

Ventura Social Services Task Force – Meeting Minutes February 1, 2012

I. Introductions and Announcements

Based on attending 3 of the last 5 regular meetings, the following 32 members are eligible to vote: Neal Andrews, Jerry Breiner, Peter Brown, Cathy Brudnicki, Cindy Cattle, Kevin Clerici, David Deutsch, Pat Esseff, Susan Everett, Bill Finley, Ken Finning, Todd Goehner, Tim Hawkins, Keri Jaeger, John Jones, Ron Kurlaender, Shelli Locklear, Amy Luoma, Donna Mason-Luttrull, John Luttrull, Eileen McCarthy, Mike Merewether, Kate Mills, Rob Orth, Amanda Pyper, Clyde Reynolds, Debora Schreiber, Karol Schulkin, Mark Stadler, Mary Stewart, Beth Sutherland, Kristin Tippelt

II. Subcommittee and Other Reports

Peter Brown:

- 1) The Winter Warming Shelter is averaging 140 to 160 people per night. Total attendance for the first 50 nights is 5,400 with 3,600 of those being from Oxnard and 1,200 from Ventura.
- 2) Teens for Jeans is coming to the meeting today and then they will be bringing more than 500 pairs of jeans to the Warming Shelter for people.
- 3) The Homeless Count was concluded on 1/31/12; results will be forthcoming.
- 4) There was a meeting with Homeshare; it is difficult to sustain the program due to a need for more participation from various agencies. There is a need for a large infusion of volunteers and for money. Ken Finning has found a staff person but needs funds to pay their salary. Ken does his work for Homeshare on a completely volunteer basis.
- 5) There was a summit meeting held for the city and county to discuss the Safe and Clean Program. Among the attendees were Rick Cole, Jeff Lambert, Ken Corney, Peter Brown, Cindy Cattle, Mike Powers, Kate Mills, Karol Schulkin, Linda Oksner, and Meloney Roy. The following issues were discussed:
 - a) The Healthcare Agency, Police, and VCBH will collaborate to find solutions to challenges.
 - b) The Safe and Clean Initiative will be presented tonight at the Westside Center.
 - c) In the Ventura river bottom the arundo plant (similar to bamboo) is taking over the landscape which destroys the native plant life. There are many landowners in that area including foundations, private owners, the city, the county, etc. There is a plan to “mow” the arundo from the river bottom. The city owns 4 acres and 1.3 of those are covered with the arundo – it costs \$2,300/acre to mow and \$1,500/acre to continue to keep the arundo from coming back (think maintenance). Getting rid of the arundo will help cut down on the illegal camping in the river bottom. There are significant environmental concerns as well – the city faces possible large fines if trash and

bacteria are not kept out of the watershed. The Wood Claysens Foundation owns a lot of property in the river bottom.

Cindy Cattle: The Hillside Conservancy may be getting some of the land donated by private owners.

Jerry Breiner: There needs to be clarification on what “mowing” the arundo means.

- d) The population of the river bottom is approximately 75 people in the city limits and the immediate vicinity.
- e) There will be a camp clean out on 2/2/12 in the city of Ventura and behind River Haven.
- f) A Debris Removal Hotline has been established, the number is 677-3999. If you call you will be asked to leave a message stating where the debris is and the caller will be told it will be removed within 72 hours (this will be changing to 5 days soon).

A. Privacy Protocol/ HIPPA Concerns – Bill Finley

There was a discussion of Release of Information rules/protocols and there was a presentation of the Ventura Social Services Task Force Person’s Right to Privacy Protocol. Cindy Cattle made a motion to pass this protocol into a VSSTF policy. She discussed privacy concerns and proposed to have an agreement not to discuss homeless individuals and to honor each person’s right to privacy and confidentiality. The protocol was amended to include the phrase “without the individual’s consent” and a discussion ensued as follows:

Neal Andrews – It can be difficult to eliminate mention of names in emails, especially if someone is providing the name of someone who they are seeking help for.

Karol Schulkin – One should minimize identifying information and not use names.

Clyde Reynolds – Family members looking for other family members often mention them by name. If the name is not vital to the situation it should be left out.

Neal Andrews – Public discussion should not include names but at times private communications may have to include names.

Debora Schreiber – Some VSSTF members are called for help when they are not attached to an agency; they are called as VSSTF members who might be able to help.

Kate Mills – An individual’s consent must be part of the language for a motion.

The motion is formally made, seconded, and passed with one person abstaining. To read the entire Protocol Language please go to www.vsstf.org

B. Faith Community Subcommittee – Bill Finley and Rob Orth

Bill Finley – People do not like coming to meetings without a clear purpose to the meeting.

Rob Orth – We will put together a “constant contact” email update to let people know what is being done. How to best do this? Project Understanding and Salvation Army will put this together and then they will get the information out. The information can then be

included in newsletters, etc. for various faith based people who will be on the distribution list.

Bill Finley – Quarterly clergy meetings might be possible if the right agenda is set that can be effective.

Debora Schreiber – Information should be put out to as many people as possible.

Beth Sutherland – Social action groups from faith based organizations can also share information with each other.

C. Homeless Prevention Subcommittee – Cindy Cante

The Salvation Army assisted 4 households and 5 children in January. Total households assisted to date is 215. In 2011, 50 households were helped. Catholic Charities has the fund for February. The Subcommittee will be exploring a range of activities including applying for grants, doing online outreach, prevention campaigns, developing a brochure, and more. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 2/15 at Catholic Charities at 1:00 pm. Habitat for Humanity information was distributed by Cindy as well.

D. Gateway Group Subcommittee – Bill Finley

Funding is the major issue; it is hard to plan for a site until the funding is worked out.

Clyde Reynolds – We are seeking more service providers to join the group to increase agency collaboration. There will be a meeting at Public Health on Loma Vista on Friday 2/3/12 at 11:00 am to discuss possibilities.

III. Business

A. One Stop – Kate Mills

There were 72 attendees on Tuesday 1/31/12 at the Ventura site. Oxnard has a comparable number of people coming in as well.

B. Ventura County Behavioral Health – Amanda Pyper

There will be a training by SOAR to help people learn how to expedite the process for getting people SSI benefits. The training will be held in February. In Ventura in January 184 clients were met; 16 clients wanted services, 15 received mental health services, and 7 got housing.

C. Lincoln School Report – Amy Louma

Over 10% of the students at Lincoln school are homeless but all are sheltered. A grant was awarded from the McCune foundation to provide another year of assistance and services including training skills for parents. The school was selected to be the pilot program for a restaurant to provide meals for homeless families (Red Brick Pizza).

IV. Networking

The National Conference on Ending Family and Youth Homelessness will be held February 9th through 12th.

The Turning Point Foundation Community Building Breakfast will be held on February 22nd from 7:00 to 9:00 am.

The next VSSTF regular meeting will be held from 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm on
Wednesday March 7, 2012 at Family to Family, 303 N. Ventura Ave. # E Ventura,
CA 93001.