

Meeting Notes

Date: 6-2-09, 9 a.m.

Location: Room H, Rock County Job Center

RE: CORD Steering Committee Meeting

The following CORD Steering Team members and others were present: Bob Borremans (presiding), Josh Smith, Jim Stickels, Sue Conley, Gail Graham, Kerry Swanson, Lisa Furseth, Gregg Bosak (recording) and Eric Kuznacic, Connie Robers, and Yuri Rashkin

Following introductions, which included Eric Kuznacic, the SWWDB's new Business and Employment Services Manager, Connie Robers, Director of the Rock and Walworth Counties Head Start programs, gave an overview of the Rock-Walworth Comprehensive Family Services, Inc., which includes Head Start and Early Head Start. She said they are currently working on opportunities to provide for expansion, but they also want to hear from the community regarding those plans. The Head Start (Early) are federally-funded primarily to serve low-income children and families at the poverty level or lower to meet their basic needs and prepare children for their school experiences. They generally serve between 250-280 in Rock County and about 100 in Walworth County.

As for the major child care issues, Connie finds a large number of children withdrawing from their program, much as a result of family job loss, she perceives. This causes discontinuity and has an effect on not only the children and their families but also the child care providers (reduced staffing) and potentially quality. Connie said they are applying for federal stimulus dollars, but it is an open process (anyone can apply) and is nationwide. They are looking to expand their capacity by about 60 children/families. They currently have waiting lists in both counties of about 150 children. They are also submitting an early reading program grant. Jim Stickels of the Wisconsin Literacy organization indicated he's help support Connie, and he and others were asked to write letters of support to accompany the grants. Dental and health care needs are also a large concern and they are currently in their last year of supportive funding for those grants. Bob indicated CORD would support those efforts in any way we can.

Next Yuri Rashkin explained how the SWWDB and he had worked to develop a continuing segment included in Yuri's Access Cable TV program *Discover Janesville*. The program is designed to feature the good things happening in Janesville by speaking to everyday, 'real' people. To this point the program has included segment/ interviews with successful dislocated workers and how they have utilized the SWWDB's services to locate employment, return to school, etc. Over the next six months, those segments will be expanded to include more topics, increased time, and some remote location segments. To access the completed programs, so to www.discoverjanesville.com.

Lisa brought up the fact that she felt we should continue to maintain contact with the Hospice person/group who appeared at an April CORD meeting to see if something could be arranged to use their expertise and interest to create a 'bridge' in helping the unemployed. Lisa also spoke about the financial counseling segment and their activities. They are now 'shopping for money' and have spoken to Rep. Ryan's office regarding accessing federal dollars.

Bob gave an update on communication with Larry Molnar, indicating that with the upcoming GM bankruptcy announcement, his office has been inundated with calls and e-mails. He indicated the On-Line Community project may still be alive through a Monster.com tie-in. Bob said we may want to invite Pres. Obama-appointee Ed Montgomery, Director of Recovery for Auto Communities and Workers, sooner than later.

Bob also mentioned that Brad Lichtenstein, a noted movie-producer from Milwaukee, will be in Janesville to produce a movie that looks at the long-term impact of the auto shut-down on the community for PBS and/or Sundance. He hopes the CORD group might be able to play a role in assisting him in any way possible.

Gail gave an update on the Referral/Assistance Network meeting on Monday, June 1. She said about half of those invited showed up, and said that Brad Munger, Supervisor of Rock's County's Community Support Program, which provides support and treatment services for people with severe mental illness, allowing them to live in the community, shared valuable information and insight. They're looking at the service directories that are currently available and have a good start at updating them but need to continue on a regular basis. One big need is to have a 'system navigator' since many potential users/dislocated workers do not know how to get into the system—a 'point of entry.'

Next Bob reviewed the Action Matrix and the various categories. The format of inviting 'guests' in to speak about needs in their respective disciplines to help organize special committees was discussed and consensus was that was an excellent way to involve others and get into more specific 'actionable' initiatives. It was decided that for the next meeting, Gail will invite Carrie Parker with the and also Theresa Marshall with the YWCA. Future topics/guests might include areas such as transportation.

Bob asked if the group felt a workshop or series of workshops to help bring the community together and head about some of the services we have as a part of the matrix might be beneficial to the dislocated workers. Various formats and time elements were discussed but that would be left to the organizer. Bob cautioned that we did not want to replicate what the state will probably be starting soon called Re-Employment Workshops (RES). The SWWDB will work on organizing some type of event or activity. In order to attempt to place more specific details on the Matrix, Gregg will contact committee members to see if they have anything to add to it.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, June 16, 2009 at 9 a.m. in room HS25 Conference Room on the UW-Rock County campus. Enter at the ground level of the new glass entrance at the northwest corner—signs will point the direction. The meeting ended at 11 a.m.