

Whatcom County Homeless Coalition
Thursday, October 4, 2007
City of Bellingham – Municipal Court Bldg.
Fireplace Room - 3:30-5:00 PM

1. Introductions, review September Meeting notes announcements.

Introductions of those present were conducted.

There were no comments or corrections regarding the September meeting notes.

Announcements were as follows:

Jim Cozad, Interfaith Coalition, announced coats collected during the Winter Coat Drive will be available to needy adults and children on Saturday, October 27, 12:00P.M. – 2 P.M. and Sunday, October 28, 12:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. at the Assumption Church Gym, 2116 Cornwall Avenue, Bellingham.

Candidates Forum on the Growth and Sprawl of Poverty, Hunger and Homelessness will be held Wednesday, October 10, 5:30 P.M. – 8:30 PM at the Bellingham Cruise Terminal, 355 Harris Street, Bellingham.

Kids 4 Kids Benefit Concert will be held Saturday, November 3, 7:00 P.M. at the Assumption Church Gym, 2116 Cornwall Avenue, Bellingham. All proceeds will benefit Amy's Place.

2. Steering Committee Report

The Steering Committee met on 9/17/07. Committee meeting notes will be sent to the Homeless Coalition members by e-mail with next month's agenda and meeting notes.

3. Update of HGAP Project

Gary stated the HGAP contract is complete and will be sent to Olympia for CETD to sign. Round II HGAP grant has been submitted and included the proposal that was in the original application for offender re-entry again, along with additional features such as resources for people re-entering from the local criminal justice system. Application is being made to establish four master leased three bedroom homes in Bellingham. These homes would be available to re-entry offenders coming out of DOC. The housing would be expected to be permanent and the individual moving into one of these homes could choose to stay for as long as they want. There would be a built in vacancy protection so if someone disappeared or had a relapse, or was in inpatient treatment, their rent or cost of their residence will be guaranteed for up to thirty days. If someone wanted to move to another community living situation they could receive support through the Homeless Service Center to get coordination for other types of grant supported housing. Work continues to establish the administrative entity contract to support the Whatcom County Homeless Service Center. There have been on going meetings with the Opportunity Council, and the report that came back from the original proposal indicates a potential need for additional funding. There are on going negotiations to work out these details.

4. Presentation: Christina McLeod, Assistant Director, Fair Housing Center of Washington

Fair Housing Center of Washington (FHW) is a private non-profit agency that serves all of Western and Central Washington, regarding civil rights laws in housing, specifically the Federal Fair Housing Act which prohibits housing discrimination.

Highlights of the presentation were:

- FHW is one of two private non-profit agencies in WA State that assist people with housing discrimination issues.
- A person cannot be denied housing in the United States because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, family status and disability. WA State expanded the coverage to include marital status, sexual orientation, and military veteran status.
- Fair Housing Act covers housing rentals, such as apartments, condos, time shares, single family dwellings, transitional housing, group homes, and homeless shelters.
- The Fair Housing of WA does housing discrimination testing as a valid way to gather information. The City of Bellingham has been very supportive and has given funds for doing the testing.

Christina provided a number of handouts and internet resources. For any fair housing concerns or for further information email tmcleod@fhcWASHINGTON.org

Christina answered several questions from the Coalition Members.

5. Portland Transitions to Housing Program

- **Technical Training Scheduling Update**

Greg Winter is coordinating a half-day community training workshop with folks from Portland, on Monday, November 5, 1 P.M. – 5 P.M., at St. Joseph Hospital Health Education Center.

- **Ten Year Plan Revisions**

Phase III - Working to identify major gaps in HGAP. At the meeting in December members will be looking at the next draft to include youth and offenders re-entering from the criminal justice system.

6. Youth Focus Group Update

The issues with Youth Homelessness are being included in the Ten Year Plan. The Youth Focus Group is developing a list of the area's organizations and agencies that work with youth. The next meeting will be on October 18.

7. Project Connect Update

Bruce Johnson presented an update on Project Homeless Connect and had handouts. The intention of BWPHC is to provide 1-day, 1-stop events that:

- Invite and welcome homeless people
- Reduce barriers to service
- Provide immediate and complete service outcomes
- Create sustainable and long term service partnerships
- Track and publicize results that connect to the 10-year plan to end homelessness locally.

BWPHC asked that the Homeless Coalition formally adopted Bellingham Whatcom Project Homeless Connect as an official project.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded and passed unanimously by those present to support and endorse the BWPHC.

Gary will present this to the Whatcom County Housing Advisory Committee in November.

Bruce stated that a Project Homeless Connect meeting will be held at the Tacoma Dome Exhibition Hall on Wednesday, October 10, at 8:00 A.M. Members of the BWPHC group plans to attend the PHC event in Tacoma. Paul Carlson, a regional PHC planner, will be available to meet informally with those in attendance at the meeting.

On Thursday, October 11, 1:00 P.M. a meeting will be held at Catholic Community Services, downstairs conference rooms, located in the Washington Grocery Building, Railroad Ave and Chestnut St., for planning the local PHC events.

8. Balance of State Update - None

9. Other

Gary stated a letter of condolence from the Homeless Coalition was sent to the family of Lyle Stork who passed away on September 15. Lyle will be missed by the community and will be remembered for his many accomplishments.

There are people in housing that are without beds. If you know of someone that has free furniture contact Jim DeGoiler, WCPC, at 676-2220.

❖ **Next Meeting: Thursday, November 1, 2007**

If you have any questions call or e-mail:

Gary Williams at 676-6724 Ext. 30693 or e-mail gwilliam@co.whatcom.wa.us

Gail de Hoog – Northwest Youth Services 734-9862 or email – gaild@nwys.org

Ann Holmes at 676-6724 Ext. 50811 or email aholmes@co.whatcom.wa.us

