

SPOTLIGHT

Jim Milner, MBA, BCLC, MCC

President & CEO

Urban Strategies/Sector
Management

(Member since 2006)



Jim Milner is a very lucky man. He loves his profession.

When a person thoroughly enjoys work, he or she has the enviable ability to go to bed happy and awaken refreshed and ready to tackle the day's opportunities. Satisfied and fulfilled in their profession seems to be a common theme among the Rotarians interviewed thus far for this Spotlight series; none have been more stimulated and engrossed than Jim Milner.

As a leadership coach, Jim works primarily with mid-level managers in the utilities, banking, insurance and healthcare sectors. The process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge and opportunities needed to fully develop effectively carries a lot of responsibility. To prepare himself to help coach managers to be successful leaders, Jim immersed himself in many relevant educational opportunities. "I earned more than 40 seemingly ridiculous, but meaningful, credentials centered on the art and science of effective coaching."

Coaching initially intrigued Jim because of the marriage of the science behind the art of helping people grow to their best potential. "Using both the science and art of coaching helps build great teams and leaders as we strive to get a picture of the whole person at the early stage of his or her career. We use our own talents and training to discover patterns of behavior that may get in the way of an executive or manager's success."

In addition to leadership coaching, Jim's firm also has expertise in community development focused on project design implementation and evaluation. "Neighborhoods within the Metro Milwaukee area have identities, for example Riverwest, Harambee, Johnsons Park, etc. Each has a business association tied to the neighborhood; we work with them to identify what is needed to sustain the culture and nature of the geography. We ask: What is needed to see a project or idea through to sustainability? And then work with the group to help them identify and fill the voids."

Jim came to his vocation through his own self-assessment. In 1988 he started working with the judicial system in career development with young men who had been adjudicated. He didn't identify this work as coaching or career development; he just wanted to impact and change the lives of the young men. He enrolled at Marquette towards a degree in Organization Development and an MBA. He went onto earn a Master certification from the International Coaching Association. (Jim offers that coaching is a largely unregulated field, thus earning the master's certification places him in an elite group with finely-honed competencies).

Jim's son also serves our community. He is the Executive Director of Walnut Way. And Jim's former wife, Karen, continues working alongside Jim at Urban Strategies. Jim also has a grandson, age 16, and granddaughter, age 23.

Jim was born in Fulton, Kentucky but Milwaukee has been home for most of his life. He has two sisters, one still lives in Fulton; the other lives here and works in healthcare.

Several years ago, Jim challenged himself to learn to swim, drive a Harley and speak Spanish. He's still working on becoming bi-lingual but has mastered the other two. In his limited free time, Jim enjoys a round of golf.

Jim was introduced to Rotary by the indomitable Harry Franke. Jim's office was down the street from Harry's. Harry would often run into Jim on the street and they would exchange pleasantries. One day Harry told Jim he'd like him to consider joining Rotary. The beloved Harry said, "Tell me about yourself? How come you're not part of Rotary?" Ironically, Jim had been considering looking into Rotary, so the meeting was serendipitous.

Jim has been a member of RCM for 15 years. "I like the idea it is a group of professionals and the community service focus. I come as frequently as I can. I am interested in what people are saying and asking. There is great power in the questions asked of the speakers and at the table."

Jim's suggestion for improvement includes more diversity from the podium. He agrees variety and diversity of the membership are necessary, but equally important are different voices from the stage. Most speakers tend to be white; speakers need not address diversity issues, BUT a variety of knowledge is broadening.



Editor's Note:

This year we will feature the popular Spotlight series bi-monthly. The week of April 5th we will profile James T. Barry, III. Rotary Spotlight is written by RCM Board Member (and its Sergeant at Arms) Barbara Velez.