



Three Rivers Community Action, Inc.

Serving people in Goodhue, Rice, and Wabasha Counties

Wabasha County Homeless Response Team Meeting Minutes
Commissioner's Conference Room
Wabasha County Social Services Building, Wabasha, MN
February 3, 2010 10:00 a.m.

Attendance:

Judy Siebenaler, Wabasha County Social Services
Lisa, McNally, Wabasha County Social Services
Jane Timm, St. Felix Social Justice
Elle Tibor, Saint Elizabeth's Medical Center
Guest Speaker: Jane Timm, St. Felix Social Justice
Facilitator: Karen Kroll, Three Rivers Community Action, Inc.
Recording Secretary: Robyn Meixner, Three Rivers Community Action, Inc.

Welcome and Introductions

Karen Kroll, Three Rivers Community Action, Inc welcomed everyone to the meeting. She introduced herself as the new Family Development Team person taking Abby Morphew's place. Karen did some social work in northern Chicago before her family moved to Africa. Karen said she had recently moved back here after spending 17 years in Africa doing mission work. Everyone introduced themselves and gave a brief background on what they do.

Approval of the October 7, 2009 Minutes and the February 3, 2010 Agenda

Judy Siebenaler, Wabasha County Social Services, made a motion to approve the October 7, 2009 minutes and the February 3, 2010 agenda. Jane Timm, St. Felix Social Justice, seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

Guest Speaker

Jane Timm, from St. Felix Social Justice, shared a story about an individual case. According to Mike Kieffer, from St. Felix Parrish, an individual had come to the church looking for help. He had been brought down from the Twin Cities to attend his arraignment in court. His case was dismissed, but then he had no way to get back to the cities. He had no coat and also needed his medication. Mike took him to lunch and then got him a warm coat. He was living in a homeless shelter in the cities, but there was no transportation available to get him back. Mike reached his counselor in the cities and he came down to get him. Mike took him to the library to wait for his ride.

Everyone agreed with Jane that there has been and still is a need for better transportation options. Wabasha County is very limited. The nearest shelter is in Rochester and we have no options to get people there. Law Enforcement is not allowed to take them to Rochester. Bus service to Red

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Faribo Town Square
Faribault, MN 55021
Phone: 507-333-6450 Voice/TTY
Fax: 507-333-6462

1414 North Star Drive, Zumbrota, MN 55992
Phone: 507-732-7391
TTY: MN Relay Service: 1-800-627-3529
Fax: 507-732-8547
www.threeriverscap.org

611 Broadway Avenue
Wabasha, MN 55981
Phone: 507-732-7391
Fax: 651-565-2754

Wing is limited, where people could catch a bus to the cities. Jane asked for any ideas to solve these problems.

There was a concern from the group that this could become a problem with the new jail here. When prisoners are released there aren't any transportation options. This will start March 1st. But it also is a problem when people get discharged from the hospital with no transportation available. Lisa said there was going to be a program where an inmate would be assigned a case manager and they would prepare them to be ready to leave, but she hasn't heard any more about it. Judy was concerned about more inmates being released and Wabasha County not having the programs and transportation to help them get where they want to be.

Lisa McNally, Wabasha County Social Service said in Winona County they have the Poverty Round Table. They have a board, bylaws and meet regularly, but do much of their communicating through their website and email. This group provides the community with a way to connect with each other. That way they know how to help an individual and can put an email out stating how they have helped the individual and others can see what they could do to help also. Lisa said she could see if they would like to come to our meeting and talk about how they set it up. Lisa has also started a website, but few have joined.

Karen said the CRC (Community Resource Center) in Wabasha will be for clothing and food support to start with. An option might be to join other services along with these, but they would probably need a bigger facility. She thought someone from the CRC should get in contact with Bill Lewis from Faribault; he has raised funds to buy the public school in Faribault for the same purpose and has many ideas he could share.

Karen said she would like to be able to make the Wabasha HRT very operational and use the HRT group here as a spring board to other things, organize and give credibility to the group, to pull in other members by getting others involved and work as a group, using the Continuum of Care Programs available. With people from the jail being released, working with the Sheriff's Department would be important. She wants to involve teachers, school social workers, law enforcement, someone from the CRC, and get the churches represented at our meetings. She asked for names of who to personally invite the meetings: Jeanie Woodly-CRC, Lynn Schoen-CRC, Rodney Bartsh-Wabasha County Sheriff's Dept., Dave Krueger-Chief of Police for Wabasha, Churches of Lake City, Wabasha and Plainview. Karen said after attending Goodhue and Rice County HRT meetings she has seen what great input they get from all these different groups and what a difference they are making for the their counties. It would be so valuable to have that happen here in Wabasha County also.

