

EASTSIDE INTERFAITH SOCIAL CONCERNS COUNCIL

P.O. BOX 662, Bellevue, WA 98009-0662

February 14, 2017 Meeting Minutes

The meeting was held in Bristol Hall of St. Margaret's Episcopal Church and began at 12:00 noon and ran until 1:45 PM.

WELCOME: After 15 minutes of lunch and networking, the meeting was called to order and conducted by EISCC President Tony Copes.

OPENING PRAYER: Tony Copes

SELF-INTRODUCTIONS were made by 25 representatives and guests.

MINUTES of the January 14, 2016, meeting as drafted by Secretary Karen Studders have not yet been approved by the board. January and February minutes will be reviewed at the March meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Warren Marquardson reported our accounts balance of about \$102,441 balance on hand. Approximately \$61,000 Backpack Meals, \$25,000 Congregations for Kids and \$16,000 EISCC.

PROGRAM: Just Serve by Gordon Wilson & Emily Siple

Gordon first talked about the 1/14/17 fire at the Islamic Center of Eastside, known as the Bellevue Mosque. It is a small mosque next door to the Bellevue Stake of the Church of Latter-day Saints (LDS). LDS offered a large room to their Muslim neighbors to use free of charge 6 days/week until the members can resume praying at their mosque. There has been a very positive response in the LDS community. The Muslim community is raising funds to rebuild and accepting donations.

Farida Hakim presented two options that the mosque is considering:

- (1) rebuild on site and meet codes; will cost about \$800,000 and take 6 months;
- (2) rebuild at a larger site; will cost \$1-2 million and take 2 years, similar to MAPS in Redmond.

Gordon said tha the LDS and the Islamic Center have always had a good relationship. The relationship was leadership focused and since the fire, the relationship is congregationally focused.

A bit of background about LDS. It is organized geographically and there are some premises:

- (1) wards and stakes similar to parishes and dioceses
- (2) everyone is an amateur; a calling is given to you; lots of turnover
- (3) community service is a common interest; serve poor and needy
 - a. Catholics build hospitals
 - b. Some faiths work with homeless
 - c. LDS provides volunteers

- (4) 4 Things a Non-Profit can do:
 - a. Volunteer (LDS does well)
 - b. Donate supplies (LDS does well)
 - c. Donate money
 - d. Provide facilities

Need: LDS can provide volunteers for service beyond its LDS members' needs. LDS created a website which focuses on volunteer time and volunteer match. Similar to Idealist, King County and University of Washington. The City of Renton uses the website for its volunteers.

www.JustServe.org

- (1) Emily walked us through creating a profile.
 - a. Yellow is volunteer skills and orange is type of service you want to do.
 - b. There are 2 videos on-line that she recommends you watch.
 - c. Examples of local non-profits which are listed include: Hopelink, King County Public Library, Bridge, Sophia Way, Hero House, Salvation Army, Congregations for the Homeless, Eastside Baby Corner, etc.
- (2) Emily walked us through adding a project.
 - a. Sponsor can register
 - b. Write and add a photo
- (3) Three people maintain the website in this geographic area; you are welcome to email them & they'll call back:
 - a. Emily Siple manages Bellevue South of I-90
 - b. Kathy Martin manages Bellevue North of I-90
 - c. Doneen manages Redmond
- (4) Q & A:
 - a. They volunteer their time and the website is at your own risk; no formal vetting of organizations
 - b. A local non-profit can get permission to manage their own rather than LDS; examples are the City of Renton and YWCA. See Gordon to add organizations.

1:05 SPOTLIGHTS:

A. Backpack Meals by Jan Starr

Jan acknowledged Farida Hakim and Nicky Sheriff for their work and Warren Magnuson for managing the funds. Backpack Meals is an agency of Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council that started in 2011. Originally served 60 kids, last week served 330. Now serve grades K-12: all children, all grades and all Bellevue schools. A lot of kids need food. Some statistics:

The Crisis of Hunger in Bellevue

- Every day children in the Bellevue School District are going hungry.
- More than 250 students are known to be homeless.
- Nearly 4,000 students from low-income families qualify for free or reduced price meals during the school day.
- For some kids, the only meals they eat are at school. On weekends they go hungry.
- Hunger pervades every aspect of their lives—their health, academic performance, behavior, family and social relationships, and their hope for the future.
- During the 2016-2017 school year, 300 children have been given a pack of food each week.

What are effects of hunger and food insecurity?

Food insecurity is linked to increased hospitalizations and developmental problems, headaches, stomach aches and colds. Hungry children can't learn. They have an inability to concentrate, poor academic performance, headaches, stomach aches and more behavior problems.

National and State Hunger and Food insecurity Data:

Food Insecurity means not knowing where your next meal is coming from. Food insecurity means that a family is uncertain if they can acquire enough food to consistently meet the daily needs of all members of their households.

- Hunger is a real and pressing problem all throughout the US and in Washington State.
- **1 in 5 children in the US are at risk of hunger**
- **33.1 million adults and 15.9 million children are Food Insecure.**
- Washington State Food insecurity is 13.7 % compared to 14% nation-wide.
- **Washington is 23rd hungriest state in the nation**
- **1 in 5 kids in WA live in households that struggle to put food on the table**
- **1 in 7 Washingtonians rely on SNAP (food stamps), which is severely threatened by budget cuts. Half of all people on SNAP are kids.**
- The majority of working-age Washingtonians who live in poverty are actively working or looking for work.
- Since the start of the recession in 2008, Washington has cut more than \$12 billion in discretionary spending from our state's operating budget, in the areas of public safety, higher education and basic needs services.
- 1 in 5 Washingtonians relies on their local food bank.
- Households where food insecurity is greater include: Households with children 19.2%, Households with incomes below poverty line 44.8%, Households with children headed by women 35.3%, African American 32%, Hispanic 26.9%
- Washington ranks 28th in the nation for Food Insecurity
- Washington ranks 23rd among states in hunger.

