

Conversation

Welcome Home Skagit

Mt. Vernon Seventh-day Adventist Church

4520 East College Way, Mt. Vernon, WA 98283

November 1, 2019

Started at 8:30 am - closed at 9:00

Larry Paise – Facilitator

Rogue Retreat: The training that covers ways to provide Shelter services in a community started yesterday. This is being provided by Rogue Retreat staff in light of their 15 years of providing such services in Medford, Oregon. We have 10 participants signed up. We will be getting the recording from yesterday shortly.

Safe Parking: Ellen Anderson put out an email to those who expressed an interest in going on a field trip to visit 3 different churches whose congregations have been supporting a Safe Parking program for years. That trip will happen this month. There are churches that are considering opening up their parking lot for safe parking. Those who park at the Public Defender's office have been told that they need to be out of there by Monday.

February Play re: Homelessness: There are "Save the Date of February 15th" fliers for the play that will be presented at the Lincoln Theater. This play will be done by Stella Ireland and her group, Theater Arts for Social Action. Stella & this same group performed a play at the Lincoln Theater last February called "Forty Dollars & a Bus Ticket". This play addressed the issue of the challenges faced by people released from jail or prison & return to their community. This play was very well attended and very well received. Sources interested in sponsoring this play to cover the expenses are being sought out, so, please let Nancy or Wende know of any possible sources for sponsorship.

Welcome Home Skagit: W.H.S. is finalizing the work to be officially under the umbrella of Angels for Angels for 501 C3 coverage to facilitate donations to the work of W.H.S. The next step is scheduled for this Monday and, once completed, there will be a "Donate Here" button on the W.H.S. website.

The relationship that W.H.S. has established with Angels for Angels is temporary & they will be applying for their own 501c3 status by the end of the year. They are waiting for the revised amendments & were told that the attorney will soon have that done..

Friendship House (F.H.) Meals: The question of whether or not F.H. could return to serving meals was raised & discussion ensued on that topic. The tone of the conversation was that the community needed to explore what needed to be done for F.H. neighbors & business owners to be heard re: their previous concerns & for all involved to attempt to work out solutions. Larry P. stated, "I am a firm believer in seeking to understand. They were seeking to solve a problem when they took the meals away. The problems declined when they took the meals away. We need to determine why people were congregating there before and are not now".

Temporary Winter Shelter: Winter shelter scheduled to be open Nov. 25. If so, it will close March 23. A question was raised re: the procedure for people to be able to get into the Shelter. Tina had said that people would need to get on the list by applying through Community Action. However, the hope was to set it up so that people could be screened for entry ahead of time so that they could plan accordingly in advance if they could not get in. There was also hope that, if someone previously approved to get into the Shelter did not show or didn't need a space, that people on a Waiting List could gain entry for the night.

Dignity Banquet: Curtis S. reported that he has targeted April 4 or April 11 for the Project Dignity Banquet.

Care Kits Project: There have been some very cold temperatures over the last few weeks. The Care Kits put together by the Resource Committee have been very much in demand and the hope is to be able to obtain and provide more. The kit consists of a 7 by 9' tarp, a 72 X 80" Moving Blanket (both available at Harbor Freight in Mt. Vernon), a pair of wool socks, one of the numerous hand knitted hats from the United Methodist Church and a 45 L duffel bag that was provided by Eddie Bauer's Burlington & Marysville Outlet Stores at an 80% discount. People who have been sleeping with only a coat, a single blanket or a very thin sleeping bag have been really suffering in this cold weather that will continue to get into even lower temperatures. The committee members had been told by people w/homelessness experience that sleeping inside of one of these moving blankets that was covered completely by the tarp had been protected from the cold. People receiving these kits have been very grateful. Many people sleeping outside will not get into the Shelter so the hope is to continue to provide this form of protection from the elements. We know that the real need for shelter can only be provided by having a building & programs to support services, but, this is a vital step until that is provided.