

REGIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE HOMELESS

July 11, 2006

MINUTES

Attendance: Laurie Gross, Chair

Eileen Lopez-Cordone, Betty Skaggs, Evelyn Castile, Ellen Carter, Helen Wasserman, Sister Eileen Baffa, Simone Wright and Catherine Brennan of United Way campaign staff.

Ms. Gross welcomed all to the meeting.

Ms. Gross asked for approval of the May 9, 2006 minutes.

Ms. Eileen Lopez-Cordone noted that the May 9, 2006 minutes should reflect Ms. Lopez-Cordone and the Safety Net Committee are designing a Prevention Book.

The Homeless Committee members approved the May 9, 2006 minutes.

Sister Eileen Baffa stated that she left Mercy Learning Center four years ago with the hope of creating supportive housing for women with children. Mercy Housing will develop the property. Finding the land has been the downfall. Mercy Learning Center is looking for approximately four acres to create a community of supportive housing for families to lift each other up. Scattered housing will not work for these families. There are a lot on zoning and environmental issues that have prevented the progression of this program, thus far.

Ms. Ellen Carter, Outreach Worker with the Connecticut Association for Human Services for Non Profits based in Hartford, has been doing family economic security work and Food Stamp Outreach in Bridgeport. She brought informational material for anyone needing information on what Ms. Carter does on the food stamp portion of her work.

Ms. Evelyn Castile of Stratford Community Services brought info on "Help with Medical Coverage." There is a growing population of people in mid-income range that need resources and are referred to Bridgeport to get those resources. A "Residential Rehab Program" pamphlet was introduced. This program is for Stratford residents only, which enables them to do home repairs. There was no funding last year. However, this year there is up to \$15,000 available to homeowners who live in Stratford. There is a waiting list. They would call the Town of Stratford to get an application to apply for this money. Assistance is available in filling out the application.

Ms. Eileen Lopez-Cordone reported that 211 Infoline has received 1,322 on housing and shelter calls in the last six months. Bridgeport totaled 11,000 calls on housing and shelter in the last six months. These reports can be run from the website for your town.

Ms. Lopez-Cordone attended the New Haven Housing Forum who is also working on the Ten-year Plan to End Homelessness. The 90 people in attendance received the newly created Housing Resource Guide. They had a welcoming guide for their tenants who are in supportive housing and transitioned to permanent housing, getting settled. There was much information distributed at an all-day forum. There were panel discussions, speakers, breakout sessions and much more. It was a successful event.

Ms. Betty Skaggs, social worker at St. Vincent's Outreach Department. Every Wednesday morning the Geriatric Clinic is opened from 9 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. Monday, Thursday and Friday they are at Thomas Merton House from 9 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Fridays are primarily social work and nursing days with no doctor on duty. For the past few months, every Mondays volunteer Dr. Joanna Vincent has been coming in. The hospital started monthly social work meetings among 8-9 staff.

Ms. Simone Wright of FSW, Inc. indicated that her program at FSW is eviction and foreclosure prevention. There is funding in the form of a loan, to assist people that are facing eviction or foreclosure and there is a small amount of money given to FSW for security deposit assistance. The security deposit assistance is for those in an emergency situation who would otherwise be homeless without our assistance. They need to be employed, able to afford their basic living expenses in the new apartment as well as pay back the loan to FSW, Inc. The term of the loan is approximately 12 months, interest-free. FSW, Inc. does not accept any cash assistance because that changes so quickly the loans don't get back with cash assistance. FSW does accept social security and SSI. FSW, Inc. tries to help as many people as they can.

Ms. Gross stated that through an article in the paper, the Park City Project will be moving forward so that there will be units for both elderly and supportive housing for people with disability.

Ms. Lopez-Cardone informed all that they are no longer 211 Infoline but simply 211.

There was a discussion on the Ten-year Plan to End Homelessness. Some progress has been made but we'll have more data after the first year.

Ms. Ellen Carter reported that two books, "Your Families Money Too" – "Manage and Debt Credit" at the 6th grade reading level and "They're Your Clients' Money" gives you a lot of tips on how to manage debt.

With no further business Ms. Gross announced that the next meeting would be held on September 12, 2006, at 9:00 a.m. at United Way. She wished all a wonderful summer!