**Heart of Texas Homeless Coalition Meeting Notes- November 20, 2020**

**11:45 am pm via Zoom**

**I. Waiting Room Poll**

Do you call it “stuffing” or “dressing”? (Stuffing barely edged out dressing!)

**II. Financial Report - Shannon**

1. Donations: Network for Good=$440, Farmer’s Market Booth=$116.58, Balance is $4475.10
2. Famer’s Market is a great success. It generates a lot of positive feedback in the community and is wonderful for outreach. Let Shaun know if your organization wants to hand out flyers.
3. Poll vote to accept report, Report accepted

**III. Meeting Minutes – Shaun**

1. Minutes were not emailed
2. We will email last month’s meeting minutes and this month’s meeting minutes and will vote on both sets of minutes at the next HOT Homeless Coalition meeting.

**IV. SOAR Program Update - Karisa**

A. SOAR is a program that certifies case managers to help complete SSI applications for clients who are at risk/experiencing homelessness. Training is available online.

B. Karisa is SOAR lead. Beginning next month she will lead online informational trainings. She will also help with technical assistance and keep track of all SOAR applications. Goal is to coordinate additional SOAR funding with Coordinated Entry.

C. SOAR process increases client’s chance of SSI approval and reduces wait time. More info to come in future emails. There is also a training for the youth side of SOAR. Karisa will send out this info. too.

D. First SOAR module is a great introduction to SSI and would be helpful to many of us.

E. Thanks Karisa for completing this training and heading up this process!

**V. Project Homeless Connect - Karisa**

1. Planning is moving forward. Need to hear final OK for rental space at convention center. Will send out info. concerning volunteer needs next month. Have all the donations we need or have donations procured.
2. It is a lot of work to get this organized, especially during a pandemic. Thank you Karisa!

**VI. Tiny Homes Update - Shaun**

1. Thanks for responding with interest about this project.
2. Shaun will send out a Doodle Poll concerning a meeting time.
3. Concerning location – Roy Nash suggested figuring out location as a first step.

**VII. Crisis Counseling Program at MHMR – Vince Erickson**

1. Texans Recovering Together Crisis Counseling Program, a FEMA program which is passed through the state to a sub provider. We serve a 6 county area. Mission to offer free and anonymous crisis counseling and mental health support for disaster recovery. For anyone directly or indirectly affected by COVID.
2. Introduce counselor Crystal Hicks
3. Thus far we have worked with Salvation Army on various efforts and are in the process of working with Mission Waco. Earlier in the year the homeless populations felt forgotten. We are trying to get out and meet with that population. We can also hold support groups for your organization.
4. Our intervention is designed to be short-term, 1-5 sessions. After that time we will access to determine what is the next best resource for the client. We also offer mental health support, not just counseling. We are basically about disaster recovery.
5. As providers we need to remember we experience secondary trauma and this service is available for us. Shaun will email out flyers. Thank you Vince and Crystal.

**VIII. Persons with Lived Experiences - Shaun**

1. Before COVID we had conversations about involving persons with lived experiences more in our meetings, planning, etc. Our current meeting format really excludes some of the people that we want to include. Would like to have conversations about ways to include more people in our current meeting format.
2. Suggestions: YHDP has an advisory group, would this approach work for the Homeless Coalition? Could we have a space for a community Zoom meeting? Reaching out to the families at Sally’s House is another idea.
3. Roy mentioned letter to editor in paper addressing how to “deal with” homeless. He suggested that Shaun write a letter to offer some suggestions for how to help homeless and work with the Homeless Coalition. Shaun agreed and stated that controlling the narrative about what we are doing is very important. Shaun will follow-up with this article in the trib.
4. If you have any additional ideas please let Shaun know.

**IX. Thanksgiving and Blessings - Shaun**

A. We usually take this meeting to talk about people who have helped us our in our work.

B. Shaun: Ruth Smith and her church are always willing to help. They always go above and beyond the call. Thank you! Also we would like to recognize the partnerships we have with landlords. We can’t find housing without the help of these folks. Waco All Bills Paid has been very helpful. This year Bentwood Properties has also been very helpful.

C. Nicole: I’d like to give a shout out to Prosper Waco and the help they’ve provided us, especially with the HMIS administrator. I’d also like to say a huge thank you to all of the folks who have helped with the YHDP planning. Kelly: I’d like to piggy back on the YHDP thank you! We have

moved into the first floor of MCH’s Family Outreach Center which provides us with great opportunities.

D. Success Stories

1. The Cove: We have seen some new students in the last few weeks. Even during this pandemic.

2. Margaret Ferguson: My Sunday School class of 1st and 2nd graders raised money to purchase items for homeless packs.

3. Cristal Garcia: At Respite House we’ve been able to house three youth during COVID. They have been homeless for over 5 years and now they have a warm and safe place to sleep at night.

4. Jerod Clark: At the Myers Center we have a program called Street Sweep which works with local churches to pay homeless clients to collect trash. We’ve had 6 in the program and 4 of the 6 have found other jobs and a couple have moved out into their own place. Over 400 bags of trash have been picked up. We have funding for this program through June then we will need to look for other funding sources. Also we have 25 participants at the shelter and 22 of the 25 have income. Making efforts to keep shelter a safe and sanitary place for the winter.

5. Charles Harris Veteran Case Manager at Caritas: Moved four veterans from homelessness by providing deposits, first month’s rent, etc. Please contact us if you know of a homeless veteran. We can also provide assistance for surviving spouses of veterans. Call Caritas’s main number and ask for Charles.

**X. Adjournment 12:56 pm**

Notes Taken and Submitted by Melissa Ishio

**Chat Messages**

* **Hildhilda.Contreras**05:41

Good afternoon

* **VHACTXPageS**06:38

Hey Yall this is Sara from the VA. :)

* **Nicole Wiscombe (she/her) YHDP Director**08:47

Hey everyone! This is Nicole Wiscombe. I have a new email address now that I work for HOTRMHMR as the YHDP Director. You can reach me at Nicole.wiscombe@hotrmhmr.org.

* **Vince.Erickson**10:02

This is Vince at MHMR. I'm not hearing anybody.

* **The Cove**10:17

Kelly Atkinson here with the cove

* **Prosper Waco**10:20

hi everyone, Suzii at Prosper Waco

* **Cecilia Padgett**10:23

Shuan, will you add me to your email list for this Coalition, please. Kathy forwarded the email to me.

* **Vince.Erickson**11:00

I'm good now.

* **The Cove**19:11

is that youth under 18? or 18-24?

* **The Cove**19:39

thanks, karisa

* **Roy Nash**20:32

Interesting Letter to the Editor in this morning's Trib. Obviously, the public needs to be educated on the efforts going on to address homeless issues. Shaun, how about writing a letter to editor to explain what all the homeless coalition is doing in Waco? And invite folks to volunteer with us!

* **Karisa Garner**25:28

thank you all! see you next time.

* **Hildhilda.Contreras**33:03

What organization are you with Crystal Hicks?

* **Shaun Lee (him his)**33:46

Heart of Texas Region MHMR

* **Hildhilda.Contreras**33:51

TY

* **Vince.Erickson**39:52

We have a toll-free phone line: (866) 576-1101

* **Cecilia Padgett**40:50

Would we be able to ask the families at Sally's House if they'd be willing to share their view/input?

* **Nicole Wiscombe (she/her) YHDP Director**44:46

https://wacotrib.com/opinion/letters/letters-remembering-fred-gehlbach-helping-the-homeless/article\_7b036d1e-2aa2-11eb-b9b0-9ba279047789.html