

**General Membership Meeting
January 7, 2016**

9:35 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

SERHO, 1736 Purchase Street, New Bedford, Massachusetts 02740-6821

Members present (21): Rita Abreu, Barbara Acksen, Carl Alves, Stephanie Boulay, Gail Brennan, Jean DeCoffe, Eleni Dupuis, Darlene Dymysza, Deirdre Healy, Michael Jackman, Jay Kenney, Mali Lim, Maria Mendes, Kathleen Murphy, Rosemarie Ricci, Christine Sullivan, Carmen Salvador, Julienne Siwe Ngongang, Karen Vernen-Thompson, Gloria Villalobo, Kathleen Wilbur. *If your name does not appear on this list and you attended the meeting, please contact gnballies@gmail.com.*

Minutes

Call to Order and Member Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 a.m. by Chair, Barbara Acksen, who welcomed new member introductions, as well as round table introductions of those in attendance. New members included:

- Carl Alves (Executive Director, Positive Action Against Chemical Addiction)
- Eleni Dupuis (Community Coordinator, Plymouth WIC)
- Carmen Salvador (Director, Adult Foster Care, People Incorporated Fall River)
- Christine Sullivan (Grant Coordinator, Coastline Elderly)

Business meeting

Meeting minutes – approval

December 3, 2015 – Jean DeCoffe moved to approve the report as amended (phone number extension correction for Kathleen Wilbur 508-995-3026 ext. 3955), Maria Mendes seconded, with no discussion all members present approved the December minutes.

Treasurer's Report – Jean DeCoffe, Treasurer, reported:

- Bank balance 12/31/2015: \$225,894.83
- Unrestricted net assets: \$39,429.93
- Net income: \$9,344.20

Darlene Dymysza moved to approve the Treasurer's report, Michael Jackman seconded, with no discussion all members present approved the report.

Standing Committee reports

Health Access – Gail Brennan reported that showing of the film, *On the Dark Side of the Moon*, was well very well received by those who viewed it. She said there will be another event in the spring.

Health Equity – Kathleen Murphy reported that the Capacity Building Cancer Disparities group is in the second phase of working with CHW's on colorectal cancer screening and developing tool kits. She said some of the community partners include Coastline ElderServices, Dog Tags Navigators veterans' group, Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, The Immigrants Assistance Center, United Interfaith Action and YWCA of Southeastern Massachusetts. She said the goal is to create early awareness for colorectal cancer and engage other community groups. She hopes to get two or three oncologists from the area more actively involved in the community in the upcoming months.

Other Business

Barbara Acksen announced that GNB Allies is looking for a new place to hold its meetings since SERHO is closing on Feb. 12th. She said the group is exploring other locations and is open to member suggestions.

Barbara Acksen initiated a discussion on youth concerns where members were divided into groups. Each group answered two questions: (1) What are major youth issues? and (2) Who should be at the table to discuss them? A representative from each group discussed their answers with the larger group. Since the groups offered overlapping responses, here's a summary of what was discussed.

(1) What are major youth issues?

Among the major youth issues mentioned were: substance abuse, suicide, teenage pregnancy, bullying, family structure, dropout rate (especially high for ESL families and minorities), homelessness, economic disparities, inadequate employment opportunities, the need for peer mentors, grandparents raising their grandchildren, children not being involved civically, and violence in the schools.

The issue of cultural norms was also raised. People may feel disconnected from programs if various agencies are imposing an American paradigm on people from other cultures. There is a need for cultural competency at all agencies that are dealing with families in the Greater New Bedford Area.

(2) Who should be at the table?

Among those recommended to be at the table were: middle school principals, SouthCoast Youth Alliance and its members (i.e. Craig Dutra and Warren Berube), Rev. David Lima and other members of the Inter-Church Council of Greater New Bedford, Community Connections Coalition of New Bedford, Positive Action Against Chemical Addiction (PAACA), Mayor's Youth Council, YWCA (i.e. Gail Fortes), Southcoast RAPP, SMILES Mentoring Program, and various youth-related groups such as boys and girls clubs and key clubs.

It was noted that community groups such as 3rd Eye Youth Empowerment, HOPE Collaborative and NorthStar Learning Center were already doing a great job serving the youth of the area.

On behalf of his group, Michael Jackman said that GNB Allies has a role to play to convene stakeholders in this realm and to disseminate quality information. He said it is difficult for GNB Allies to initiate projects without staff/infrastructure (similar to Partners in Fall River), but they could play a role in collecting/collating data that tells the story of substance abuse in our region. He said Plymouth County (CHNA) has a dashboard which has up to date health data indicators and questioned whether there

was a similar resource in the South Coast? Is South Coast Signals still an active dashboard?

Following the discussion, it was suggested that GNB Allies Should have an on-going approach to major youth issues by focusing on a few specific objectives rather than too many at once. The following action steps were recommended:

- GNB Allies should sponsor an Open Forum, a larger-scale version of this discussion.
- Can GNB assemble a resource update, to make sure resources are coordinated (not duplicative)?
- An inventory of school programs – what is currently offered, what else is available—how to identify and access funding?

In the best interest of time, Barbara Acksen said a follow up discussion would take place at a future steering committee meeting. This would also be revisited at a future general membership meeting.

Member Announcements

Members are always welcome to provide handouts for others and to share upcoming events.

- Deirdre Healy noted that the UMass Dartmouth Leduc Center for Civic Engagement in conjunction with its SouthCoast Serves Collaborative is offering a free three-day Youth Civic Leadership Institute from January 16-18, which includes a visit to the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for the Senate in Boston and participation in the MLK Day of Service Events in New Bedford. If you're interested in nominating someone, e-mail southcoastserve@gmail.com.
- Mali Lim noted that City of New Bedford Department of Community Services received a small grant for a program to assist parents who don't speak English with conversational skills. The program begins at the end of January.
- Carl Alves noted that the New Bedford Homeless Continuum of Care, known as the Homeless Service Providers Network (HSPN), will conduct New Bedford's annual Point-in-Time Count and survey on January 27 & 28. The event kicks off at the steps of City Hall at 1 p.m. and will run for 24 hours. A training session for volunteers will take place on January 21 at 5 p.m. at PAACA, located at 360 Coggeshall Street in New Bedford. The training will last one hour. For more info, visit nbhspn.com.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on February 4, 2016 @ 9:30 a.m.