



## *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  
April 1, 2010 10:00 a.m.

### **Attendance:**

Judy Siebenaler, Wabasha County Social Services

Lisa, McNally, Wabasha County Social Services

Jane Timm, St. Felix Social Justice

Carol Scott, Saint Elizabeth's Medical Center

Shelly Meyer, Workforce Development, Inc

Guest Speaker: Lynn Schoen, Wabasha Area Community Resource Center/Common Closet Thrift Store

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.

### **Approval of the February 3, 2010 Minutes and the April 1, 2010 Agenda**

Shelly Meyer, Workforce Development, Inc., made a motion to approve the February 3, 2010 minutes and the April 1, 2010 agenda. Judy Siebenaler, Wabasha County Social Services, seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

### **Guest Speaker**

Lynn Schoen, Wabasha Area Community Resource Center/Common Closet Thrift Store, had started with the Horizon Group discussions. They learned that what was needed in the community was a one stop shop, where people in need could come and utilize many different services at one time. Unfortunately nothing became of it. From this group they started a new group, it has been over a year and they have a 5013C Non-Profit, under Three Rivers Community Action, Inc. They have a business plan and have started with the opening a thrift store, opening today. They will have clothing, basic household items, and sleeping bags to start with. They hope to find a larger building and then will able to expand. Eventually they would like to have programs for seniors and a one stop shop for people looking for various services. The Food Shelf is working with them and Three Rivers is helping with grant writing. They have received many words of encouragement and many donations. They will have signs by the Eagle Center and in locations where people come off their boats.

201 South Lyndale Avenue  
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](http://www.threeriverscap.org)

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

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They have business cards and would like to hand them out with a signature line on the back, so if they are referred, for example from Social Services, they would sign the back of the card and give it to the client. Then the client could come down, hand it to the volunteer at the Thrift Store and they would know who is sending them and that they need help with no questions asked. They want the people who come in to feel like everyone is treated equal and respected. She asked who they should hand the cards out to. People will email her with their ideas.

Lynn said they need resource material to put into their racks and they also have a big bulletin board that can be used.

They can sell furniture, but they will only take a picture of it and place it on the bulletin board due to space restrictions. They will call the person about it and take the money at the store.

Lynn said they do need more people on the Board of Directors. Right now they are meeting weekly but hope by May twice a month, and by June once a month. Lisa McNally, Social Services said she may be interested.

Volunteers are needed. Volunteers have to be 18 years old to work as the cashier, but 14 year olds can work on their own and 10 and 11 year olds can work with their parents. It was suggested other areas to look for volunteers would be 4-H clubs, high school, programs where people need to find ways to volunteer.

Lisa McNally, Social Services, made a suggestion to have a person there to answer questions about different services in the community.

Lisa and Shelly (Workforce Development) work with the Salvation Army vouchers, and asked if the Thrift Store would be able to take them and maybe eventually handle them from the beginning. Lynn said they would take the vouchers and would consider being the source for them in the future.

Regarding fundraising Karen said there is a gentleman by the name of Bill Louis from Faribault she may want to talk. He has done great things and has great ideas on fundraising; he raised \$150,000 in three days in order to buy a school. Lynn was interested.

Lynn will be part of the Wabasha HRT group. Everyone was pleased.

Jane Timm, from St. Felix Social Justice, shared that the Clothing Share will be April 17<sup>th</sup> and will open 7-7:30 to 11:30 or 12:00 at St. Felix Auditorium. They have one in the fall and one in the spring; it is well known and many come to it. They have posters up and ads in the paper. They will serve coffee and donuts to everyone that comes. What doesn't sell the Salvation Army comes and picks up. They have a resource table set up and have someone from Social Services, Three Rivers and the Housing Development there to answer any questions, and hand out brochures.

Karen said in Rochester they had the Point In Time Count (where they count how many homeless people they have in the counties) at that time they also held a Project Connect where they had medical, dental, hair cutting, food, and many different services at one place. It was a big success. She stated it would be nice to be able to combine the Clothing Share along with having other services there that day. Right now they do the Point In Time Count in the winter, but in this area it isn't a true count because so many leave for the winter but come back in the spring.

