

Community health depends on community voices

North Port CHAT Meeting Summary
May 9, 2012, 4:30 pm

Present: Sam George, Dave Powell, Freddy Koenig, Janis Russell, Vince Guiffre, Bruce Isbell, Mary McDonald, Linda Jericka, Pat Lucia, Megan Berhalter, Tom Davie, Diane Ramseyer

Welcome and Introductions: Sam George, chair, welcomed everyone and introductions were provided.

Resources for Coping with Alzheimer's – Megan Burhalter from ClareBridge presented the group with information and resources for caregivers of loved ones with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. In the short time she has been with ClareBridge, the majority of calls have come from North Port area. She is hoping to help get information out in the community regarding supports and resources for persons with Alzheimer's, even before they may need residential care. This can help equip caregiver in the knowledge and resources they will need as circumstances change in the health and wellbeing of the loved one. Friendship Centers offer both a Caregiver's Resource Center and Adult Day Services through the Living Room. An important resource is the Elder Help-Line which can help link to senior services (any senior issue, not just caregivers and dementia). That toll-free number is 1-866-413-5337. ClareBridge is an assisted living community for persons with dementia and Alzheimer's.

FISH – Bruce Isbell shared information on the history of FISH (Friends In Service Here) which helps provide transportation to medical appointments and groceries. This is a volunteer run program which originated through a collaboration of local churches in the 80's. The FISH program in Venice ceased operating in the 1992 due to lack of volunteers. The North Port FISH is in need of more volunteers due to the number of requests they receive weekly – 15-20/week. 90% of their clients are both elderly and living alone. They cannot transport those in wheelchairs. Volunteers are reimbursed for mileage, though some do chose to use their mileage as a donation under taxes. Volunteers are also protected under the Florida Volunteer Protection Act and FISH of North Port also carries a general liability policy. Riders are requested to give a donation for the ride (\$10 out of North Port/ \$5 within North Port). FISH is a non-profit. Anyone who is interested in helping should call 941.429.8945.

Community Updates

North Port Coalition for Homeless and Needy Children (Backpack Angels): Pat Lucia gave an update from the Coalition. They packed 436 backpacks of hygiene products (trial sizes) this month. They pack both small bags for individual children and

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family bags which include laundry products, toilet paper, etc. as well as the hygiene products (trial sizes). Many of the items are donated, but they spend approximately \$3000 for products to make up the difference.

Committee Reports

Health Services: The Committee is working to secure an ongoing intern position through USF School of Nursing to help with the immunization outreach. Linda Stone will also be sharing a link to a survey through the City Economic Development Dept and requests CHAT members respond to the survey. Diane will send the information.

NP-ASAP (Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention): The coalition is working with the schools on a student survey this month. They will also be asking the CHAT to help with a short survey on community issues.

NP D-Fy (Drug-Free Youth): The group continues to grow, and volunteers are preparing for the 700+ renewals that will need to be processed between now and the Fall of 2012. Random tests are done weekly, either with call night before or shoulder tap at Morgan Center when D-Fy is there.

Community Announcements

Annual Postal Food Drive is this Saturday (May 12) – Please place non-perishable food items in a bag by your mailbox Saturday morning. Volunteers are also needed – come to Trinity United Methodist Church on Saturday.

Library Caregiver Series continues. May 3-June 7 is a series of 6 sessions- Powerful Tools for Caregivers; May 14th is Placement Alternatives (10-Noon); May 21 10-Noon is Making Memories Workshop.

May 18th – Night Carnival for teens on May 18th from 6-10pm at Library.

May 24th 10 am - In honor of Memorial Day, the Library will host an event with a writer who is compiling stories of veterans from our area.

Addiction 101: Free Event at City Hall on June 15th at 9 am – very informative session on recognizing addiction and better understanding of addiction.

JFS has a special grant which can provide a variety of types of assistance to veterans.

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Meeting Dates to Remember

May 10th – 3:30 pm – NP D-Fy Workgroup @Morgan Center

June 27th - 3:00 pm – Health Services Com – Family Services Center

June 12th – 8:30 am – NP-ASAP Coalition- Peace Christian Church (3010 S. Sumter Blvd.)

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

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