

Capital Area Coalition on Homelessness
General Membership Meeting
December 10, 2015
Minutes

Members Present: Bryan Davis, Harrisburg Redevelopment Authority; Rumulus Brown, City of Harrisburg; Angela Wise, YWCA; Steve Schwartz; Elaine Strokoff, Downtown Daily Bread; Peter Fidgett and Michelle Sholder, CAIU; Darrel Reinford, Christian Churches United; Maria Chianos, Pinnacle Health Systems; Sheila Forrester, Head Start; Kristina Marshall, Family Promise; Kay Pickering, Harrisburg Center for Peace and Justice; Aubrey Stephens, Salvation Army; Denise Britton, Shalom House; Deb Clayton, Dauphin County MH/ID; Barbara Muller, Janet Jones, Guadeniza/DELTA Community.

Welcome and Introductions: Bryan Davis convened the meeting, and welcomed everyone. We all introduced ourselves. Bryan wished everyone happy holidays

Approval of the Minutes: Motion made by Angela Wise to accept the minutes of the October 8, 2015 meeting without revisions. Seconded by Kay Pickering. Motion to accept the minutes passed.

Committee Reports:

Blueprint Implementation Team (BIT): In Tim Whelan's absence, Deb Ritchey reported that the subcommittee to revise the Ten-year plan to end homelessness met in October and this month. The format of the consolidated plan may be revised to address the HEARTH Act requirements. Bryan Davis invited people to visit the CACH website to review our consolidated plan. Maria Chianos told us that 1758 homeless people were seen by Pinnacle Health System Harrisburg Hospital between September 2014 to October 2015. There may be duplicates within this count.

Planning and Resource Development – Bryan Davis said that the Coordinating committee is trying to identify funds to support community meetings for the revision of the consolidated plan. Dan Eisenhower presented to the Coordinating committee a revised 2015 budget and proposed 2016 budget. Bryan recognized the efforts of Angela Wise, Karen Snider and Amy Kaunas in fundraising for the 2015 Project Homeless Connect. He also reported the CACH would participate in the 2016 Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community for the third year.

Community Conversations – Denise Britton told us that this group celebrates its 2-year anniversary in January 2016. The group is working on creating a vision for what our community would look like if poverty and homelessness were eliminated. Several faith-based community organizations have joined this effort. Darrell Reinford reported that the committee is trying to reduce fragmentation of services and support networking. Bryan Davis encouraged participants to recruit their churches to get involved.

Homeless Prevention – Maria Chianos reported that this group’s efforts to develop a respite health care facility for homeless people is on the back burner. There are some medical services provided in the Memorial Building on the Polyclinic campus. Theresa Sellers is on the site providing wound care plus other services. Maria said that she and Theresa are at the Downtown Daily Bread’s Drop In Center expanding social and medical care. The committee continues to try to address service gaps.

Housing Committee – Bryan Davis told us that the Harrisburg Housing Authority (HHA) is building fifty new units on Derry Street. These will be for Housing Choice vouchers. These units will replace older ones. After some criticism, Bryan said he would invite both HHA and the Housing Authority of Dauphin county to our next meeting.

Education and Public Information – Bryan Davis said now that Project Homeless Connect is over, Angela Wise and Natasha Woods will provide leadership for this committee. He reported on recent social media accomplishments.

Project Homeless Connect – Angela Wise reported that the Project served 344 guests plus 31 children seeking various forms of assistance; with a total equaling 375 people. Three unaccompanied youth attended Project Homeless Connect (PHC). In addition, many other individuals obtained support and made connections with service providers that will work with them in addressing barriers to obtaining permanent housing. She said many changes took place for this year’s PHC; the result being fewer homeless people attended. The number of guests was manageable. Much outreach to alumni took place. Specifically colored t-shirts were worn which improved managing the volunteers. Again, this year it was difficult to serve large families. The YWCA took in families. Some of the problems including the lack of computer access for the Salvation Army and feeding the volunteers. The Farm Show staff were very helpful this year. Maria Chianos reported that 110-120 guests were served by the medical unit; 50% of which are known to her. Bryan Davis expressed the opinion that this year’s event was well run. Peter Fidgett asked about the lower numbers this year and we discussed the numerous possible factors: event held late in the year, a number of people arrived late and providing services was difficult because agencies left, plus other factors. Scheduling the debriefing is underway.

Service Delivery/Data Collection – Bryan Davis reported that this committee is gearing up for the 2016 Point In Time survey, undertaking the homeless youth survey and continuing to implement the coordinated assessment. He said that Face Book would be used to survey homeless youth.

CCIMS – Deb Ritchey told us that refresher trainings took place. We have been working on the Annual Homeless Analysis Report (AHAR) and the number of homeless people is down from 2014. The AHAR does not include the data from Bethesda Mission. Several people are working on changing that. The AHAR also highlighted specific HMIS training needs.

Mayor's Challenge to reach Veteran Homeless Functional Zero – Bryan Davis told us about the local and state activities to end homelessness for Veterans resulted in a reduced number of homeless veterans in Dauphin County. Kay Pickering asked about the status of the VOA. She has not been successful in getting a return call from them.

2015 Continuum of Care – Bryan Davis reported that this application was submitted by the due date.

Service Gaps, New Opportunities, and Announcements: Steve Schwartz announced he is leaving Brethren Housing Associates. Crystal Baxter will be Interim Director. Bryan Davis thanked Steve for his dedication and work and wished him well.

Bryan told us that CACH hears from people wanting to stay in their homes versus seeking emergency shelter.

Kay Pickering sees a trend of utility companies being more strident to shut off utility services. Aubrey Stephens said that the utility companies are working with the Utility Commission to reduce high usage shut offs. She said that the Salvation Army administers a utility program for people with low incomes. There is a process, which involves asking to speak to a supervisor for approval for an extension on a bill. Agencies should use the Community Action Commission's On Track program for electricity security deposits.

Angela Wise said that the Northern Dauphin County Human Services office is reaching out to offer housing to people in Harrisburg. She announced that the YWCA Safe Haven for women has an opening for a chronically homeless woman with mental health problems.

Aubrey told us that there is one more day to access toys for a needy family. Call as soon as possible. One toy is available per family. She corrected our impression about the Salvation Army providing Christmas trees, which they no longer do. They also no longer provide furniture vouchers, partly because of bed bugs. On a different topic, she told us of a May 2016 event that the Salvation Army will hold.

Kay provided two handouts: Where to go for Help (contact CACH for how to get copies) and the attached Guide to Low-income Rental Opportunities.

Next Meeting: The next General Membership meeting of CACH will be **February 11, 2016** beginning at 10 AM at Christ Lutheran Church, 124 South 13th Street, Harrisburg
Adjourned 11:40. Respectfully submitted, Deborah Ritchey, CCIMS Project Manager