

Aging Well Whatcom Initiative

Friday, August 3, 2018

9:00-11:00 AM

At the Eleanor Apartments (Mercy Housing NW) – 1510 N Forest St

MINUTES

Attending:

Amy Hockenberry, Whatcom County Health Department
Melinda Herrera, Rosewood Villa
Tammy Bennett, Whatcom YMCA
Dr. Chao-ying Wu, Chuckanut Health Foundation Board/Family Care Network
Dr. Dave Lynch, Chuckanut Health Foundation Board President/Family Care Network (retired)
Heather Flaherty, RiverStyx Foundation
Kristin Granstrand, Mercy Housing Northwest
Marie Eaton, Palliative Care Institute, WWU
Sue Sharpe, Chuckanut Health Foundation
Tonja Myers, Christian Health Care Center
Rachel Lucy, PeaceHealth
Colleen Harper, Bellingham At Home

Regrets:

April Claxton, Recreation Northwest
Carol Nicolay, Health Ministries Network
Mary Carlson, Whatcom Council on Aging
Ryan Blackwell, Northwest Regional Council
Heidi Bugbee, Generations Early Learning & Family Center
Mary Anderson, Whatcom Transportation Authority
Jeanne Brotherton, Chuckanut Health Foundation Board/Health Ministries Network (retired)
Jenny Weinstein, Opportunity Council

Guest: Susan Givens-Seymore, CHF Board Member

Welcome and introductions

Lara welcomed the group; members introduced themselves and thanked Kristin and the Eleanor Apartments for hosting today's meeting.

Review and approve minutes

Minutes from June 1, 2018 were approved.

Information and Inspiration – member sharing

Kristin gave the group a tour of the Eleanor Apartments, and pointed out some key features such as the kitchen and activity areas, signage encouraging using the stairs for exercise, and the garden area and designated walking routes outside.

The Eleanor Apartments were developed and are managed by Mercy Housing NW; residents are low-income adults age 62 and older. Multiple funding sources supported building the apartments, including tax credit mechanisms and the City's Home Fund. Rents pay for support staff and programs/activities.

Housing for Older Adults Subgroup Update

The group reviewed the most recent iteration of the report (summary is attachment 3 in the meeting packet) and inventory.

Comments and discussion:

- It's helpful to see the housing information compiled in one place.
- Include additional information in the inventory:
 - Which SNFs have memory care (secured unit).
 - Wait list times, if applicable. While waitlists are an indication of unmet need, they also should be interpreted with caution because people are often on multiple wait lists.
 - Cost.
 - What is special or unique about this place.
- It's important to think about older adults as a community where everyone belongs and is served, rather than divided up by income levels.
- The information and inventory help us understand the housing need/demands, but could also be used for advocacy on the supply side of the housing equation; for example, encouraging City and County Councils to think more broadly about housing needs and options for older adults.
- The housing assessment needs a "gap statement" that clearly articulates the gap between what exists and what the needs are. Ying is willing to work on this.
- Baozhen Luo is a WWU Sociology professor who could be an asset to this work.

Listening to Older Adults and Their Families Subgroup Update

Amy and Marie reviewed the Listening Plan (attachment 3 in the meeting packet), which the subgroup revised based on the group's feedback at the last meeting. Listening sessions are being arranged with groups of older adults and people who work closely with older adults.

Aging Well members are asked to do three interviews with older adults. This can be done using the paper survey, or entering responses directly into the SurveyMonkey version. The subgroup is requesting this both to contribute to the data collection, and ALSO (perhaps more importantly) to engage everyone directly in some asking and listening.

Comments and Suggestions:

- Include Family Care Network providers
- Susan Givens-Seymore can help with contacts at Lummi and Nooksack if needed

ACTION ITEM → All Aging Well members will conduct at least three interviews with older adults by the end of August.

ACTION ITEM → Lara will send out the survey and SurveyMonkey link to all.

Meeting with Gordon Walker on 8/14

Gordon Walker, a long-time director of an Area Agency on Aging in Virginia and advocate for creating livable communities for all ages, will be visiting the group on Tuesday, August 14, 4:30-6:00 PM.

The following were identified as topics the group would like Gordon to speak to:
Impressions about our Whatcom County efforts so far.

- Thoughts on the "right" things for us to focus on. What else should we be addressing or considering?
- What did it take to create the shared vision and goals laid out in the 20/20 Plan? What were the strategic steps for agency collaboration?
- His experience working with the AARP Model (pros and cons, observations and reflections).

ACTION ITEM → Lara will communicate these interests to Gordon.

Wrap up and next steps

Next meeting: Friday, September 7, 2018, 9-11 AM [*Location: Whatcom County Health Department, 509 Girard St.*]