

Minutes March 4, 2015

Ventura Social Service Task Force

Present: Judy Alexandre, Neal Andrews, Jerry Briener, Brian Brennan, Peter Brown, Tara Carruth, Harold Cartlidge, Kevin Clerici, Joe Dawson, Elizabeth Egelko, Jill Forman, Mary Haffner, Olga Hamra, Tim Hawkins, Amanda Herrera, Tim Hockett, Steven Karnazes, John Jones, Camilla Lee, Arlene Martinez, Alicia Morales, Al Myers, Kathy Powell, Jan Schmutte, Debora Schrieber, Karol Schulkin, Doug Stanton, Holly Whitmore, Daniel Zapata Huerta.

1. Meeting was called to order by Chair Judy Alexandre at 3:15 pm
2. All present introduced themselves
3. The minutes of Feb. 4, 2015 were adopted as submitted.
4. There were no changes to the agenda and it was adopted as presented.
5. New Business items were discussed
 - A. Mary Haffner reported on **Laura's Law**. Materials (letter and background information) from Mary Haffner, Esq. were presented in written form. A summary is as follows: Laura's law was adopted by the state of California in 2002. Each county needs to adopt the law. The purpose is to provide services to the severely mentally ill who do not self-access mental health services. The law will be going to the County Board of Supervisors in the near future. Support for the law is desired to show the Board of Supervisors that there is community support for adopting the law. The law is aimed at those who experience anosognosia , a condition where those with severe mental illness to not recognize their illness and therefore are at high risk of homelessness, are homeless, and/or are a potential danger to self or others. The intervention required by Laura's Law has shown decreases in overall service cost to this population and in the number of mentally ill in jail and costs associated with that; more importantly it saves lives and allows for individuals to receive mental health treatment. After considerable questioning and discussion, Kevin Clerici moved and ...seconded that the **Task Force vote to recommend that the Board of Supervisors adopt Laura's Law**. The vote was all ayes, zero nays, with 3 abstentions: Neal Andrews, Brian Brennan, Peter Brown. **Mary Haffner** is to draft the letter to the Board of Supervisors and also to the County Mental Health Advisory Board. **Judy Alexandre** will sign once the letters are written. It is noted that the Homeless Committee of the City will look at the law at their meeting on 3/5/15 and will make a recommendation for the April City Council meeting.

- B. Judy reviewed the **granting process** for monies allocated from the City of Ventura (\$70,000.00) and checked to be sure that agencies had received the necessary materials. A **selection committee slate** was presented to the Task Force consisting of Judy Alexandre, Karol Shulkin, Kevin Clerici and Sue Brinkmeyer. Peter Brown will be the city representative. The recommendation was moved and seconded and **approved** by a unanimous vote.
- C. Reports from the 3 new sub-committees (Housing Engagement, Housing, and Education/Advocacy)
- **Housing Engagement** had not yet met and will meet prior to the April 1 meeting of the Task Force.
 - **Education/Advocacy** met on 2/17/15. John Jones will be serving as the immediate chair. The group will focus on evidenced-based research regarding the benefits of being housed, the impacts of housing first, sheltering success, working with our elected officials, what works in similar cities, developing a resource list of documents and documentaries, educational events and a speakers bureau. The next meeting of the committee is Friday March 13, 2015 at 3:30 pm at the Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf (Main and Telephone)
 - The **Housing** committee met on 2/27/15 and Camilla Lee was chosen as the committee chair. The focus is to develop a specific goal for housing for very low-income residents that is doable and achievable. Various types of housing will be explored with all of the necessary requirements addressed in order for the plan to be implemented.
 - **Steven Karnazes** from the Mission Church reported on the work of a committee that had been called together by Rob Orth over a year ago to look at sheltering concerns. The question was to examine what the city /we will do when the winter shelter closes this year. Steven was tasked to see what faith-based organizations in Ventura would be able to open their doors in inclement weather. The goal was to locate 10 properties that could serve the 50-60 people that would need shelter on any given night with separate space for men, women and families, the ability to serve food, and hopefully in an approved zone (M1 or M2) or in a zone where the \$7,500 fee might be waived (M3). The city of Ventura will not consider using a church facility in a residential area. Steven is still working on this goal and may join with the VSSTF Housing Engagement Center(s) group.

