

Aging Well Whatcom Steering Committee

Friday, February 3, 2023

Chuckanut Health Foundation + Zoom

MINUTES

Attending:

Amy Hockenberry, Whatcom County Health Department
Becky Kirkland, PeaceHealth Center for Senior Health
Bethany Chamberlin, Northwest Regional Council
Chao-ying Wu, Family Care Network (retired)
Chris Orr, Whatcom Council on Aging
Marie Eaton, Palliative Care Institute, WWU
Sarah Lane, Health Ministries Network
Tessa Whitlock, Chuckanut Health Foundation
Tonja Myers, Christian Health Care Center

Regrets:

Barbara Juarez, NW Indian Health Board
Heather Flaherty, Chuckanut Health Foundation
Heidi Bugbee, Generations Early Learning & Family Center
Janet Malley, Whatcom Transportation Authority
Kenzie Nelson, VibrantUSA
Kristin Hill, Opportunity Council
Tammy Bennett, YMCA

Welcome and Introductions

Committee members introduced themselves and shared new activities, opportunities and/or challenges:

- Chris, Whatcom Council on Aging – recently brought on five new board members, adding leadership capacity to implement the new strategic plan; investing time building relationships in the east county.
- Amy, Whatcom County Health Department – announced new department name: Whatcom County Health and Community Services.
- Marie, Palliative Care Institute – new legislation is being introduced regarding supportive use of psilocybin, which can be especially helpful for people with serious illness or end of life; the movie [Revival](#) will be showing on Feb 12.
- Tonja, Christian Health Care Center – launched a new Nursing Assistant class to address NAC shortages; is advocating at state level to allow nurses from other states to work in WA (this was permitted during COVID, so advocating for it to continue).
- Bethany, NW Regional Council – just participated with a group of older adults in legislative advocacy for parity in case management funding, funding for the Health Homes program, and expansion of dementia support programs.
- Sarah, Health Ministries Network – continuing Ask a Nurse in E County, and adding Goodwill and Empower Next Generations as partner sites.
- Tessa, Chuckanut Health Foundations – CHF grants to Blueprint-aligned projects are going to Make.Shift Art Space for intergenerational programs and Dementia Support NW [full list of CHF grantees is [here](#)]. It hasn't been decided yet if there will be a separate AWW grant round in 2023, or if Blueprint-aligned grants will be part of CHF's annual round in October.

- Ying is retired and turning 65 today. Happy Birthday!
- Lara shared that Mary Anderson and Melissa Herrera both recently stepped down from the Steering Committee.; the 2023 [Race and Health Equity conference](#) key note speech is on belonging and inclusion, which seems very relevant for age as well as race.

Review and Approve Minutes

Minutes from the 1/6/23 Steering Committee meeting were approved as written.

Lara suggested a new process: Steering Committee members review the minutes when they are sent out and inform Lara of any corrections or additions, using “reply all” so the full group sees the needed revision. We can then remove approving minutes as a standing agenda item.

Those present agreed with this approach.

AWW Work Plan

The committee reviewed the draft work plan. Lara explained that this draft:

- Is a three-year plan, recognizing that a longer time frame is needed to accomplish the projects.
- Includes corresponding Blueprint strategies to ensure that the projects/activities align with the Blueprint.
- Matches projects/activities to AWW roles/functions that were discussed at the last meeting.

Sarah reminded us that the workplan is fluid and dynamic!

Comments and Discussion:

- The group supported the three-year time frame.
- Under **1B. Ensure that older adults’ and/or their advocates are included in groups and initiatives involving community decision-making**, key activity *“Review community advisory boards’ membership to assess representation of older adults (Whatcom Council on Aging is undertaking this); determine ways to increase older adult participation/ representation.”*
 - Ying suggested expanding this to include AWW convening and coordination with the people representing older adults on these boards. This would support them in their advocacy role and help with delivering consistent messages across the various boards and commissions.
 - Others agreed this would strengthen the impact and should be added to the work plan.
 - AWW and WCOA can work together on the review of advisory boards’ participants.
- Regarding wording of **1C. Expand community awareness of older adults. AND Responsiveness toward? Respect for? Consideration of?**
 - Suggestion for “inclusion” or “inclusiveness” and support for “consideration of” or “consideration for.”
- Under **#2 Expand relationships and social connections.**
 - Important to first learn about existing programs that already support relationship building and connections with older adults, and explore ways to expand or strengthen before starting any new program. For example, Bellingham at Home and faith communities already do something like the Friendly Visitor Program.

- Look for intergenerational opportunities with the Child and Well-Being Task Force and the implementation of the Healthy Children’s Fund (HCF).
- Amy noted that the draft HCF Implementation Plan goes to County Council later this month and there will be a 30-day open comment period; this would be a good opportunity for AWW input.
- Under **#3 Advance Housing for Older Adults**.
 - Accessibility is another important aspect of housing to advocate for.
 - Marie will investigate the status of WWU’s exploration of building housing for older adults on or near campus (this was pre-COVID).

➔ **ACTION:** Lara will make revisions to the work plan based on this discussion and send out to all.

What Does AWW Do?

The group discussed the visual “What Does AWW Do?” (modified from Age-Friendly Seattle).

- Agreement to remove “DO” – it’s redundant to the other verbs.
- Agreement to say “FUND” rather than “ENABLE” – other aspects of enabling are captured by the other verbs. “INVEST” is another possible word. Heather and the CHF Board will need to review this.

Asks

Lara requested assistance with three tasks:

1. Help identify additional Steering Committee members.
 - Marie and Chris volunteered to help with this.
 - The Steering Committee Charter provides a good framework for looking at representation and being intentional about who we ask.
2. Helping at Senior Center Resource Fairs.
 - Whatcom Council on Aging is coordinating resource fairs at four senior centers, 9am-2pm: March 10 in Bellingham, March 17 in Blaine, March 24 in Lynden, and March 31 in Ferndale (all Fridays).
 - AWW is signed up; it’s an opportunity to talk with people, share the Blueprint, and gather information from older adults.
 - Marie, Ying, Tonja, Sarah, Becky (and Bethany?) agreed to help.
 - Lara will follow up for scheduling and discussion about what questions we may want to ask participants.
3. Help create a Blueprint two-pager
 - We need a much shorter and more digestible (and less expensive) piece to communicate the Blueprint.
 - Lara will draft, but would like others’ review. The graphic designer who did the Blueprint can likely do the design work.
 - It would be great to have this by March 10 for the senior center resource fairs.
 - Marie and Tessa agreed to help with this.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

Next meeting: Friday, March 3, 9:00-10:30 AM at Chuckanut Health Foundation and via Zoom link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84714163447>.