

Coordinating Committee to End Homelessness (CCEH)

Meeting Minutes



March 17, 2010
First United Methodist Church

Facilitated by: Jean DeMaster and Marc Jolin

Prepared by: Dove Hotz

Reviewed by: Steering Committee

Present: Robin Triest Carlson, Shannon Singleton, Jennifer Chang, Caren Baumgart, Liv Jenssen, Paul Schroeder, Bobby Weinstock, Lynne Walker, John Chism, Charlie Raymond, Ellen Martin, Leo Rhodes, Gerry Pruyn, Melissa Crocker, Shinji Mae, Molli Mitchell, Jeanette Griffin, Richard Lightfoot, Rosemary Dodds, Natasha Roe, Amanda Hurley, Rachel Payton, Sonja Arigbon, Milan Homola, Jim Sloan, Andy Noethe, Russell Silver, Brad Powell, Jon Hawkes, Kelly Riechers, Michael Davis, Tiffany Kingery, Caitlin Campbell, Patty Doyle, Brandi Tuck, Chris Hennel, Theresa Lamkin, Marylee King, Clover Mow, Steven Keenan, Danielle Bastien, Sara McGirr, Cathie Boerboom, Amanda Waldroupe, Ryan Deibert, Ashley Egeland, Larry Turner, Richelle Wilhite

Action Items/Next Steps:

- Oregon Coalition on Housing and Homelessness annual conference in Hood River on April 21-23
<http://www.ochh.org>.
- Faith in Action Panel contact information:
 - Andrew Noethe, Downtown Chapel, (503) 228-0746 ext. 13, noethe@downtownchapel.org.
 - Russell Silver, Union Gospel Mission, (503) 274-4483, russ@ugmportland.org.
 - Katie Parkinson, Catholic Charities, (971) 222-1880, kparkinson@catholiccharitiesoregon.org.
 - James Sloan, Salvation Army, (503) 239-1293, james.sloan@usw.salvationarmy.org.
 - Milan Homola, Compassion Connect, (507) 313-3771, milan@compassionconnect.com.
 - Kevin Finney, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, (503) 221-1054 x204, kfinney@emoregon.org.
- Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 21, 2010, 3-5 p.m., FUMC Room 202.
jennifer.chang@portlandoregon.gov.

Updates and Announcements:

- Census 2010 / Complete Count Committee
Ms. Martin reported that Census training will take place March 31 4:30-7:00 p.m. at the Portland State Smith Center and the actual count will take place from 7:00 p.m. to midnight on the same night. Call (503) 205-8355 or (503) 205-8374 if you have questions.
- Summer Increase in Youth Travelers update
Ms. Campbell reported on a meeting that convened last month that brought together service providers, businesses, law enforcement and other community stakeholders to issues related to the increase of youth travelers to downtown Portland, including aggressive/illegal behavior and impacts on business and livability issues. The group will work to identify and implement effective strategies to address the concerns.

“Faith in Action: Addressing and Ending Homelessness” (Panel members: Andy Noethe-Catholic Charities, Russ Silver-Union Gospel Mission, Katie Parkinson-Catholic Charities, Milan Homola-Compassion Connect, Jim Sloan-Salvation Army, Kevin Finney-Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon)

Presenters shared about their services and effective/successful approaches to respond to the needs of homeless families and individuals. Mr. Silver (Union Gospel Mission) said his organization is proud to be faith-based and they see the gospel of Jesus Christ as critical to responding to homelessness. They develop relationships with people on the streets and meet their physical needs—food, transportation, and connecting to resources.

Ms. Parkinson (Catholic Charities) works with a housing transitions program that assists single and non-parenting women. Using a housing first model, the program connects clients to other services such as basic services and employment. The day space is open Mondays through Fridays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. with coffee, food, and computers. A main need is for additional funding to help their clients with move-in costs. She sees opportunities for relationship-building with other organizations in the community to enhance resources for their clients (e.g. micro-lending program and recreational opportunities).

Mr. Noethe (Downtown Chapel) said their agency is a Roman Catholic-based group which supports people who experience trauma in their lives. They focus on providing a safe and welcoming atmosphere and are very hospitality-based. Their hospitality center at Sixth and West Burnside is open Monday through Saturday mornings. Their outreach is relationship-based, to get to know people and what their needs are. They work to build relationships with community partners. They offer no housing or addiction treatment services. They hope to build trust with their clients, so that trust can be passed on to other community partners. They serve as a bridge to resources in the Catholic community.

