

Ventura Social Services Task Force – Meeting Minutes March 7, 2012

I. Introductions and Announcements

Present at Meeting: Neal Andrews, Jerry Breiner, Peter Brown, Cindy Cantle, Miguel Cardenas, Harold Cartlidge, Kevin Clerici, David Deutsch, Pat Esseff, Susan Everett, Dorothy Fast Horse, Bill Finley, Jill Forman, Lynda Girtsman, Tim Hawkins, Keri Jaeger, John Jones, Shelli Locklear, Amy Luoma, Donna Mason-Luttrull, John Luttrull, Jessica Mann-Bedell, Mike Merewether, Kate Mills, Rob Orth, Amanda Pyper, Debora Schreiber, Karol Schulkin, Sandra Smallwood, Mark Stadler, Beth Sutherland, Kristen Tippelt, Eileen Tracy

II. Subcommittee and Other Reports

A. Faith Community Subcommittee – Rob Orth

- 1) Email lists will be going out to various faith communities and to the general population.
- 2) Harold Cartlidge – Expressed concern about the clergy engaging in collaborative efforts and communication for advocacy purposes; stated that he feels that is not happening at an appropriate level.
- 3) Bill Finley – Hoping that clergy will meet and find possible ways to deal with that concern. It is possible Lift Up Your Voice might be involved.

B. Homeless Prevention Subcommittee - Cindy Cantle

- 1) Catholic Charities donated \$971 for February – so far 225 total households have been helped with the fund.
- 2) Salvation Army has the fund for March.
- 3) Subcommittee meetings will be held to try to coordinate efforts with case managers from different agencies.
- 4) There is approximately \$8,000 in the fund at the current time.
- 5) Salvation Army has entered into an agreement for FESG funds to get \$20,000 in homeless prevention funds with state organizations.
- 6) Bill Finley – There are lots of changes going on with ESG funds for HUD programs.

Peter Brown – Update

- 1) San Luis Obispo has been looking at the Safe Sleep program in Ventura County as a model (an explanation of the program was provided for those who don't know about it).
- 2) River Bottom update

- a) Mowing has been done on private and city property which means there are less places to camp. This has resulted in more people moving to other river bottom areas. There were two fires on 3/6/12 and the causes are considered to be suspicious. The two fires caused a minimum of \$75,000 in damage.
- b) The Safe and Clean program has a new action plan. On the 3rd Thursday of each month they will clean up the camp(s) most in need. On the Monday prior to the clean ups they will post a notice to let the camp know they have 72 hours before the clean up; the clean ups will be done between 7:30 and 2:30 in the day. The area behind River Haven will be targeted as well. This will be a coordinated effort with the City, Turning Point, and the Ventura Police Dept.
- c) Peter will be attending meetings of faith based organizations to give out information on the Homeless 2 Home program.
- d) The Armory Winter Warming Shelter will be closing on 3/31/12.
- e) Grants for the VSSTF will be looked at for possible changes.
- f) Panhandling in Ventura – cards are being given out to advise people to donate to agencies rather than to panhandlers.
- g) Patagonia will be approached to get out the message about anti-panhandling efforts to try to solicit donations.
- h) The shopping cart locking system has seemed to reduce the number of carts being taken.

Mike Merewhether – Concerned about the two fires; what happened to people in the camps where the fires happened? At least one person moved out.

Bill Finley – There is a report that the fires were set intentionally.

Mark Stadler – It is rare that river bottom folks report crimes to the police – people should be encouraged to call Crimestoppers.

Mark Stadler – The people coming out of prison who are being supervised by Probation are adding to the homeless population and to the amount of work the Ventura Police Dept. is having to do.

David Deutsch – Clarified aspects of the challenges presented by this population.

III. Business

A. One Stop – Kate Mills

- 1) The numbers of people continue to increase – the last Tuesday of the month is especially busy. In the month of February there were 179 clients – 77 on the last Tuesday of the month.
- 2) The One Stop in Oxnard is on Wednesdays – it has been busy as well.

B. VCBH – Amanda Pyper

- 1) The SOAR training had 24 attendees – how to apply for SSI if you have been homeless or in an institution.

- 2) There will be community presentations for Mental Health Services but the plans will go to the Board of Supervisors and not the state.
 - 3) There are no expected cuts in VCBH programs for the upcoming fiscal year. Mark Stadler – All Ventura Police Officers will participate in the CIT trainings.
- C. Lincoln School Report – Amy Louma
- 1) There were 5 new homeless students in February – there are a total of 41 homeless students currently but nobody is “unsheltered”; there are certainly unidentified homeless students.
 - 2) Few families of these students are able to access HPRP funds because of their circumstances (i.e., unemployed parents, etc.).
 - 3) There will be a parenting workshop held at the Salvation Army; parenting skills will be taught.

Privacy Protocols will be posted on the VSSTF website

- D. Future of Gateway – Bill Finley
- 1) The Gateway idea grew out of two concerns needing to be addressed: The lack of a year round shelter being available in Ventura and the need for there to be an entry point into the system of services for anyone in need of them.
 - 2) The Safe Sleep program and River Haven were attempts to deal with these needs.
 - 3) Current Challenges: Finding a site and securing funding; federal funding is moving away from “site” programs.
- Clyde Reynolds – 75% of per diem funds will be directed to community housing, not “shelter” housing. For the most part federal funding will not be available for shelters.
- 4) It costs \$12,000/year to house a single person or couple in the city of Ventura and that does not include money for support services.
 - 5) Key for Gateway – Rob Orth – the point of entry. A “Virtual Gateway”, what will be the point of entry for homeless people into the system of support services?

Some examples across the U.S.:

- a) A 1-800 I’m Homeless number to call – a case manager on the phone doing a triage process.
- b) “Scattered Site” housing.
- c) How to “re-task” existing supports.
- d) Building something is 3 to 4 years away.
- e) Where is possible housing?
- f) Cities have made deals with motel owners to provide housing; it may be possible to make deals with apartment building owners as well.

- g) The Gateway needs to follow national trends – can we find ways to place people? In Ventura county the Homeless 2 Home program and Homeshare seek to address this issue.
- h) Bill Finley – Presented the concept of a Central Intake point that is “triage” to take the time to have an in depth conversation with a person to determine their needs.
- i) Clyde Reynolds – The county took \$750,000 out of \$2 million for housing other than an emergency shelter. There will be a dialogue with the city of Oxnard and other providers to decide the best use for the remaining funds.
- j) Jerry Breiner – The Gateway original design is still valid.
- k) Rob Orth – HUD will maintain some transitional housing – for smaller programs – that will encourage people to change their lifestyle choices.
- l) Karol Schulkin – There will be \$750,000 for a 2 year period for HPRP funding.
- m) Bill Finley – The county has asked for an additional \$250,000 to be raised by other agencies – all funds would go directly to client services (no administrative charges).

A motion was passed to encourage the city of Ventura to free up funds for housing and rental assistance. The motion was made by Clyde Reynolds and seconded by Mike Merewether. All but 2 members eligible to vote said “aye” – the 2 members who did not vote abstained.

The next meeting of the VSSTF will be held on Wednesday April 4, 2012 at 3:00 pm at Family to Family, 303 N. Ventura Ave. #E, Ventura, CA 93001.