

Boise/Ada County Homeless Membership Meeting—10 April 2024

The meeting was facilitated by Pete Schroeder.

Attendance: Pete Schroeder conducted the meeting. Also in attendance: Kelli Parker; Don Ruffing, Corpus Christi and LIST; Lila Fetherolf; Jim Grunow; Neysa Jensen, Secretary/Treasurer; Mel Leviton, ISILC; Elizabeth Gasparini; Vivian Parrish' Brittany Rascheck; Nelly Stastny, Miracle Message; Charlotte Barrett; Cay Marquart, LEAP; Kelsey Cooper; Christian Doroney; Peg Richards, IFHC; Pam Roemer, Danielle Sanders, Good Samaritan Home; Stacy Lawrence, Salvation Army; Gary Hanes; Jodi Pederson, Interfaith Sanctuary; Howard Belodoff; Wayne Rancourt;. Gayle Wilde

Neysa proposed that we combine the minutes and treasurer's report in what we call the "consent agenda." It's an agreed upon agenda that will be voted on, needs no motion to pass or not. Simply a vote. So the procedure would be to say we'll now take a vote on the consent agenda. Those in favor, yes. Those opposed, no. Done. The proposal and vote were unanimous. Anyone who wants details (Minutes and Treasurer's report) can find them on our website—click on Members Area and click on Minutes.

Committee Reports

Education and Advocacy: Lila gave us a legislative update. We deemed the following bills bad: HB545, HB572, and HB668. The good bills were SB1247, SB1327, and SB 1328. Details for each of these bills can be found on our website. Mel (SILC) expressed some of her concerns on SB1247. “Johnson vs. Grants Pass” will be heard at the U.S. Supreme Court on April 22.

Book Discussion Group: Jim reported on their next book *Journey Out of Homelessness* by Donald Burns. There will be three sessions—April 19, May 3, and May 17. Please contact Jim if you're interested.

The Celebration Committee: Elizabeth said that the invitations for the Celebration and Recognition Event for May 8 will be mailed on Friday, April 12. This event will take the place of our monthly meeting.

Presentations/Discussions

Don introduced Nelly Stastny (Director of Strategic Partnerships with *Miracle Messages*) who gave a presentation on what this non-profit organization does. It addresses and emphasizes relational powering (creating relationships with the homeless—not just housing them). *Miracle Messages* is an award winning nonprofit organization that helps people experiencing homelessness rebuild their social support systems. One of the programs is helping to create family reunions. Volunteers help them reach out to their relatives. The program has been very successful. One of their pilot programs in California is working on basic income and providing social support. Volunteers (from all over the United States and some foreign countries) spend about 30 minutes a week taking part in this program. Anyone who might be interested in volunteering can call 1-800-MISS-You.

Don suggested that we might be able to start such a program here, and he said they are starting to work on that.

Jim said that the last book they read, *When We Walk By*, emphasizes relationship poverty among the homeless.

Roundtable Discussion

1. Don (Corpus Christi) said that Corpus is now fully staffed. They are now open on Sundays. He's seeing more and more people he has never seen before. Don (Low Income Support, Inc.) Their outreach for animals has been very popular. They offer veterinarian services every 3 months. They are in need of cell phones and laptops. He has six clients whom he helps in many personal ways.
2. Danielle (Good Samaritan) says they now have 14 board of directors—most of them new.
3. Stacy (Salvation Army) says they offer bags of produce to the needy.
4. Kelli (Economic Opportunity by Jannus) says they educate refugees and incarcerated people to learn how to budget and with other issues that they need help with.
5. Cay (LEAP) reported on LEAP's tiny home project through the city. Anyone interested in wanting a tiny home on their property should go to the LEAP Housing site and fill out an application.
6. Peg (IFHC) says they do a lot of training all over the state about the details of the Fair Housing Act.
7. Mel (SILC) explained what an ABLE savings account is (sort of similar to a college savings account). ABLE Accounts, which are tax-advantaged savings accounts for individuals with disabilities and their families, were created as a result of the passage of the Stephen Beck Jr. Achieving a Better Life Experience Act of 2014 or better known as the ABLE Act. The beneficiary of the account is the account owner, and income earned by the accounts will not be taxed. Contributions to the account, which can be made by any person (the account beneficiary, family, friends Special Needs Trust or Pooled Trust), must be made using post-taxed dollars and will not be tax deductible for purposes of federal taxes; however, some states may allow for state income tax deductions for contributions made to an ABLE account. Participants may have up to \$10,000 in their account. Peg (IFHC) says they also offer training on their website.
8. Jodi (Interfaith Sanctuary) gave us some great news! The construction on the new Interfaith Sanctuary has been started.

Meeting adjourned. Our Celebration and Recognition Event on May 8 will take the place of our regular monthly meeting. Our next official meeting will be on Wednesday, June 12, 2024 at 1:30.

Notes taken by Cay Marquart

Secretary/Treasurer: Neysa Jensen