



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
June 3, 2010 8:30 a.m.

Attendance:

Judy Siebenaler, Wabasha County Social Services
Lisa McNally, Wabasha County Social Services
Carol Scott, Saint Elizabeth's Medical Center
Tammy Moyer, SEMMCHRA, Southeastern Minnesota Multi-County Housing Redevelopment Authority
Joe Modjeski, Wabasha County Sheriff's Office
Nel Garness, Wabasha County Jail-Programs
Judy Barton, Wabasha County Public Health Director
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 April 1, 2010 Minutes and the June 3, 2010 Agenda

Lisa McNally, Wabasha County Social Services, made a motion to approve the April 1, 2010 minutes and the June 3, 2010 agenda. Judy Siebenaler, Wabasha County Social Services, seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

Jail Discharge Planning

Karen said with the new jail in Wabasha and presently, inmates being released into the community without discharge planning. Some are from this area and have support systems in place however some are not from this area and are immediately homeless and without income upon release. The Homeless Response Team members are interested in how each agency could help inmates before they are released to help transition them back into their perspective communities and to ensure all inmates have a place to go and at the very minimum, food support.

Karen had sent an email out earlier about a premiere of a DVD from Anna McLafferty from NAMI Minnesota (National Alliance on Mental Illness) about "Jail Discharge Planning: Ending the Cycle of Recidivism". It explains how Stearns and Steele Counties reduced recidivism by connecting the inmates to many different resources before they were released from jail. Karen thanked Carol for suggesting to have Anna be a guest speaker at an HRT meeting. Anna will be a guest at our August 5th meeting. She will be sending the DVD beforehand. Karen suggested

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meeting before August 5th to review the DVD. It was agreed to meet in the Three Rivers Head Start room across from the Wabasha office in the Mittle Schule Building on Thursday, July 15th at 8:30 a.m. A reminder will be sent beforehand.

Nel Garness, from the Wabasha County Jail, works with different programs with the inmates, education classes, religion classes, if medical and social services are needed. He said right now there is nothing done to prepare them when they leave. The main problem is funding for programs and staff to help prepare them. A list of agencies and programs that are available would help him help them. He shared there was one homeless person that was being discharged and staff members donated things that were needed and he sent him to social services to sign up for some programs, but he doesn't know what happened. He said feedback from agencies if people are sent there would be helpful also. Lisa shared that the Common Closet Thrift Store could help on many items they may need. They give out business cards to agencies and if the agency stamps the back or initials it and they take it in with them they will help them for free. It was asked how many inmates they had now and how many were residents of Wabasha County. They have 12 inmates now and nine or ten are county residents and the rest are in the tri-county area. The highest was 26 inmates. Since March 4th there have been only three truly homeless. One from Wabasha County, one from Rochester area and one was a Wisconsin resident. They don't have any money when they are released and most of them have accumulated debt while in. They have to pay \$25.00 a day. Transportation is a big problem; they have had people take the Treasure Island bus to leave and get closer to their destination.

Joe Modjeski, Chief Deputy Wabasha County Sheriff's Department, shared they don't have many homeless right in the county but most are transients and they need to find transportation out of Wabasha County. They have taken them to the county line or steer them to the homeless shelter in Rochester. Homelessness changes with the seasons; in summer they will be seeing more. Winter it is not seen as much. They may not be dangerous but 95% have mental illness problems. The churches do help, and the Salvation Army can pay for an overnight stay at the hotel or motel in town. Judy Siebenaler, Wabasha County Social Services, said there is concern with the hotels/motels about continuing taking vouchers for an overnight stay, because they have had problems with damage and some won't leave. So it is important to figure out how to help them leave the community to get to where they need to go.

Judy Barton from Wabasha County Public Health asked the members to look at not only homeless individuals but all who are leaving. Judy B. asked what the HRT group could do and whether housing/homelessness was a big concern compared to mental health and chemical dependency. Karen explained that if they have problems with mental health, chemical dependency, health, transportation, keeping jobs and a criminal record, any of those make it hard to find housing or keep housing,. The HRT group could work to help them. Judy B. said the health history form they fill out when they enter does ask if they are homeless, but many times they don't think they are homeless because they will be planning to stay with family or friends or they think they may go back home, when in reality they may not be able to do that legally. So maybe rewording that form would help. Karen said for her guidelines for HUD if they are staying with anyone, they are not considered homeless. If they got the information before they are released then maybe they would be able to get help.

Judy B. said it's also hard for them to get medical insurance so that they have it when they are released. Lisa said social services could maybe send out forms with the public nurse and they could fill them out and be able to start the process right away to apply for medical insurance so they may walk out with medical insurance. Options are: MA (Medical Assistance) for families, elderly and disabled. Single adults with no children, who are not disabled, will now have to get their medical care from one of four metro hospitals, SMRT (State Medical Review Team) is a process to help certify someone as disabled who is not already certified disabled by Social Security. MN Care (Minnesota Care) could be used while they are waiting to see if they are certified disabled or while MA is pending. With MN Care you do have to pay a premium but if there is no income it costs \$4.00 and it takes 3-4 months to get. So they may walk out with medical insurance.

