

Coordinating Committee to End Homelessness (CCEH) Meeting Minutes



September 15, 2010
First United Methodist Church

Facilitated by: Marc Jolin
Prepared by: Zane Potter
Reviewed by: Steering Committee

Present: E.V.Armitage, Teresa Badel, Caren Baumgart, Israel Bayer, Kari Brenk, Heather Brown, Jennifer Chang, Melissa Crocker, Margot Cybulska, Gary Davis, Patty Doyle, Bob Durston, Tom Elston, Kira Fielding, Sharon Fitzgerald, Sherry Franklin, Nick Gallo, Mary Geelan, Sherry Grau, Tina Hadley, Kyna Harris, Christine Hannel, Marc Jolin, Puanani Lalakea, Beckie Lee, Tricia Lund, Traci Manning, Molli Mitchel, Gina Montenaro, Susan Montgomery, Ibrahim Mubarak, Becky Mullins, Andrew Noethe, Laurie Palmer, Rachel Payton, Gladys Ramirez, Joseph Rea, Dave Roberts, Marcelo Santibáldez, Ericka Silver, Shannon Singleton, Linnea Stenhouse, Berry Stull, Renie Sutherland, Larry Turner, Bobby Weinstock, Gloria Willis, Zoë Zachariades

Updates

- **Healthy Kids update – Kyna Harris, Oregon Action**
Ms. Harris explained that Healthy Kids is free or low-cost health care coverage for uninsured Oregon children. Program eligibility is parceled into three categories: a) No-Cost: provides free health care for a family of four whose income is less than \$44,000; b) Low-Cost: provides a low-cost premium on a sliding scale for a family four whose income is between \$44,000 and \$66,000; c) Full-Cost provides no subsidy but a full-cost premium is available to purchase for a family of four making greater than \$66,000. This program provides coverage to children who are US citizens or legal residents. For more information contact Ms. Harris at 971-634-0005.
- **Winter Services for Families – Erika Silver, Human Solutions**
Ms. Silver reported that Goose Hollow Family Shelter opened today and will now be open year-round. In November, Common Cup which is located at Sunnyside Centenary United Methodist Church, will open and provide shelter for families. Lastly, Ms. Silver stated that a 60-bed Family Warming Center will open November 1st at Eastminster Presbyterian Church (125th and Halsey).
- **Report: 2010 Without Housing Update – Israel Bayer, Street Roots**
Mr. Bayer explained that the Western Regional Advocacy Project (WRAP) was designed to influence policy and advocates for affordable housing at the federal level. Mr. Bayer talked about the 2010 update of the Without Housing report. WRAP has been involved with Speaker Nancy Pelosi and in December the first congressional hearings on homelessness and civil rights will take place. Mr. Bayer encouraged those to read the report to better understand the causes of homelessness in the past 30 years. For more information visit <http://www.wrAPHOME.org/>
- **Community Warehouse Update – Tom Elston, Community Warehouse**
Mr. Elston reported that due to the recent uptick in bed bugs, Community Warehouse is using preventive measures to ensure all items that are distributed to families and individuals are safe. Staff at the Community Warehouse are trained to identifying bed bugs; therefore, donated items are being turned away on a daily basis. For more information visit <http://communitywarehouse.org/>

- \$1 Million Fund RFP and Winter Services RFP – Jennifer Chang, Portland Housing Bureau
Ms. Chang summarized two RFP's released by the Bureau to serve people experiencing homelessness, the \$1 Million Fund RFP (due September 27, 2010) and the \$400,000 Winter Services RFP (due October 1, 2010). For more information about both RFPs visit:
<http://www.portlandonline.com/phb/>

Safe & Equitable Foster Care Reduction Initiative (Nick Gallo, Oregon Department of Human Services; Mary Geelan, Commission on Children, Families, & Community)

Nick and Mary presented on the **Safe & Equitable Foster Care Reduction Initiative**. African American and Native American children are disproportionately represented in our County's child welfare system, despite research that shows children of color are not abused at higher rates than white children. **African American and Native American children make up 12% of our County's child population, while they represent 43% of the foster care population.** The overall goal is to safely and equitably reduce children in foster care by 20% by 2011 and eliminate the racial and ethnic disparities of the over-representation of children of color in the system. In addition, the Initiative aims to increase relative placements by 50%, reduce children entering foster care by 10%, increase children exiting foster care by 20% and maintain or reduce current child abuse/neglect recurrence rate. The presentation included key findings from the Decision Point Analysis prepared by Portland State University. The Analysis identified 9 major decision points on the child welfare continuum: Intake/ Reports to CPS, Screening, Disposition, Removal/Hold, Foster Care, Placement, Foster Care Stay, Plan and Ext. For more information about the Initiative visit <http://www.fosterchange.com> or contact Mary Geelan at 503-988-3982.

