

Okaloosa Walton Homeless Continuum of Care AKA Opportunity, Inc.
Board Meeting February 1, 2010
FWB Chamber Board Room

Attendees: Terrie Henderson, Families Count; Paula Hutchinson and Carrie Ziegler, OK Health Dept.; Claire Ogle, Hosanna House; Marietta Scheer and Ginny Barr, Mental Health Asso.; Beth Norton, NW FL State College; Ben Tandy, St. Stephens Baptist; Anthony Sawyer, Sharing and Caring; Anita Ferrell, Stephanie Yelverton, Lydia Barton, Keli Cummings, CC Fearson, Lenore Wilson, Opportunity Inc.; Jaff Rascon, Oasis; Duane St. John and Nate Smith, Continuum of Care; Michelle Sparzel, Shelter House; Patricia Ell and Annette Maldonado, OK Schools; Lisa Lydston, Catherine Revai, Teresa Gomez, DCF; Mack Gay, Children in Crisis; Maryann Helfrich and Adrienne Carr, Fresh Start; Mary Hauge, Jan Palmgren, JoAnn Gorsuch, St. Simon's Episcopal; Ann Peebles, First Baptist; Tom and Denise Buscavage, Community of Christ; Don and Kim Jackson, Point in Time Survey; Jackie Pilcher, Pelican Real Estate/Krewe of Chameleons

Nate Smith, Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM. Members introduced themselves.

Minutes of the January 4 meeting were approved as written. Ginny Barr, Treasurer, gave the financial report. She suggested that we put the minutes and the financials on the consent agenda. Motion was made and seconded that we do this. Motion passed. Motion made and seconded to forego the reading of the financials at this meeting. Motion passed.

Annette Maldonado, Okaloosa County Schools Title I Director, spoke to the group about providing services for homeless children. Financial Assistance can be provided if certain forms are completed for the requirements. They can provide a myriad of services from transportation to medical assistance. 400+ students have been identified as homeless in the OK School System. They are working on a Spring Break Camp. South end of County has identified five schools that will have this through the YMCA (Burner, Elliott Point, Wright, Shalimar and Eglin Schools). Also are trying to identify students in other areas (Crestview, Niceville, Destin) but this can only be accomplished with the cooperation of the parent/guardian. Schools and the Continuum have different definitions of homeless children. This is because of government rules that govern each organization. Children can be 3-22 years old. After school care can be provided for these children.

Donald Jackson attended the meeting and addressed the group. Lenore introduced him as the point in time survey crew leader. He and his wife were homeless last year and stayed at Opportunity Place. Donald found several homeless families who had children. Churches and camps were where he checked. Brooks Bridge has a lot of people living under it. The families are concerned that their children will be taken away if people know they are homeless. He also had a Spanish interrupter helping him. Donald felt a lot of these people were newly homeless. Crestview did counts on Saturday and hired homeless to go out to the camps. Heavy rain had caused the homeless to hang tents and sleeping bags to dry. Lady in Crestview takes homeless into her home. She has 32 living there right now. She is a widow. She also has three small children, one is disabled. She doesn't allow any drinking or substance abuse. Keli found some parents with two children (a 1 and 3 year old) who were evicted and Lenore has the funds to put them into a motel tonight.

Lenore expects the counts to be very high this year. She is starting to see a lot more people than in the past because the Continuum has some resources that it hasn't had in the past. Television came out today to Opportunity Place and spoke with residents. Cold night shelters are up every night. City of

Defuniak Springs opened its community center and staffed it with employees and volunteers. Ginny suggested that Lenore send them a congratulatory note on this effort. HMIS audit went well. They gave Opportunity Inc. a very high rating. Children in Crisis will name its new teen home building Opportunity Home. Keli and Lenore will meet with the Muscogee Creek Nation tomorrow and do a needs-assessment.

Ben Tandy went over and had a difficult time identifying Native Americans. There is an after school program for the children on Tuesday and there are 35 children there. Christ the King provides the food and St. Stephens Baptist is transporting it. DCF went out and signed up families for food stamps. A bigger need has been identified and now Rural Relief is in effect. Ann Tucker is the chief of the tribal council.

Nate explained the status of Opportunity Inc. The Board has asked that the clear title be deeded to the Continuum. Ship has requested that some income stream be generated from Opportunity Inc. Gregg Chapel is to get a 400,000 loan returned to Ship. CDC meets tomorrow. The executive Board will be dealing with the CDC on this.

The Shelter needs an organization to take over some of the meals since Opportunity Place lost a major benefactor. Therefore, the Shelter needs meals on various days. Fundraiser for Victims of the Haiti Earthquake on February 6. Contact Ben Tandy for information. Motion was made and seconded to formally recognize the City of Defuniak Springs for its efforts on providing services to the homeless. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Jackie Pilcher, Secretary