

Ventura Social Services Task Force Oct 5, 2011

Self Introductions were performed (28 present - Christine Amundson, Neal Andrews, Erica Bauntel, Peter Brown, Cathy Brudnicki, Cindy Cattle, Kevin Clerici, David Deutsch, Pat Esseff, Susan Everett, Ken Finning, Jill Forman, Mary Haffner, Tim Hawkins, Keri Jaeger, John Jones, Amy Luoma, Eileen McCarthy, Pat McLean, Mike Merewether, Kate Mills, Rob Orth, Andrea Palmer, Amanda Pyper, Keri Rushing-King, Debora Schreiber, Mary Stewart, Kristen Tippelt)

- I. City of Ventura report Peter Brown
- A. Welcome extended to Andrea Palmer who is now working with homeless issues for the city. She spent 16 years in Macon, Georgia, and is originally from Ventura.
- B. There is a remaining balance of **\$11000** of VSSTF money from the city because Catholic Charities are not participating in the **Homeless2Home program**. Peter, with concurrence of the steering committee, **suggests money be given to the program, split between participating providers. Motion made** by Neal Andrews, seconded by Mike Merewether and passed with 2 abstentions: Rob Orth and Clyde Reynolds due to conflict of interest.
- C. Winter Warming Shelter to open Dec 1 in Ventura.
- D. Meet and greet held last Thursday by Society of St Vincent De Paul at a private home, by invitation only. Hosted by their local Conference to expand services in Ventura. David Fields is the executive director. They are forming an advisory body (name?) to look into building a shelter. Peter will give them feedback that VSSTF should be included in discussion. Sacred Heart and Our Lady of Assumption have Conferences. VSSTF members of those churches will also keep aware of activities. No one at meeting is clear how their structure works.
- E. Downtown Ventura Partners (DVO) are in discussions with the City to draft an anti-panhandling city wide campaign. It would be similar to the 2009 program, and encourage charitable giving to organizations as an alternative to giving to panhandlers. Clean and Safe Committee Of DVP meets at the Visitors' Center (California and Santa Clara Sts) Wednesday AM.
- F. VPD reallocated 2 persons from traffic division to address illegal activities in specific downtown areas which experience a high level of such behaviors.
- G. On Oct 25 vagrancy summit to be held to encourage everyone involved to meet and talk together. By invitation only. Included are: Ventura County Behavioral Health, DVO, Sheriff, service providers, representation of VSSTF, transportation CalTrans, regional parks, etc.
- H. Wood-Claeyssen continues to keep people off their river property. This results in more people in other areas. Wood-Claeyssen not participating much in helping people in this area, although they have done some property related acts in the past. Consideration being given as to how to engage them more.
- I. David Deutsch with Telecare is coordinating early release men who are being supervised by probation, (not parole) with moderate to high mental health needs. They are serving only a fraction of those being released. Indications are that 20% are homeless (12-14 people). Mark Varela, head of probation, gave a lengthy presentation to BOS about the early release program. The presentation is on line. <http://portal.countyofventura.org/portal/page/portal/bos/Archives>

The presentation is on September 27th, Item #32 Local Community Corrective Partnership Phase 1 Plan.

- J. VPD supports H2H and are seeing some good results already. People are looking for more money to use for the program. Anecdotal reports are that Plaza Park is looking better.
- II. Kevin Clerici spoke. He is now full time with DVP (the 501(C)3 arm of the Business Improvement District). Their shared goal is to help people out of poverty and homelessness. Part of plan is activating public spaces with events and peoples' presence. He told us about a specific event during the clean up at Plaza Park during which persons were given the chance (and help) to move their belongings. Rob Orth was there and services were offered. Jeff Wagner, a Parks employee, was particularly helpful to one individual and helped him bring recyclables in for refund. Clean and Safe Crews wear blue polo shirts and are visible Downtown, their contract does not include Plaza Park. Kevin pointed out that often help has to be offered many times before a tipping point is eventually reached and the help is accepted. Kevin is happy to talk to anyone with Downtown questions or concerns: 302-1660

III. Committee Reports

A. Faith Based (Bill Finley Chair)

No meeting yet in Oct. Meeting will be on Oct 11, to discuss Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving OneCityOneMeal will be held at the Fair Grounds this year with one seating. We expect 600 persons.

B. Ventura Homeless Prevention Fund Cindy Cantle

Catholic Charities had the fund last month. \$3015 total was allocated to assist 26 people (19 children), 198 households total to date. Salvation Army has fund in Oct. A subcommittee is forming to talk about Nov homeless awareness month actions.

C. Housing Options Susan Everett

HomeShare has 19 matches. One person who applied made her own match at a meeting she drove Muriel to! Program operating now for 19 months. One seeker who was matched with a provider, had been living on the beach and was so happy he is offering to help any way he can! Still a big need for providers. Suggestion made to have newspaper story about successes. Ojai is doing their own HomeShare. One of the providers there was going to lose their home because of financial need; having a renter/sharer made all the difference.

D. Gateway Clyde Reynolds

Meetings are ongoing, strategic issues being worked out. Biggest issue remains siting.

E. Basic Human Rights ad hoc committee Kate Mills

Group is planning to meet soon. Let John know if you are interested
johnsandersjones@juno.com

F. Steering John Jones

Met to plan agenda and decide on funds remaining from Homeless2Home (see above)

IV. Other Business

A. OneStop Kate Mills

May-Sept 621 unduplicated services provided, 285 new. Not all homeless, some at risk. Countywide there is a huge influx of new clients who are homeless. Dental services are

now available to OneStop clients through Salvation Army who is offering an added day of care, by appointment only. Client must be cleared medically first, and have a TB test before the appt.

B. VenturaCountyTogether fund drive has allocating money, around \$20,000 for year round and seasonal shelters including Turning Point and the Lighthouse and Santa Paula which is desperately in need and has a small budget. After donation to Santa Paula was announced, a donor matched it!!!

C. Kinetic Sculpture race to benefit Turning Point on October 22

D. Lift Up Your Voice received the 2011 Earth Charter Award from Citizens for Peaceful Resolution. Lift Up Your Voice, through the Unitarian Universalist Church, is a partner with VSSTF working on the VHPF.

D. Neal Andrews distributed free tickets for children to the Highland Games.

E. Mary Stewart questioned the use of the word vagrancy. Peter confirms it is meant to refer to illegal behavior and is an extension of the chronic offender issue. There are 22 specific activities named. The city hopes to eventually have service providers who receive city and VSSTF money refuse services to these chronic offenders or risk losing their grant. Discussion about verbal terms and their impact on the public followed. The Oct 25 meeting will consider use of the term vagrancy. Several persons re emphasized that the focus of concern should be on illegal activities, not on people.

Respectfully submitted,
Debora Schreiber