During the course of the presentation some comments and questions were raised by the audience.

- *I've had issues when trying to place children with family members who have a criminal history. What is being done about this?*
Good question. Kids can be allowed with an exception process. We're working on making this process from a "rule-out" to more of a "rule-in" approach. Unfortunately, it's difficult to change the policy but we're beginning by changing the practice.
- *An audience member urged those in attendance to call the hotline if they feel a child is in danger and allow the person receiving the call to determine the next steps.* Phone: 503-731-3100 Toll Free: 800-509-5439
- *How is this program reaching higher education, specifically in regards to training for social workers in the BSW and MSW programs?*
Unfortunately, DHS workers are not required to have had this education so this is an area that requires improvement, and where interested parties may want to look at re: advocacy around hiring practices. The Governor's Child Welfare Equity Task Force is working on addressing the levels of racial disproportionality across all systems and programs.
- *I've noticed that with cuts to alcohol and treatment, parents are unable to keep their kids because they couldn't get the treatment.*
We've noticed that this is a community problem and not just DHS. The purpose of these meetings is to get feedback and work on building greater cross-sectional partnerships to assist.
- *What policy is in place for those children that are placed with families outside of the US?*
The Salem office has a liaison that is in contact with the consuls from different countries. I can't speak to the specifics of the policy but I do know we do everything we can to ensure the safety of the children.

- *Has there been any relaxing of federal laws to provide discretion to those who make decisions?*
Our hands are somewhat tied but we try our best to mitigate barriers to prevent children from being placed with family members.
- *I've noticed the discrepancies between the Portland area and Dane County Wisconsin where I am from. I've worked for domestic violence agencies in both areas. In Portland, women are statutorily mandated to report on domestic violence. Many women are labeled as "unable to protect" their children when, in fact, they're trying to protect their children. Portland punishes the victims and they're the ones who must go through hoops to get their children back.*
- *When kids turn 18 are they out of the system?*
The maximum age is 21. There are some services in place for those children transitioning out of foster care. DHS has struggled with this.
- *Preventive measures work best. In my experience a program is successful for 4-5 years then is its spending is cut. I try to address each child and not worry about DHS.*
- *It would be helpful to have access to resources/information that is available for child welfare.*
DHS is relying on the expertise of the community and this is a change from previous policy. The Rose City Resource can help those seeking resources.
- *Are there cultural competency training classes for foster parents?*
There is a curriculum that all foster parents go through. To be honest, it's inadequate and folks must choose to go.
- *In my experience, resources at the federal level are most effective for youth who need little support. However, it does not meet the need of those youth with the highest need.*
- *It's sometimes difficult to access information from DHS. If this information was more accessible it might be easier to coordinate and help make plans for those who need services. We need DHS's help to collaborate across all systems.*

Other Updates and Announcements

- Barry Joe Stull expressed his concerns about the treatment of homeless citizens who set-up camps near the Memorial Coliseum. Mr. Stull reported that in late August, homeless citizens returned to their camps and discovered that all of their possessions had been removed by the Portland Police. He also reported that individuals were given no warning of the removals and the City had determined it was illegal to erect structures. Mr. Stull stated that all of their possessions are still missing.
- Central City Concern announced that a day storage facility will open by early October. It will be located on the ground floor of the Grove Hotel. Hours are 6-8:30am for drop-off and 4-6pm for pick-up. The facility is designed for grocery carts but will not store carts that have names on them. The facility will move to the RAC, upon its opening.
- Kyna Harris, Oregon Action, announced that the African American Family Fair will be held on Saturday, September 25 from 11am-3pm. The event will be held at the Genesis Community Fellowship. For more information contact Ms. Harris at 971-634-0005.
- Jennifer Chang, PHB, announced that Downtown Compassion will take place Saturday, September 18 from 9am-3pm at the Memorial Coliseum. The event will provide free medical, dental, food and other services.
- Jennifer Chang, PHB, announced that a summit addressing poverty will take place in East Multnomah County on Sat., September 18 from 9am to Noon. For more information, contact Pastor Steve Kimes at stevekimes@aol.com.

- Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 20, 2010, 3-5 p.m., FUMC Room 202.
For more information, contact Jennifer Chang at (503) 823-2391 or Jennifer.Chang@portlandoregon.gov