

NORTH PORT CHAT met on 4/10/13 to discuss that some of the missing services are, as well as the gaps in services.

### **BIGGEST NEEDS CURRENTLY IN NORTH PORT:**

- Huge problem with the gap between kids needing mentors and the number of mentors in the system. Big Brothers/Big Sisters has about 70-80 North Port kids waiting for mentors
- Need baby products FAST for street outreach – so much need but resources have been cut back- Back Pack Angels are working on providing these items through the pre-schools, newly identified area of need.
- LACK OF SHELTER in the county for unaccompanied youth with no place to go. A special piece to this puzzle is the number of YOUNG teens who are pregnant and kicked out of their homes. 14-15 yr olds have been identified as sleeping behind buildings with no place to go. There is also a lack of Foster Care homes in North Port, so kids have to be placed out of their home area.
- ALL FAITH'S FOOD BANK: has food for all organizations – they are working hard getting more food into schools. They are already helping create food pantries in many of the schools – suggestion made for them to contact NPHS School Nurse, as there is a pantry there.
- SPECIAL PROBLEM: So many children have NOTHING to eat on the weekends. All-Faith's Food Bank can work with BACKBACK ANGELS to create food packs for them to take with them on Friday's.
- Sue Lord spoke of efforts to provide shoes to school kids – very successful endeavor, but never complete. She also identified need to help provide healthy snacks at many of the schools. Donations she is able to secure, as well as some donations through the Salvation Army helps her do this at Atwater. But, likely other schools have similar issues.
- Remind everyone that the North Port Family Health Center has a place people can shower – but signage is terrible and many people do not know this is available.
- Dept. of Juvenile Justice – Mike: DJJ has a problem with Mental Health services – in need of people who are willing to work with kids. Need both psychiatrist and psychotherapy. Lots of trouble getting kids from NP to Sarasota where they are required to go to court.
- COASTAL BEHAVIORAL – voiced same struggles as Mike from DJJ. They have great services, but getting parents to bring the kids is a huge problem.
- HUGE numbers of grandparents are caring for children – They really need support. They often are unaware of services in the area and not sure how to link to supports.
- There continues to be difficulty communicating the services and resources that are available. Different ages respond to different types of communication. Dave Powell from the Sun's *Feeling Fit*, reminded the group that grandparents are of the demographic that most strongly read this supplement. It can provide a good communication means for this demographic.
- Mindi Rohan from Volunteer Community Connections shared information on the opportunity for agencies to use them in finding volunteers. She has willing North Port residents who need a place to volunteer.

There was some conversation about a Southern Annex (other side of Toledo Blade – (Atwater area) – difficult for people to get up to this area from South County.

**\*\*\*\* FROM 4/17/13 Interagency Meeting**

**Charlotte County Homeless Coalition** – WILL HELP SARASOTA COUNTY RESIDENTS! They cannot stay open all day – but serve breakfast & dinner – 7 days a week, 365 days per year. Everyone is welcome.

People must live up to their case plan throughout their allotted 60 day stay, and 75% of people leave the shelter with a job or housing.

FOOD PANTRY – open 1-4 on Fridays – need to bring an ID

They also have 4 transitional houses & the Waldo House for chronically homeless men. They are currently on the look-out for a place for chronically ill women.

They also have OUTREACH where people can come in from the woods --- case management is provided.

There is also post-care for those who discharge – where they are called and followed up with just to make sure everything is ok.

- DMV will give free ID for homeless – and GED is free as well!!!
- HOMELESS can obtain an ID for free!!!
- LIBRARY also has a special card for the homeless

Currently Charlotte County Homeless Coalition is teaching life skills classes, parenting, hygiene class, finance, self esteem, anger management, communication, how to stretch your food stamps, etc.

People in the shelter are required to attend class unless they are working.

**SchoolhouseLink through the YMCA** – Picks up homeless children and transports them to THEIR school even they are not on the same jurisdiction. Important for the children to have that continuity of school even though they are not in their home.

**Solstice** – Helps with loan modification and assists people with programs to help them stay in their homes. Currently foreclosure process is averaging 27 months and there are LOTS of programs that are new since January – so don't give up! They have 18,000.00 to assist people in catching up with payments and will work with modification.