

Ventura Social Service Task Force  
Draft MINUTES  
October 1, 2014

Judy Alexandre, Neal Andrews, Sue Brinkmeyer, Kevin Clerici, Joe Dawson, Elizabeth Egelko, Susan Everett, Marylou Faris, Jill Forman, Mary Haffner, Olga Hamra, Tim Hawkins, Tim Hockett, John Jones, Sharon Lanning, Amy Luoma, Arlene Martinez, Kate Mills, Ron Mulvihill, Rob Orth, Kathy Powell, Melissa Ramirez, Dave Schmutte, Jan Schmutte, Debora Schreiber, Karol Schulkin, Ben Unseth, Holly Whitmore

Meeting was called to order at 3:23PM

I. Introductions and Welcome

II. Revisions to and Approval of Minutes

A. Review of minutes identified a change on page 1. The name of the program is Rapid Integrated Support & Engagement (RISE). With that change incorporated Kate moved to approve the minutes, Tim H. seconded. Minutes are approved

III. Changes or Additions of the Agenda

A. Kathy P wants to add a mention of her appreciation to Sue B. for her perseverance in establishing the VSSTF, Inc. 501 (c)(3). Sue B. says it was a team effort and thanked especially Neal Andrews in helping to get us a wonderful board that is a powerhouse.

B. The program called “Almost Homeless” at Temple Beth Torah on October 8<sup>th</sup> still needs speakers.

IV. Committees and Other Reports

A. Updates from City –

Peter is not present. Rob O. mentions that there was a river clean up organized by Parks Department. Lots of team members from RISE were there. They encountered the same folks that they usually do. Many of them are drug users and there were lots of needles found lying around. Social Services were there to offer services.

The HACSB’s Westview Project is going to DRC this evening.

Neal A. mentions the contract to share staff services is being signed. Peter B. will work with Oxnard half time and Ventura half time.

B. Faith Based Community Subcommittee – Sue Brinkmeyer

The Faith Subcommittee has created a task group chaired by Judy. The goal is to get more active engagement from faith communities. The Faith Subcommittee is also working to bring CIRCLES to Ventura. The program requires \$100K for two staff members and 15 to 20 community members to serve on the Guiding Coalition.

The idea is for 2 to 3 allies to surround the circle leader, an individual or family in poverty to provide support to get the family permanently out of poverty. There is training for all the families involved. The program is nationwide and seems to be working. Leslie Orth heads up the CIRCLES program in the Conejo Valley.

Tim Hockett says CIRCLES is an outgrowth of Bridges Out of Poverty. It is sophisticated mentoring using befriending/coaching and best practices and community action. He has a friend in Idaho seems to be having remarkable outcomes.

Judy A. states that mentoring is more than case management and gives a person a sense of dignity to move from poverty to middle class. The plan in the Conejo Valley is to begin by working with residents of Many Mansions. Karol S. says people share their social capital and become advocates for the person in poverty. Ron M. says SVDP has a program that is similar to Circles that works well for those they serve over time.

The Park Outreach group from the UU Church of Ventura is in hiatus. This group had been meeting with homeless individuals who spend much of their time in the parks and providing food and water as part of their efforts to build trusting relationships. Last week the group, consisting of Kathy P. and three 70+ year old volunteers were in the park when a police cruiser drove across the park and stopped in front of the group. The Mayor got out of the car, escorted by two police officers who stood by her side as she told Kathy and the other volunteers that the City policy is to give a hand up not a hand out and that what Kathy and the others were doing was frowned upon, and that they were enabling those in the park. Kathy P. got a call from the County Health Department a few days later saying the group can't give food to people in the park without a permit from the County and permission from the city. The group will continue to explore ways to connect those in the parks with food on Tuesdays and Thursdays, when Family to Family is closed as well as ways these volunteers can reach out to those in the parks that help them move toward readiness to accept services and to find ways they can collaborate with others like the H2H team, as they had begun to do.

Kevin C. made the counterpoint that he is glad that Kathy was making connections but that the downtown district has a problem with the food in the park because they generate a significant amount of trash. He said he wished someone had called him and that he doesn't think handing out sandwiches makes a relationship and he wishes that the group would do something in a way that he thinks is more productive. Kathy P. counters that she thinks breaking bread with another human being is a way to make relationships. Debora S. says many of the homeless people know Kathy P. is a consistent person who is always there to help. Neal A. says he will investigate as to the legality of giving food to the homeless. He understands that the majority of the city council frowns on these feedings but

