

Coordinating Committee to End Homelessness (CCEH) Meeting Minutes



April 21, 2010
First United Methodist Church

Facilitated by: Jean DeMaster and Marc Jolin

Prepared by: Zane Potter

Reviewed by: Steering Committee

Present: Caren Baumgart, Kari Brenk, Heather Brown, Caitlin Campbell, Jennifer Chang, Jean DeMaster, Liv Jenssen, Marc Jolin, Tiffany Kingery, Rachel Payton, Shannon Singleton, Ian Slingerland, Larry Turner, Lynne Walker, Bobby Weinstock, Renata Wilson, Eileen Devine, Steven Keenan, Heather Weitman, Dave White, Rachel Devlin, Sybil Hebb, Sarah Ausbrooks, Bobby Weinstock, Kelly Riechers, Ibrahim Mubarak, Rachel Post, Marylee King, Donald Hice, Ashley Egeland, Courtney Dahmen, Amanda Waldroupe, Marietta Louden, Angie Thompson

Action Items/Next Steps:

- Cuts are facing the Neighborhood Inspections Program which addresses unsafe housing and neighborhood livability. The Community Alliance of Tenants is urging community members to contact the Mayor and Commissioners to voice your concern. A rally will be held April 22, 2010 at 5:15 pm in front of city hall.
- Jean DeMaster asked the audience to identify items within the City and County budgets that concern the homeless and pledge support to those programs. In addition, Ms. DeMaster said, if needed, audience members should collaborate and send a message to address any concerns regarding the new definition within the HUD HEARTH Act.
- Next Meeting: Wednesday, May 19, 2010, 3-5 p.m., FUMC Room 202.
jennifer.chang@portlandoregon.gov.

Updates and Announcements:

- Eileen Devine, VA, commented on the progress of the 5 Year Plan to End Homelessness Among Veterans. Ms. Devine reported that the VA will receive 60 additional vouchers this year, with an emphasis towards housing chronically homeless veterans. The VA is seeking ways to partner with community members to effectively distribute these vouchers. In addition, 100 medical center vouchers will be distributed to more rural locations.

Screening and Discussion of “Unnatural Causes: Episode 7 – “Not Just a Paycheck” (Angie Thompson, Multnomah County Health Department, Health Equity Initiative)

“Not just a Paycheck” examined the closure of an Electrolux Corporation plant and the consequences on the 3,000 middle class workers of Greenville, Michigan. The film documented how job loss negatively impacted the health of former Electrolux employees. In the year following the closure of Electrolux, the number of cases of alcoholism, domestic abuse and depression at the local hospital tripled. These problems broadly reflect America’s individualistic social policies. However, when an Electrolux plant closed in Vastervick, Sweden the subsequent distress on the workers was minimal. Laid-off workers receive 80% of their salary in unemployment benefits and receive education and training for new jobs. In addition, Electrolux paid \$3 million to encourage the start-up of businesses in Vastervick because of pressure from the government and unions. More largely, the response to the plant closure reflects Sweden’s social policy of shared responsibility. Swede’s must pay higher taxes than Americans for these safety nets; however, they live on average 3 years longer.

Upon completion of the film, Ms. Thompson asked questions to the audience.

- *What was your first thought? What struck you about the film?*
The media primarily reports on the unemployment rates and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act; however, there isn't much discussion on the secondary effects. In small mill towns (Myrtle Creek) plants have closed and one either logs or leaves. Once an individual becomes unemployed for so long their options are diminished.
- *What were the problems facing the individuals in the film? Try to localize some of these issues?*
We live in a capitalistic society and it's imbedded in your culture that an individual must produce and take care of yourself. Our society is driven by money and the more you have the more you want to get.
- *Some of these workers were at the plant for about 30 years and received no notice. What can we do locally to remedy some of these problems? More taxes? Try to think upstream and long-term.*
 - A welfare state (Sweden) has very different structure than ours and it would require a complete shift in consciousness move towards that structure.
 - Our safety nets have not kept pace with living costs.
 - We have a responsibility as voters to inform those who aren't in touch with the social realities that exist. The amount of money our government pays to those in need is not much and it cannot sustain those people that need help.
 - Employment is needed to maintain a safety net.
- *Question from audience member: How do people feel about corporations going for the lowest wage? Agree/Disagree?*
These corporations left because they didn't want to follow the rules. Corporations didn't want to adhere to the environmental rules. We need a more holistic approach to these issues because we only have one planet.
- *Mr. Jolin was curious how Swedish officials are reaching the social policy balance between much more comprehensive safety nets than the United States and free trade.*
One audience member commented that it is important to keep in my mind that there was pressure from the EU to move companies to countries not in the EU.
- *Question from Ms. DeMaster: President Obama ran on health care and passed the legislation; however, the sentiment is that people don't like it. Why?*
We are still focused on an individualistic society.
- *Two audience members provided thoughts on the film:*
 - The film showcased the psychological effects of job loss and we're focused on a quick fix. This builds more questions in the long run.
 - Sweden made the corporation pay \$3 million to help those workers who lost their job. It is up to American government to implement the same deal. Green jobs that are sustainable could have replaced the void left by the factory. American government was not involved enough in these decisions.
- *What can we put in place (2 things), not just dealing with health (jobs, income, housing) to help solve these problems locally?*

