

## Central Florida Commission on Homelessness

### Commission Meeting Minutes May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Heart of Florida United Way  
Dr. Nelson Ying Center, Orlando, FL

#### Members Present:

Alex Martins, Honorable Belvin Perry, Jr., Cathy Jackson, Craig Miller, Donna Wyche for Mayor Richard Crotty, Dr. Steven Shea for Timothy W. Liezert, Ed Timberlake, Gary Earl, Mark Brewer, Mayor Buddy Dyer, Meg Crofton, Michelle Saunders for Bob Dallari, Robert H. "Bob" Brown, Sister Elizabeth Worley, and Tracy Schmidt.

#### I. Managing Chair's Comments

Ed Timberlake

- Mr. Timberlake convened the Commission at 5:30 PM. After welcoming everyone he gave a brief update on the status of the potential merger of the CFCH with HSN. Mr. Timberlake indicated that both organizations had formed negotiation teams and that the first meeting of those teams had met on Friday, March 23rd. He reported that there was follow up information being collected and that he expected another meeting of the negotiation teams soon.

#### II. Veteran's Administration

Dr. Steven Shea

- Mr. Timberlake shared with Commission how pleased he was that Mr. Timothy Liezert, Director, VA Medical Center of Orlando, had joined the CFCH. Unfortunately, Mr. Liezert was called out of town. Mr. Timberlake asked Ray Larsen to introduce Dr. Steven Shea, Chief of Psychology, VA of Orlando. Dr Shea made a presentation "HealthCare for Homeless Veterans Program."
  - *Why are veterans homeless?* Many lives with the lingering effects of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and substance abuse. Military occupations and training don't frequently transfer over into civilian jobs, leaving some veterans at a disadvantage when competing for employment.
  - *Who are homeless Veterans?* Mostly male and single, many have addiction & mental health disorders, many served in combat or war-zone, they have served in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, Lebanon, Afghanistan, and Iraq. VA estimate nearly 150,000 veterans are homeless on any given night.
  - *Overview of Services* – The VA provided services to approx. 72,000 homeless veterans in FY 2006. These programs are design to provide a continuum of care and include the following elements: Outreach, Grant & Per Diem Programs, Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Programs, VASH, Homeless Dental Program and Justice Outreach.
  - *Veterans who are homeless need a coordinated effort that provides:* Secure housing, Essential Medical Care, Substance Abuse Treatment & Aftercare, Mental Health Counseling, Job Training & Assistance and Personal Development & Empowerment.
  - *VA Commitment* – The VA is the largest integrated network of services designed to address the needs of veterans who are homeless. VA expects to spend \$287 million for homeless specific programs in FY 2008. Nationwide there are over 300 program clinicians working to contact veterans who are homeless as part of our outreach efforts.

- *Opportunity for Improvement:* Outreach, More Partnership with Community Agencies and Additional of Contract Residential Beds.
- *Helpful VA Resources:*  
 VA Benefits 1-800-827-1000  
 Orlando VA 407-629-1599  
 VA Home Page: [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)  
 VA Benefits Payment Rates: [www.vba.va.gov/bin/vre/index.htm](http://www.vba.va.gov/bin/vre/index.htm)

### III. Samaritan Center – East Orange County Drop-In Center

Donna Wyche  
 Cathy Jackson

- Ray Larsen introduced Ms. Donna Wyche, Manager, Orange County Mental Health and Homeless Issues Division. Larsen reminded the Commission that according to a recent UCF study: 89% of respondents in the region had indicated that homelessness was a significant problem and that 73% didn't think enough was being done to address homelessness. He further reiterated that TEN2END called for 4 drop in center to be created in the region. Ms. Wyche gave an update to the Commission on efforts to create a Drop-In Center in East Orange County. A discussion followed with the Commission indicated its full support.
  - *Recommendation* – East Orange Drop-In Center – Integrated service delivery model (Primary Care and Behavioral Healthcare, Substance Abuse, Benefits/Economic Services), housing assistance, meals, food pantry, clothing, showers, laundry, phone calls, job search, partnership with VA, HCCH and others.
  - *Current Status* – CDBG grant to acquire a facility: East Orange County (Hwy 50 corridor), zoned commercial, not in residential areas or near schools or churches, and working with Orange County Real Estate Division.
  - *Summary* – Serves homeless in their community. Consolidates many services provided by area churches to one location. Emphasis on clients' return to housing and self-sufficiency, rather than emergency food and clothing. Data collection/analysis quantifies achieved outcomes.

### IV. Homeless Court Update

Honorable Belvin Perry, Jr.,

- Chief Judge Perry gave a report on the status of the effort to establish a Homeless Court.
  - The Homeless Court builds on partnership between the Court, Corrections, local shelters, service agencies, the prosecutor, defense attorney, and homeless participants. It works to resolve the problems that homelessness represents with practical and effective solutions.
  - *Target Population:* Homeless Court is a criminal justice management process for individuals that are homeless, and may have a mental illness and/or substance use disorders, or veterans that are homeless and indigent, who have been arrested on a writ of attachment for failure to pay fines.
  - *Homeless Court Design:* Homeless Court shall be held one time a week. Homeless participants voluntarily sign up for Homeless Court. The homeless participant is entitled to all protections afforded by due process of law.
  - *Legal Eligibility Criteria:* Writ of Attachment, City Ordinance, County Ordinance and Misdemeanors (non-violent).
  - *Addressing the Charges:* Homeless Court works to resolve the problems that homelessness represent with practical solutions. Fines and custody are replaced with participation in a treatment program or community service. A case is closed

for demonstrated accomplishment and proof of completion of a treatment program and/or community service hours.

- Individual who successfully complete the Homeless Court program will receive a completion certificate and all charges and fines will be dismissed.

#### **V. Executive Director's Report**

Ray Larsen

- Ray Larsen gave a report updating the status of: A collaboration with the Orlando Housing Authority to create 50 units of transitional housing; and, the pilot program for housing 15 vulnerable homeless in the City of Orlando. Larsen also demonstrated CFCH's website and encouraged everyone to visit the site. He indicated that minutes, presentations, and all handouts would be available on the website.

#### **VI. Adjournment**

- Mr. Timberlake indicated that because of a national meeting that some Commissioners may be attending, the next CFCH meeting scheduled for August 4, 2010 may be rescheduled. Notices will be sent. He then adjourned the meeting.