

Anoka County Human Services, Faith Communities and Non-Profits linking resources to strengthen our community.

When everyone brings something, there is more than enough.

June, 2007

New Board Member

Jamie Morrow, Vice President/ Programs, CEAP (Dec 1, 2006)

"Having loved working for the Xerox Corporation for 18 years, I was very involved as a volunteer in Xerox Community Involvement Program and VEAP (Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People).

My father had a major stroke and was paralyzed when he was 50. Attempting to navigate "the system" with no paycheck or assistance was extremely difficult. Imagine how my mother felt when she was told she should go on food stamps. It was through Interfaith Outreach, various non-profits, and their church that my mother and father were able to get some assistance.

It was during this time I knew I wanted to make a change in my life. Upon awakening one day, I believe God spoke to me telling me that my next step would be to work in the non-profit field. I gave my notice to XEROX that morning.

I began to realize my dream by obtaining a position at Goodwill. Easter Seals. My 7 years there gave me opportunities with clients; teaching them job skills and helping them obtain and retain jobs. During this time I was on the Board of CEAP and President of the Board for 4 years. Imagine my surprise, when CEAP offered me a job working with their emergency assistance programs. Serving people at CEAP gives me skills that I can also use within the larger community through the Compassion Action Network."

~ Jamie Morrow

"Hungry to Help?" Part I

The Spring Fall Forum on April 20th "Hungry to Help?" was a complete success. Our guest speaker, Margaret Langfeld, captivated the audience with her talk titled "What is our motivation? Are we more than caring?" See "Speaker Margaret Langfeld" article within this newsletter.

Following Margaret's talk, a panel from four different faith communities explained their social service programs for responding to service gaps.



See the "Community in Action" Panel article within this newsletter.

A 'work session' followed with 8 groups, each focused on one of the following community needs: Housing, Healthcare, Transportation, Senior Services, Youth Children & Families, Refugees & Immigrants, Life Skills, Basic Needs, and Foster Care. Individuals within each group shared what services they deliver to the community, identified any gaps, and 'brainstormed' ideas for filling those gaps in their area of interest. These ideas and actions were then presented to an actively engaged audience.

A "Resource Directory" was presented to the attendees. The Circle of Influence members compiled resource information (decision trees) for faith communities in the areas of finance, housing, transportation and health care to meet emergency and non-emergency social services needs for those who ask for them. Copies are available at the Compassion Action Website at www.compassionnet-mn.com.

A directory of Faith Community services available to the community is being compiled. Information was gathered from the participants and will also be gathered from those who were unable to attend. More information will be forthcoming so ALL Faith Communities are included, resulting in opportunities for networking with duplication avoided.

"I appreciated the gaps being identified so that I can figure out what types of things our congregation could do that would help fill a need that isn't being filled elsewhere."

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Going Forward.....

Please attend the next Circle of Influence Meeting on June 7th at Emmanuel Christian Center, 7777 University Ave. N. E., Spring Lake Park at 1:30. This meeting is open to EVERYONE who is interested in taking action regarding gaps in service in Anoka County and in networking efforts to eliminate these. RSVP to Eilsa Thibodeau at Emmanuel Christian Center at [763-784-7777](tel:763-784-7777) or elisathibodeau@emmanuelcc.org.

The "Community in Action" Panel

In keeping with the "Hungry to Help" theme, four faith communities who have actively responded to the needs in their communities participated on a panel at the Spring Faith Forum. By these four groups sharing their stories, ideas were sparked and participants were inspired to consider how they too might fill the community gaps identified earlier in the day. Our 4 panelists were:

Bridgewood Community Church, Blaine – Financial Peace University

Families or individuals seeking help getting and staying out of debt can receive practical financial information, develop strategies to deal with debt, set and achieve realistic financial goals and receive support from their peers and a professional as they work towards these goals. New this year, Bridgewood offered it as a 12 week course using material by Dave Ramsey. Participants have expressed that the support they received during the course was as helpful as the financial expertise. Contact Info: Diane Stores 763.780.2500

Faith Lutheran Church, Coon Rapids – Lunch Bunch Program

Low income families are often challenged during the summer months to provide nutritious meals for children who typically receive meals through a free lunch program during the school year. In 2005, when asked if they would assist families in a near by apartment complex by providing lunches to the children living there 2 days a week during the summer, Faith Lutheran responded by organizing volunteers to prepare brown bag lunches and acquiring donations to feed 60 children and their parents each day. Since that time, the program has grown from simply providing the meal to organizing activities, and engaging the larger community in meeting the need. Contact Info: Deb Henning/Judy Latenschlager 763.506.4701



Epiphany Catholic Church, Coon Rapids – the "Gathering"

Epiphany partners with the Faith Community Nurse program and Anoka County's Caregiver Support Network to provide respite care and support to families involved in caring for an elder. Using a group respite model, caregivers come to Epiphany's Assisted Living site 2 days a month where volunteers and a RN provide interactive programming for the care receiver while the caregiver attends a support group and receives a much needed break from their care giving duties. Care receivers benefit from the stimulation and socialization they receive during the "Gathering". The volunteers participate in a meaningful opportunity. And, most importantly, the caregivers build relationships with each other, learn new skills, and get time to themselves. Contact Info: Jill Agyekum 763.422.6960

"All of the presenters offered wonderful, positive ideas and opportunities."

Islamic Center of MN, Fridley – Free Clinic

To address the medical needs of low income families in Southern Anoka County, the Islamic Center offers a free medical clinic on Sundays from 10:30 am – 12:30 pm. Anyone is welcome and appointments to see specialists can be arranged by calling ahead of time. Contact: 763.571.5604

~ Gayle Alexander



Mission Statement

To mobilize community organizations to recognize the value and benefits of working together, because when everyone brings something, there is more than enough.

Vision Statement

Working together to serve our community, every community organization will recognize and utilize its own unique gifts and recourses.

Advisory Board

Mary Jo Loftus, Co-chair
Loftus Care Providers, Inc.

Gayle Alexander, Co-chair
Anoka County Human Services

Lyla Pagels
Mercy & Unity Hospitals

Ellen Raeker, Secretary
St. William Catholic Church

Jamie Morrow
CEAP

Sue Kennell, Newsletter/Website
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**“Hungry to Help?”
Spring Faith Forum
Speaker Margaret Langfeld**

“What is our motivation? Are we more than caring?” So began the keynote address of the Compassion Action Network Spring Faith Forum by Margaret Langfeld, former Board Chair of the Anoka County Commissioners. Through an exercise of expressing times of un-appreciation and then expressing appreciation, Margaret involved the attendees in understanding their role as compassionate leaders.

Servant leadership was the theme she developed. It was



compared to a three legged stool with the body, mind and spirit representing each leg. The stool cannot stand if one part is missing. Over her 30 years of leadership in the county government, Margaret said she responded to many

needs but it was the smallest needs that often made the biggest difference. When she saw a need for housing for battered women as a member of the Blaine city council, she was not reluctant to go forward when others backed out. Somehow she felt compelled to get motivated and move ahead, knowing that it is difficult to get others motivated for the long term.

As a leader Margaret continues to see her role as encouraging the gifts of others and showing appreciation for what they have done. Let others take credit, since leadership is about avoiding duplication of services and getting things done. Margaret’s inspiring talk set the scene for the rest of the day’s discussion toward concrete actions in “seeing what is needed.” Margaret sparkled as she spoke.

“It was a joy to hear Margaret speak.”

~ Mary Jo Loftus

