

Manchester Initiative for Supportive Housing

Minutes of January 9, 2008

Attendees: David Blackwell, Tim Woods, Jody Wynn Rodiger, Anne Carr, John Gibbs, Kathleen Grover, Edith Gerber, Boris Gerber, Jay Stoppelman, Ken Harley, Sarah Edwards, Dianne McPherson, Mary Foley, Edith Perlwitz, Fr. Stephen Sledesky, David Smith, John Flynn, Sue Hadge, Anthony Bonetti, and Eileen Sweeney.

St. Bridget Church hosted our meeting. Sarah Edwards began by reading a story of a woman's struggle with bipolar disorder, homelessness and depression.

Upon motion duly made and second, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the MISH meeting of December 6, 2007.

David noted on the back of the agenda is a timeline of MISH accomplishments on where we have been from 2005 through December of 2007. We now need to discuss where we are going.

There will be a Supportive Housing Lobby Day on Tuesday, March 4th, at the State Capitol. It's an opportunity to advocate for funding of 650 units of supportive housing in the upcoming legislative session.

The Point-in-Time Count is on January 30 from 7 to 11 pm. It's a one day state-wide snapshot of our homeless population. Volunteers go into the streets looking for people who are homeless and also survey people who are staying at shelters. Tony Bonetti from Coalition to End Homeless said Manchester is still looking for volunteers. Training sessions will be held prior to the night of the count and some training will be provided that night. The survey information will provide important data that helps guide funding decisions. The night of the count will start at the MACC soup kitchen at 6 pm.

David reported on the housing situation Martha brought to our attention in December. She did provide the security deposit and is pleased to report her friend is doing extremely well and working over time. She wanted to thank everyone for listening.

Our consultant, Betsy Crum and the Women's Institute for Housing and Economic Development has been investigating the sites we've mentioned: Little Street (off Broad), Regent Street, Willy's Steak House and another site across the street from Willy's. The Clarion Suites has been taken off the list, at least for now.

Tim Woods spoke about the upcoming HartBeat Ensemble Show to be held at Manchester Community College on Thursday, March 13. HartBeat is a non-profit social action theatre group. The show is approximately 45-60 minutes long, consisting of 3 or 4 skits on homelessness called "Life Without an Address." It is an opportunity for MISH to tie it in with community awareness and advocacy. Their session is usually followed by a discussion and HartBeat thought it best to leave it to MISH as to what we would like to do.

There were a lot of suggestions on what program should include and how to publicize the show:

- talk about permanent supportive housing as a solution
- let people know what MISH is doing and what they can do to help
- overcome objections through education
- make sure our website has information on the show
- have lawn signs or billboards about MISH and mention the show
- make sure people know homelessness is a problem
- have a testimonial by a person who has participated in the point-in-time survey
- possibly have MCC students help with the presentation, maybe collaborate with students from an acting class
- educate with handouts - what MISH has done/is doing/will do
- get an article in Manchester Life about HartBeat Ensemble and the March 13 event
- everyone should make phone calls inviting people to come
- make sure event is posted in bulletins
- get posters in public places

There are some folks from other towns like Enfield, Vernon and Hartford who would like to come and hear about MISH and homelessness in Manchester. It was suggested we have a dinner prior to the show and invite officials from other towns. It would give them an opportunity to learn more and ask questions.

Possible scenario for that evening: dinner for town officials, display tables set up outside of the auditorium for organizations like MACC, Genesis and others, HartBeat skits interspersed with information about MISH (show ending with skit that has supportive housing as a solution), and social following the show.

Tim mentioned that his class only starts on January 29th, which doesn't give them a lot of time. He thought they could work on posters and postcards. Tony and Katie can help with handouts and information solutions. David, Tony and Katie will work on the dinner with officials. Jacki will work on invitations and coordination with outside groups like NAMI, Genesis, etc.

We should continue our community awareness campaigns in our own congregations.

Our next MISH meeting will be at United South Methodist Church on Wednesday, February 13 at 7:00 pm.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, it was

VOTED: To adjourn.

Submitted,

Dianne McPherson
Secretary