

HUMAN SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD
CITY OF MESA
MESA CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
57 EAST 1ST STREET, LOWER LEVEL
November 20, 2003
-MINUTES-

MEMBERS

Ms. Susan Klecka, Vice Chair
Dr. Carlos Vallejo
Ms. Mary Bolig (Excused)
Ms. Teresa Cotton
Mr. Raymond Jones
Ms. Judy Kent
Ms. Kim Reynolds (Unexcused)

Mr. Ken Salas (Excused)
Ms. Linda Starr

STAFF

Ms. Nichole Ayoola
Ms. Kathleen Kelly
Ms. Ruth Anne Norris
Ms. Lisa Wilson

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Susan Klecka welcomed those in attendance.

COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

There were no citizen comments.

MINUTES OF OCTOBER 23, 2003 MEETING

There were no minutes recorded for this meeting due to technical difficulty regarding the recording equipment.

MONTHLY HOUSING REPORT

Ruth Anne Norris gave an overview of the monthly Housing Report. Requests for housing continue to rise but Housing Services was able to assist 25 families. Rehabilitation was completed on nine homes with a total of 27 homes completed year-to-date. Ninety-one percent of the Section 8 funds and 87 percent of the affordable housing program funds have been used. Monthly rental rates also continue to rise. More vouchers are available and eligibility should increase. The goal is 98 percent before the end of the year. Ms. Norris reported that the current waiting list is approximately two years old and some people have been waiting for as long as three years.

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR THE FUTURE

Copies of the executive summary for the East Valley Needs Assessment, "Building Blocks for the Future" has been distributed by the East Valley Tribune and were given to members of the Board. The Cities of Mesa, Chandler, Gilbert, Scottsdale and Tempe as well as the Mesa United Way and Maricopa Association of Governments conducted a community assessment of needs that included empirical data collected and presented to the community on November 14, 2003, at a reception held at the Sheraton in Mesa. The final report will be completed in December and distributed.

AGENCY PRESENTATIONS

Karen Brown presented information about PREHAB and the various programs. PREHAB consists of a group of administrative, development, and human resources offices, as well as, fund raising properties, which support several programs. La Mesita, a homeless shelter provides temporary emergency shelter and case management to help homeless families with young children to increase their self-sufficiency. Residents can stay at La Mesita for up to 120 days. Most families have completed the program within the 120-day time frame, but those

requiring a longer stay can be referred to other agencies. Autumn House, located in the East Valley and Faith House located in the West Valley are the two domestic violence shelters run by PREHAB. They both provide 24-hour emergency shelter for victims of domestic violence. Domestic Violence Safe Temporary Overflow Program (DVSTOP), contracted to PREHAB by the State, is a program created for immediate crisis prevention when all other shelters are full. PREHAB also provides counseling at the Dorothy B. Mitchell Counseling Center, Westside Social Services and Mayfield Counseling Center located in Mesa. PREHAB also owns and operates the Homestead, Larry Simmons Residence, Dorothy Mitchell Residences and Helaman House. These are residential treatment centers for youth 12-17 years. Other programs include a Positive Alternative to Gangs program that is in run through Mesa Public Schools, the Maricopa Alliance for Juvenile Corrections and the Mesa Gang Intervention Project. Ms. Brown announced that PREHAB's newest project is their thrift store located in downtown Mesa. She also explained that a budget cut of one million dollars forced PREHAB to lay off 15 staff members but they continue to provide the same quality of service, even with the limited staff. Most clients come from Mesa and other clients are referred to agencies in their area of residence

Pat Gilbert of Mesa Community Action Network (MesaCAN) spoke about the various programs they provide. He explained that Neighborhood Services is now a function of their Community Technical Assistance Center. Mr. Gilbert explained that the East Valley Men's Shelter operated by Margie Frost is the largest of MesaCAN's programs. It serves 84 homeless men throughout the East Valley by providing shelter, meals and a work assistance program. The typical stay is 50 days but residents can stay as long as two years. In the near future, MesaCAN is planning to open a Day Labor Center that will house a clothing bank, food pantry, thrift store, English as a Second Language courses and technology courses. MesaCAN is exploring the possibility of receiving matching funds for the families on the waiting list for their IDA program. Mr. Gilbert thanked Bob Perry, Community Revitalization Financial Specialist, for all the work that he has done in working with MesaCAN.

