

January 3, 2008
Dialog 1

TOPIC: ***POVERTY***

KEY ISSUES: *Health care- seniors and children*
Employment
Lack of 'family wage' jobs
Childcare – accessible, safe
Barriers to services: illegal, language barrier

ESSENTIAL CONTRIBUTING FACTORS *The poverty mentality; low education, mental health issues*
Low self esteem, drug and alcohol, employment skills, intergenerational poverty. Lack of access to health care and other services that middle class take for granted.
Transportation – ability to get to work – housing close by
Language barriers, globalization
Domestic violence issues
Ability to or lack of ability to navigate the system

COMMUNITY BASED SOLUTIONS *Attend neighborhood meetings to talk about poverty and volunteer opportunities.*
Build public awareness of poverty – outside the holidays to educate, acknowledge extent and depth of poverty in non politicized way. Share the success stories too.
Partner – co-located services to maximize resources
Current resources knowledge – allows local community to foster individual ways to do something to address issues of poverty.

Employment mentors- link to employment services; getting them back to work asap, sending notices, quality registrations, skills, language barriers and have transportation networks.

know

FUTURE VISION *A community that is knowledgeable and can advocate for systems changes (e.g. TANF regs.), that treats people with respect and kindness, developing authentic relationships. A community that can help meet basic needs first and plan for the future.*

TOPIC: ***HOUSING***

KEY ISSUES: *Lack of affordable housing*
Homelessness
Lack of Homeownership
Low vacancy rate (from 8% to 4% in one year)

Stabile housing is critical to family & neighborhood health

**ESSENTIAL
CONTRIBUTING
FACTORS**

*Hard to access housing for people with criminal background
Housing for people w/o housing history (rental) or with poor credit*

*Special needs homeless: pets, older children
Not affordable for seniors*

**COMMUNITY
BASED SOLUTIONS**

*Increased/ expanded ready to rent and fresh start programs.
relocation program for condemned rental or housing
Subsidized, special needs, seniors, people with pets*

FUTURE VISION

*Homeownership that breaks intergenerational poverty
Loan industry changes to hold unscrupulous lenders accountable
Stable housing with support programs – support with housing.
Subsidized housing pools for the very low income*

**03 April 2008
Community Dialog 2 at Fairview City Hall
Homelessness**

(1) Gathering the Facts

What is currently happening on the ground? Raw issues

- Seven family shelters are currently available to house 85 families per night
- Winter Shelters are closing – 30 calls per day are coming in for shelter
- Waiting lists for all seven shelters are active
- 3000 people per night are homeless, 49-53% are families, 1090 were children mostly under the age of 5.

What is the crisis about?

- Push out from Portland (gentrification – affordable housing)
- Economic tipping point in the U.S.
- Mortgage crisis shifts: house to apartment, apartments fill and managers charge higher rents, thus forcing low income residents out as they cannot afford the increases.
- Those with car repair or medical debt – the financially insecure and non-literate.
- Those with mental health/addictions issues – recycled through a broken system.

Who is involved? (Describe them)

- Families living with families – they do not see themselves as ‘homeless’
- Single women with children
- Teenagers [new social paradigm *it is o.k. to ‘kick-out’* the young before they are ready]

- Single Men
- Couples that are pregnant [not yet a family]
- People with pets

What is really getting your attention about this issue NOW?

- People are suffering
- Funding is coming but there is a services lag
- Families are on top of families; the functional homeless, under the radar – they are exposed to high stress, domestic violence, abuse, drugs and alcohol.

(2) Getting Reactions and Making Associations

What are the authority structures that are keeping us apart?

- Definitions of what is homeless
- There is a lack of high level policy discussion re: fear factor as there are no scary activities getting attention.
- Housing affordability

Who can act; who is involved, who benefits and how?

- The federal government has shifted resources to defense with IRAQ – food stuff's now going overseas.
- Private dollars and foundations have missions (wants) that do not necessarily meet needs or are flexible enough to shift.
- Competition for grant funding
- Limited resources means that conflict can result when different systems are trying to work together.
- Benefits of the 501C3 tax deduction – is it enough and do ordinary people know about it?

What concerns you the most?

- The people who do not see themselves at risk, or who are currently homeless – we cannot manage to meet need now; economic downturn can create bigger crisis.

Where work is needed the most?

- Education: of all stakeholders -Equity Map, concept papers, identify the resources and the volunteer opportunities.
- Prioritize through the community- what is the best way for this community?
- Advocacy: getting federal designations changed and seeking allocation distribution equity.

(3) Articulating the values and implications

What is our moral imperative with this issue?

- It is a moral and human rights crisis in our own community.
- We cannot compete for or duplicate efforts.
- Housing is a human rights issue.

How does this issue relate to you personally?

- Everyone in the conversation works with this population and feels strongly there are huge risks and ramifications for the entire community if these issues are not addressed.

What are the new options/ considerations?

- This is an economic livability issue it is about the BIG picture.
- We need to grow our images to fit the reality – there are many more people than we recognize on the street.
- It is a local cultural crisis as well. There is suffering and fear creates additional barriers (immigration)
- Success in school is the right of every child.

What is the key problem area?

- It has to be viewed as local
- Committees resolve must engage neighborhoods and citizens
- We need to be asking people what they think.
- Engagement can build moral drive.

(4) Decision making; looking at the options for action.**What are the key criteria for taking action that must be committed to?**

- We must educate through attention to the positive – what we know works
- Have people tell their own story.
- Advocate for what is possible – show it as fixable.

What are the alternatives to this action?

- Worsening conditions

What is the resolve of this discussion?

- There can be additional advocacy through the internet by building a list serve network
- There can be a revision/addendum of the 10 year plan that addresses these issues

What has been decided here?**A) Build a families plan for East County Families**

1. Bill of rights
2. Call to Action for all stakeholders
3. Annual event that fundraises for services sharing

B) Design a public relations program that;

1. Includes spokespersons who have suffered homelessness
2. Determines where to tell the story and how to tell it
3. Contacts in the media who are engaged in telling the rolling story