

IMPACT POVERTY TASK FORCE MEETING MINUTES
April 14, 2011

Members Present: Sherry Anderson, James Berry, Brenda Brown, Jim Brown, Olivia Burr, Michael Byers, Danny Fugate, Randy Greene, Tina Hayes, Lisa Heine, James Hudson, Georgann Lookofsky, Chris McNeill, Bill Mogan, Melanie Nunn, Terri Osucha, Cal Ross, Cintia Sutton, Gerald Watkins, John Williams, Sr., Ashley Wright

Members Absent: Gary Adkisson, Glenda Adkisson, Anitha Davis, Bill Evans, Doug Harnice, Jon Hayden, Deanna Henschel, Maurie McGarvey, Patty Mills, Gerry Montgomery, John Operle, Marianne Potina, Stephanie Reese, Charlie Ross, Mark Rowe, Cynthia Sanderson, Rosa Scott, Nancy Waldrop, Kristin Williams

I. Welcome & Introductions

II. Crime & Drugs

a. Introduction of Panel Members and their responses to the following issues:

- i. What are you seeing regarding poverty in our community?
- ii. What trends are you seeing in Paducah/McCracken County regarding the population you serve?
- iii. What direct effect does poverty have on the population you work with?

1. Captain Matt Carter – Sheriff's Department/Drug Unit

- a. Poverty is related to drugs & crime
- b. It seems as though people don't want to help themselves
- c. Many choose to stay in the situation because it's all they know
- d. Just because you are in poverty doesn't mean you're into drugs
- e. In theft & burglary most often drugs are the root cause of those crimes
- f. Drug arrests occur in every neighborhood, not just low income housing areas

2. Chris McNeill – Drug Court and Department of Public Advocacy

- a. 75 – 80% of crimes are drug related
- b. State wide crime has increased but in Paducah crime has gone down
- c. The cost of corrections has increased 44%; the cost to house an inmate is \$19,000/year per inmate
- d. It costs more to jail someone than to educate them
- e. It is less expensive to treat someone rather than imprison them
- f. Drug Court is an option of rehabilitation rather than prison; obtaining a job is a condition of choosing drug court
- g. Kentucky has the nation's fastest growing incarceration rate which hinders economic growth
- h. House Bill #463 just passed and will be effective in June of this year will change the severity of the penalties for drug arrests

3. Sgt. Gilbert - Paducah Police/Drug Unit

- a. Sees a criminal history within families
- b. Poverty is generational in his opinion
- c. Crime isn't necessarily a poverty related issue
- d. Believes that many don't want to change
- e. Food Stamps are being sold for cash or traded for drugs
- f. In the county there is a bigger meth problem and in the city the problem is cocaine
- g. His department deals with the same families over and over

4. Chief James Berry

- a. In March juvenile arrests are down 65.9%
- b. Paducah has an 86% graduation rate
- c. In Kentucky we spend more money to incarcerate someone than we do on secondary and elementary education combined

- d. Paducah is a good community; there are a lot of good things happening; we are on the right track
- 5. Darrin Thomas – Director of Center Point, a residential drug treatment center in Paducah
 - a. The center sees a lot of repeat offenders
 - b. In the case of court appointed treatment there is a trend in Kentucky of mandating longer term treatment
 - c. Long term treatment is the best change to sustain recovery and there is limited access in our area for that treatment
 - d. Since the program began the facility has grown from 10 beds to 100 beds
 - e. Some of the trends are:
 - i. The center is seeing a lot of younger men
 - ii. More court mandates; judges believe the program works
 - iii. Clients with multiple drug issues
 - iv. Opiates are the predominant problem we are seeing
 - f. The program is free, but if the client can afford it a \$25 fee is requested
- b. Questions:
 - i. Question: Do you feel there are there policies in place that encourage poverty?
 - ii. Answer: Not really
 - iii. Question: Do you feel it would be a deterrent if a bill were to be proposed or considered stating that anyone who has been arrested for drugs cannot receive social service benefits?
 - iv. Answer: Not opposed to that; also should have to work or volunteer to receive benefits
 - v. Question: Where do generational poverty folks live? Further, are the slum lords accommodating the drug dealers and are there any community/public policies we can put in place to deal with this potential problem?
 - vi. Answer: Housing projects are not the problem but the long distance management/landlords that create the problems. We can control the HUD funding in order to deal with problems in housing areas.
- c. Miscellaneous Comments:
 - i. A man who is charged and incarcerated for nonpayment of child support has a felony record which makes it virtually impossible to get a job upon release which prohibits a father from paying child support; something should change
 - ii. Domestic Violence is on the rise
 - iii. Treatment & rehabilitation works better than jail
 - iv. People involved in drugs/crime are not goal setters, they live in the here and now because that's how they have always lived, it's a "just getting by" attitude
 - v. When someone is arrested they don't care as much about the sentence as they do about posting bond, they say, "I can do the time, no problem"
 - vi. 50% of those incarcerated do not have a high school diploma or GED
 - vii. A typical former inmate, age 48, after being incarcerated will earn \$179,000 less than if he had never been incarcerated. Prior to incarceration 2/3 of these men had jobs and more than half were the primary provider in the family
 - viii. Disability is the new welfare
 - ix. Take a look at the model being used in Portland, OR of "Restorative Justice" where the perpetrator of a crime must maintain a relationship with their victim; it is working.
 - x. Consequences are not necessarily a deterrent

