

Park Avenue Faith Community
Collaborative Meeting
September 25, 2008

Attending:

1. Chris Andersen, *First Presbyterian Church; Church & Community Concerns Committee*
2. Bruce Wallace, *First Presbyterian Church*
3. Brenda Banks, *Angels on Wheels*
4. Jodi Cooper, *Mosaic Community Development*
5. Vicar Aaron Decker, *First Lutheran Church*
6. Brittany Hanson, *Mosaic Community Development*
7. Amanda Chipman, *Mosaic Community Development*
8. Louise Jeffrey, *First Unitarian Church member*
9. Lois Knutzen, *First Lutheran Church member*
10. Kevin Marik, *Metropolitan Community Church member & deacon*
11. Pastor Kip Mickelson, *First Baptist church*
12. Rick Moulton, *Angel Food Ministry volunteer*
13. Karla Oliver, *Metropolitan Community Church (member & deacon)*
14. Fr. Peter Pappas, *St. John's Greek Orthodox Church*
15. Pastor Judith Rainforth, *First Lutheran Church*
16. Rev. Frank Rivas, *First Unitarian Church*
17. Wanda Selzer, *First Lutheran Church member*
18. Rev. Jonathan Sloan, *First Presbyterian Church*
19. Stephen Stout, *Good Neighbor Ministries*

Overview

Members of the faith community in the Park Avenue area met on September 25, 2008. The meeting was focused on sharing thoughts about the volunteer training and the Community Meals, brainstorming names for the collaboration, and obtaining information about Angel Food Ministries.

The meeting was held at the Columbus Park Community Center from 11:00-1:00 p.m. The meeting was facilitated and notes were taken for reporting back to participants. Nineteen people participated in the meeting and planning session. The meeting began with a round of introductions to welcome newcomers.

Community Meal Reflection and Evaluation

After reviewing the agenda, Brittany Hanson asked meeting participants to reflect aloud about their own experiences and perceptions of the Community Meals' first month. Many positive responses were noted in addition to several areas in need of improvement.

Group members shared how impressed they were with First Baptist Church volunteers, the quality of the food, and the success of the children's craft/art corner. It was mentioned that community development was actually happening as connections between people extended beyond the Saturday meals. Five to ten servers has been adequate depending on the complexity of the meal being served. Also, Fr. Peter Pappas confirmed the use of the St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church building as a backup (secondary) location for the Community Meals.

Participants discussed areas of improvement in clean-up (especially mopping the kitchen floor), a better system for carry outs, and a need for improved communication when getting the entry code to First Baptist Church for Saturday mornings. Brochures are still available for distribution to interested Omaha community members and faith communities; contact Brittany Hanson (brittany@mosaiccd.org or 933-6672) for additional brochures. Several meeting participants committed to connect with potential partners (see below) to continue gaining additional support and involvement for the Community Meals initiative.

Vicar Aaron Decker → Grace Lutheran Church's intern

Pr. Judith Rainforth → Morning Star Lutheran Church and St. Timothy's Lutheran Church

Brittany Hanson → St. Peter Catholic Church

Bruce Wallace → passing contact information for Temple Israel and several Hispanic churches on to Brittany Hanson

The group brainstormed additional groups that could be involved throughout Omaha as well as media sources that could be utilized. Possibilities include an article in the Omaha World Herald and a short radio interview on local radio stations.

Revisiting Collaboration and Group Name

A handout with a table describing the differences between coordination, cooperation, and collaboration was given to all meeting participants. Participants were asked to consider the table throughout the next month, noting where they would like the collaboration to fit into the table and their perception of where the collaboration actually fits.

The participants were then given a blank note card and asked to write down ideas for names or naming concepts for the group (the entire collaboration, not just the Community Meals initiative). After several minutes of individual brainstorming, the ideas written on the note cards were then written on the white board for all to see.

Initial thoughts about potential names included the importance of a name being marketable, easy to communicate (verbally and in text), and recognizable. The group discussed whether the name should include a geographic location phrase or words associated with religion and faith. The suggestion of becoming a 501c(3) nonprofit could limit the name, but doesn't necessarily have to.

Participants agreed to complete a survey before the next meeting indicating their favorite and least favorite brainstormed names and ideas. Brittany Hanson will develop the survey and distribute it online and through paper mail.

Angel Food Ministry

Rick Moulton, a volunteer from Angel Food Ministry and member of Trinity Church, made a short presentation about Angel Food Ministry, a nonprofit, nondenominational, low income food distribution program. Through Angel Food Ministry, Trinity Church currently serves 550-600 families in Omaha each month, and supports four host sites throughout the city.

Because of Trinity Church's West Omaha location, they are interested in supporting a new host site further east, specifically in the Park Avenue area. He discussed the process of becoming a host site, distribution day logistics, and addressed questions from participants. A new distribution site is currently being established at Hanscom Park United Methodist Church (44th & Frances). Any parish or organization interested in connecting with Rick Moulton to further discuss distribution site

possibilities for the Park Avenue area can contact him directly at Rlmoulton@nationalindemnity.com.

Wrap Up

As the meeting drew to a close, Brittany Hanson briefly discussed a grant opportunity through the ELCA Domestic Hunger Program and the need for another Letter of Endorsement from a member of the Faith Leader Collaboration. Vicar Aaron Decker also announced basic Spanish classes geared toward local community members and workers will launch on Wednesdays at 3:00 beginning on October 15th.

The next meeting is on Thursday, October 23, 2008 (11:00-1:00) at First Unitarian Church (3114 Harney Street). If interested in hosting a meeting at your location, please contact Brittany Hanson (brittany@mosaiccd.org) for scheduling.