Judy said her church, St. Mark's Episcopal in Lake City, has a free meal each Wednesday through May. It wasn't a great success last year, the ones they were hoping to come didn't, but they will have it again.

Lisa said there are many that still don't believe there are homeless people here. Karen said there are small communities of homeless people found in Faribault and Red Wing. Many move out in the winter but move back in the summer and the school enrollments show this happening.

Survey Results

Abby did a survey at the St. Felix Fall Clothing Drive to see what other services people would like available. Karen will check on this to see what they were.

Training Opportunities

- February 24th – MSSA Maintaining Ethics in Today's World. Held in Mankato.

Karen would like to be notified if there is any training for Somalia Cultures. Lisa said there was information on the DHS Website; she will get her the information.

Program Sharing

Lisa McNally, Wabasha County Social Services, said they have \$23,000 in the Emergency Assistance Fund for families only. It can be used for evictions and utility shut offs. Governor Pawlenty had unallocated funds for single adults so no funds are available. They have 73 applications for Health Care, this is the highest case load in history. They are losing General Assistance Medical on April 1st. This will affect 28,000 people.

Judy Siebenaler, Wabasha County Social Services, said she has 26 children in the Mentor Program looking for adult mentors. Presently she has 15 adults. Qualification: must be over 21, have a background check, willing to spend 1-2 hours a week for one year. The Child Abuse Prevention will have a guest speaker Tina Feigal on April 15th, Nurturing Heart, it is about parenting.

Jane Timm, St. Felix Social Justice, said "Just Faith" is running for 30 weeks, concerning issues local and worldwide. "Haiti's Hope" will be February 10th from 6:00 - 7:00 pm for a meal and prayer service.

Elle Tibor, Saint Elizabeth's Medical Center was here to sit in for Carol Scott, Saint Elizabeth's Medical Center, Social Services Department. She said the food shelf in Wabasha is still located in the basement of the hospital.

Karen Kroll, Three Rivers Community Action, Inc, said the FHPAP (Minnesota's Family Homeless Prevention Program) will be out of funds within six months. Right now there is a freeze on the funds. They are trying to find funds that maybe other counties are not using. The RHASP (Rural Housing Assistance and Stability Program) funds have been frozen until June. The HPRP (Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program) has very strict guidelines; HUD (Housing and Urban Development) is the overseer. It can help with emergencies if laid off for three to six months and can prove that they can manage payments and can be back working within six months. If the county cannot help them Karen needs a denial letter from the county for each individual file.

The Continuum of Care Program will have their meeting February 18th at 10:00 am in Owatonna at Cabela's. If you are interested in attending call Kelli in our Faribault office or if you would like to be put on the email list for information.

There will be a three week course one night a week for Money Management to help low income households be able to rebuild their credit and learn to handle their money. These classes will take place in Lake City on February 25th, March 4th and 11th, from 6:30-8:30 pm, at the Lake City VFW. Location for Wabasha is still to be determined.

There is a two bedroom house for sale in Wabasha; call Barb Dolan at Three Rivers Community Action for more information.

There is a Free Clinic for residents of Goodhue County located in the old Fairview Hospital Emergency Room on Tuesdays from 4:00-8:00 pm. It is for people that don't have insurance.

The Point of Time Count of the homeless was done on January 27th but there are no results yet.

The Energy Assistance update was given by Robyn Meixner, Three Rivers Community Action Energy Assistance Staff. Right now they are working on applications they received January 12th. Lisa asked what percent of fuel left would be considered an emergency. Robyn said 20% and under. They should call and a crisis form will be filled out and given to a staff member and they will work up the application. The application has to be complete (all information included) to process the crisis situation. She stated everyone needs to send proof of all gross income for the three months prior to the month they sign their application and a copy of their heat and electric bill along with any disconnect notices.

Karen asked everyone if the meetings should stay bi-monthly or go to monthly. They will remain bi-monthly right now. Karen asked if it would be ok to move the day to Thursdays because she will be in Faribault on Wednesdays. Everyone said that would work so the next meeting will be Thursday, April 1st. Lisa will book the same conference room.

Next Meeting: Thursday, April 1, 2010 at 10:00 a.m. in the Commissioner's Conference Room at the Wabasha County Social Services Building, Wabasha.