

My Friends Place
Monthly Meeting Minutes
December 7, 2010

Present: Christina Socwell, Heather Vonderfecht, Cliff Brown, Mark Lee, Merrie Crawford

Meeting called to order.

Cliff talked with Cathedral of Joy. Discussion ensued about working with churches who are not willing to work with gay/lesbian and/or illegal immigrant children.

Talked with Lamb Weston with the person in charge of charitable giving. Took our flyer, but said not to count on them because of a bad business year.

Talked with Lampson.

Talked with Columbia Bank – would they be willing to donate foreclosed property? None in Tri-Cities, but may be able to try other banks and/or credit unions.

Cliff will continue to talk to churches and corporations. Has not been able to contact Amy Schultz. Has called Faith Assembly. Jericho Ministries (Amy Schultz) is at Bethel Church.

Discussion concerning offering pro bono services to kids who need emancipation in order to meet HUD requirements for housing. Would call ourselves dba Teen Advocacy Center or something along those lines. Cliff would provide attorney services until he could get other attorneys involved. Christy has teens who could use these services in her school. Principals in other alternative school might be interested in participating, as well. Christy will know the names of those other principals. Mark going to talk to Rivers Edge soon. Duplexes in Richland being given away to whoever had submitted the best proposal by December 6, 2010. City of Richland said we would not be competitive in this kind of situation unless we partnered with somebody else. He talked to Elijah Family Homes, and they already had their application ready. Cliff asked if they would be willing to make their homes available to emancipated teens, and they are giving this some thought.

Merrie didn't want for us to be seen as trying to break up families. We have talked from the beginning about having a prevention program in place such as what Cocoon House has. Toni Neidhold (McKinney-Vento liaison, now director of HR at ESD (Educational Service District) 123 has said that money is available, but mainly to those who have prevention services as part of their program. We haven't been able to implement the prevention program because of the additional cost above running a shelter, which we also haven't been able to get going. Is it counterproductive to have a prevention program and a program that will emancipate teens from their parents and be construed as breaking up families?

My Friends Place
Monthly Meeting
December 7, 2010

This Project Safe has not been successful for Walla Walla, and they spent a very large amount of money (approximately \$50,000) with only a handful of calls in a year. If we did this, it would be something to build locally, not going through Project Safe. Walla Walla said that if they had built the shelter first, then implemented the Project Safe program, they believe it would have been more successful.

If we did one night a week at possibly Riverview UMC, then we could offer both counseling and emancipation services.

The question was asked, "What are we trying to prevent?" If trying to prevent the break-up of families, then emancipating a minor might be seen as opposing them. If trying to prevent teens from having no place to go and no way to get on with an adult life, then emancipating them is helping them have access to services that they cannot access currently. Would depend on what kind of spin we would put on the service. Also, the petition for emancipation would have to go through the court, and the court may ask the teen to go through counseling with the parents, would initiate the mediation that a prevention program would be trying to make happen. Some teens need to get away from parents and choose to be homeless in order to be clean and sober. Parents use them as dealers. Mark talked with Andrea Reyes at Yakima Valley System of Care. She said we should go to Rod's House, a new homeless shelter in Yakima. Mark will call Andrea to get contact information. Would be nice to get budget data from them, also. Mark gave out Andrea's cell phone information.

Christy mentioned a shelter in Seattle at last meeting. Cliff called them, played phone tag, they said everything we need to know is on their website, but Cliff did not think it was helpful. At one meeting, Mark had talked about a road trip to the west side to visit some places. Face-to-face encounters would get us more information. Might be better to go to Yakima, similar population size, similar donor pool, etc.

Concerning emancipation, could have a discussion with Tracy Diaz, who recently left Benton-Franklin Community Action Committee, and ask her about where a teen could go for support in this area. She is now at DSHS. She would know if a youth was emancipated if they would be able to get assistance. Kennewick, Carol Evans, block grant money from HUD, interested in helping us until found out we were helping teens, not adults. Betty from Richland said the duplex could be made available to emancipated teens. They would rent. Being a Teen Advocacy Center and offering emancipation would allow us to show that we are doing something and be a concrete organization that people can donate to. Cliff working with Northwest Justice Center and might be able to use their offices to meet with teens Benton Franklin Justice Center.

My Friends Place
Monthly Meeting
December 7, 2010

Mark made a motion made to adopt a plan to promote ourselves as a teen advocacy center. Seconded. Unanimous aye. Motion carries.

If a child is at the shelter and parent says they want him/her back, we would have no choice but to turn the child over to the parent. The child can only stay with the permission of the parent. If believe child is in danger, can call the police, though had already called them when the kid first showed up. This is a good reason to have an open back door so a teen can leave if they want to.

There are resources to help kids, but would be nice to have someone on hand who knew about these services and could give guidance. Majority of kids don't know what is available to them. Would be great to have teens who have this knowledge and can help other teens. Key Clubs in high schools? MFP a project of regional Kiwanis, trying to get to be a district project. Cliff has been reluctant to ask them for a small amount of money because he wasn't sure what we would use it for. Cliff and Christy wrote up application to the Rotary asking for a \$2,500 grant to be seed money for a bigger fundraiser in the spring. Similar request could be presented to Kiwanis. Cliff could go to Key Clubs and see about them making it their project also. May be difficult because Key Club kids would not be likely to hang out or know homeless kids, but word would start to filter through the school. See about getting T-C Herald to donate ad space.

Video: Mark met with Mike Greif, Tri-Tec. He is going to re-review everything shot so far. Jessica Hodges at Lutheran Family and Julio met and agreed that they would tell their stories. Mark wanted Jill to tell her story, but she wasn't there. Jessica and Jill both pregnant and homeless, though for different reasons. Julio also has a story. Christy might be able to find a youth with a story to tell. Will start filming again after Christmas. Mark has two people set up. There is a lot of footage so far from park. Three compelling stories. Make it tellable to all groups. Discussing final product. Julio is 18, and Jessica is 21, so they can show their faces on the video. If under 18, would have to have parental permission to show the face, but can use the story. Be done before February.

Google vimeo Ittai Orr, grew up in Kennewick, video Breaking the Silence.

Derek checked into University Temple in Seattle, and they are only for 18 and older. Cliff went to Portland and visited Outside In, also for 18 to 24. Other places, funded by Multnomah County, but Fantasy Video gave \$250,000. He makes porn, but wanted to give money to

Page 3

My Friends Place
Monthly Meeting
December 7, 2010

youth, so gave it somewhere to county to be passed on to youth program. Have to be creative. Happens a lot. Mark was able to raise approximately \$150,000 for Planned Parenthood, only \$35,000 a couple years ago, so it is something we can do. Takes time. Cliff looked into renting convention center for ball, \$5,400. Vendors might help. Cliff will meet with Jeff Hendler. Hard to get donors for a first-time event.

Covenant House – 21 cities in US and Canada, many different programs. Merrie send link out to others. Teens need life skills taught to them. Majority of youth at Vista Youth Center are not in school. Fast Forward program working to help keep kids in school.

McKinney-Vento can help with transportation to school, but not housing.

Will get information from Alternative Gift Fair about how much we will receive.

Rod's House – will make plans to go visit.

Next meeting: February 1, 2011, RUMC, 6 p.m.

Meeting adjourned.

Cliff Brown, President

Date

Secretary

Date

Recorder: mmc

