

## Homeless Alliance Meeting Minutes

January 21, 2015

Attending: See Sheet

1. Introduction
2. Hope Gardens Presentation by Karen Carmen
3. Coordinated Entry Update
4. By-Laws Changes
5. Board Elections
6. Point-In-Time Policies and Procedures
7. Announcements
8. Adjournment

Introductions (see Sign-in sheet – 37 people present)

Meeting called to order at 3:10PM by Penny Selmonsky, chair of HAWNY. A quorum of members was present. (See sign in sheet)

### Hope Gardens Presentation

- Presentation by Karen Carmen and Michelle Wilczewski
- Development Team
  - Sam Savarino, Janet Meiselman of Oxford Consulting
  - Matt Urban teams
- “Hammering, a lot of noise, and then we had a building.”
- Program development
  - Who are you serving?
    - Chronically homeless women (unaccompanied)
  - What are their unfulfilled need?
    - Housing
    - Treatment of mental illness and substance abuse
    - Surviving trauma (100% of the women have experienced trauma)
  - What are the barriers to fulfilling their needs?
    - Locate them? Where are they?
      - Outreach team, community partners, friends of night people
    - Sometimes aggressive behavior
      - Experiences of assault contributes to this
    - Mistrust
    - compliance
  - Can needs be met by existing services?
    - Often yes
- Typical chronically homeless woman
  - Typically older (average age 48)
  - 70% are women of color
  - 97% have suffered some form of abuse
  - 62% report being assaulted on the street
  - Vast majority have a disability
  - Survival techniques

- Often banned from shelters due to behavior conflicting with mass shelter facility operations
    - Unsympathetic – sex workers, trying to stay out of sight, etc
- Very little research on chronically homeless women
  - Working on a study with UB School of Social Work prof Tom Nochajski (co-director of the Institute on Trauma Informed Care)
  - Over 40 Themes discovered
    - 100% had experienced abuse either in adulthood or in childhood
    - 100% had been sexually assaulted as a child
  - Understanding complex trauma
    - “the experience of multiple, chronic and prolonged developmentally adverse traumatic events, most often of an interpersonal nature... and early life onset.” Bessel van der Kolk (2005)
    - Recognizing the effects of trauma
      - Abnormal sleeping papers
      - Nightmares, flashbacks
      - Anger, rage
      - Headaches, intestinal problems
      - Chemical addictions
      - Lack of focus
      - Distrust-defiance
    - Worth noting that a great deal of trauma happens in the home, so those who experienced trauma do not necessarily see home as a safe place. Implications for housing the chronically homeless
- Trauma-informed care (five basic pillars – how Matt Urban is choosing to interact with the women in Hope Gardens, and what informs their programming)
  - Safety
  - Trustworthiness
  - Choice
  - Collaboration
  - Empowerment
- Trauma Informed Care facets of the MU HG project
  - Low-demand
    - Argument that due to the history, because the clients are the experts in their own lives, we need to adjust our perspective on compliance from expecting the client to be compliant to ensuring that the program itself is compliant
  - Therapeutic architectural features
    - Wanted HG to look like a home, not an institution, wanted open spaces
    - Therapeutic garden (well, it’s a mud puddle now – but come spring...)
    - Garden theme throughout the building to provide a peaceful and soothing environment
    - Natural light throughout building
    - Fireplace in the garden lounge
    - Furnishings differ by apartment
    - Safety
      - Enclosed courtyard
      - Security officers at night

- Front desk
- Amenities
  - 20 small fully furnished apartments
  - Staffed 24/7 with evening program (women are most agitated at night due to frequency of assaults)
  - 9slides)
- Eligibility
  - Chronically Homeless Woman
  - Filled out the local vulnerability index (in BAS-Net)
  - Must be in BAS-Net
  - Filled by highest VI score first – it is NOT first come, first serve
  - Michelle is in charge of the intakes. If you're unsure of the VI, contact 893-7222 X307 for the MU Homeless outreach team
- Struggle right now: finding the women who are at the top of the list
- "How long can they stay?"
  - It's permanent housing – as long as the project has funding, they can stay. "theoretically forever"
- They suggest that agencies should not send people directly to Hope Gardens, send them to Hope Center instead so they can receive other services, start the application process
- Clients pay 30% of their income (if they have it, if not, doesn't impact housing).
- It is a Medicaid redesign project, so all clients must be Medicaid eligible. (All homeless people are Medicaid eligible)
- Contact Karen 893-7222 X530 for a tour, for intake/application for 893-7222 X531 Michelle

