



# CONTRA COSTA CONTINUUM OF CARE QUARTERLY MEETING MINUTES

*The Contra Costa Continuum of Care provides a forum for communication and coordination about the implementation of the County's Strategic Plan to prevent and end homelessness, and for orchestrating a vision on ending homelessness in the County, educating the community on homeless issues, and advocating on federal, state, and local policy issues affecting people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness.*

**Date, Time:** Friday, October 20, 2017 10:00am – 12:00pm

**Location:** ZA Room, 30 Muir Road, Martinez, CA 94553

## 1. Welcome and Introductions

- Call to order by Gabriel Lemus, Chair

## 2. Announcements

- Jaime Jenett, H3
- Homelessness Awareness Month – November
  - Toolkit being released with homelessness information and statistics for Contra Costa
  - Leave behind documents here to take and use.
  - Two events happening (Nov 2, Walnut Creek @St. Paul's) and one in Richmond at the community center, fliers available.
- Housing Security Fund
  - This fund is being built to help get people through small hurdles into housing (get through bumps, or give additional security to landlords). Meant to be flexible.
- Free meal events around Thanksgiving – more in toolkit, which is best used electronically. Can also call 211 for more information about where meals are being served.

## 3. Homeless Awareness Month Movie Screening and Discussion of “Storied Streets” documentary

- Amanda Wehrman, HomeBase
- What are your initial reactions to the film? Did anything surprise you?
  - Overwhelming; the way persons experiencing homelessness are treated
  - Film didn't portray enough of what people experiencing homelessness deal with – more devastating than what film shows
  - Liked the statistics (3 major causes of homelessness) and the idea that homelessness happens but chronic homelessness is manufactured
- What did the film say to you about the causes of homelessness?
  - Low pay; lack of affordable housing; lack of food



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- One poignant part was the man who said he went months without hearing his name.
- Film focused on individuals that aren't chronic rather than the ones that are and it seems like we've been doing the opposite. There is some validity to the film's point of catching people before they fall into chronic homelessness.
- A few pieces of film that were lacking:
  - Film doesn't touch on safety net that keeps people out of homelessness. Hope there will be a part 2 to address the importance of this safety net and the circles of support that help in preventing individuals from falling through the cracks
  - Wasn't enough focus on education
  - Could have talked more about the mental health piece and the need for more MH resources
  - Was hoping to have more TAY in the documentary – would like to see impact on TAY in Contra Costa County
- The film emphasizes the need for the unhoused to lead the way. What can we do to support the voices of consumers and consumer advocates in our community?
  - We need to mobilize individuals experiencing homelessness to assist with getting their voices heard – the new Consumer Advisory Committee is starting to look at how we can do that
  - On Tuesday, Nov 7, BoS declaring November Homelessness Awareness month. Would be good to invite consumers to attend.
  - Housing Forums hosted by Ensuring Opportunity; this Saturday it's in Martinez at 10am; next Saturday it's in Concord. This is where you want to be having these conversations.
  - It is also important to acknowledge that homelessness and poverty are regional issues, and we need to look at how affordable housing laws affect the solution
- What can we do to address the stigma of homelessness as portrayed in the film?
  - Educate children at a younger age about the realities of homelessness – one possibility is to incorporate this into anti-bullying programs already established in local middle schools (iKind)
  - Hold people accountable/appropriately charge people who are assaulting homeless
  - Hire people with more lived experience. Reach out to TAY population – better for TAY to reach out to other TAY



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- Office of Education is working to recognize Homelessness Awareness month. Working with Martinez Unified to have peer to peer sharing
- Provide information for people on appropriate ways to interact with homeless people
- 2-1-1 cards in English and Spanish to connect with services
- How do we combat compassion fatigue, both within provider agencies, and in the community at large?
  - We haven't educated the community well enough for them to understand that shelters and programs such as food drives aren't the solution, they are just there to provide immediate help. We need to differentiate between what is keeping people from dying vs. what is actually helping to solve the problem. Get compassion fatigue from this miscommunication.
  - Programs are set up to get outcomes, to get money, but they also need some redesign to tackle the root problem. There is no quick solution, and there is also bureaucracy that comes into play.
  - Diving into data - the County health care system spent \$141M dollars on 3,000 homeless people last year.
    - We don't have the type of housing that people want, which is something we are looking into with the next PIT count
  - Another way to combat compassion fatigue is through messaging on how to respond to people experiencing homelessness asking for money. What's the best way to respond? Acknowledging people as part of the community and not ignoring them.

#### 4. Community Announcements

- East County – H3 partnering with Library to open up evening Warming Center so individuals can come in during the night. There is a community meeting on October 25 from 7-8pm at Antioch Library (501 W 18<sup>th</sup> St). Important for us to show up to be a voice for how much this partnership is needed. This is a good step to get resources out there.
- Tomorrow in Antioch: mobile food drive.

#### 5. Pin It

- Next full membership meeting is January 19, 2018.