Dr. Frank Scarpeti, the Director of Community Bridges, formerly the East Valley Addiction Counsel gave a brief history detailing the start of the organization. Because there was a need to bring people from the East Valley to central Phoenix for detoxification services, EVAC bought a piece of property in 1993 on South Bellview. It was used for their detoxification program. The program now serves the homeless, indigent and the working poor. There are 12,000 entries into the crisis system and 4,000 into the medical detoxification program. The work is done in conjunction with urgent care centers and other emergency crisis providers throughout Maricopa County. These services directly support police, fire and emergency responders. There is also a crisis response team in the City of Phoenix that functions from the central city location. The crisis response team provides 24-7 emergency transport services within the central Phoenix corridor. Dr. Scarpeti discussed the Prevention Partnership program, which provides prevention and education services to six school districts within Maricopa County, Mesa, Paradise Valley and Scottsdale. Community Bridges also provide services to the Pappas School for homeless children. Last year that program provided services to over 30,000 people. Community Bridges also has a unique partnership with several homeless and domestic violence shelters. The Center for Hope is Community Bridges' newest program. Mr. Scarpeti thanked the City of Mesa for taking the lead in making the program a reality. On October 15, 2003, a groundbreaking ceremony was held on the South Bellview property for a facility that will provide statewide service to 24 women and their children. All of the women must be homeless, pregnant or postpartum and have a co-occurring addiction and psychiatric disorders

Bob Evans of the United Food Bank provided the Board with information about their various programs. The United Food Bank along with West Side Food Bank and St. Mary's Food Bank is part of a national food bank organization called Second Harvest. He also explained that food banks operate as a type of clearinghouse for food and distribute it to local non-profit organizations. The United Food Bank is the only food bank in the East Valley and supplies all the East Valley cities, Gila County, Pinal County and the south half of Apache Navajo Reservation. To date, the 14 staff members have distributed over 7 ½ million pounds of food and decreased the cost of distribution by 20 percent. Food resources are shared with St. Mary's Food Bank, which was the first

food bank in the world. One of the programs operated by the food bank is Kid's LIFE and consists of two umbrella programs called Food for Thought and Kid's Café. They are operated through the schools and require parent's participation, which in turn receive food boxes and/or the kids are fed after school.

Dan Taylor of Mesa Senior Services Inc., spoke about his non-profit organization that has three centers. One is located in Apache Junction and two others in Mesa. He explained that volunteers are a critical part of the Mesa Senior Service operation. Mr. Taylor stated that they have recently implemented a transportation program called Enabling Transportation (ET). This allows seniors to be reimbursed for mileage accrued for transportation and they can also purchase coupons at a discount to be used to pay for taxicabs. This program benefits those senior adults and the disabled ages 18-64 who qualify through the Americans with Disabilities Act. Mesa Senior Services will start a Friends campaign in February. The campaign will raise funds that will be matched by the Virginia G. Piper Trust Fund. There are caregiver forums that provide support and information for caregivers. A prescription drug program is available in partnership with the Salvation Army. However, next year the center hopes to administer the program themselves in order to eliminate the need for clients to visit another agency.

STAFF REPORT

Ms. Ayoola briefed the Board on the progress of the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program, which the Governor's Office has taken on as an initiative. They hope to help promote the credit statewide. Mesa has also put together their own initiative again this year and included MesaCAN, Mesa Family YMCA, Mesa Community College, Arizona Saves, MAXIMUS, Mesa United Way, and East Valley RSVP as partners. The coalition hopes to get the Mesa Chamber of Commerce involved in the process.

Kathleen Kelly acknowledged that she admires the willingness of Ms. Ayoola to take on the many projects that has dramatically increased her workload.

ADJOURN

Susan Klecka moved to adjourn. Teresa Cotton seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:42 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nichole V. Ayoola, Human Services Specialist