

Consumer Advisory Council Meeting Summary

September 16, 2009

Consumer Advisory Council members present:

Anthony	Jaclyn	Nancy
Blue	Latrice	Paul
Christine	Margaret	Sheila
Daniel		

Absent:

Linda
Nina

Community present:

Ariyetta	Kristine	Laird
Bill	Kytty	Ronnie

Welcome and Introduction.

The meeting was called to order by Jaclyn, serving as Co-Chair at 6:10pm.

The two potential new members introduced themselves.

- Ariyetta is a single mother new to the area and is currently residing in Redmond. She was referred to CAC by Friends of Youth. This was Ariyetta's second meeting. Her application will now be reviewed and her membership status will be voted on at the next CAC meeting.
- Ronnie has been with PSKS as a client and a member for 8 years. He has attended previous CAC meetings and the picnic. This was his first official meeting after receiving his membership application.

Agenda and July 15, 2009 meeting minutes were approved with one correction to the agenda: Christine asked to be removed from the co-chairs list.

Public Comment

Sheila announced that the Women Veterans' Advisory Committee held the first statewide Women Veteran's Conference in Tacoma on September 12th. The conference provided women veterans with information regarding opportunities and challenges women veterans face today and information on benefits and services they might be entitled to. There were over 400 attendees.

Jaclyn made a suggestion that the United Way not hold the Day of Caring and Community Resource Exchange on the same day in the future. It makes it difficult for agencies that want to participate to attend both; some have to choose one or the other.

Jaclyn also gave an update on the Westlake Donut Dialogue. The dialogue was successful and relationships between the kids and the police were started. However, since the dialogue, the Westlake sergeant has been removed and the new sergeant has replaced the officers. There are currently no police in the Westlake area that attended the dialogue and all relationships started at the dialogue are now lost. Bill will pass this information along to Clark Kilmer.

Refugee and Immigrant Focus Group Report

The focus group was held on August 5, 2009 at ReWA (Refugee Women's Alliance). Margaret and Sheila gave the report.

The focus group was very well organized and an eye opener. There were multiple ethnicities represented and divided into groups with one interpreter per group. Refugees and immigrants are going through the same homeless issues as Americans, but with language and cultural barriers. When immigrants come to this county, they are provided with host housing for a period of time and when their time expires they have no where to go. Some have education, skills and credentials from their country however when they come here their credentials are not recognized, which forces them to have to accept lower paying jobs or go through re-training once they have learned English. ReWA offers ESL classes to learn basic language skills.

Another obstacle is that culturally, it is common for families to be large with multiple generations that live together. In this country, where extended family living together is not culturally recognized, they risk losing their housing if they have more occupants than allowed by the landlord. Many families get split up amongst friends to comply with occupancy limitations.

Funders Group Workplans

Bill reported on the progress and updates of the workplans.

- **Production** – The Funders Group Production goal was for approximately 300 development units to come online in 2009. That goal was more than achieved with a total of 214 units online in the first half of this year with an additional 130 scheduled to come online in the second half of 2009
- **Access Existing Housing** – The Funders Group production goal for Access to Existing Housing was to add 250 new subsidies, including 100 with services supporting higher needs households. To date, a total of 298 new subsidies for existing housing came online in the first half of 2009. Additional subsidies will come online and new subsidies will be awarded in the second half of the year through the Fall RFP. These new rental subsidy contracts will begin in 2010.
- **Reduce Barriers and increase the number of existing units** - The Funders Group Production goal was to place 150 households in housing through the Landlord Liaison Project. To date, there have been 58 households placed in housing and 150 are expected to move in by the end of the year. Their System Change Goal was to create better relationships with landlords and better placements. Currently, the Project has 61 landlords participating, totaling 92 properties and 24 agencies providing case management.
- **Coordinated Entry for Chronic Single Adults** – The Production goal for this group was to begin moving chronic homeless individuals into permanent supportive housing with coordinated entry via Client Care Coordination. Initial efforts began with LIHI's 75-unit McDermott Place and for chronic alcoholics transitioning into vacant units at AHA's 92 unit Wintonia. By October 2009, the plan is to bring in referral agencies to work with Client Care Coordination.
- **Coordinated Entry for Families** – The goal is to implement a common way for families to access homeless services and for providers to quickly link families to the resources they need.

