

## **Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council**

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

### **May 09, 2017 Meeting Minutes**

The meeting was held in Bristol Hall of St. Margaret's Episcopal Church; it began at 12:00 noon & ended at 1:45 PM.

**WELCOME:** People helped themselves to lunch and the meeting was called to order and conducted by EISCC President Tony Copes.

**OPENING PRAYER:** Sandy Lewis

**SELF-INTRODUCTIONS** were made by 26 representatives, new people and guests.

**MINUTES** of the April 11, 2017 meeting as drafted by Secretary Karen Studders had been previously reviewed by the board. No changes were suggested by the membership. Motion by Jean Harris and second by Trish Rogers for approval of the minutes; unanimous vote of approval of minutes by the membership.

#### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Treasurer Warren Marquardson reported our account balance as of about \$89,400. Approximately \$48,400 Backpack Meals, \$24,700 Congregations for Kids and \$16,300 EISCC.

**ACTION NEEDED:** Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council served as the fiscal agent for Congregations for the Homeless in its early years. EISCC supports this siting of the permanent men's shelter and supportive housing within the City of Bellevue. 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 preferred site is at 14350 SE Eastgate Way. Information can be found at <http://www.bellevuewa.gov/eastside-mens-shelter.htm>.

**THANK YOU for showing up, wearing red and attending the 4/17/17 Bellevue City Council Study Session & Council Meeting; 5:30-9:00 PM. Several Bellevue Councilmembers said that the faith community presence made a significant difference.** Please write and send emails/ letters to [EastsideMensShelter@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:EastsideMensShelter@bellevuewa.gov) or call Mike McCormick Huentelman at 425-452-4089, or contact Bellevue City Councilmembers directly at [council@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:council@bellevuewa.gov). Thank you to your pastor/rabbi/iman for signing the two faith letters of support that were submitted to the Bellevue City Councilmembers.

**PROGRAM: Our Homeless Youth: "Congregations for Kids' Good Start Back to School Program: - Change is Underway" & "Update on Homeless Students and Impact of new Immigration Regulations in the Bellevue School District"**

This was jointly presented by Nancy Jacobs, Congregations for Kids, an EISCC sub-agency and two school district staff: Betty Takahashi, McKinney-Vento Liaison, Bellevue School District and Grace Kuan, Family Services, Bellevue School District.

August 2017 is the 22<sup>nd</sup> time that Congregations for Kids will prepare backpacks and school supplies for students from low-income families in the Bellevue School District (BSD). We expect to help around 1500 students this summer; contrast to 143 the first year. Location has changed to Spiritridge Elementary Gym. Since 2008 CFK has worked out of

Stevenson Elementary, which is being torn down this summer for reconstruction.

The need is as great as ever; the goal is the same – for kids to be equipped on a level playing field. Over the past couple of years our volunteer Steering Committee comprised of 17 people from 9 congregations has been trying to figure out how to keep the project sustainable. We have filled over 22,900 requests so far, each for a specific student. The kids we serve keep us going; some are living in cars and shelters, were evicted from motels, are temporarily living with relatives, are refugees from the Middle East and come from domestic violence situations.

The lists of requests have grown longer and more specialized. This year we are reducing the numbers of supplies that Congregations for Kids will provide. In addition, we are considering purchasing supplies in packaged kits rather than individual supplies and are trying this as a pilot program for our Senior High students this summer. Our question is whether congregations and organizations would continue to support and fund the project to the current level, since financial donations rather than donations of supplies would be the greatest need? We are working on that. Because the issue of supplies is an equity issue, Ann Lewis, a C4K Steering Committee member, testified before the Bellevue School Board on this in March 2017. Some school districts provide basic supplies for students. Some have reduced the number of requested supplies to a more reasonable number, say 4-7 items. Some have standardized the list of requested supplies per grade level, not subject to individual teachers and schools. Our school officials understand our concerns, but to date the Bellevue School District has made no decision to reduce the list of supplies that individual grades, teachers and schools put together.

Nancy read some student letters provided on two handouts with data on Congregations for Kids and 2016 letters from grateful students; both CFK handouts are attached to these minutes.