III. Getting Ahead Group Update

- a. Ann Ponder Simpson – The demographic of the group is different from the second group, they are all women, the age range is 29-71 with most in their 40's and 50's, all have a college degree ranging from associates to masters, they have bonded very well and continue to network with each other; committed to growth and empowerment; they have made the statement "poverty comes from within" and "if it is to be it is up to me"; the group is all in agreement that they

don't want to be in the situation they are in and are concerned about the next generation; involved in giving back to our community; desire to change and willing to take the risks needed to make those changes

- b. Melanie Nunn – Our group is enthusiastic and getting a lot out of the program; most are very young, in their early 20's and all have children; half are a product of generational poverty and the other half are in situational poverty; the group has decided that instead of being poor they are "in the struggle"; the ladies are progressing because of the program and making baby steps; an issue is follow-up, what will happen to them when the program is over? (they will be utilized in future Getting Ahead Groups as facilitators)

IV. Domestic Violence, Homelessness, Drug Addiction & Mental Health

- a. Introduction of Panel Members and their responses to the following issues:

- i. What are you seeing regarding poverty in our community?
- ii. What trends are you seeing in Paducah/McCracken County regarding the population you serve?
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- 1. Vonnie Hayes-Adams – Merryman House Domestic Violence Center

- a. Poverty is not necessarily related to Domestic Violence, however women in poverty don't have the resources to get out of domestic violence
- b. A woman in poverty has nothing to lose by getting out where a more affluent woman has much to lose by getting out. It is easier for a woman in poverty to leave an abusive situation than a woman of wealth.
- c. A study was performed stating that a victim of domestic violence behaves very much like a prisoner of war
- d. Historically DV shelters will house clients from other cities if necessary but DV is on the rise and we can no longer receive clients from other cities because we are maxed out with clients from our own area
- e. Drugs/alcohol don't cause DV but they certainly enhance the problem
- f. Because the economy has drained our social services we are having a difficult time getting that kind of help for our clients

- 2. Heidi Surheinrich – Paducah Cooperative Ministry (a homeless shelter)

- a. The face of homelessness in rural areas is different than in urban areas, it's not as visible
- b. The adults coming in are younger, about half the adults in the shelter right now are under 25 years of age
- c. 40% of kids in the shelter are under the age of 5
- d. 79% of adults in the shelter have special needs
 - i. Drug/alcohol addiction
 - ii. Learning disability
 - iii. Mental health concern
 - iv. Criminal background
- e. We have become very focused on educating our clients and preparing them to be self sufficient, also educate parents of the affect of homelessness on their children
- f. For the children in the shelter we are trying to identify developmental delays or issues so they can be dealt with before it's too late
- g. Most in the shelter are local
- h. The trends we are seeing are clients are younger and younger and their values are basically nonexistent
- i. We work with vocational rehab services to help our clients secure employment
- j. We need to encourage relationship building
- k. Since there are facilities for men and married couples we focus mainly on single women and single women with children

- 3. Patty Hughes – VP of Clinical Services at Four Rivers Behavioral Center

- a. Mental illness and poverty are not mutually inclusive; you don't have to have one to have the other
- b. Last year 4,500 clients from Paducah-McCracken county were served
- c. 350 new intakes last month (March) from Paducah-McCracken County
- d. The numbers are growing for mental illness
- e. High number of depression related cases
- f. Major diagnosis in children is ADHD
- g. We are seeing an increase of children with mood disorders
- h. The majority of clients served are in poverty
- i. We have seen an increase in middle and high school students with drug and alcohol problems
- j. Changes in health care will greatly affect the services we are able to provide to our clients

V. Small Group Discussions

- a. The small groups were asked to discuss the following:
 - i. Introduce him/herself and discuss what did you hear in the earlier session that had the greatest impact on you?
 - ii. Brainstorm
 - 1. What could the community be doing to assist with issues related to your topic?
 - 2. Are there model programs elsewhere we should evaluate for Paducah/McCracken County?
 - 3. Are there existing programs/initiatives (public or private) that are working well that could be enhanced?
 - iii. Small Group discuss:
 - 1. The ideas presented in terms of impact.
 - iv. What ONE idea discussed/presented could have a great impact on your topic?
- b. Group One – Domestic Violence
 - i. The ONE idea that could have a great impact on Domestic Violence is D.V.O.T. Programs (Domestic Violence Offender Treatment)
- c. Group Two – Mental Health & Homelessness
 - i. The ONE idea that could have a great impact on Homelessness and Mental Health Issues is education in the areas of the importance of the family unit, building character and life skills and change in the thinking process
- d. Group Three – Drug Addiction & Crime
 - i. The ONE idea that could have a great impact on Drug Addiction and Crime is more mentoring programs and more positive role models