- Businesses must be held responsible when they do leave and companies must have deterrents if they do move.
 - People shouldn't buy the products.
 - The new jobs people have won't be in the same field, so we need to help people retrain for new jobs.
 - Not just job retraining, but a more holistic response to these issues.
 - Affordable housing living conditions need to change.
- *In response to Ms. DeMaster's previous question:*
The media greatly influences how people think and determines where people get their information. In addition, we need to think of health with regards to nutrition and not just money. We need to broaden our definition of health. Ms. Thompson recommended viewing of "In Sickness & in Health" episode of the miniseries which provides information on this issue.
 - *One audience member provided thoughts on the film:*
At the federal level it's accepted we that we don't want people to starve so we need to get housing in the same basket. We need to get housing as an entitlement.
 - *Ms. Chang to Ms. Thompson: "How are you utilizing this feedback?"*
We've been taking notes in four categories (food, environment, income, and housing) and are trying to narrow this down to key priorities. We have until the end of the year so please contact us with any other feedback. We are mandated to report on bimonthly basis to inform our decision making. Please come to our next board meeting and have your voice heard. We believe the Board of Commissioners is really going to take some action.

Ms. Thompson noted that the Multnomah County Health Department will be taking these positive recommendations forward and is looking strongly at environmental health.

Presentation: "Measuring the Impact of Evidence-Based Supported Employment"

(Heidi Hendrinckx, Portland State University and Rachel Post, Central City Concern)

Over the last two years, the innovative Evidence-Based Supported Employment program model has assisted more than 300 homeless individuals with primary addiction disorders, of which 70% had felony convictions. The Evidence-Based Supported Employment model has 5 principles – competitive employment is the goal, eligibility is based on consumer choice, rapid job search, service integrations and long term support.

In a prior study, the employment rate upon the completion of the CCC Mentor and ADFC program was 49%; however, with the addition of the supported employment program the percentage of those employed has increased to 71%. The average wage is \$9.96/hour and 53% of the graduates were in full time jobs while 28% worked 21 to 31 hours per week.

A few questions were asked throughout the presentation.

- *Did you have a sample of those not in treatment?*
We didn't know who was engaged or not. We looked at the variable of those who completed the program. If you examine other research literature there was a belief that those on drugs couldn't work. Also, the sooner people are involved in employment it's possible to prevent relapse.

- *When people leave transitional housing, what type of housing are they exiting to? (Subsidized or unsubsidized)*
People are exiting into both. It is difficult to track because HMIS doesn't separate these items. An additional evaluation would be needed.
- *Was there an effort to recruit blocks of jobs from employers?*
That's not how this program works. We don't try to find large chunks of jobs. Instead, we try to find jobs that fit people's specific interests and career goals.
- *Can this program be applied to a broader population or other groups who may not have the same level of intensity/need as those served in your program?*
Absolutely. This program is applicable to multiple populations.

Other Announcements

- Tiffany Kingery, Multnomah County, announced that the Homeless Families Warming Center will be closing on April 30, 2010; however, other winter services (including Daybreak Day Center and Goose Hollow) will remain open until June 30, 2010.
- Jennifer Chang, PHB, announced that the bureau has submitted its budget to the Mayor's Office. The Mayor's proposed budget is expected to be released around April 30, 2010. A public hearing will be held Thursday, May 20, 2010 on the proposed budget. In addition, HUD announced it will release the notice of continuation of care applications no early than July 1, 2010. Lastly, HUD released proposed definitions under HEARTH and public comments are can be made until June 21, 2010.
- Marc Jolin, JOIN, announced that the targeted side of the 2010 Census has wrapped up. In spite of the fact the day of the street count was changed, the whole process went well. There are still events planned for those with housing. Staff locations are now closed.
- Jean DeMaster, Human Solutions, announced a human trafficking film will be shown on May 21 in the Multnomah County Commissioners office. Research shows this issue impacts Portland and funding should be increased, especially for youth.
- Bobby Weinstock, NWPP, announced that a meeting presentation on innovations in bed bug eradication will take place on Thursday, April 29 from 3:00-5:00 pm in the Fireside Room at First United Methodist Church. For more information and to RSVP, email Mr. Weinstock bobbyw@nwpilotproject.org