



Meeting Minutes

Date: 10-17-2024 **Time:** 3:00 PM

Meeting Called to Order By: Van Roberts

Location: Wayside Center @ 44219 10th St W, Lancaster, CA 93534

Organizations in Attendance

Voices of Our Youth, Parents Anonymous, Children's Law Center, Auto Pros, Lincoln Investigations, Tarzana Treatment Centers, City of Lancaster Police Department, CASA of Los Angeles

Minutes

Minutes were posted to the VOYCC webpage on the Voices of Our Youth website.

Reports

There are no reports at this time.

Old Business

There was no old business at this time.

New Business

Van extended a warm welcome to all present and inquired if the newcomers were familiar with Voices of Our Youth. Many attendees admitted they were not acquainted with the organization. Van proceeded to provide a concise overview of VOY and its mission. He emphasized that VOY serves as a sanctuary and actively engages in grassroots efforts such as housing and relocating families.

The Council aims to unite prominent stakeholders to leverage their collective capabilities. It serves as a platform for leaders to collaborate and share innovative ideas.

Homelessness remains a significant challenge in the Antelope Valley, with its impact visible in every corner. Immediate assistance is crucial for families in need. While completely eradicating homelessness may not be entirely achievable, we can definitely take steps to reduce its prevalence.

Van proceeded to start introducing the individuals present in the room.

The City of Lancaster Police Department recently unveiled their new station located south of the Boulevard within the old AV High School District Building. The department has identified five key areas of focus: homelessness, mental health, economic development, faith-based initiatives, and youth diversion. Their role has been likened to that of a primary care provider, with the Sheriff's Department acting as the initial point of contact, similar to an ER doctor. The Police Department works to address community members' needs at a deeper level, identify root causes of issues, and prevent individuals from entering the justice system.

Van expressed his gratitude to Christine Malta from the City of Lancaster and Pam Jones for their collaborative efforts in the community, working together to create positive change.

This Council is focused on taking action. It goes beyond just being a job. Each person in this room is driven by passion and a desire to make a greater impact!

Van introduced Kia, a single mother who participated in Voices of Our Youth's Streets to Suites program. Kia is a dedicated single mom raising five young children, all under the age of seven.

Kia, a single mother who escaped a domestic violence situation in Texas, sought refuge in California with a friend. When the friend and her family were unable to accommodate Kia and her children, Kia used her remaining funds to stay in a hotel. Unfortunately, Kia ran out of money and had to leave the hotel. Desperate for help, she made multiple calls but faced obstacles due to organizations lack funding or space, or her children being too young. Eventually, Christine Malta connected Kia with Voices of Our Youth (VOY), who collaborated with the Sheriff's office to secure the last available voucher for Kia and her children. VOY arranged transportation for Kia and her kids to the motel, ensuring they had a safe place to rest for the night.

Voices of Our Youth's Streets to Suites program has been supporting Kia and her family for the past two weeks through the generous donations of

community members who wanted to make a difference. Along with providing them with a safe place to stay, we have been ensuring they have home-cooked meals almost every night. We have helped enroll the kids in daycare and the oldest child in school, and even arranged for the oldest to have their hair done in preparation for her first day. Additionally, we have been assisting the family with transportation as needed. We helped Kia find a telemarketing job opportunity, but she is searching for a position that is more conveniently located near her kids' daycare and school.

Van emphasized the importance of uniting and considering these families as our own children. He stressed the need for improvement and coming together as a community.

Van then discussed another Streets to Suites success story – Callie!

One illustration of the impact of our program involves a call we received from Deputy Green in Community Relations. Deputy Green informed us that a deputy would be reaching out to us. Shortly after, Deputy Porras contacted us, explaining that a lady in a wheelchair who was paralyzed from the waist down had been stranded in the same location for three days. Deputy Porras asked if there was anything we could do to assist her. Without hesitation, we sprang into action.

Upon receiving the distress call, we promptly headed to the lady's location. During our journey, Deputy Flores contacted us to inquire about our whereabouts, to which we responded that we were only a few minutes away. Upon arrival, we swiftly gathered information from Deputy Flores and took control of the situation. After conversing with the lady, we provided her with some ice and later some ice water, as she was upset that her cup had broken. She disclosed that she had bed sores and urgently needed medical attention. Recognizing her distress and her wish for shelter, we decided that the most suitable course of action was to place her in a motel for the night to rest and then arrange for a medical evaluation the following day.

In order to ensure her safety and well-being, we collaborated with a community partner who facilitated housing and transportation using their access van. We ensured she had a meal, considering she had gone without food for days, and arranged for a registered nurse to periodically check on her throughout the night in case she required any assistance.

The next day, we transported her to the hospital for medical evaluation, where we gained further insight into her situation. She had multiple wounds infested with maggots that had reached the bone, along with feces covering the wounds. The hospital doctor expressed astonishment that she was still alive and credited us with saving her life. However, we attributed the credit to the Deputy who alerted us (Deputies Porras & Flores) for initiating the rescue operation.

Given Callie's extensive needs, she has been relocated to a convalescent home where she can receive the necessary care. She is now on the path to recovery and flourishing in her new environment.

Van mentioned that there are numerous organizations in this area that have the ability to assist individuals in need. Consider if the person requiring assistance was a loved one - this emphasizes the significance of collaboration and cooperation.

Van is reaching out for assistance. He is calling for unity and mutual support among us. It is crucial to shift our focus from individuality to collaboration. By joining forces, we can achieve great things as a collective. It's time to set aside egos, eliminate company labels, and let go of stubbornness.

Icebreaker: What aspects of your role do you enjoy the most when contributing to the community?

Danci – Sales, Marketing

John – Networking, Sharing Knowledge

Pam – Helping Others, Linkage

Max – Listening

Tammy – Being the Squeaky Wheel

Christine – Solving Problems, Collaboration, Utilizing Skillset to go Further

Teri – Seeing the Impact

Karen – Bridge the Gap Between Community & Badge

Ester – Outreach, Never Give Up

Alex – Connect with People, Share Story

Jeannet – Network, Serve the Community Needs & Recourses

Tasha – Listen

Danci has expressed her willingness to leverage her connections to reach out to businesses for donations. These donations could come in the form of time, financial support, or goods to support our mission at Voices of Our Youth.

Christine from the City of Lancaster Police Department recommended reaching out to Rochelle and attending the Business Watch Meetings organized by the city. She expressed interest in connecting her with our organization and said she would facilitate the introduction.

We have exciting news to share! Our upcoming VOY Christmas event will be a VOYCC event this year, as many of our Council members are involved. Save the date for December 21, 2024, at the Wayside Center. Stay tuned for more information on the event, including special meetings that may be scheduled to plan all the details.

We have recently made the decision to reschedule the Voices for Change Gala to February 22, 2025. This change was necessary due to scheduling conflicts with artists and uncertainties within the industry.

Other Information

None to report at this time.

Committee Reports

No reports at this time.

Announcements

No announcements at this time.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned around 5:00 pm.

Next Meeting

Thursday, November 21, 2024, @ Wayside Center @ 44219 10th St W, Lancaster, CA 93534, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.