

Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council

Meeting Minutes June 11th, 2019

Meeting was opened by President Linda Hillsheim at 12:00 noon

Introductions were made.

May minutes were approved.

Financial report by Treasurer Warren Marquardson (see website for report)

Congregations for Kids report by Nancy Jacobs. Nancy reported they are starting on their 24th year of this project and initial contacts with congregations and other organizations are underway. 1300 students are expected to be supported from grades K-12. (This number jumped to 1700 after district requests were received a few days after this meeting.) She also shared two heartfelt stories about students who had been helped from the Family Connections Center Staff.

Elizabeth Maupin announced the EISCC workshop on Housing to be held at St Luke's on Oct 12th from 9 until 3. Main topic is how faith communities can make their land available for homeless services, mostly housing. Cities will hold breakout sessions for discussions about each cities processes and requirements.

Jean Harris reported on Faith Action Network's legislative reporting session June 23rd. Contact FAN for more info.

Hopelink shared about lots of new foodbank services and hours as well as new funds available in the new fiscal year starting July 1. Please see attached handout for details.

Betty Spohn thanked the lunch volunteers for an excellent lunch. Thanks to Jennifer Fisher, Fran Wessling, Farida Hakim, Suzie Wiley, and Betty Spohn.

Presentation.

NAMI Eastside Helping Those with Mental Illness

Mike Mathias Operations Manager

NAMI-Eastside.org

NAMI is the National Alliance for Mental Illness. The Eastside Agency, headquartered at the Together Center in Redmond serves all with mental illness on the Eastside of King County.

68% of the chronically homeless have a mental illness, mostly untreated and misunderstood. This divides the homeless from others including those providing support. NAMI Eastside tries to intervene before a person is homeless for long and

becomes habituated to their situation. Early contact can avoid the separation caused by mental illness and habituation to homelessness.

NAMI –Eastside works through many partnerships with 7 agency counselors available at their offices. These include Crisis \Connection, Addiction recovery, Warm line for listening, and 211 resources lines. More information about each of these is at nami-eastside.org/mental-illness-resources.

NAMI Eastside also offers many support groups for both individuals and families. Details of these support groups and their schedules are at <http://nami-eastside.org/mental-health-support-groups>. Groups are open to all and are no charge.

They also advocate for the mentally ill and also trains police in conflict resolution, de-escalation and how to detect and understand mental illness.

NAMI also works with the Redmond Community Court which is for offenders who offend as a result of perhaps mental illness. The court meets Wednesday from 1:30 until 3:30 at the Redmond downtown library. NAMI treats many clients remanded to them from the court.

Mike suggested that if you encounter a person you suspect of mental illness please treat them as any other person. Tell them you don't understand and cannot easily understand their experience. Ask what you could do to help.

A spokesperson from the King County Library System announced a new program of social work at the Renton Library, training staff, providing resources to folks in need who come into the library.

NEXT MEETING July 9th 12:00 PM, St Margaret's,

TOPIC: Muslim Support Services to all on the Eastside

EISCC's mission: Members of Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council ("EISCC") believe we are guided by the moving of God's spirit in our community to work together in a spirit of caring and celebration. We honor and respect each other's religious heritages, welcome and pray for each other, and share information about pressing community needs.

EISCC provides a forum to educate, advocate, initiate, coordinate, and support through task forces and other means, to work for the common good, and to address human needs and improve the quality of life of the citizens living in the eastside communities of Bellevue, Kirkland, Issaquah, Renton, and Redmond

Stories about two students who received backpacks and supplies from Congregations for Kids during the 2018-19 school year – shared by BSD Family Connections Centers staff

In the beginning of the 2019 school year, a single mom came to our high school to register her son as a student. They had just arrived from Central America and gave me a background of what their life was like. It was hostile, very unsafe, and full of poverty. The mother explained to me how she was ready to start her new life and maximize new opportunities. She apologized for not being able to afford school supplies for her son. I told her that Congregations for Kids was going to provide him with whatever school supplies were needed. This included a backpack and everyday things as well. They were both ecstatic and weren't able to hold back tears of joy! They kept repeating "THANK YOU, THANK YOU" and "God bless you." It was one of the most rewarding feelings I have ever had.

A little kindergarten boy, who came to register for school after the school year had already started, was afraid of being in a different country and away from his family. I could see the fear in his face. But as soon as we helped enroll him in school and gave him his new backpack with the school supplies, his face changed with a flash of joy and he said in wonder, "Is it all for me? Do I have to pay for it? Why do you give it to me?" I replied to him, "Yes, it's all for YOU! It is your new backpack; and no, you do not need to pay anything for it! It was given to you by Congregations for Kids because many people were very happy that you are with us in school. Congregations for Kids helps students who need backpacks." His little face just smiled and he said, "Thank you."