he does not know if it is against the law. Joe D. says H2H is aware of Kathy's work and that efforts are in progress to have Kathy and the group work with H2H case managers. Tim H. says what is a hand up and what is a hand out cannot be defined by City officials. If a hand is extended with food in it and the individual ends up better off, then it was a hand up. If the individual is not better off, then perhaps it was a hand out. Danny Z. says feeding is fundamental right, an act of love. Mary H. says compassion and practicality are both needed – there is a large piece missing. The homelessness problem is not just going to go away. The problem is here and we have to engage it – not hope that when Harbor goes away the problem will go away. Clyde R. says we are sitting in a place where food is served. What can we do to make sure that food is available on Tuesday and Thursday - the days Family to Family does not serve. He can sympathize with the City if the park is becoming the center for food service. Jan S says that Family to Family makes sure that lunches are served Mon., Wed. and Friday and breakfasts are served on Sat. and Sun. They would be happy to have meals served on Tuesday and Thursday as well if there were a sufficient number of volunteer groups to make that happen. They believe people with full stomachs cause fewer problems. Judy A. says the hand-up/hand-out debate will continue. Kate M. says having two police in a car arrive with the Mayor to tell someone that feeding the hungry is unacceptable is not the right way for the debate to take place.

C. Outreach Committee – John Jones

John met with the steering committee. He would like each organization to fill out a volunteer sheets listing volunteer opportunities and to have this available on the VSSTF website.

Karol S. brings up the fact that the Post Office no longer provides general delivery services. Many providers no longer provide mail services. She knows that there is a need and she will continue to investigate a solution. There is an online registration option but you have to have a credit card. Tim H. says that Community Action of Ventura County collects mail for over 400 people.

D. Homelessness Prevention Subcommittee – Brian Brennan

Received \$986 from the UU Church. The VHPF committee met with the VSSTF Board and they have decided to park the fund with the VSSTF 501(c)(3). John is taking on the website and there will be a dedicated email, e.g. [venturahomelessprevention@gmail.com](mailto:venturahomelessprevention@gmail.com). There will also be a google phone number.

November is homeless prevention month. Debora, Judy and Kent are working on a letter. Debora moves that this letter be signed by Sue as Chair of the VSSTF and send it in to the various newspapers.

E. H2H Community Solutions – Amy Luoma

Last month H2H assisted 24 adults and 5 children and 16 adults with rapid rehousing. The SVDP aided 3 adults. H2H assisted 318 adults in the time period between Jan and September.

F. CoC – Rob Orth

There has been a 2% cut across the CoC. There is \$36K in a tier 2 fund for rapid rehousing. The County will apply and Lutheran Social Services ESG funds will be the recipient. The County is open to applying for permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless/disabled. The County is willing to manage the funds should we receive it. The CoC application is due October 26<sup>th</sup>. This could mean a new \$500,000 in ESG funds.

Clyde R. says the hope is to expand H2H to Oxnard. Turning Point is willing to take on the money. There is a defined group of people with services. As long as you reside you get funds. However, there is a significant match and leveraging attached.

Karol S. says there is another source from the State. The opportunity for \$20 M for chronically homeless families. CalWORKS families are eligible to apply. It is a new program that functions like H2H. She will be able to hire a social worker and help homeless families. They will be able to serve 120 families and unlike the federal program the funds can be used for mixed documented households so refer your CalWORKS people.

G. VSSTF Steering Committee – Sue Brinkmeyer

The steering committee with reserve a table for the Black & White ball. The cost will be \$50.00 until November.

Kathy P. brings up a red flag. She has seen flyers out in the community from Pastor Shirley Broussard and her organization SWARM, a non-profit housing group, saying they are opening a homeless shelter.

H. One Stop – Kate Mills

There are no statistics to report this month. The Samaritan Center of Eastern Ventura county met their fundraising goal.

I. Family to Family – Pat

They are still researching portable showers. Center for Spiritual Living and the UU Church have joined other groups that provide meals on a monthly basis, bringing the total number of groups to 30.

J. Homeshare -

Will be participating in the event on October 8<sup>th</sup> at Temple Beth.

V. Networking

Project Understanding held their annual Thank you to volunteers on September 25, 2014. The Shalom award went to Joe Presidio. The Shining Star Award went to the H2H team intern Sandra Troxel. The next fundraiser is November 1, 2014 – the Starlight Super Club.

VI. Business – None to report

VII. Announcements

Neal A. mentions that the Highland Games will be at the Ventura County Fair Grounds the second weekend of October.

Turning Point's Kinetic Sculpture Race is coming up October 18, 2014 at the Ventura Harbor.

Interfaith Thanksgiving Service will be Monday, November 24, 2014.

Meeting Adjourned 4:50PM

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Everett