

MINUTES  
LAFAYETTE COUNTY HOMELESS COALITION  
THURSDAY August 17, 2017 8:30 A.M.  
Darlington United Methodist Church  
Darlington, WI 53530

**Mission Statement:**

- a. *Learn about and define homelessness and its causes in our county.*
- b. *Coordinate community networks which promote self-sufficiency and stability for families, and*
- c. *Advocate for locally driven solutions to end homelessness.*

Present: Rev. Craig Simenson, Grace Lutheran Darlington, Joy McQuaid, Housing, Michelle Friedrich, SWCAP, Jason King, Darlington Police Department, Lee Gill, Lafayette Co. Health Department, Rev. Connie Matye, Peace Lutheran, Belmont, Shari Olson, Food Pantry, Angela Swinehart, Salvation Army, Dana Harcus, ADRC, Mary Knellwolf, Community/Edgewood College

1. Call to order by Rev. Craig Simenson at 8:36 a.m.

2. Approval of minutes from July 20, 2017. One correction: Joy McQuaid is taking over for DOUG O'Brien. Mary K, motioned we approve the minutes with this correction. Dana seconded. Motion carried.

3. Resource: Kim Voigts of Belmont Blessings in a Backpack. Kim did not attend the meeting.

4. Point in Time Count and Community Breakfast update. Mary reported that there were 4 sets of two who went out. One law enforcement individual with a member of the community. They did not find anyone that was homeless. The flooding in July caused some complications with this task as there were several roads that were impassable and thus closed.

Breakfast at Methodist church. 11-13 people were served with 8 volunteers. They did not determine that any who attended the breakfast were homeless. There was a free will donation to the coalition of about 30 dollars. Michelle thanked all who helped with the Point in Time Count.

5. Christmas in July update: Four communities participated: Darlington, Belmont, Argyle and Blanchardville with \$1464.20 collected. There are still two buckets out which will be used this fall in Gratiot. Many thanks to Tony Ruesga for all his efforts in this project and to his family for helping to cover many of the shifts in Darlington.

Discussion then centered on what can be done to create a situation in which the churches in Lafayette County can support Salvation Army? How can Salvation Army tap into activities that are already happening?

Angie reported that there is \$1200 left in the Salvation Army budget this year. They have given money to Blessings in a Backpack in Belmont and Darlington. There were a couple of requests this month as well. In mid-September closer to their fiscal year's end they will look to spend down the money with gas cards if need be.

6. Iowa/Lafayette County Family Promise update. Connie reported that after a year of conversation the Task Force has decided to separate the two counties. The counties working together made sense when we were exploring an actual Family Promise model but that is not feasible at this time. With the separating of the Task Force came some recommendations to the individual homeless coalitions in each county. Following are the recommendations for Lafayette:

Create a better system for counting the homeless through school homeless liaisons and clergy awareness.

Gathering county clergy together to discuss the issue of homelessness and what it looks like in our county.

Iowa County is going to focus on short term housing. Question asked: do we have a need for that in Lafayette County? It is felt that in Lafayette county people are not without a place to stay but that family members and others who are letting people stay with them may need some support that is currently not happening.

Encouragement for the homeless coalition to talk more specifically for the need of housing or a shelter space.

Have conversation about funding for these systems that may need to be put in place.

Iowa County has a Google doc for reporting to help record interactions with people who are homeless. This might be a good idea in Lafayette County.

Human Services is going to create a very specific document to determine homelessness or the degree of homelessness for individuals that are seen there.

Michelle has been in conversation with individuals around the Hideaway Acres about using a trailer out there as short term housing for people who needed it. She was able to use one of their trailers already and was told they have another they are cleaning up that could also be used. There was discussion about how remote that area was.

Discussion then continued regarding having some trailers in the Mobile Home Parks in the county. Again funding was part of the discussion.

Joy reported that there is a housing voucher program that has not been used and she will be focusing on that in the near future and get it up and running again. There are 30 vouchers that are not being utilized with a 2 year waiting list.

Motion: Pastor Craig made a motion that we put housing vouchers and trailer conversation on the Agenda for the meeting on September 21<sup>st</sup>. Lee seconded the motion. The motion passed.

7. SWCAP: Michelle reported that the State requires that she have an after-hours plan that is posted. There was discussion about the current system of vouchers being at the Sherriff's Office. There was continued discussion about having the motel vouchers at the Sherriff's Office in Darlington and how a person not in Darlington can access them. The answer is that the person can call the Sherriff's Office and a voucher given to a participating motel per a phone call. Exploration will happen regarding patrols out on the roads perhaps having vouchers and then delivering those as need arises.

Motion then made by Mary that the after-hours plan is for people to call the Salvation Army, with that phone call directed to the Sherriff's Office who will provide assistance as warranted. Seconded by Joy. Motion carried.

8. Poverty Simulation: Lee reported: This is on the calendar for November 1 beginning at 5:30. There is a tentative plan for a light lunch to be served. Place: Town Bank. If you can help with this call the UW Extension Office and ask for Lori Berget. We need many people to help as well as a plan to get the word out about this. There is a push to get students and staff at schools to attend. Suggested that churches be contacted about bringing confirmation classes as this is on a Wednesday. More to come.

Additional report by Lee during this time about Walk to Remember which will be a walk to raise awareness and funds to help with creating Dementia friendly communities and programs for the people with Dementia. The walk will be Sunday October 1 with the cost of \$25 per person. Barb Taylor will be a keynote speaker at the event.

Next planning meeting will be Monday, August 21 at 6:00p.m. at Jackson Pavilion in Shullsburg.

9. Decision Tree: to be discussed at next month's meeting. Dana also shared a Homeless Checklist which may also be discussed.

Adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

**NEXT MEETING: Thursday September 21 at 8:30 a.m. at the Darlington UMC, 546 Park Place in Darlington. Enter through the Washington Street Entrance please.**

Submitted by Pastor Connie Matye, Acting Minute Taker