

Attendance: Bobby Knickerbocker, Allison Palm, Nichole Ennis (Front Door), Pam Wellman, Jon Spira-Savett, Joanne Perez, Jocelyn Sharp-Henning, Kelly Turney, John Rowntree, Nancy Meyer, Mike Apfelberg, Christa Tzechrentzis, Angela Mercado (GSOP, Nashua School District McKinney-Vento), Pam Deres, Cheryl Massie, Meta Vornehm, Kathy Boss, Nonny Egbuonu, Karl Hester, Hannah Stohler, Nancy Meyer, Karla Tolomeo, Emily Daversa (Rivier University), Cindy Owing (Habitat), Dr Manseau

Presentation: Homelessness in Greater Nashua

Pam Wellman: network of homeless service providers is very collaborative. Presenters from Marguerite's Place, Front Door Agency, Family Promise, Habitat for Humanity

Nichole Ennis (Front Door Agency): Front Door Agency has been in business for over 36 years, helping folks transition from crisis to self-sufficiency, focusing on education to eliminate barriers to housing stability. Housing Stability programs focus on stabilizing any household who need help with rent, utility assistance, security deposits, etc. The need is rising. Transformational housing is for single mothers with children, starting in a group home with case management and getting an education. Then moving to agency apartments with case management and then moving into their own apartments with continued case management. Also just took ownership of Mary's House on W. Pearl with 40 units for homeless single women from 18 to seniors.

Community organizations work with the Front Door to supply needs.

Hannah Stohler from Marguerite's Place: Marguerite's Place has been supporting families experiencing homelessness for 29 years. 3 core programs: transitional housing of two phases (phase 1: stabilization in independent apartments with washers and dryers and phase 2: 10 scattered site condos for families ready to move on from transitional housing working toward independence financially, psychologically, etc). Seeing a spike in applications for their programs—tripling since the end of the pandemic. The pandemic did not create the need, but it did accelerate it. They also run a licensed childcare program for 40 children. They are the lowest cost, highest quality rating program in the city of Nashua. Childcare is a core need for families stabilizing and also for children who have experienced trauma. Childcare helps to provide wrap around care. Also launched community based group programming for non-resident childcare patrons, graduates and phase 1 and 2 participants. I.e. parenting support, educational programs, speech pathologists, and overall family wellness, such as playing well with children. Generalized support might include cooking healthy family meals. They have also hosted a legal expungement clinic to clear up criminal records to help families stabilize and qualify for housing.

Christa Tsechrintzis from Greater Nashua Habitat: also been working in the area for 29 years. They offer home ownership opportunities for families who might not qualify for a market rate

mortgage. Build houses with skilled tradespeople and volunteers and hold the mortgages themselves. The last house, a duplex on Paxton Terrace, was sold to two single mother veterans. A first mortgage gets paid back and the other is held by Habitat. The organization can work with the families to avoid foreclosure when they fall behind. They are trying to extend wrap-around services to stay connected with families throughout their lives. 50% of applicants come from area agencies. New house will begin on Granite St in Nashua—a woman referred by an agency. Habitat also runs a home repair program to help people stay safely in their homes. They also built a ramp at the NSKS, a playground at the Front Door Agency.

Pam Wellman from Family Promise of Southern NH: the program began through the NAIC (seed money) 21 years ago. Became a Family Promise affiliate in 2012. The NAIC and United Way worked with the Sisters of Mercy to become Anne-Marie House on the grounds of Presentation of Mary Academy convent. Two principles: interfaith and volunteerism. The organization operates through volunteers and donations. Volunteers cook meals, mentor adults and children. Family Promise is one of the only organizations who host single fathers, teens, and other families who don't fit the models of other area programs. They host low to middle income families, guiding them through overcoming obstacles to stability and trauma, parenting properly, career search, clear credit, background expungement. They do this through education and safe housing. Transitional housing at Infant Jesus School with up to 100 people. Community Case Management and diversion. They served 214 people a year ago. This year, they've served over a hundred families and individuals already this year, and Joanne Perez does this work. Supportive housing leased through other organizations allows families to pay sub-market rent and stabilize. Another 9 families can be served in Derry with the purchase of another property. The Manchester Mayor Craig has asked them to look at having a physical presence in Manchester. With extra federal funding coming to a halt in June, they expect a huge increase in demand.

The Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter provide emergency shelter, as does the Southern NH Rescue Mission and Hope House for single men and women. And Stepping Stones is opening transitional housing for youth ages 18-24. These shelter services are of critical importance for people who are navigating this space.

Question: Jon Spira-Savett: what happens to graduates of programs after 5 years. Pam: graduates move to the suburbs (i.e. Londonderry, Hudson, etc.) Nichole: Front Door sees a balance, but due to the focus on education, graduates take local jobs and stay in the area. They do gravitate toward safe schools and neighborhoods. Hannah: they get referrals from Cynthia Day Center (recovery for mothers WITH children). Marguerite's Place finds that these people have to get to know how to move from a very structured recovery program. They are removed from their site of substance use and live well here. Some do choose to go back to their hometowns after they're strong in recovery and identify ways to do so in a healthy way. They get a lot of people from Rockingham Cty and the North Country. They encourage folks to look at other communities where housing is not so scarce and is more affordable. Pam: many families come from other states because they think they can get good services here. Sometimes Family Promise is able to use their national network to help people go back to their

home communities and other organizations at “home.” They are not encouraged to go back to unsafe places, but sometimes they have better, safe places to go.

Thank you Allison Palm for hosting us at the UU Church of Nashua.

Introductions

Old Business: Asphalt plant updates.

Kathy Boss: Traces of the Trade film, tracing family roots to the slave trade. June 11th at 3:30. Church of the Good Shepherd. Looks at how the northeast participated in slavery. Followed by panel discussion. Need a projector and large screen. Looking for panel speakers. Open to the public. Free.

Jon Spira-Savett: The Meeting Owl used here belongs to the NAIC and Jon is it's caretaker. It is available for use, so reach out to Jon to use it.

Interfaith Housing Justice group is creating a mailing list for particularly local housing issues. Please consider joining the list and encouraging other supportive folks to join as well.

Meg has announced that the Christian Science community will have an open house May 21 for their new facility.

John R. Sunday at 4, Church of the Good Shepherd will be hosting the Klezmer Band from Temple Beth Abraham to fund their youth group mission and service.

Mike Apfelberg: Over the Edge rappelling event for United Way raises money for the agencies who presented today. Annual Mother's Day roses event distributes 150 bouquets of flowers. You can donate or volunteer. June 3-4, 4th annual community wide food drive at supermarkets for local food distribution centers. Volunteers are needed.

Jocelyn Sharp-Henning: the Water Walk will be September 26th in Greeley Park at 9 am. Please consider forming a team and walking. Flyers distributed.

Christa: Habitat is participating in Over the Edge. May 20th cornhole tournament at Anheuser-Busch facility for Habitat. They'd also like to see a house completely sponsored by faith communities.

Allison: NH Council of Churches Annual Meeting this Saturday.

Kristy and Kelly: 9-12. Green Church movement to recycle sneakers.

Nonny: Let's Talk Group meets on zoom at noon on first and third Thursdays and 9 am on 2nd and 4th Thursdays as a collaboration including United Way, Main Street UMC, and others. This is an opportunity for folks to get together to talk and combat loneliness.

Jon Spira-Savett will receive an honorary doctorate in honor of our interfaith work on Mother's Day. Congratulations to him!

Emily DaVersa is the new Rivier University director of Campus Ministry, starting in January. One of her goals is to have students being involved in the community through voluntarism and also to host an interfaith spirituality group in an effort to bring together students of all faith backgrounds. She wants to educate students on traditions outside of Catholicism and to allow students to learn respectfully without appropriation.

Kelly Turney: Bishop Peggy Johnson (United Methodist Church) is coming on June 25. They are seeking to have a conversation with trans/queer people in the community. If you have folks interested in that kind of conversation, please reach out to Main Street United Methodist.

Nonny requests help with the sound, as it was difficult today.

Closing: June Annual Assembly will take place at Temple Beth Abraham, who will provide lunch. Drinks, fresh fruit can be brought in, but the rest will be provided with the congregation