The Hunger Council of Lamoille Valley

November 21st, 2013 • 9-11 am • First Congregational Church • Morrisville

Present: Ellen Hill, Rick Aupperlee, Lily Sojourner, Joyce Clothier, Deb Krempecke, Linda Farr, Catherine Gallagher (LSU – Student Services), Michelle Wallace, Brynn Evans, John Mandeville, Emmett Mosely, Scott Johnson & Kathy Cookson.

Guests: Father Rick (St. John’s Episcopal Church in the Mountains), Theresa Snow (Salvation Farms), Mary Bushnell (Johnson Food Shelf), Dennis Hamel (VT Veterans Outreach)

Hunger Free Vermont: Derrick Lambert, Dorigen Keeney

Updates:

Deb: Correction from the minutes for the last meeting: Lamoille FoodShare never turns anyone away. Because of increased need and reduced resources, the pantry is asking those from towns outside their catchment area to only come every other month.

Lily: Emergency housing under GA rules allow for exceptions for cold weather – if a day is indicated as “cold weather” will be posted on the website each day or call 211.

Joyce: 32 Thanksgiving baskets coming into the area for vets and their families.

Rick: All Laraway students do a community food rotation including volunteering in food pantries and at the VT FoodBank facility.

Brynn: They have had several successful fundraisers for MOW. They are serving 450 recipients.

How can we expand the food safety net this winter?

Father Rick Swanson, St. Johns in the Mountains Church, distributed fliers (attached) about the warming shelter at his church in Stowe, open 10 am – 2 pm and where they serve lunch. The shelter has been open over the last 3 weeks, and they have had 3 people come to the shelter. It has spurred a conversation in Stowe where local leaders are surprised that there is hunger and homelessness in the town. All the churches and temples in Stowe are involved and each is sponsoring a Friday meal. They are offering 2 kinds of soup, bread, milk, juice, coffee, tea and sandwiches and also send food home. Need volunteers, not big groups but 3-4 for each day and assistance in getting the word out. The church is small and they have no room for storage.

Catherine: She lives in Stowe and wonders if Father Rick is reaching out to schools.

Father Rick: Great idea. 50% of the students in Stowe do qualify for some assistance. They chose Fridays because that is what they could do – they know that a supper meal or a weekend would be better attended. They are an older congregation so members have difficulty volunteering in the evenings. General discussion about finding volunteers or financial assistance. Some ideas were to contact the Mountain Company or Green Mountain Coffee Roasters.

Father Rick would like to have agencies come to help connect people with services.

• Contact him to sign up for a particular Friday.

Joyce: She has 3 older veterans who have been told by a staff person at CVCAC that they cannot go to the Stowe shelter because they don’t live in Stowe.
**Father Rick:** Anyone can come.
- Linda Farr will make sure that everyone at CVCAC knows that the warming shelter is open to everyone.

The Church is on the free bus line that runs from downtown Stowe to the ski area.

**Scott:** Linda Burger is Catherine’s equivalent in Lamoille South SU - they are the homeless liaisons for their school districts and could assist with outreach for the shelter.
Discussion that the Lamoille County Food shelf brochure needs to be updated with the new community meals in Stowe, Hyde Park and Jeffersonville.
- Edits were given to Ellen Hill who will make the changes and get more brochures printed.

**Scott:** The Housing Coalition met and it was reported that there are 7 homeless parents in Morrisville. There is a meeting with the churches on emergency housing needs in the area on Dec 10th at noon at Puffer Methodist Church. Father Rick will talk with them about the issues with hunger.

**Michelle:** Wolcott building is open Tuesdays & Wednesdays and could be used as a warming shelter.

**Ellen:** The Johnson Community Meal Program is currently offered on the second and forth Wednesdays of the month. Johnson State College (JSC) took over the program from the court diversion program that could no longer do the meal. JSC has offered about 10,000 meals since they took over in 2010. Last week was their Thanksgiving dinner, at which was donated over $200 to Johnson Food Shelf. They continue to partner with Laraway. JSC usually collects the food for the Thanksgiving baskets but this year Sodexo offered to purchase the food for the baskets and they were able to get the food much cheaper. Packed 50 Thanksgiving baskets this year. The previous food service at JSC built a culinary training program around the meal program. The culinary training program was reinvigorated this past summer where they trained 2 students.

**John:** There are conversations about expanding the culinary training program that VT FoodBank and CVCAC are running in Barre and transporting people from Lamoille.

**Ellen:** Ellen asked Sodexo at JSC if they would expand the Johnson Meal program to every Wednesday and they are open to the idea. Need reliable volunteers.

**Brynn** has a strong group of volunteers and they may be interested in helping in Johnson. Need to have an organization willing to organize the volunteers.

