

Community health depends on community voices

**North Port CHAT Meeting Agenda
March 9th, 2011**

Present: Sam George, Tom Davie, Monica Becket, Vince Guiffre, Barbara Gross, Joy West, Lou Galterio, Tom Jones, Hector Mendez, Lorna DeRiggs, Kevin Vespia, Sue Owens, Annie Hicks, Terry Vande Krol, Don Vande Krol, Anne Marie Lupien, Linda Stone, Patricia Scheerer, Jeri S. Maxfield, Diane Ramseyer

Welcome and Introductions – Sam George, co-chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were provided.

Neighbors Gathering - Don Vande Krol shared insights from Neighbors Gathering. Don shared his belief that we have created a culture which alienates us from each other – we are losing our social capital. He indicated that to reverse this, we need to intentionally build community. He and his wife started “Neighbors Gathering” in their neighborhood. What has grown from this, is an understanding that wealth can be measured in relationships, not possessions. Terry shared how they built the group – from walking door to door to invite neighbors to a gathering. They have started a neighborhood garden, using the food both in individual families, as well as for community potlucks. Additionally, neighbors have begun to help each other through illness, financial issues, and home repair. While the neighbors “knew” each other in the past, this was more that they were neighbors, not in a relationship sense. They would like to help other neighborhoods start similar gatherings. They have a website www.neighborsgathering.com.

Community Updates

World Wellness and EcoFest – Barbara Gross updated the group on the final plans for this event on March 19-20th. They hope to have 100 or more exhibitors. Diane requested volunteers to help with the CHAT booth. There is a separate parking area for the vendors and workers – so that there is no fee for parking.

North Port Coalition on Homeless Students – Diane shared an update from the group with the CHAT members. They have added two distribution points – Children’s First and North Port Social Services. This month they have filled 50 backpacks, with 86 more scheduled to be done at the end of the month.

The Community Development and Housing Visioning Sessions will continue at North Port City Hall on Thursday evening at 5:30 pm. This is for the Community Plan.

On March 25th, the Suncoast Partnership for Homelessness will hold a special Community Forum at R.L. Anderson Building in Venice at 1:30 pm. This is another opportunity for the community to provide input into future planning related to homelessness and homelessness prevention. The partnership is working on a 10 year plan to alleviate homelessness.

Our Mission: Through the efforts and activities of the North Port CHAT, we will achieve a safe, healthy community where individuals and agencies collaborate to assure the physical, social, and emotional well-being of all residents. We will accomplish this through advocacy for an integrated health and behavioral health care system, evoking community action and collaboration to reduce substance abuse among our youth and adults, promoting the value of “connectivity” in all aspects of the development and growth of our community, and most importantly, providing an effective way for the voice of the community to be heard and active in North Port.

Committee Updates

Health Services Committee – At this month’s meeting, Dr. Lee Gross shared a review of the Epiphany Health Plan. This is NOT an insurance program, but, a pre-paid plan with significant discounts. It was suggested this be a topic at future CHAT meeting.

Knight Owls Kiwanis Health Fair is in April, and the committee is helping to locate participants.

The plaque for Venice Regional will be presented to their board on March 30th by Sam and Linda. This is also the date of the Healthcare Reception at City Hall.

Anyone planning to attend the “North Port Celebrates Healthcare” at City Hall on March 30th, please let Diane or Anne Marie know. We have to have a count for the caterer. The Gardens of North Port will provide the food. SMH and Regions Bank have also provided sponsorship funds. A proclamation for Doctor’s Day will be read at the March 28th Commission Meeting – 6 pm– CHAT members urged to attend to receive the proclamation.

Also discussed some of the recommendations for change in Department of Health.

See March Meeting summary for more details on all these topics. **NEXT MEETING – APRIL 6th** at 4:00 pm – Family Services Center.

NP-ASAP/NP D-Fy – Membership for NP D-Fy is at 118 at this point, with a large number of applications to be screened. A bowling event was held for members-only at Treasure Lanes with 38 members attending. Another screening will be held in April, and plans are being set for an additional event.

Group has been approach by local civic group about possibility of collaborating on future event involving local groups and individuals associated with the political process, etc. to help youth see ways to be part of the process, etc. Would not be focused on any specific issues, candidates or parties – just the process and roles citizens can take.

See March Meeting summary for more details. **NEXT MEETING – APRIL 5th** – at 6:30 pm – Family Services Center.

Community Announcements

Healthy Start Coalition is holding a baby shower in North Port for the first time (have held in Sarasota for 16 years). It is on April 16th at George Mullen Center. Monica requests CHAT members help get the word out to the community. The flyer will be sent through the CHAT email list.

Lou Galterio noted that Lee Gross, MD is now president of Suncoast RHIO.

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Tom Davie asked the group to keep aware of the legislative work related to Prescription Drug issue and Monitoring system. Chief Vespia indicated last year there were 18 prescription drug overdose deaths in North Port – ranging from age 15-67. Discussion on the issue ensued.

The Shining Start Award for SCOSA this year is North Port High School Senior, Kris-An Hinds. Her award will be presented at their luncheon on March 24th at Michaels on the East.

“Linguine for Life” – Café Gelato – all next week – 14th-18th (all day) \$6.99 – proceeds go to Relay for Life.

Meeting Dates to Remember

March 30th – 6:00 pm – North Port Celebrates Healthcare– North Port City Hall

April 5th – 6:30 pm – NP-ASAP/NP D-Fy meeting – Family Services Center

April 6th - 4:00 pm – Health Services Com – Family Services Center

April 13th - 4:30 pm - Next CHAT– North Port Police Department

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