

**Minutes for the Faith Subcommittee
Ventura Social Services Task Force
February 26, 2014
Prepared by Sue Brinkmeyer**

Attendance: Judy Alexander, Susan Brinkmeyer, Sam Gallucci, John Sanders Jones, Jerome Kahler, Jennifer Mokos, Kathy Powell, David Pyle, Debora Schreiber, Chuck Terra

1. Coordination of services

- a. Rev. David explained a fundraiser the UU Church of Ventura is holding for the Safe Sleep Program on March 29 with a multifaith event in words and song called "One Light, Many Candles" running from 7-9 PM. This program Paul Stookey (of Peter, Paul & Mary fame) and his wife, Rev. Betty Stookey. Preceding the program will be a meal of soup, bread, and fruit. Following the program will be a panel with Judy Alexander, Kate Mills, and Rob Orth answering questions about what we are doing about homelessness and what more people can do to help will run from 9-10 pm. At 10 p.m. all will be invited to throw down a sleeping bag or sleep in their cars until breakfast at the church Sunday morning at 8 am. All are invited to services Sunday at 10 am. All proceeds from the Multi-faith event and the Sleep In will help individuals qualify for the Safe Sleep Program and move into housing when they are ready.
- b. It was moved by Debora and seconded by Kathy to send forward to the Task Force for submission to the Homeless Subcommittee a formal request that the language governing the Safe Sleep Program be modified to allow congregations that wish to do so to admit up to 10 vehicles to the Safe Sleep Program in their church parking lot.
- c. It was pointed out that increasing the number of vehicles would place additional burdens on the Salvation Army for case management. A possible solution might lie in the VSSTF grants currently available.
- d. Chuck Terra of Food Share (also a representative of Community Bible Church) described the new mobile food pantry that will go to areas in Port Hueneme and eventually Oxnard and Ventura that do not have pantries. Through partnerships, the mobile vehicle plans to become a mobile One Stop, offering assistance on utilities, housing and medical care as well as the pantry.
- e. Chuck asked that we add to our agenda next month a visit by Ted Humphrey of the So. Calif. Gas Co. to tell us how people can qualify for assistance with their gas bills. It was suggested that this might be most appropriate for the VSSTF meeting. Sue will follow up with Chuck and will scan and email to the Faith Committee the program forms provided by Chuck.
- f. Sam Gallucci thanked the Faith Committee for our support as its appeal of the denial of the Conditional Use Permit goes back to City Council on Monday, March 3, at 6 pm.

- g. Jim Duran reported that there are now 12 families residing at The City Centre, a total of 25–26 people. On–site managers will move in the first week in March. The first meeting of the new Board is Thursday, February 27. Nine churches are supporting the Center at the moment, but with 11 more rooms coming on line, a great deal more support is needed. The new board will be exploring whether all faith communities will be invited to participate. At the moment, participation means a \$500 per month donation and a team to mentor one family.
- h. Jim Duran further reported that Project Understanding is moving from its Vince Street offices and food pantry to a variety of locations. The food pantry building has been sold, and the pantry will now operate from First Christian Church on Paloma, where Pastor Jonathan Hall is minister. There will be space for storage, refrigeration, and an office as well as the pantry. The Intake and Referral services of Project Understanding will move to office space, at a location with negotiations ongoing. H2H will need a location where clients can take showers and do laundry, etc. A search for that location is also underway. The Turning Point Foundation, which bought the old Intake/Referral location on Vince, should begin construction on the new veterans' housing there by mid–April. Jim reported also that Kathy Donofrio has resigned from her position as Executive Assistant and Volunteer Coordinator, so he is actively searching for someone to fill this critical 30–40/hour–week position.
- i. Jim also reported on current thinking that a year–round shelter for single men with case management that leads to a projected 30–90 day turn–around is a critical need for the community.
- j. Judy Alexander reported that the next meeting of the Senior Concerns task force that has been meeting to find ways to solve the problems that drive seniors into homelessness will be March 17 at 10 am at VCAAA. The bill payment program has a final draft and Community Foundation is helping the group to ID potential sources of funding. Agencies to oversee the program are being identified as well.
- k. Sue will send to full Faith Subcommittee a letter from the Faith Subcommittee inviting all faith communities to participate in our work to end homelessness. This letter was put together by Janine Dykstra, Debora Schreiber, and Sue for inclusion in a mailing that Rev. David Pyle was doing offering all faith communities an opportunity to display the new LUYV photo project, “To Sleep . . . Perchance to Dream.” The display includes 12 photos of places homeless children sleep and the stories of these children as told by their parents, as well as a piece of art done by the child. The photos show everything from rooms at Rain, to rooms in a motel, to the back of a car, to a public park. Also included in the mailing is the new rack card for the Homelessness Prevention Fund.

Next meeting: 4th Wednesday of every month -- March 26, 2014 at 3 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Ventura, 5654 Ralston, Ventura.