**Lily:** Another source of volunteers are Reach Up recipients who have to do community service.

**Joyce:** Suggestion of a “stuff a truck” drive run by Salvation Army in central Vermont – could we do one in Lamoille.

**Dorigen:** Provided some examples of ways to use existing infrastructure to increase access to food:
- Senior centers feeding children in the summer – successful program in Gilman last summer
- Schools feeding seniors – can seniors volunteer in the schools?
- The school meal program in Milton is providing free oatmeal prior to school for parents, siblings and full pay students who don’t have money or food to eat. They are also providing free soup and bread at lunch.
Lily: Lamoille just hired a SASH coordinator (Medicare funded) to help seniors stay in their homes (Maxine Adams – at Lamoille View; Maxine@lamoillehousing.org; 802-851-8348). She would be a good person to contact about food needs of seniors.

Brynn: The Senior meal program in Johnson is dwindling. They have trouble getting more seniors to the Senior center in Morrisville, except on Wednesdays, partly because there are few activities.

Linda: Early childhood success requires engagement of the community. Seniors could volunteer their time and then get a meal.

Mary: Could the churches get together and create an action ministry and reach out to seniors.

Father Rick: Ecumenical Council is very active in this area. Focus has been on housing.

John: 2/3 of the economy of Lamoille is travel and tourism. The ski areas sell about 1,000,000 tickets a year. What if the ski resorts were to ask each skier to donate a $1. He would be willing to approach them with this idea. John has a friend who has a machine that plants potatoes – can do an acre in 15 minutes. He will approach Lamoille Valley farm bureau to see if any farms in the region would be willing to do this to grow potatoes for meal programs and pantries.

Central Vermont Hospital and Fletcher Allen Hospital are working with Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC) to provide “health shares” to staff and patients. These are boxes of produce and meats raised by VYCC. Hunger Free Vermont provides nutrition education and recipes to go with these CSA’s. Could we replicate this in Lamoille? There would need to be a local group who could raise the vegetables and meats that are delivered in the CSA boxes.

Theresa Snow: Salvation Farms works with organizations around Vermont to help them scale up their gleaning programs to capture more of the agricultural surplus – providing technical assistance and training. We have created an on-line application to inform potential gleaners about gleans, capture data on the products gleaned and help with distribution. We are also developing methods of processing and redistributing the gleaned products through our Vermont Commodity Program. This will increase capacity to process large volumes of surplus to clean, case pack and/or lightly processing (freezing, canning, dehydrating, etc). SF is testing new products. This year, 110,000 pounds of potatoes, squash, and apples have been processed using prison labor in Windsor. There is a crowd-funding campaign going on now to renovate the building at the prison to be able to do light processing of products. Go to Salvation Farms website to learn more: www.salvationfarms.org

Michelle: VT FoodBank is trying to decentralize to make more fresh produce available. They plan to allow organizations to pick up gleaned produce at the Wolcott site.

Deb: The produce from SF has been hugely beneficial for the people who come to her pantry.

Theresa: There are frozen peppers and summer squash available for testing. She would make them free for those who would collect the information on which processing is best.

Brynn: She got a lot of produce from VT FoodBank. Preparation is an issue. So this light processing would be very beneficial.

Scott: His Learning Together program would be willing to use these products.

Mary: The people using her pantry often don’t know how to use the products.
**Emmet:** VFB working on to educate people on how to use the gleaned food. Cooking demos and taste tests.

“Vermont Fresh Handbook” is a book, published by Salvation Farms, Sterling College and VTFB that provides recipes and information for each vegetable grown in VT. Sterling College is a good resource for assisting with food education.

**Deb:** what has worked for them is to tell people at the pantry verbally how to simply cook the foods they are getting. Very successful.

**Scott:** We have outlined some next steps to increase food access:
- Ellen to update food shelf and community meal brochure. She will also make sure 211 has the updated information
- John Mandeville to talk with Smugs and Stowe Mountain Resort about adding a request to those who buy tickets to support hunger relief
- John to talk with the Farm Bureau about seeing if farms in the area would give land to grow potatoes
- Father Rick and Lily to begin conversation about need for housing and food in region – what can be done
- Scott is meeting with Kevin Kelly, to discuss where will savings in Medicare go? How can we get nutrition to those frail seniors?
- Meal programs in the region can contact Theresa to get the lightly processed peppers and squash to test.
- Ellen will pursue expanding the Johnson community meal program to every Wednesday. The meal program needs volunteers if it is to expand.

**Linda:** After hours crisis fuel will only be during the day (8:30-4:00) on Saturday and Sunday. After hours crisis fuel is only available to elderly, disabled and those with a child under the age of 6. Crisis fuel is only available for a one time per year assist. Wood assistance is through the Lamoille United Way. Bradly’s Food shelf is also cutting back – only able to give one meal package a month. Homelessness is growing in Lamoille.

**Dennis Hamel:** He is the new Veteran Outreach Specialist for Lamoille. (Cell: 802-310-0631; Dennis.g.hamel.ctr@mail.mil) and both he and Joyce are working with vets and their families in Lamoille. Please refer any vets in need to them. The situation for homeless veterans in Lamoille is the worst they have seen. There are more vets in Lamoille county than in any other county in Vermont and the needs are very high.

Next meeting is in February – will send out a meeting doodle to determine a good date.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Dorigen Keeney