

**Minutes for the Faith Subcommittee
Ventura Social Services Task Force
March 27, 2013
Prepared by Sue Brinkmeyer**

Attendance: Kent Brinkmeyer, Susan Brinkmeyer, Pamela Castro, Janine Dykstra, Pat Esseff, John Sanders Jones, Jerome Kahler, Pam Marshall, Cecilia Perez, David Pyle, Sid Ward, Miranda Fierro, Kathy Powell

1. Opening Words
2. Introductions
3. Food Pantry/FoodShare discussion
 - a. Kids and Families has moved to Camarillo; their pantry is now at Project Understanding. Janine Dykstra will report at a future meeting on the results of the various pantry mergers.
 - b. The Salvation Army and River Community Church pantries continue discussions regarding merger. Project Understanding continues discussions regarding merging with another church pantry on the Avenue.
 - c. Pam Marshall of Seventh Day Adventist distributed a list of the six food pantries she has identified thus far in East Ventura: Catholic Charities/Cabrillo Village; Lighthouse Christian Fellowship; Temple Beth Torah, Seventh Day Adventist; First Assembly of God on Violeta; First Assembly of God on Kimball. All but Lighthouse and First Assembly on Kimball are USDA. (List with addresses attached). Pam also reported that Temple Beth Torah expressed initial reluctance regarding merger, indicating that merger would make it more difficult to fulfill the part of their mission that is to make people aware of the Jewish people. The goal of mergers is to maximize resources and make the greatest variety and quantity of food available to the community.
 - d. The 2nd Church of Christ Scientist at Victoria and Foothill in the East End has offered to make their parking lot available for larger/merged food pantry distribution center.
 - e. FOOD Share would like to see pantries cooperate to expand/diversify hours
 - f. Janine will contact Grace Lutheran Church where there is reportedly a food pantry once a month regarding possible merger/coordination/sharing of information.
 - g. FOOD Share is working to be sure that all that receive Panera food donations are FOODShare agencies and that those who do pick ups at Panera have appropriate

identification from FOODShare. Janine will provide Ericka and Pamela a list of agencies getting Panera donations.

- h. FOODShare is working to make distribution more equitable so that what agencies receive matches client base and an agency doesn't arrive to find that the supplies they need have been taken by other agencies that simply arrived before them. Pamela and Cecilia indicated that when agencies share supplies with other agencies, they must let FOODShare know so that records can be accurate. FOODShare's new computer system will match distribution amounts to client lists; thus, for example, a pantry cannot get dozens of diapers that they share with a sister agency if FOODShare has not been informed what the agency is and how many children ages 0-3 it is serving. Agencies should be sure that FOODShare has accurate numbers for their client base no later than June 1.
- i. Pamela asks that when an agency has unused or unneeded supplies that they not simply pass them on in an unfamiliar network of sharing, but contact FOODShare to let them know of the overage. FOODShare often knows of an urgent need elsewhere that can be met through that supply.
- j. Pamela provided statistics of FOODShare services within the city of Ventura 2011-2012 and indicated that the figures are much higher so far for 2012-2013. (attached)
- k. Pamela indicated that FOODShare is still working on a flyer for distribution that clarifies for all wishing to contribute to FoodShare that \$1 in cash results in \$5 worth of food; contributions can be earmarked for specific pantries or programs. When it is completed, she will email it to Sue Brinkmeyer, who will distribute it to subcommittee members.
- l. Janine indicated that she has a listing of newsletter contacts for some 20 faith communities that she will email to Sue, and she will attempt to add additional contacts to that list. David Pyle will ask that a request for newsletter contact be sent out through VIMA.

4. Status of Harbor Church and Operation Embrace

- a. A 61-page Conditional Use Permit was filed by Harbor Church. The Church is now answering the City's questions, working to be good neighbors, meeting with the principal of the neighborhood school, and with the police. Public hearings should take place end or April or in May. Harbor has collected over 60 letters from church members who were once homeless about where they were and what the Harbor has done to turn their lives around. Project Embrace continues to experience much success in its work and has reunited additional formerly homeless individuals with their families who are grateful to have them back now that they are sober.

5. Winter Warming Shelter, Bad-Weather/Emergency Shelter

- a. A working group continues to meet. Rumors are that something like the winter warming shelter will be open next year. Great appreciation was expressed for the City of Oxnard and Police League which has opened the facility across the street to the shelter on the nights when the armory was unavailable.
- b. The need for faith communities to be prepared to open their doors in extraordinary circumstances and serve as severe-weather/emergency shelters was discussed. The Faith Subcommittee requested that Neal Andrews take to the Homelessness Subcommittee the need to pass ordinances that allow church's to do this, especially in light of the problems being faced by Harbor Church. Rev. David Pyle reported that on Galveston Island in Texas, the City actually has ordinance that help congregations serve as shelters and make relief happen.

6. Getting a broader cross-section of the faith community involved with our work

- a. Rev. David Pyle suggested that ask high profile, influential individuals to make a presentation/hold a forum at future meetings of the Faith Subcommittee and invite all ministers and social action chairs to participate.
- b. Neal Andrews suggested that we put together an initial brochure of the information we have gathered thus far about what those in the faith community are doing to serve those in need

7. Announcements

- a. Pat Esseff has an opening for an M.A.-level case manager at the Oasis Program and 1800 square feet of space (1,000 + 800) to rent at very reasonable cost to a non-profit at 303 N. Ventura Avenue.
- b. Miranda Fierro announced that People Assisting the Homeless is opening a program to assist veterans in Ventura County. She can be reached at mirandaf@epath.org
- c. Debora Schreiber asked that we take a look at the need to store/distribute donated items

Next meeting: 4th Wednesday of every month -- **April 24 at 3 p.m.** at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Ventura, 5654 Ralston, Ventura