



Great Falls Inter-Faith Association

January 23rd, 2014

Central Christian Church

Ray opened the meeting with a reading from James 2.14-17 and 1John 3.17-18, a quote and a prayer.

Father Raphael is a new priest from Nigeria working at Benefis.

Steve read minutes,

Udo gave the treasurers report, have received dues from six congregations so far. Bank account balance is \$2,169.69.

Youth support team update, Fred Lee Houle couldn't make it, told Pastor Ray that 172 homeless youth are recorded so far this year, 136 homeless youth are in the system, about 30 are couch surfing. He knows of 2 that are totally homeless, one spent an entire night outside. They got a \$2,500 grant from Russell Country FCU, but had to spend \$1,500 immediately on food.

Fred had a meeting to talk about emergency shelters for the homeless youth in the school system. One of the ideas is having host homes, the hosts would be well trained and coached, but if someone needed a place to stay, they could go to host homes on a revolving basis. He invited us to Google "Gimme shelter", a film about homeless youth, and watch for it coming to town. Another meeting February 12th, hopefully more will be done.

Ron brought up Crosswalk in Spokane, started out as a meal program for homeless kids, and is evolving into a shelter program. It was suggested as a possible resource. The Kairo's Youth homes were also a possible place to shelter homeless youth.

Circles USA-a program that makes a person in need (that actually WANTS help and is willing to try) a circle leader who partners with people who can help coach and educate the individual to help get themselves out of poverty. They meet for 13 weeks and work through books with coaches and allies. There is responsibility and accountability so that they stay in the program. Fred is suggesting we use this program as a model with our own curriculum. Ray added that this is unique in the way that the person in need directs his own program to meet his/hers unique needs.

Pastor Ron recommends Ruby Payne book on poverty.

Center West update- the plumbing is done, six doors about to be installed, then they will have the city come and do the final inspection. Need more sponsor churches...They are planning on a grand opening for March 2014. This is a transitional care facility, where clients are evaluated, diagnosed, get treatments and voch rehab.

Kate, from Family Promise said they have 8 congregations , 4 are voting and 1 host church so far, need 13. Had fundraiser Saturday, formulating board of trustees, the program is progressing very quickly, most take two years, we are this far along in just over a year.

Thomas with the pastoral care team at Benefis gave an update on the Volunteer chaplaincy program. They have trained 27 ministers, 14 have come in to do chaplaincy. Already receiving apps for the next class, they are hoping to expand the program to pastors in outlying cities The Gideon's have gotten involved for donating bibles. They have placed 300 bibles since September, and they still have many more. The bibles are plastic wrapped, and when a patient opens it and take them home, they replace them. They also have lots of little toy boxes for kids in the waiting rooms. They will be on call 24/7 starting in February.

Father Raphael from Nigeria introduced himself, was ordained as a priest, studied in Germany for ten years, Rome for five years, and was a professor for 22 years in the seminary in Nigeria. December last year he came back to the US, Great Falls MT.

Start Trying Other Programs (STOP) is a new nonprofit organization in Great Falls aimed at working with troubles youth. They are working to get their 501 3C. Their goals include:

- To help youth with their education
- To help youth develop better social skills
- To help youth with vocational training
- To help youth with drug and alcohol awareness
- To help youth with sexual abuse treatment
- To help youth with specific counseling personally needed for their growth

They need support from the surrounding communities to sustain the facility.

Kristen Paduano is the new YWCA case manager. In September they added crisis counseling services. Men, women, and children are all included in this service. It is also free of charge.

Our next meeting will be Thursday February 27th. . . .

Ray adjourns the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,