Bill announced a HUD study that King County may be participating in. It will be conducted in 12 cities with 50 families in each city participating with informed consent. The families will randomly receive various housing opportunities such as vouchers, vouchers with services, or transitional housing. Each family will be tracked and their progress, struggles and characteristics will be recorded. The outcome of the study will help to determine how many services are really needed to get individuals off the street and how to better align and efficiently use funding.

Discussion: At What Point of Client Progress does the homeless system stop its work?

Bill Block posed a question to the group based on recent work currently being done on the Gates Foundation initiative to revise the family homelessness system. The question is: At What Point of Client Progress does the homeless system stop its work?

Discussion:

Sheila shared that she has participated in focus groups with people from other states and they are shocked at how much hand holding is done here, to the point of discouraging initiative and motivation on the part of the homeless individual. We need to teach self sufficiency and competitiveness. When you are labeled homeless you are automatically assumed not to have skills.

Nancy said that she has friends in poverty that are frustrated that they don't qualify for services. She doesn't see why people shouldn't compete for services. She thinks people are encouraged to be dependent and discouraged to be independent.

Jaclyn stated that PSKS has a mixed clientele. Some are lazy and just collect their benefits and some try hard and can't move forward because they are too young or too old for youth services.

Ariyetta's case manager tells her what she can or cannot do because she is on assistance. She has drive and wants to be successful but people tell her to stay put.

Christine believes that homelessness is a measuring line. What she found most helpful was taking various classes that were offered to her – how to network, how to use computers, interview skills, even learning basic everyday skills like cooking. She attended a voluntary group through "Dress for Success" where she learned how to budget her money, practice interviewing and how to act on a job.

Daniel said he worked at First Avenue Clinic and felt that some of the case workers looked down on him for helping clients move on. He thinks that the mentality was that if clients still need services, case workers had job security. He works at Boys and Girls club now and he's referred to as "Dan the Dam" because he focuses on building a dam with youth to prevent future homelessness and struggles.

Hansen Dam Planning

Bill informed the committee of the flood planning for the coming rain season. There is damage to the Hansen Dam in south King County and a 30% chance of flooding in the Auburn, Kent, Renton and Tukwila area. If a flood happens, there will be toxics in the water and people could go up to 3 weeks with no power. They are currently working on how to relocate people including those that are homeless. There will be an 18 hour warning prior to flooding in which they need to find people who are homeless in the area and relocate them to higher ground. Logistics on how to notify people who are homeless of the potential danger are being worked out. Work is also continuing around feeding programs, the mobile medical van and other services.

Legislative Advocacy

Each member present was given their invitation to the legislative breakfast on Tuesday, October 6th. Bill announced who the sponsors are along with CEH and reviewed the CEH legislative agenda.

Logistics

Kristine passed out a contact sheet for each member with contact information that CEH has on file for each of them. Each member was asked to make any necessary changes.

Public Comment

Sheila announced that the mobile services for vets are working on making it easier for vets to access the medical van so they can get on services quicker and become informed.

Anthony shared that he had recently become homeless again and was able to quickly move into an apartment with assistance through the Creative Change Counseling Center and Favor. He apologized for his absence from CAC recently.

October CAC Meeting

The next meeting, co-chaired by Blue and Latrice, will be Wednesday, October 21st at Plymouth Congregational Church, 6pm – 8:00pm. On the agenda:

- Gates Foundation Strategic Plan and Landscape
- Legislative Breakfast Recap

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56pm.