

Marta Kelsey called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM. The following members were present, Pat Friend, Juanita Nether, Norma Pipkin, Katie Werner and Jennifer Elkins-Roby. Maureen Johnson, Andree Wells and Darlene Johnson are excused. Rose Everett is absent. A guest, Sue Gough was also present.

**Announcements:** May meeting 5/21/2007, 5:30PM.

Budget status: Cynthia Brown announced that we took in \$1480.00 at the March banquet. Marta stated she would like to have a couple people work on developing the budget for next year. Cynthia indicated she had requested an increase in next year's budget. A concern was raised regarding if it is important that funds be generated when hosting an event since those funds cannot be reallocated.

Our guest speakers were Ella Mae Russell and Don Kidwell of the Department of Social Services, the topic: Homelessness in St. Mary's County.

They shared many interesting facts. It was noted there are several different funding sources to assist persons in crisis situations but there are limited funding opportunities to help people maintain housing. Finding affordable housing is a major challenge they face each day. Ms. Russell indicated we continue to have mothers and children residing in motels. Many families are only one paycheck away from homelessness. Some families only need services for a short time frame others will need assistance for months. Most often homelessness is only one of multiple issues. They are implementing a plan that allows them to coordinate with the other organizations and units to develop a plan that addresses all concerns, day care, mental health, physical health, substance abuse, transportation etc.

One of the major concerns is families without health insurance. One trip to the emergency room can cause credit problems that will impact their ability to have a credit rating that is required to rent an apartment.

Mr. Kidwell said he uses Angel's Watch, Pathways and Three Oaks as options for the families he serves. He also noted Leah's House is starting and sometimes he calls on Calvert County's Project Echo to help.

Statistics he shared included 321 persons were served last year for a total of 7, 223 bed nights in a motels. One hundred forty one were children and 180 were adults. The gender breakdown was 72 males and 108 females. A total of \$77,658 from all funding sources was spent.

There is a new federally mandated Homeless Management Information system they are beginning to use along with Three Oaks. The system has a great deal of potential but it is still a work in progress. The goal is to provide accurate information and better case management.

Three Oaks has some transitional homes. The issue of domestic violence often results in reoccurring homelessness.

When asked what CFW could do regarding this issue Ms. Russell stated we should invite Lanny Lancaster to our meeting to share what his organization is doing and stay informed and involved. She also shared with us she has had a problem hiring a CPS supervisor. The position has been vacant for 19 months some of the concern is the low salary as compared to high cost of housing in Southern Maryland. Ms. Russell suggested that we let our congressmen and Senators know our concerns regarding the cuts in HUD.

The meeting reconvened at 6:45 PM.

**Retreat:** Marta and Juanita will begin to plan the retreat. June 2, 2007 was a possible date.

**Women's History Banquet:** Norma Pipkin suggested that Jessica Lyons be given a gift certificate to Bay Books in the amount of \$15.00. Katie Werner suggested the Restoration Free Gospel Church Praise Dancers be given a pizza party at Nicolletti's for \$50.00. The group agreed.

**Family Violence Coordinating Council:** Andree Wells was not present to report.

**Annual Report:** Marta Kelsey shared a draft annual report and asked for input from Cynthia and the members.

**Minutes:** Katie Werner moved that the March minutes be approved as written it was second and passed.

**Bylaws:** The Bylaws were distributed there are two revisions, one copy of the previously proposed by-laws and a copy of the bylaws with the revisions by Jennifer. Each member was asked to send recommendations for changes to Jennifer by May 7. Jennifer offered to bring her laptop and make changes at the next meeting so it can finally be submitted to the Commissioners for approval.

Minutes prepared and submitted for approval by Norma Pipkin