Judy B. said in other counties there are release programs that inmates are in for a minimum of 6 weeks, and someone is assigned to that inmate from the beginning and asks what their needs are. Then that person goes to a panel and tells them what is needed. That person also takes them to each service needed to make sure they go and get what they need. Judy B. said there needs to be a panel for the jail with representation from each community in Wabasha County, not just the City of Wabasha. There is a Public Health nurse that goes to the jail; funding allows for only three hours a day. She does medical management-doctor orders for meds, diabetic diets, monitoring, and mental health. Karen asked Judy B. what she thought the top five concerns would be right now: 1) Mental Health 2) Chemical Dependency 3) Dental Health 4) General Health 5) Direction-where do they go from there.

Judy B. said in Stearns County when they discharge an inmate they are given a duffle bag with clothes, toiletries, money for public transportation or a number for a volunteer driving service. It is worth up to a \$100.00. It was discussed that the HRT group could do bags for probably less money, and the Common Closet Thrift store would probably donate items. Carol Scott, Saint Elizabeth's Medical Center shared that the Mississippi Arts Council was looking for a project and maybe they would make the bags to put the items in. She suggested putting together a volunteer group just for transporting inmates that are released. There are some people who would be qualified and OK with transporting inmates. Then Nel could get a list of volunteers and could call when an inmate is being released. She suggested everyone bring one name of someone who would volunteer to the next meeting.

Trainings

Karen went to a SOAR training on how to sign people up for Social Security or Social Security Disability and Supplemental Security Income.

CoC Update

The CoC (Continuum of Care) has a meeting August 18th and would encourage anyone to attend. The HRT is a branch of the CoC. If anyone would like to go they can contact Kelli McMullen, Administrative Assistant, in our Faribault office. Her email is kelli.mcmullen@threeriverscap.org or call her at 507-333-6451. Go to the CoC page on our website at www.threeriverscap.org for more information.

Program Sharing

Judy Siebenaler, Social Services shared she needs more mentors for her program. She has 27 kids and only 18 mentors. She really needs mentors in the Mazeppa and Plainview areas. They did a cleanup day and had 21 people help.

Judy Barton, Wabasha County Public Health Director shared she is working on an Effective Parenting Class for inmates. Many times when someone is in jail, their spouse or significant other is getting help with parenting issues but then when the person is released from jail there is conflict because that person wasn't aware of the changes being made on parenting and this would help.

Tammy Moyer, SEMMCHRA shared there is a two year waiting list for Section 8 housing. They purchased a 16-unit housing complex in Wanamingo, five of them are still open, you need to be 55 years old or older and have to have a Sec. 8 voucher already. They are having an open house on June 19th and if they sign up for a 12 month lease they will receive \$250.00 off. They are working with the Bridging Program for housing. You need to apply for Section 8 and can be helped up to five years. They have to pass a background check, and can't be a sex offender, and they look at the drug history. If it has been more than three years they can appeal and they will need documentation on their current situation.

Carol Scott, Saint Elizabeth's Medical Center shared they have a program available if someone is rejected for MA then this program will help. They have an anonymous donor that will help with dental, medications, diapers for low income people. They also still have the food shelf located at the Medical Center.

Joe Modjeski, Wabasha County Sheriff's Office shared they have been busy with the new jail, but time is getting better now. He hopes to be able to attend more HRT meetings. He agreed the more we can do to help prepare the inmates before leaving the jail, there is a better chance they won't return.

Lisa McNally, Wabasha County Social Services shared that as of June 1st if single adults didn't qualify for MA they will need to go to one of the four metro hospitals. They still have some money for emergencies for families only: evicted, utility shut off, and homelessness.

Nel Garness, Wabasha County Jail-Programs said he was looking forward to working with the HRT group and to start any steps to be able to help the inmates be more prepared at discharge.

Karen Kroll, Three Rivers Community Action, Inc. shared they still have money for children to go to an accredited camp and recreation programs. Have HPRP (Homeless Prevention and Rapid Rehousing) funds and FHPAP (Family Homeless and Prevention and Assistance Program)

funds up to \$700.00 and RHASP (Rural Housing Assistance and Stability Program) funds available.

Robyn Meixner, Three Rivers Community Action, Inc. shared EAP (Minnesota Energy Assistance Program) ended May 31st but there are funds available for ROFW (Reach Out for Warmth). To qualify for these funds they need to complete an EAP application and proof of three months income, copy of heat and electric bills. They can also help clients that are past due, disconnected, or shut off if they qualify. To receive an application they should call 800-277-8418.

Karen thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

Next meetings:

- **Thursday, July 15th at 8:30 a.m. in the Three Rivers Head Start room across from the Wabasha office in the Mittle Schule Building to review the DVD “Jail Discharge Planning: Ending the Cycle of Recidivism” before the next meeting.**
- **HRT meeting; Thursday, August 5, 2010, at 8:30 a.m. in the Three Rivers Head Start room across from the Wabasha office in the Mittle Schule Building. Guest Speaker: Anna McLafferty from NAMI Minnesota about the DVD.**