Report to Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Coalition on Hopelink's Community Services Programs

Financial, energy, and food assistance are our Community Services that bring stability to our

Feedback from a client:

Dear [Manager],

This is not a grievance. This is just the opposite! I am writing to compliment and commend [a Hopelink staff member]. During my ... appointment, [this staff member] changed the quality of our lives, gave us hope, and kept us from becoming homeless. [This staff member] showed compassion, patience, and knowledge throughout the entire Hopelink process. Thank you for having such a committed and dedicated staff member available to your clients, and the community.

Gratefully,
[a client]

clients' lives. In 2018, the congregations who comprise the membership of the Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Coalition made gifts totaling \$29,874.27 to support Hopelink's Community Services programs. This [final/interim](#) report highlights our accomplishments and challenges during 2018.

Financial Resiliency Program

Hopelink provided 1,842 individuals from 980 families with \$511,439 in total financial assistance. Out of that, 401 households received \$435,511 in rental assistance to avoid homelessness. The average housing assistance per household was \$1,086.

Financial Program Updates

After having piloted our new, flexible financial assistance, we rolled it out at all five service centers in April 2018. This service allows us to be more proactive and flexible in what we can pay for, all in support of helping clients meet rent and remain housed. We also implemented a plan to contact clients 90-days after program exit to check in and offer post-crisis resources and support.

Findings and Conclusions.

- One of the key takeaways from this year, was the need to ensure that clients were able to leverage other resources as effectively as possible, not just Hopelink's financial assistance. By effectively building partnerships with other organizations, such as Within Reach to enroll in public benefits, and for internal referrals to additional Hopelink services, we are better able to build the bridge to additional stability supports with a very "light-touch" service.
- The addition of a phone consultation prior to an appointment to complete an application was helpful in being able to respond quicker to specific needs that might be

best addressed with a referral to another organization and provide staff the opportunity to make sure that clients are clear about what paperwork they need to bring to apply.

- The 90-day follow-up is challenging as many clients do not respond. When the connection is made, it is a great opportunity to provide additional information and/or resources or referrals for the client and as a good check-in.

Trends. We continue to see a similar number of individuals or households. Of the types of services, we provide more “rent assistance” and “car repair” than we have in the past, as well as being able to address more unconventional financial shocks. This has helped to ensure that we address client needs as early on as possible prior to an eviction notice or a job loss due to loss of transportation.

Challenges. The community need for financial assistance is greater than the amount of dollars that we have available to address those needs. Often, we would find that we were out of the budgeted financial assistance dollars by the first week of the month, except for very restricted dollars. This limited our ability to provide consistent services and is something that we are working to address.

Energy Assistance Program

Hopelink administers both the federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Puget Sound Energy Home Energy Lifeline Program (PSE HELP) grants in our service area. 9,083 individuals from 4,145 households stayed warm with \$3,081,474 in energy assistance. 93 of those households made emergency appointments for lack of heat.

Food Assistance Program

Our Food Assistance program served 14,519 unduplicated individuals from 6,544 households with 2,230,161 meals.

- Our food banks provided 3,936,539 pounds of food.
- We distributed 6,336 emergency bags of food (E-bags).

Food Assistance Program Updates

We opened our new, larger Redmond Service Center in August 2018. We are thrilled with the bigger, lighter, less crowded food bank that can serve more clients. We model our food banks after grocery stores keeping the dignity of our clients in mind. This new food bank resembles a grocery store more than our older food bank did. The flow is now much more flexible, and clients are no longer forced to follow only one certain path. Clients may walk through in any

A family of 5 had moved to the Eastside from New York for a contracted job that unexpectedly lasted only 4 months. This family fell behind on the rent before an adult was able to secure another full-time job. They worked hard to catch up on their back rent over a 3 to 4-month period but had just finished paying off one month with nothing left for the next month’s payment. We were able to get them both energy assistance and eviction prevention dollars to avoid homelessness and to keep their home warm. They also signed up for our food bank during their energy appointment to stretch their tight budget even further.

order and re-visit shelves they have already browsed. They can take their time and truly shop.



Feedback from clients has been extremely positive.

We have also increased the number of Redmond food bank hours from 9 to 16 per week and even expanded the number of evening hours for client convenience.

Year-round gardens with raised beds supply additional fresh produce to this food bank.

Thank you

Thank you! We know you have many options for your donation dollars. We appreciate your choice to invest in your community through our services.