More housing first beds are now available

- 18 at Evergreen
- 40 at Spectrum
- 22 at Matt Urban Housing First 2
- (if Hope Gardens doesn't work out there are other resources)

Coordinated Entry Update

- Homeless Alliance is in the process of finalizing the policies and procedures for all the subpopulations impacted by the process of Coordinated Entry
- Thank you for your efforts in the focus groups – the feedback was invaluable
- Kexin has been working to get the policies from pen to paper
- The subcommittees will review the drafts and submit
- They will be up to approval at a vote at the next HAWNY meeting
- It will be amended and changed as it is implemented and we experience unforeseen facets of the process
- We appreciate the time consuming nature – thank you for the time spent to make this process better
- If you have any questions, comments, concerns, please contact us and share.
- We expect that we will have to submit the policies and procedures to HUD as part of the CoC application project
- PSH has been using the vulnerability index, rrh will use the VI-F-SPDAT when they are funded, youth will have a process as well.
- We will need an accountability committee

- Subcommittees will review their own facets
- Accountability will likely be made of providers directly affected by the process

#### By-law changes

- The changes are to be in compliance with the Revitalization Act of 2013
- Changes
  - Make electronic communication easier
  - Need to have an audit committee
- Error in article 2, section 16 – “suggest that the board would adopt” was from the attorney
- Motion – Mike Henry
- 2nded Sister Mary Augusta Kaiser
- No discussion
- Passed unanimously

#### Board Elections

- “That time of year where we have board elections” – Penny
- Karen Carman, Chris Syracuse, Don Dauman, Robyn Krueger, Sam Savarino
- Motion to present as a slate – Warren Marcus, 2nded by Karen Carman
- Approved unanimously
- Dale noted that we needed more representation from the business community to help us present homelessness to the private sector – otherwise we risk simply preaching to the choir
- We need to reach from beyond ourselves

#### Point in Time

- We anticipate that HUD is going to want to see this as part of the CoC application
- Expanding into new locations, especially in Niagara County, to do a more region wide approach
- It is a formality, pen to paper for what we have been doing
- Christine wrote this
- “A lot of really fun stuff that the staff has been working on” “when we apply, we’re going to have some great paper to go with it”
- Byron McKinney motion to approve, Warren Marcus 2nded
- Discussion
  - “Think it will be helpful to have that for next year.” Warren
- Passed unanimously

Utilities Interagency Group in Niagara Falls – Miguel Santos is suggesting that maybe the NF providers should attend this. (Mark Johnson would be a good connector for these.) (Miguel Santos - 831-7312)

Question if we could add more board members? Answer: Probably, but this vote is over. Have the interested person send a resume to Dale.

#### Announcement:

- The assistance for National Grid HEAP has expanded to include more in the eligibility
- Outreach Team from the WNY Coalition for the Homeless
  - Established a satellite office at the NFTA Exchange Street bus station from 11PM-2AM, staffed by members of the outreach team (interagency)

- Working on a collaboration with the Buffalo Police to create a homeless outreach team (HOT) to train police officers to respond to the homeless rather than arresting it
    - There are petitions going out to demonstrate that this is valuable
- Starting the annual membership drive for the Homeless Alliance
  - See the bottom of the agenda
- Penny Selmonsky is stepping down from the chair of the board of the Homeless Alliance
  - Karen Carmen will be the next president
- Question from Magalie from Hispanics United
  - Running into teenagers who are trying to do well in school, but they have parents who are not necessarily assisting in this process or a very troubled family life
  - Trying to get connected with clients before they end up on the streets and embedded
  - Some are high school age and some are community college students
  - Would like to partner with other agencies who can help
    - Ida Parker was just hired to work at ECC to work with clients who are struggling with their families
    - Also recommended to connect with Teaching and Restoring Youth
    - Also recommended to connect with Diana Proske of Neighborhood Legal Services
    - Another recommendation from Angel of City Mission to contact John Furby of Compass House (contact her for info)
    - Recommended for males 16-20 to contact Plymouth Crossroads