Lisa gave case discussions: one about an elderly couple that was in permanent housing but were going to be evicted because of financial, mental health and alcohol issues. Social Services worked with them to get their finances in order and then when they were doing better they refused any more help. Housing tried working with them so they would not get evicted, but eventually they were evicted and were living out of their car. Because they were evicted they couldn't find anywhere else to rent so they eventually ended up in the nursing home. It was discussed that they could have tried for Protector for Guardianship or Vulnerable Adult may have worked to help, but those things were already tried.

The other one was about a convicted drug felon getting out of jail wanting help. They are only given \$100.00 when they are released and landlords need first and last month's rent and a security deposit. Lisa said if they have mental health and prior records it is very hard to help them find a place to stay. Some will double up with other people, but then that can hurt them too because they don't qualify as homeless, according to HUD guidelines. Lisa said they can give them a voucher but that doesn't help more than one night and if it happens on a Friday, there is nothing to help them over the weekend. Carol Scott, Saint Elizabeth's Medical Center said it would be nice to be able to educate them in jail, on what they need to do when they get released. It was discussed that Judy Barton, Wabasha County Public Health Director, was trying to set something up for them before their releases, but didn't know if it went through or not. There is a Public Health Nurse that is out at the jail working with them now. It was discussed that it would be nice to have Judy and Sheriff Rodney Bartsh come and talk at one of the meetings. Karen will look into inviting them to the next meeting and talk about what is happening currently when they are released from jail. Karen said the Chief of Police in Red Wing comes to the Goodhue County HRT meetings and his input is very valuable and from a different point of view.

### **Training Opportunities**

Lynn shared that there is a Grant Writing Training on April 17<sup>th</sup>.

Karen shared that she went to an ethics training Mankato, MN; focusing on ethics in technology. One of the things discussed was ethics issues regarding Facebook. They cited cases where a girl had talked about her eating disorder on Facebook to her friends, and the father was in the process of changing jobs and insurance, and they would not cover the eating disorder because it was a preexisting condition. They took it to court but the judge said it was a public domain and they lost. Lynn said there was a police officer on Facebook and was able to find everything about a young person just by reading what she wrote. One thing she stated was she was going to be home

alone so he went and stayed outside of her home to make sure she was ok, then when the parents came home went in talked to them all about what he had found out just by reading her Facebook.

### **Program Sharing**

Karen explained what an unlawful detainer was. That if a landlord serves them with this they have to go to court and are physically removed. A landlord has to have a retainer in order to get them out. If they think they have it resolved and the landlord says it is lifted, that does not mean it is off their record. They have to get it expunged in order to get it taken off; Legal Services can help with this.

The Continuum of Care (CoC) covers 20 Counties in Southern Minnesota and the HRT is a branch of that. The CoC meets quarterly. For more information go to [www.threeriverscap.org](http://www.threeriverscap.org) and under programs click on Continuum of Care. Under quick links you will find meeting information, minutes, etc. If anyone would like to go they can contact Kelli McMullen in our Faribault office. Her email is [kelli.mcmullen@threeriverscap.org](mailto:kelli.mcmullen@threeriverscap.org) or call her at 507-333-6451.

Karen also has funds again for the Pohlad Family Foundation Camp Scholarship Funds, ages 8-15 years. For first time campers there is more money available.

Judy Siebenaler, Wabasha County Social Services shared that for the Mentor Program she needs mentors for Lake City, Plainview, and Elgin. Also, that April is Prevent Child Abuse Month, they put information brochures in restaurants on Child Abuse. There will be a speaker, Tina Feigal, on April 15<sup>th</sup> at Bluffview Elementary School about "Transforming the Challenging Child" from 6:30-8:30 pm.

Also, St. Marks Episcopal Church in Lake City is still serving free meals on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month. They have donated \$500.00 to the Food Shelf from money people have left for the meal, but it is free.

Lisa said they have \$20,000 left for the calendar year for families, only for eviction and utility shut-offs. Lisa reminded everyone about the Wabasha HRT website that shows upcoming events. People need to become part of a Yahoo group and then they will be connected with all updates.

Karen thanked everyone for coming and said that she is working on getting more people involved. She will try and get Judy and Rodney to speak at the next meeting.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, June 3, 2010, the time and place is still being determined. The time may be scheduled earlier than the usual.**