



Great Falls Inter-Faith Association

February 28th, 2013

Opportunities Inc. –Resource Center

Ray opened the meeting with reading Psalm 69, a passage from Ruth, and a prayer. Ray asked that we go around the room and introduce ourselves and give any updates with their organization.

January Minutes were passed around, and approved.

Ray informed us that Kim resigned as treasurer effective immediately. Udo is now the sole Treasurer. To assure GFIA's financial continuity after Kim's resignation. The following applies to GFIA's banking transactions: Ray (President) and Udo (Treasurer) are authorized to perform any banking transactions as necessary on behalf of the Great Falls Interfaith Association (GFIA).

Fred update: The group has been meeting as a task force for six weeks, Jill is working on the actual plan. They met with Chris February 22nd. Chris is the chairman of the community at large task force. He is a former legislator, been very involved with projects such as this one before, and is very experienced, connected, and networked. Shooting for an at large community forum at the end of May. They are hoping to get the help of Nancy who started Neighborworks. and Mary Jo. They are trying to involve them on this process in putting together an action and community plan.

The Homeless Youth movement, and Tumbleweed; a project Billings, started as a result of their plan to eliminate homeless in 2005-2006. Tumbleweed has a building, a three day drop in center for homeless youth and overnight centers. Paris Gibson Alternative school is planning to go down with Jackson and Lee to research the project in Billings with the goal of getting something like it up and running at or around Paris Gibson Alternative School.

Vets for Vets is working on putting together a recovery/homeless shelter for Vets.
The Center for Mental Health is working with Red Horse Carpenters to get 12 units finished.

Jim update; the Rescue Mission is going to rent the front half of Ferrin's Furniture Warehouse starting the first of May and make 5 new family rooms for the mission. They need to raise \$2000 per month for rent and utilities and are seeking contributions to cover the first year.
Jim added that the number of homeless getting food from the shelter is at least double from previous years.

Jill; HOME task force; She passed out drafted position descriptions defining all the positions for the board of GFIA.

Jill is working on the plan for the strategic task force that Fred is working with. She is having trouble deciphering statistics on defining homelessness. The Montana statistics tools currently in place were designed for congress to track homelessness, not for public use and are very over complicated. She is working with the tools and the user guide for the tools to find out what each of the statistics mean. They are using the HUD definition for homelessness and drafting our model after the Billings model with changes such as volunteers instead of city employees running the program.

Jackson; Homeless Youth Program: Jackson has submitted a rough draft of a solution to Chris to house the 186 documented homeless students. The number may vary, since some may not come forward to be identified. Of this number, about 80 are totally homeless, not couch surfing or staying with friends, kids that are looking for a place each night. Jackson added that there are a fluctuating number of students that are actually sleeping outside. He has found a building that is suitable, and not being used for a shelter. He will get a report on Tumbleweed next meeting. Billings has a three day drop in center for youth.

Ray added that Jackson is encouraging kids to stay in school and graduate.

Announcements:

Family Promise by Ron: announced a fund raiser for an organization to focus on transitional homeless families with children.

Jon: Great Falls Ministerial Association is hosting a CROP (hunger) walk/run April 13th to raise money for the Great Falls Food Bank and for National and International Organizations. 25% goes to the Great Falls and 75% goes elsewhere, and participants can choose from a list

Marcia; YWCA Empty Bowls Fundraiser \$20 a person. March 19th through the 21st. You choose a handcrafted bowl donated by local pottery artists, have dinner, then take the bowl home. Evenings and Noon seatings are available.

Ray adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted.