



*uniting central alabama to end homelessness*

*It is the mission of One Roof to equip and empower our community to prevent and end homelessness through advocacy, education and coordination of services.*

**AGENDA Membership Meeting April 6, 2017 Cooper Green Health Services**

**I. Welcome and Roundtable Introductions [Click here for Sign In Sheet](#)**

- Meeting started by Michelle at 2:05 with 40 members

**II. Old Business**

- None was mentioned when asked.

**III. Special Presentation: Youth Homeless Panel, Speakers: Courtney Stinson (One Roof), Che Hatter (One Roof, Warren West (Youth Advisory Council), and Alice Westery (Youth Towers).**

- Members from our CoC's Youth Advisory Council will take part in a discussion about the particular housing barriers face by youth age 19-24. Please bring any questions you might have about this particular subpopulation and come prepared to join in the discussion.
- Speaker: Warren West. Warren introduced himself and discussed some of his barriers that he faced with health and safety while he was experiencing homelessness. He discussed some of the places her slept (cars, park, abandoned buildings) and how he slept in the cold weather.
  - **Safety:** Warren often felt unsafe in typical emergency shelter situations, which is why he preferred to stay on the streets or find an abandoned building. Some of his feelings of being unsafe were because men in the shelter are much older than he is, and he feared other people would take his property.
  - **Wellness:** Warren also spoke about his fear of harm from other clients who are experiencing mental health issues. Also, he feared contracting an illness from someone and having it affect his own health and wellness.
  - **Streets vs. Shelter:** He felt as a youth it was safer to be on the streets than in shelter. It allowed him to be alone instead of feeling trapped in a shelter away from others his own age. Warren would seek out other youth his age who could relate to his experience of homelessness.
- Speakers Courtney Stinson and Che Hatter: Courtney and Che discussed some similar viewpoints held by other members of the Continuum's Youth Advisory Council. They reported that youth often feel like others don't hold respect for them because of their young age. They also discussed how the LBGTQ homeless youth community doesn't perceive our homeless services as accepting of their identity and youths don't feel safe.

- Speaker Alice Westery: Alice reported that Youth Towers is now serving 129 homeless young people in our community. This is a sharp increase to the number of individuals the organization previously served. She went on to explain that the shelter environment isn't designed for youth because it didn't allow them to be themselves and often times reminded them of large foster or group homes. Rather than face an environment that reminds them of their traumatic experience growing up, youth will refuse to access services. Alice also shared that youths who are new to homelessness are extremely vulnerable and are targeted by older individuals or individuals who have been experiencing homelessness for a longer period of time.
- Question from the membership: If youths aren't staying in shelter because it triggers trauma and they prefer to stay on the street, how do you decide where is stay?
  - Speaker Warren: Youth will always go with their gut feeling and take a chance when determining where they will stay for the night. What encouraged him to work with an agency because he felt that the agency really wanted to help. When he was in a shelter he felt that they wanted to help the older individuals verses the younger individuals. He felt that agencies designed for youths made him feel like he was wanted and that they care if he ate that day or if he needed help looking for a job, etc.
- Question from the membership: If you could pick one thing that would help end youth homelessness, what would it be?
  - Speaker Warren: Having someone there for them (youth experiencing homelessness) and someone who will listen, talk with them, and guide them. Youth need to have that light to help guide them and to have someone on their side.
  - Speaker Alice: The one thing that could help end youth homelessness is having that safe place they can go right then and there when they need it. This would prevent them from going into survival mode. One of them most common things Alice hears from her youth clients is that they are afraid they won't make it through the night. Having that immediate safe place for them is the key to ending homelessness among youth.
- Courtney Stinson discussed the different survival behaviors utilized by youth experiencing homelessness:
  - Survival Sex / Car Hopping
  - Drugs (Both recreations and medical)
  - Temporary employment through temp agencies: youth who take a job from a temp agency can expect to earn \$50/day. The company also deducts paycheck for work related expenses, e.g., work clothes, boots, etc.
- Warren shared his friends' experience when they moved into housing after living on the streets. After they moved it, they didn't know how to be in an apartment. They didn't have any furniture or food in the house. They were alone and away from the people they know. It still felt like they

had nothing. Youth feel like they have more resources available to them on the street than they do in housing.

- Representatives from Ascension, a youth housing program through AIDS Alabama: Ascension case workers reported that they have limited resources to provide youth after they move into their new apartment. They can offer a twin sized bed, but unable to provide sheets, blankets, pots, pans. They have some donations, but their federal funding limits them in what they can purchase for each youth. There is a gap between youths getting housing and living on the streets. They weren't taught how to take care of a place or have any programs that help bridge their experience from living on the streets to living in housing.
- Speaker Alice: Providing a youth with a fully furnished place and giving them everything that they need to succeed doesn't mean they will succeed. Most young individuals have a fear of letting go of their dependency. There's a need for a transition program to help youth through these fears. Youth Towers takes their youth clients through many steps that help them succeed.
- Final words from Warren West: "Youths just need somebody. It's scary out there and stressful, but we just need that one person that can be there to listen and help."

#### **IV. Continuum Business**

- Coordinated Assessment Implementation Update - Gordon Sullivan
  - CA is entering phase 3 of implementation -- the integration of ESG service providers into the CA process. Stated that it is very important that members attend the next meeting so we can discuss prioritizing the prevention scale, and to discuss how we can make policies and guideline that follows HUD guidelines.

#### **V. New Business**

- Heather Bussey, Birmingham Bar Volunteer Lawyers Program.
  - Please send homeless clients to Homeless Help Desk on the first Tuesday of every month, 8:30 am - 12:30 pm in the One Roof office.
  - [Click here for handout.](#)
- Majadi Baruti, Dynamite Hill-Smithfield Community Land Trust.
  - Announced that the CLT is looking to partner with other agencies as they begin to work on land development in Birmingham. Will set a time for them to present at a future membership meeting.
- Ty Evans, Birmingham DHR Jobs Program
  - DHR Jobs Resource Fair will take place on April 19, 2017. All are welcome to attend.
- Deisha Rosser, Pathways
  - Spring Food truck rally is this Sunday from 1 to 6 and Pancake-palooza will take place at Pathways on April 29th.
- Jesse Humphries, AIDS Alabama

- Dinning Out for Life event will take place on April 27th. Several Birmingham restaurants are taking part of this event. A percentage of food sales will support AIDS Alabama, including their youth-specific housing program.
- Next Membership Meeting – May 4, 2017 2 p.m. in 2nd floor cafeteria of Cooper Green Health Services. Coordinated Assessment priorities will be reviewed and a vote will be taken. Please be sure to send a decision maker from your agency.
- Project Homeless Connect Monthly Legal Help Desk: May 2, 2017 8:30 am - Noon, Located in the One Roof Office, 5th Floor Cooper Green Mercy Health Services.
- Have a topic idea for a membership meeting in 2017? Please email Gordon Sullivan at [gordon@oneroofonline.org](mailto:gordon@oneroofonline.org) with your suggestions or comments.
- Please let One Roof know what's going on in your agency! Send info, flyers, announcements to [info@oneroofonline.org](mailto:info@oneroofonline.org) to be included in One Roof's weekly newsletter.