Nancy closed with a quote from Dorothy Day:

“People say, what is the sense of our small effort?  
They cannot see that we must lay one brick at a time,  
Take one step at a time.  
A pebble cast into a pond causes ripples that spread in all directions.  
Each one of our thoughts, words and deeds is like that.  
No one has a right to sit down and feel hopeless.  
There is too much work to do.”

Betty Takahashi, McKinney-Vento Liaison (Students Experiencing Homelessness), Bellevue School District

Betty commented that Nancy Jacobs is tireless! Betty’s job is to ensure the education rights of youth experiencing homelessness are met. Under McKinney-Vento, No Child Left Behind and Every Student Success Act students are represented.

Three changes in the law affecting how students experiencing homelessness are assisted:

1. Now can remain in feeder pattern so education is continuous and can remain with friends;
2. Pre-school children are now covered by McKinney-Vento, which includes right to transportation;
3. Created foster care liaison (Tracy Meyers in BSD), which is different than Betty’s role.

In the Bellevue School District, 51 students live in foster care and 242 students experiencing homelessness.

In 2006, when the McKinney-Vento program started, there were 58 students experiencing homelessness.

Today we see more people living in cars, doubled up and an entire family lives in a bedroom in an apartment or home.

Section 8 housing recently had 19,500 applications for 3,500 spots; 63% of the applicants are experiencing homelessness. A lot of people in King County are working full-time and cannot afford housing.

Trauma training is now being done and informing teaching practices.

From Jan-June 2017 BSD did a pilot and paired students with teachers to increase the connection to school.

The solution to homelessness is housing. Some Housing activity in Bellevue:

- Hopelink Place transitioning to low-income;
- Bel Red Residence Center meeting for a Day Center –residents pushing back against a Day Center;
- New Bethlehem Project – Salt House filled need for in-between shelter operation hours during the winter;
- Redmond United Methodist- St. Peter - Overlake Park Presbyterian - St. John’s Episcopal Church in Kirkland (effective June 1) provide shelter for families. For the first time the congregation based rotating shelters will NOT close in the summer; these family shelters will be open year-round!
- Safe Place Car Parking – a lot more families live in cars.

Immigration Rules:

All children are afraid. Kids told to go back to the country they came from by other students. Kids are afraid to go home. Two parents have been deported and left their families here. Some families are leaving for Canada. BSD held two information sessions with Bellevue Police Department and individual schools. ICE is NOT allowed on school grounds. ELAP provided two sessions where parents encouraged to write out guardians, who pays the rent, power of attorney, chose American citizen as guardians at the Family Connection Center.

Grace Kuan has been a Family Services Specialist for 5 years. The Family Services program is in its 15<sup>th</sup> year at the Bellevue School District. There are currently 10 specialists in Family Connections Centers located in 6 elementary, 2 middle and 2 high schools, although they provide support to all district schools. The Centers provide access to food, clothing, school supplies. Seeing that medium and moderate income families have to double up and share houses, which impacts students. Food banks need to increase weekend hours. Food has become VERY important to Bellevue School District students. People are getting desperate.

Tacoma model – apartment building with social services.

Highline School District – partner with low income housing.

**SPOTLIGHT: Support for State Homeless Legislation and Proposed Permanent Men’s Shelter**, Steve Roberts, Congregations for the Homeless

Bellevue City Council decided to site a permanent shelter for men. As the potential operator of the permanent Men’s shelter, Congregations for the Homeless is answering questions. The proposed site is Eastgate. At the last city council meeting, they decided to also look at Lincoln Center and Sound Transit OFME. Last two weeks helping staff and councilmembers.

The next meeting is **June 5<sup>th</sup>**, if you would like to support the shelter siting.

CFH encourages you to:

1. Write to Bellevue City Council to make a decision; send your email to [council@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:council@bellevuewa.gov)

- Attend council meetings. Study sessions are at 6 pm; Full council meetings are at 8 pm. Wear red and lend support to the Bellevue City Council to make a difficult decision. CFH is in support. Timing is important.

