

Wireless Broadband - My View

Eli Williamson,
President, Board of Directors,
Leave No Veteran Behind

Over the last seven years, Leave No Veteran Behind (LNVB) has provided returning veterans in our community over 800 transitional jobs. We've paid out about \$4 million in wages



to veterans, family members, youth, and community members as well. Now, when asked, "What does LNVB do?" I can go down a list of metrics. We can describe the great work that our Safe Passage program providers do in reducing youth violence around the City of Chicago. I can talk about the work that our mentors do with youth as they transition into college, and many other tactics. I am most proud, though, of having been able to bring together an eclectic group of people that can work in a multi-disciplinary way.

No one would have expected us to form a relationship with Cambium Networks, a high tech communications manufacturer. No one would have expected us to form a relationship with SoCore, which now wants - and has committed today - to provide solar technology to power the Cambium relay system. This church will still stay connected despite anything, even when everything else is dark. No one thought about that. I didn't think about that, but when you're doing the right thing, when you have a really great mission, then people will converge upon that mission and support it, and that's what's happening here in Windsor Park.



ELI WILLIAMSON

No one would have expected a donation from BLUE1647, which is a tech incubator working in very difficult communities just like ours, teaching young people and adults how to engage with and build relationships in the tech industry. No one asked them to donate over 20 laptops to Windsor Park Lutheran Church, and they did. No one

thought of reaching out to general contractor and Marine Corps veteran Mario Short with SYTE Corp. Nobody thought that this individual would say, “You know what? I’ve done contracts for The Army Corps of Engineers. I’ve done contracts all over, everywhere but Chicago. How can we build a better South Shore?”

So, when we converge and connect as a community, and we bring these various stakeholders to the table, then as an organization, you don’t have to collaborate because any good organization is multi-disciplinary. We work together and get stuff done. Everybody talks about Chicago being the city that works, and for Windsor Park, we do work every week. Over 200 families get fed. Now there’s community garden. Windsor Park is now a hub of connectivity.

With Leave No Veteran Behind, we employ people who normally don’t get job offers. We provide opportunities for those people to impact their communities directly through safety and mentorship. I want to thank everybody involved for their ability to converge upon what I feel, and what everybody else feels; it is a really strong mission. How do we build better communities as an organization? How do we build better communities as a company? How do we build better communities as veterans who are coming back home asking, “What is my new mission?”, and how do we stay organized and continue to focus on the missions that are most important?

There are a lot of distractions out there – politically, financially, and otherwise – but today, this is not a wire-cutting about money. This is a wire-cutting about people using their time and talents to get stuff done, and look how much we were able to get done just by people saying, “You know what? I’m going to do what I normally do,” which is connect people, feed them, give them work, provide them power, build new things together – that’s the way things are supposed to work.

I just want to thank you again, Cambium. We really appreciate this opportunity. I want to thank SoCore for the great opportunity and donation of solar technology, Blue1647 for the donation of laptops, and Mario Short and SYTE Corp. for his contribution of time and talent. The last donation, that I think is most important, is hope. It’s the collective will that this becomes a hub in which we train up the next group of people who can work together for our community, who can install solar technology, WiFi technology, and develop the skills that are necessary for success in the 21st century.



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