 15 years.

Slocum initially got involved with Mary Crane Center because of his wife, who happens to be the great-great-granddaughter of Mary Prentice Crane, after whom MCC is named. “Mary Prentice Crane’s work with immigrant children as part of Jane Addams’s Hull House in the early 20th century established the essential mission that continues to guide MCC today,” said Slocum.

Slocum’s wife, Mary Slocum (whose maiden name is Mary Fleming Crane) is a speech pathologist, and she also serves on MCC’s board with her husband.

Slocum says he serves on the board because he believes in MCC’s mission and wants to help preserve and extend its legacy of service to Chicago. He points out that, while the neighborhoods where the organization is active have changed over the more than 100 years since it was founded, the needs of the families who benefit from MCC’s work remain much the same.

And yet, despite MCC’s continued work and survival, Slocum knows better than to take its existence for granted. “Survival is never a given,” said Slocum. He knows MCC continues helping families today, not just because Chicago continues to have families in need of its services, but as a direct result of the hard work and dedication of many people for more than a century.

Teachers, staff, parents, directors, and benefactors have all done their part to help MCC serve the community and make the world a better place for all of us. Each and every one of them understands that when children succeed, we all succeed. “I serve partly to honor the contributions of those individuals, starting with my wife’s forebears, so that MCC can continue to serve future generations,” said Slocum.

Slocum recently compared how he thinks about MCC to a chalk painting he saw while attending a street fair at the Rogers Park location last summer. It was a very intricate design that had been started by one of the teachers, but various kids had added to and expanded it until the entire piece of artwork covered about 10 feet of pavement.

“That chalk painting struck me as a bit of a symbol for MCC: an imagination-fueled collaborative effort that is ever growing and ever changing,” said Slocum. Like the chalk artwork, MCC may have been begun



by one dedicated woman, but through the combined efforts of others around and after her, the venture has grown, and not just survived throughout the ensuing decades, but thrived. With the same level of dedication and passion from current members like Slocum, there's no telling where MCC could go in the future.

But it's about more than legacy. Slocum would be doing a disservice to the founders and proponents of MCC if he failed to realize that the heart of any community is with its children. At the end of the day, that's who MCC is here to serve and Slocum gets that it's all about the kids. "Visit any MCC classroom and you will be struck by the energy, curiosity, beauty, and brilliance of the kids," said Slocum. "To know MCC makes a difference for these kids and their families. They are always a source of inspiration."

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