6. Judy reported on the voting poll re regular reports to the VSSTF.

- All VSSTF Steering committee, all Agency, the Continuum of Care and Family to Family are to be oral as needed.
- Homeless Prevention, H2H, Shelter Options, One Stop, County Homeless Outreach and the Faith Sub-committee are to report orally each month.
- It is desired that One Stop, Homeless Prevention, H2H single number, county also be provided in a written format.
- It is requested that the report from the city/Peter Brown be both oral and written if possible.

7. Reports:

- Judy reported on the Faith sub-committee reminding all of the **Partners for Change** event on March 12. Request was made for all agencies to finalize their reservation.
- **Alicia Morales** reported on H2H. She stated that since the coordinated assessment line was not receiving calls on the weekends they are pulling the case manager from Sat. on call. 17 people were housed; 13 adults and 4 minors in permanent housing, and others in transitional housing and in reunification.
- **Amanda Herrera** (SVDP) reported that 357 individuals and 7 families were sheltered last month for a total of 3,696 shelter stays, with 55 haircuts last month for 100 total. In the four months of the WWS in '13-'14 there were 10,826 total stays; and in the three months of WWS so far this year, as of March 1, 2015, there were 10,319 shelter stays averaging 140-150 per night. Last year there were 486 unduplicated people and this year Dec.-Feb there have been 674 unduplicated people (93 children, 581 adults) including 42 families.
- Kate Mills, One Stop, reported via a written memo of a **family in financial need** for rental assistance so that the male family head could continue with his chemo treatments. A total of \$5,000 is needed. The information was sent to several faith communities. Ben Unseth from Project Understanding indicated that he would coordinate that outreach and be in contact with Kate.
- Neal Andrews urged all **agencies to report their statistics at least once per year** as the council members want to know specific results.
- **Peter Brown** reported that the decision regarding the hiring of homeless consultant Marbutt by the city will be postponed until April since there

will not be a fully attended City Homeless Committee this month. The city is updating its panhandling information card. The homeless count statistics will be completed by the 3rd week in April. Peter also reported on the City of Oxnard and its addressing of the homeless camps and the residents that have been there for a significant length of time. The Oxnard Homeless Commission has new members, including Sue Brinkmeyer, and is considering a new policy making 25% of 60 section 8 housing vouchers designated for those that are on the list and are currently homeless. He also met with a group of non VIMA pastors in an effort to involve the broadest range of faith communities.

- Deborah Schreiber reported on the 4th of July booth on Main St during the **4th of July** Fair/parade. The VSSTF gave its full support. Kevin Clerici from the downtown merchants will cover the cost.
 - Brian Brennan reported on the Homeless Prevention Fund. During the month of February, the Fund received \$1,073.60 in donations, expended \$1,0640, and kept 4 households, including 6 adults and 2 children, in their homes. Total for 2015: 12 households, 21 adults, 14 children; total since 2007: 343 households, 909 people. At the end of February, the balance in the fund was \$122.60. A donation of \$974.53 was received from the UU Church on March 1, bringing the current total to \$1,097.13.
 - Judy shared the list of information items that was listed in the agenda.
8. Successes and Accomplishments. Neal Andrews reported that the Rotaract, young Rotarians, will hold a volunteer fair on April 14 at the Wedgewood Banquet Hall. This is an opportunity for all non-profits to meet. www.venturarotaract.com.
 9. It is requested that **each sub-committee of the VSSTF** submit a monthly written and oral report.
 - 10.If there is a question or concern that needs to be on the agenda please submit it to chair, Judy Alexandre 10 days before our next scheduled meeting so that it can be given adequate attention and time on the agenda.
 - 11.Next Meeting is April 1, 2015 at 3:15 at the Family to Family building, 303 N Ventura Ave #E.

Submitted by

Kathy Powell, Vice Chair and Acting Secretary