### Questions & Answers:

#### **Why low-barrier shelter?**

- Low-barrier is designed for life safety. In 2008, CFH started an Emergency Winter Shelter, which is low-barrier, after a man died on the streets in Bellevue. If the men are not in a shelter, they will be in the woods.
- Faith communities provide medium-barrier shelter. Looking for permanent space for a low-barrier shelter.
- Natural fear of everyone of unknown fueled by myths; men are not scary
- CFH's Emergency Winter Shelter is now closed for the season and the men are in the woods.
- CFH operates a Day Center from Sunday-Thursday, NOT on the weekends, from 8AM-3PM

#### **REFRESHMENT COORDINATOR:** Sandy Lewis

Please thank Sandy Lewis, Gordon Wilson, Steve Roberts, Nadine Benson and Anne St. Germain who provided the food for today's meeting.

#### **REPORTS:**

**President's Board Report:** Tony Copes thanked EISCC members and congregations for the excellent faith turnout wearing red at the April 17<sup>th</sup> Bellevue City Council Study Session and City Council meeting. We need to show up June 5<sup>th</sup>! Tony presented a draft letter to the membership with copies available to all on the tables. The letter is to the CFH board of directors asking them to take a strong position of support for the siting of the permanent men's shelter at Eastgate.

Trish Rogers made a motion to accept the draft letter from the board and Sandy Lewis made a second that the letter be accepted by the membership. Discussion by the membership followed. As drafted the letter is to be sent to the CFH board of directors from Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council and the Church Council. Elizabeth suggested that the membership felt it would be stronger if the letter was sent from the EISCC alone since it is an Eastside issue. And the Church Council could send a separate letter, including the same letter on its own letterhead. We need to make clear that the proposal is replacing the already existing low-barrier shelter. Finally, two letters need to be sent by EISCC: one to CFH and one to the Bellevue City Council. Membership vote was unanimous in favor.

#### **Backpack Meals:** Farida Hakim

Farida met Jan and Betty at a 2012 Nourishing Network meeting. Pilot last year at St. Margaret's for summer school. This year Backpack Meals is adding elementary and middle schools to high schools. Backpack Meals has a goal to raise \$8K at Give Big on May 10, 2017, tomorrow.

#### **Congregations for Kids:** Nancy Jacobs

Report provided in the May Program, above.

#### **EISCC Legislative Coordinator:** Jean Harris

Legislature is now in Special Session.

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.**

- HB 1570 document recording fee needs to be extended
- HB 1646 environmental tax on carbon
- SB 5073 and HB 1529 deadly force statute reform

- SB 5294 ombuds office to monitor Department of Corrections and prison related issues; non-violent communication
- Careful of I-1552 which seeks to repeal transgender equity; vote AGAINST this initiative.

**Hopelink:** Brittany Holmes

Hopelink newsletters available on the back table.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Sandy Lewis shared that House & Hammers repaired 10 houses plus Cambridge Court Senior Housing. Fed 200 volunteers breakfast and lunch.

Elizabeth Maupin announced that Issaquah will be deciding on the disposition of the former Sisters of Providence buildings and seeks partners to save the building and its stained glass windows.

Dick Jacke Climate Change- Eastshore Unitarian is hosting an event on 6/3/17 from 9:30 AM-11:30 AM solar and energy efficiency.

**ACTION NEEDED: Please plan to attend the 6/5/17 Bellevue City Council Study Session & Council Meeting; 5:30-9:00 PM and wear red.** Please write and send emails/ letters to [EastsideMensShelter@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:EastsideMensShelter@bellevuewa.gov) or call Mike McCormick Huentelman at 425-452-4089, or contact Bellevue City Councilmembers directly at [council@bellevuewa.gov](mailto:council@bellevuewa.gov)

CLOSING PRAYER: Karen Studders

**THE NEXT EISCC MEETING will take place on Tuesday, June 13, 2017, 12:00 – 1:30 pm**

PROGRAM: **Decolonizing – Idle No More** to be presented by Jeff Smith, American Friends Service Committee and Eastside Friends Meeting House

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

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Karen Studders*

*Secretary, Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council Board*