Jan encourages us all to talk about hunger and to share these facts in our congregations, with our families, friends and neighbors.

B. MCRC and MAPS and Mosques in General by Khizer Sheriff, MCRC

General sentiment: Thankful - for LDS supporting the Bellevue Mosque which burned and after MAPS' sign was vandalized twice, the community stands together. Tony Copes attended an event after MAPS was vandalized.

MCRC works with refugee populations and since the Muslim ban is providing further refugee assistance.

On 2/19 MCRC is providing a free **Legal Clinic** on immigration at the mosque in Redmond, 2-6 PM. King County Bar Association, ACLU and Attorney General Bob Ferguson's Office has committed to attend.

On 2/19 MCRC is providing a **Health Clinic** & community gathering, from 10AM-1 PM.

On 3/25 5:30-8:30 PM Interfaith dinner at Eastshore Unitarian

REFRESHMENT COORDINATOR Sandy Lewis:

Please thank Sandy Lewis, Tony & Trish Copes, Anne St. Germain, Gordon Wilson and Brittany Holmes who provided the food for today's meeting.

REPORTS:

President's Board Report : Tony Copes commented on the Sanctuary movement that his congregation is participating in and would like to share what the Church Council of Greater Seattle is doing with congregations and the vetting of refugees.

Congregations for Kids: Nancy Jacobs

- Goal is for Congregations for Kids to remain sustainable.
- Helped 1400 students with backpacks and/or school supplies in Bellevue this school year.
- The number of students experiencing homelessness is increasing. In 2016: final number was 250. In 2017 so far already 182, 30 more than last year at this time.
- Stevenson Elementary is being torn down and rebuilt so in August Congregations for Kids is moving elsewhere.

EISCC Legislative Coordinator: Jean Harris

- Washington legislature is in session.
- Attended Faith Action Network Legislative Advocacy Day on February 9th and learned alot.
- HB 1935 is in committee and is to repeal the death penalty.
- HB 2097 is Washington State's immigrant protections.
- HB 1987 makes it easier for faith communities to build housing for low-income people and not have to work through a non-profit as they did in Shoreline.
- HB 1122 is in committee and concerns gun control.
- **Policy cut-off is this Friday, 2/17.**
- HB 1387 limits access to assault weapons.
- To contact your state legislators, call **1-800-562-6000**. Tell them where you live and they'll provide you contact information for your legislators. **Email or postcards are the best way to reach state legislators.**
- Anne St. Germain met with Attorney General Bob Ferguson and he told her he directed his staff to place hand-written notes on this desk directly. Anne St. Germain provided some United Grannies Post Cards to everyone!

Hopelink: Brittany Holmes

- Huge thank you from families for donations that EISCC members made for kids, food and money.
- Hopelink served 564 households and 1064 children for holiday meals.
- New tally of EISCC member donations: \$3,397 in December and \$1,198 in January.
- Opened in Shoreline. Hopelink on campus.
- Tax Clinic thru University of Washington Thursday, Friday, Saturday & Sundays. Income <\$64K, taxes done for free.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Sandy Lewis announced that if you have refreshment questions, to please call her at 425-562-1228; Betty Spohn is out-of-state for the winter. Donations are also encouraged to St. Margaret's since they provide EISCC this meeting space.

Sandy Lewis announced that **Hearts & Hammers** is coming up. This is a collaborative ministry supported by five congregations of the Lake Hills Interfaith Covenant. Over one weekend each year, teams of volunteers provide labor and supplies to help with major household repairs, small renovations, yard-work and cleaning for local households. This ministry has been supported by fund-raising within the participating congregations. LDS ward provides dozens of volunteers. **NEED houses to work on!** Expect 200 volunteers to work on 10 houses.

Diane Richards announced that **Holy Cross** is hosting the emergency Women's shelter run by Catholic Community Services; Holy Cross is a small parish and they need support from other congregations.

Karen Studders relayed that over 400 people participated in February 2nd is **Interfaith Advocacy Day** in Olympia.

ACTION NEEDED: The City of Bellevue is accepting comments regarding the **proposed permanent men's shelter and supporting permanent housing at Eastgate**. Several public meetings have been held. The City of Bellevue and King County are working in partnership with Congregations for the Homeless & Imagine Housing. The site being studied is at 14350 SE Eastgate Way. Information can be found at <http://www.bellevuewa.gov/eastside-mens-shelter.htm>. Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council served as the fiscal agent for Congregations for the Homeless in its early years. The EISCC Board supports this siting of the permanent men's shelter and supportive housing within the City of Bellevue.

Please write and send emails/ letters to EastsideMensShelter@bellevuewa.gov or call Mike McCormick Huentelman at 425-452-4089, or contact Bellevue City Councilmembers directly at council@bellevuewa.gov.

CLOSING PRAYER: Jean Harris

THE NEXT EISCC MEETING will take place on Tuesday, March 14, 2016, 12:00 – 1:30 pm

PROGRAM: An Introduction to Sanctuary Congregations by Michael Ramos.

LOCATION: St. Margaret's Episcopal Church, Bristol Hall, 4228 Factoria Boulevard SE, Bellevue, WA

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Studders

Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council Secretary