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**Community Advisory Board**

**Minutes for December 18, 2020**

**In Attendance:** Kerry Fair, Jennifer Younker, Samantha Barrett, Joan Balbuena, Jennifer Colvin, Joyce McClanathan, Kelli Trencer, Renee and Mark Nutwell, Don Marbury, Sarah Bush, Wendi Perry, Monica Johnson, Denise Kuhna, Shelley McIntire, Tiara Burnett, Emily Keller, Scott and Tressa Nicewarner, Brittany Wedd, Christine Cassatt, Kim Halsey, Lakeisha Thrower, Mary Anne Burke, Bobby Strother, John Krowka, Mark Douglas, Sandra Balbuena, LeeAnn Broder, Tyler Stinson, Keith Chapman, Nya Seaward, Austin Green, Rebecca Irvin, Nadine Thompson

**Schools:**

* + Bester Elementary School
    - South End 21 total enrollment for September through November: 21 Students in Grades K-5
    - School Based Health Clinic Update - Working with Greensburg Farms to create fruit and vegetable baskets that will be delivered to 95 student homes during the month of January
  + E. Russell Hicks Middle School
    - South End 21 total enrollment September through November: 26 students in Grades 6-8
  + South End 21 Family Involvement
    - September (Let’s Get to Know You Board Game)
    - October (Tailgate Theme)
    - November (Helicopter Around)
    - December (Winter Olympics)
  + Open Positions: One Program Assistant

**Families:**

* + September through November:
    - Total number of referrals: 33
    - Total number of transitions: 21
    - Total families served:
      * September: 34 families, 177 individuals
      * October:  27 families, 143 individuals
      * November: 35 families, 177 individuals
    - A total of 56 home visits and 137 service connections
    - Working to address barriers such as technology, childcare, housing, etc.
    - Parent Advisory Committee is working on safety and how to educate the South End on how to keep their family safe at home and as pedestrians
    - Parent Cafes have been occurring virtually throughout the pandemic – Open to the entire community once a month.
    - New FSW, Austin Green, joined our team in November

**Community:**

* Community Enhancement Projects:
  + - Locust Point Market mural – Call for Artists is active with Washington County Arts Council Deadline Jan 15
    - Holiday window painting- local residents and artists helped to paint the windows at The Crown (formerly the Dagmar) Hotel, E. Russell Hicks Middle School and Bester Elementary School. Window painting kits were provided to area residents who asked to do their own homes.
* 5th Annual Babypalooza - VIRTUAL
  + 353 registered to participate
  + 5 Live Q&A sessions, 9 parenting tip videos, food drop and game show finale
  + We were able to provide the same quality event through a virtual platform and use of the Bester Community of Hope app
* Together Boxes:
  + - All four boxes are placed and filled weekly on Fridays (Emmanuel United, St. John’s Lutheran, St. John’s Episcopal and Otterbein)
    - Currently seeking partners to help fill the boxes weekly with activities for a range of ages and interests
    - Brittany Wedd volunteered to make 80 catapult making kits for the boxes
  + Community Coffee:
    - Continues to be available Thursday mornings from 9:00am to 10:30am via Zoom with the link posted each week on our Facebook page
    - Casual conversation that often sparks new ideas and partnerships
    - Guest speakers can join to help address community needs and provide education to participants
* Discussion:
  + What are the current needs in the community?
    - Food insecurity
    - Increase in substance use, overdose and fatalities
  + What are the possible solutions from the community perspective?

Food Insecurity:

Barriers and challenges:

* stigma behind reaching out for help and an unwillingness to get help
* daycares requiring families to provide meals when they weren’t before to help offset costs
* children being overseen by older siblings who do not have ability or permission to bring younger siblings to food sources
* challenges with food bank cards: If you are living with someone else who has a food bank card and move out, you cannot get your own card until theirs expires. Additionally, a hotel address cannot be used to obtain a food bank card.
* delays in communication, relying on social media or digital communication and those who need the most may not have access to digital tools
* a lot of those who are most vulnerable are not aware of food resources or where to find information
* Michah’s backpack only serves school aged children
* Times of meals are different for each school and grade. If you have multiple children in different grades or schools, it is hard to get to a lunch site together\
* General lack of trust in services and community resources – information needs to come from a trusted source and relationships are key
* Some of the most vulnerable families such as those living in hotels do not have transportation to get to a meal site

Solutions and comments:

* Use success stories to share information about resources, make it personal and relatable to help normalize asking for help and utilizing food resources
* Add information to City bills and other mailings
* Utilize HARC’s resource page, WGP resource page and listings. There are a lot of resource pages and access areas but does the general public and most vulnerable population know how to access them?
* City is currently conducting a survey which includes a question about how people would most like to be notified or informed which may help to develop a plan to spread information
* Aetna Better Health provides non-medical transportation which may be used for rides to food resources. Other insurances may do the same, worth checking in to
* The lack of WCPS representation was noted and it was suggested to ensure they have a greater presence in community based meetings like CAB
* Encourage attendance by general public at Board of Ed meetings to advocate for better outreach
* Distribute resource guides through Goodwill Stores, hotels and other places the most vulnerable population may frequent

Substance Use:

A shorter discussion was held due to time constraints. Comments included:

* Due to isolation, stress and increased trauma, the problem is anticipated to get worse. Peer Recovery Specialists are in the community. The community needs to embrace harm reduction and realize that people will use regardless and this is an opportunity to help them use in the safest way possible.
* The pandemic has taken the spotlight and we are not hearing as much about substance use and addiction.
* Most deny addiction and the need for services. There needs to be more physical interaction and conversation if we want to reach more people.
* The lack of in person interaction is not the same as a traditional AA/NA meeting which greatly helps those who struggle with addiction. The pandemic has created time for people to “sit in their own heads” and this is scary for many and a cause for relapse or worsening addiction
* If you know someone who is struggling, call them. Check in on them and let them know there are people out there rooting for them.

Next steps:

Bester Community of Hope will share these critical conversations with stakeholders and committees in the City working to understand and address these issues. We will also consider how BCOH can act as a conduit to further the conversations in the South End and seek viable solutions.

Next meeting: Our next meeting will be in March, 2021, at lunch time. Date to be announced.