



Community Liaison Committee (CLC) Meeting Agenda Monday, July 24th, 2017

SCHEDULE

CLC Meeting 6:00p.m.-7:30p.m. (Refreshments & Dinner will be provided by LOFT Kitchen)

Special Guest: Patricia O'Connell, Executive Director of *Sistering*, will be joining us to discuss updates to the agency's programming and the changes that have taken place in the past year.

In attendance: Pat O'Connell, Greg Rogers, Alison Sproat, Dianna Cochrane, Karen Haberman, Cam Gilmour, Dermot Grove White, Jason Burke, Nico Mirante

Facilitator: Samantha Vite

Minutes: Jill D'Angelo Scott

AGENDA

Community Update:

1. Welcome & Review of June 26th 2017 meeting
 - Welcome, Dianna! She is looking to see if she'd like to become a CLC member. Dianna has been a volunteer at CONC every Monday night. Her professional background is in mental health (MH). She spent 15 years with CAMH and now works for Ministry of Health.
 - Review of last meeting: CLC members spoke about the shelter being at full capacity, success of our book club, and our dire need of TTC tokens (Alison donated some tokens - thank you!!!). We also welcomed Fair Change Community Services, who spoke about the work they do in fighting tickets and fines for street involved people.
2. Update on Shelter and Drop-in operations
 - Shelter Manager Greg reporting on the past 30 days now, not quarterly. Not much to report from the shelter – it is summer so residents are out and enjoying the beautiful weather.
 - On August 1st, CONC welcomes new Health and Wellness worker Rafael. Previously at the YMCA for 17 years, Rafael will be offering group and individual counselling to address health issues and a design wellness program for shelter and drop in clients
 - Question from member re: healthcare referrals. Asked if we send residents to any community health centres (CHCs), citing Davenport-Perth as the area CHC; yes, we do encourage the use of services offered by CHCs and refer there.

- Planning to push for funding for TTC tokens this year around holiday season. Hoping companies are feeling generous.

3. Patricia O'Connell, Executive Director from *Sistering*

- Sistering has come up during CLC meetings a few times in the past few months. ED Patricia O'Connell is the guest speaker this evening. Background of Sistering: agency has been around for 35 years, but has been down the street from CONC for only 8-9 yrs. 18 months ago, Sistering became a 24/7 drop in for women. Since then, the number of women using services has exploded.
- Hours of operation used to be 9:30am – 3:30pm so they would only see women for breakfast, lunch, counselling, etc. Population and needs have changed dramatically since becoming 24/7. Most women are homeless or precariously housed with/without significant issues relating to MH and/or addictions. Most can't live unsupported (cooking, hygiene, isolation); large number of seniors; a lot of vulnerable people with complex needs. There is another 24/7 women's drop-in near Fred Victor, but Sistering is much busier and low-barrier
- Sistering serves close to 100 breakfast, 365 lunches, and 90-100 dinners, plus soup and sandwiches overnight. Basic services are offered – food, shower, laundry, plus wide range of wraparound services. Agency has 3 housing workers, 3 doctors, 3 psychiatrists, 1 psychotherapist in partnership with Jean Tweed. From Jan '17 to March '17, Sistering had a nighttime doctor and they're in the process of securing this ongoing.
- 2 social enterprises: pottery studio called Inspirations (program = 1 to 1.5 years to become proficient) and textile studio called Spun (weaving, knitting, sewing, crocheting). Social recreation program is solid, but looking to increase that to address boredom during extreme weather. Have yoga 2x/week, fitness, beading, Saturday night movies, Friday night music/dancing/singing/karaoke. Working hard on a variety of partnerships.
- Agency receives city funding of 1.8 mill; 1.2 from other; they do lots of fundraising (about \$500k a year); became anchor agency with United Way. Token donations are also a need for Sistering!
- Re: physical space concerns. Patricia says they have outgrown the space – every office space has 2-3 desks and portable desks. When they renovated, they put in new HVAC system so now they have two new program spaces in the basement. Even so, stuffed to the rafters. Sistering anticipated they would have 20 people a night, but actually around 65 per night. Patricia thinks capacity is best around 50. Have reclining and tub chairs, plus sleeping mats and floor space. Dimmer lights, try to maintain a quieter space but it is an all-night drop in. Patricia says we need more housing – people need somewhere to live.
- Comment from Greg: funding structure needs to change – funding is granted based on/following statistics. Ex: if your housing program serves easily housed people, your program statistics will reflect success and you will get \$\$\$. If your program is geared toward difficult to house people, you may not be so successful and receive less funding
- Patricia mentioned Sistering does not partner with CAMH because they don't seem to be able to deal with their population very well. Suggestion from Dianna: Share Care through CAMH is mandated to work with homeless people in Toronto and is very under-utilized program. She will send Samantha the info for further follow up.
- Re: staff morale. Very stressful job. Before becoming 24/7, staff would start work at 9, end at 5. Now it never ends. No closing, no time to debrief, always needed. Hard to even get a break. Very intense, potential for burnout and compassion fatigue. Big issue and Sistering is struggling a little; many staff there for 20+ yrs, 2 staff members have been there over 30 years!
- Re: broken window. A man went along Bloor and smashed a number of windows. Sistering's smashed window was secured the same day. Replacement is being installed tomorrow – now doing 3 panels instead of one big sheet so easier to replace in case of future vandalism. This repair has taken a little longer. They try to deal with maintaining building asap. Patricia deals with complaints asap, welcomes feedback, welcomes tours of agency.

4. Committee Member Forum for questions or concerns relating to shelter operations

- n/a

5. Scheduling of August meeting

- committee decided to meet on Monday, August 21st to check in prior to the Bloorcourt Festival
- September meeting will be a review of work done so far; it's the 1 year anniversary of the committee! Samantha will be here until December at least; CLC is welcome to self-organize and continue meeting monthly or quarterly. To be discussed.

**5 Minute
Break*

Community Integration:

6. Continued Organization of Volunteer Projects:

- n/a
- Cam shared about group called Wild Areas Wilderness; teaches people how to forage and identify edible plants in Toronto. Started with a group of people who are homeless.
 - Bloorcourt Festival Schedule
- Saturday August 26 – the theme is opening the drop-in to the wider community. We're available from 12 -4. After 4, space is private for the residents.
- Pay-what-you-can fundraiser
- All day colouring books and face painting (done by student)
- Greg and Erica are main contacts for day-of
- First performance at 12, second at 3pm. Salsa dance lesson at 1pm (instructor referral from Dovercourt House); planned to do salsa inside, but if there's room outside, it will be on the street. Prefer to do it outside
- Samantha will speak to neighbouring businesses to see if they're also planning live music to avoid noise pollution. It's unlikely given the businesses around us, but just to be sure
- Distributed schedule for event

7. Closing Remarks

- n/a