

Ending Homelessness Committee
Minutes of the 9/2/09 meeting

Present at the meeting were: Angela Linke, Magaly Rios, Lianne Bower, Eileen Brady, Wendy LeBlanc, Jessica Karwatske, Barbaros Dinler, Jerry Leclerc, Katie Merrill, Laura Nault, Linda Newell, Kathy Paquette, Peter Segal, Nathan Goodwin, Jarretta Copeland, Laurie Skibba, Joan Koliss

The meeting began at 9am with introductions. Minutes of the 8/5/09 meeting were reviewed. L. Nault made a motion to accept the minutes and K. Merrill seconded the motion.

E. Brady stated that she had received an email from Candace C. Gebhart at NHLA regarding a workshop for Landlords. NHLA will organize it and cover issues including fair housing and LL responsibilities. No date is set yet for the workshop, but it will be discussed—possibly a date in October. Perhaps the library would be a neutral place to hold the forum; K. Merrill also suggested Harbor Homes. E. Brady will touch base with Candace to discuss. There will also be a tenant forum held at Harbor Homes on 10/9/09 from 1-3pm and it will cover topics such as tenant's rights. E. Brady noted that there are now some legal protections for tenants whose LLs have been foreclosed on.

W. LeBlanc stressed the importance of advertising these workshops.

L. Skibba introduced a mentoring program developed by Family Promise, who is the parent organization of the GNIHN. This is a 1:1 mentoring program where volunteers will develop a relationship with formerly homeless families, in order to provide guidance and emotional support. It is similar to the Big Brothers/Sisters program, yet it is for adults. Several organizations across the country already have adopted the model, and they include members of the Interfaith Hospitality Network as well as non-members. There will be a community awareness meeting on 10/7/09 from 6:30-9 and a national representative from Family Promise will be there to answer questions.

J. Koliss suggested that if a few agencies want to collaborate on this project, perhaps a grant could be written to get some start-up funds. There is a lot of discussion to be had on this topic. The flyer will be sent to the CoC mailing list, as well as to the Unitarian Church, and the Family Resource Center at the Boys & Girls Club, Granite State Organizing Project and other churches, including Grace Fellowship.

J. Leclerc gave an update on Project Employment Connect; it is doing ok but there is low participation from employers. St. Joe's will be there, along with Healthy at Home and Labor Ready. K. Merrill noted that there are some interested businesses, but a lot of them are not hiring right now. The committee did not get a positive response from the Christmas Tree Shop. Maybe there will be more seasonal job opportunities as November approaches. Jerry noted that the event will be a success if even one person gets a job.

Eileen mentioned that it is time again to think about emergency winter preparedness. Having the Rescue Mission shelter open now will be a help. K. Merrill said that Maple St. has been so full they ran out of bed linens. K. Paquette said that the areas she covers have no shelter space, and outreach workers are receiving more calls from families experiencing homelessness for the 1st time. Motel 6 will now accept Fuel Assistance—folks can get a LL verification filled out, return it to SNHS and get fuel assistance which will pay for the motel stay. Lillian's & Country Barn do the same thing.

K. Merrill brought up the idea of warming centers. This has been discussed a couple times over the years and the challenges are: who will run it, where will it be and how will it be organized?

L. Skibba asked if there are any churches that could set up an overflow shelter like the ones in Concord. W. LeBlanc asked if the Granite State Organizing Project would help with this.

K. Paquette & Captain Segell from the NPD discussed difficulties they are facing when breaking up campgrounds. Those who are staying in the woods are afraid and hiding, going deeper into the woods. Any suggestions from the community on how we can address this issue are welcome and appreciated.

Meeting adjourned at 10:07am

Minutes prepared by Jessica Karwatske