Major Sloan (Salvation Army) said the Salvation Army has had a presence in downtown Portland since 1886. Their original mission was “soup, soap, and salvation,” and this has not changed. The Salvation Army is recognized as a religious denomination, not just a service organization. They adhere to the compassion of the Christian faith. Services include 300 beds of winter shelter, drug and alcohol treatment, veterans assistance, and helping women and those facing domestic violence. Everything is designed to help people see that there is hope in the world. Their programs vary based on their clients’ needs. They also place a strong emphasis on prevention; they feed 5,000-6,000 people monthly and provide rental assistance, to help people from losing their housing. They could use more partnership to support women experiencing drug and alcohol addictions and mental illnesses.

Milan Homola (Compassion Connect) stated their agency helps churches work together to be the church in the neighborhood to help their neighbors. They help to coordinate almost a dozen free health clinics that engage hundreds of local churches across three Oregon counties and Vancouver, WA. The clinics are led by local churches and Compassion Connect provides coordination and outreach services. They also offer a Home Again mentoring project in coordination with Human Solutions. Their faith and love of Christ compels their work: 1) His command to love your neighbor as yourself, and 2) the desire for a united church. They endeavor to reach out, respect, and love others. They’d like to establish better relationships with full-time clinics and are open to new partnerships and/or suggestions for resources.

Kevin Finney (Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon) described EMO’s focus on homeless children and families. They also operate the Northeast Emergency Food Shelter in the Portland Cully neighborhood and provide housing match and rental assistance programs. They operate alcohol- and drug-free SRO housing in Northeast Portland. They represent over 16 mainstream denominations and helped lobby for the successful document recording fee effort. They are convening statewide discussions in the faith community, including a Interfaith Summit in early summer 2010, to address homelessness among children and families. Their goals are to get more public attention, to work at the congregational level, and to develop a legislative agenda for the 2011 session.

Ms. Chang fielded questions from CCEH participants to the panel:

- *What changes have you seen in the homeless populations you serve, and how have your programs changed to reflect that?*
People who previously might have been donors are now people in need. Demand for services has increased significantly, and they are seeing populations (families, recently unemployed individuals) they did not see as much before. Some agencies are changing their approaches to focus more on prevention efforts.
- *What do you see as your agency's specific role in addressing or ending homelessness?*
 - To help equip and inspire local churches.
 - To be a place of hope and where people can connect to needed services.
 - To provide and promote an effective housing first model with wraparound services.
 - Ms. DeMaster commented that the faith-based Daybreak Shelter network provides services without any mention of religion. Ms. Tuck said the Goose Hollow Family Shelter operates similarly—everyone is welcome.
- *Would your group support the tent city / Dignity Village model?*
Some panel members mentioned this is not a question best addressed to agencies, rather it should be addressed on the government-level. Mr. Rhodes said he comes from Seattle, where their tent city had been viewed skeptically, but they gained political and community support to show its effectiveness.
- *How is your group reaching out to non-Christians or unaffiliated churches?*
Several agencies said their services are provided to everyone, without proselytizing. For others, their faith is the motivation and entry point for which to reach out and build relationships with clients. All participants acknowledge the importance of inter-faith efforts and partnerships.
- *What can CCEH do differently to help you partner and participate with us on an ongoing basis?*
We may not have the personnel to participate in CCEH full-time. CCEH should contact the pastors or clergy to get them involved. An attitude of mutual respect and learning from each other (faith groups and service providers) is crucial to building lasting partnerships.
- *How does your organization reach out to businesses? How is employment addressed?*
The lack of a work history is a big barrier to hiring a homeless person. One agency mentioned desiring to hire more people to offer job skills and training. With some groups, the skills of congregants can be used to assist clients in need. Some clients lack mental stability, which poses a big barrier to employment. Several agencies mentioned seeking to build relationships with donors who own businesses to offer job placement opportunities for clients.

Other Announcements

- Jeanette Griffin, JOIN, announced they were trying to help educate our clients and educate them about the Census. Call (503) 895-8969.
- Paul Schroeder, JOIN, oversees the “New City Initiative”, which will connect congregations and serving and assisting homeless people. The initial orientation seminar will take place Saturday, April 24, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., at Grace Memorial Episcopal Church. RSVP to newcityinitiative@gmail.com by April 16.
- Kari Brenk, New Avenues for Youth, announced her agency is seeking a homeless program manager. Contact her if you have any referrals.