

VOLUNTEER REPORT (06-17-09)

Community Meal Feedback Forum

On Tuesday, June 16 at 6:00 p.m. Neighbors United held a Volunteer Feedback Forum for all Community Meal volunteers and partners. The Forum was hosted by First Baptist Church and facilitated by Brittany Hanson from Mosaic Community Development. Thirty three volunteers and partners attended.

Welcome

The forum opened with a review of the agenda and brief introductions. Each volunteer noted their name and how s/he became involved with the Community Meals. The continual generosity of First Baptist Church was acknowledged with a Certificate of Appreciation from Neighbors United. The following materials were distributed:

- Forum Agenda
- Updated Community Meal Volunteer Manual
- Point Person(s) Contact Information
- Community Meal Rotation Schedule
- Outline of Hospitality Volunteer Roles & Duties

Update

Pastor Kip Mickelson gave a general update on the progress and accomplishments of the Community Meal initiative since its inception in September 2008. Several volunteers shared stories of lessons learned, significant experiences, and overall celebration with the group. The newly renovated Clothing Closet was also highlighted.

Manual Review

Brittany Hanson guided Forum participants through four main Volunteer Manual additions:

- *Hospitality (Relational) Volunteers (p. 7)* – Neighbors United has changed the language for this volunteer role, noting that Hospitality Volunteer is more intuitive to what role actually entails. In addition, the specific duties of these volunteers are now outlined in greater detail; this addition will be posted in the First Baptist Church kitchen and dining hall.
- *Intoxication Policy (p. 9)* – This is a new policy.
- *Unlocking/Locking Procedure (p. 10)* – Updated to reflect current procedure.
- *Adverse Weather Policy (p. 12)* – Updated with policy developed during December 2008.

Our Vision for the Future

This portion of the agenda was skipped over in respect for time.

Brainstorming & Troubleshooting

This portion of the forum started with this question posed to Pastor Kip Mickelson from a volunteer: How is the meal going from the First Baptist Church board or cabinet perspective? Pr. Mickelson noted there have been no complaints in relation to the facility or finances. He



noted that, in fact, the congregation is experiencing revitalization—in part because of their participation in and hosting of the Community Meal.

Paper Plate Frustrations

Another volunteer noted a frustration with the current use of paper plates—they are flimsy, difficult to count, and cause spills. A discussion was had about using Styrofoam plates instead, however several volunteers were concerned about the cost, both financially and environmentally. A solution was found in ordering 200 plastic paper plate holders. Rev. Stephen Sinclair of Second Unitarian Church has already secured this order. Tubs containing bleach water will be placed by each trash can; neighbors will place their plastic plate holders in the tubs to be disinfected as they toss their garbage.

Deep Cleaning the Dining Room

Though the First Baptist Church dining room is cleaned each week by neighbors and Hospitality Volunteers, it is clear the room is experiencing extra wear and tear due to additional use. In response, volunteers will do a deep clean of the dining room once a month. A schedule for the deep cleaning is forthcoming; volunteers will be notified once it is available.

Gaining More Participation

More volunteers are needed, especially Hospitality Volunteers and those willing to do Security Patrol! Ideally, there would be at least 2 volunteers patrolling the outside premises, and at least 2 volunteers patrolling the restrooms and dining hall. Some faith communities are carrying more of a burden than others and are beginning to feel burnt out. Neighbors United would like each participating faith community to recruit one parishioner to volunteer each Saturday of the month (e.g. Sally the 1st Sat., Carl the 2nd Sat., Juan the 3rd Sat., Brandy the 4th Sat., etc.). Volunteers helped identify both challenges and effective strategies for recruiting volunteers.

Challenges

- Lack of clarity and/or structure in the Volunteer Framework
- Difficulty articulating Volunteer Roles
- Volunteers are unsure what to do when they show up
- Volunteers do not know who to connect with once they show up

Effective Strategies

- Point persons and existing volunteers take responsibility for recruiting volunteers within their own faith community
- *Identify specific people* within your own faith community *and directly ask* them to get involved
- Call people at home, ask to share your experience and indicate why you think they would be a good fit to volunteer also
- Invite someone to go to the Community Meal with you to see it for themselves (very effective!)
- Volunteers sharing their volunteer experiences from the pulpit or smaller classes



Solutions

In response to the challenges noted in this conversation, volunteers brainstormed several solutions:

- Conflict management or de-escalation training for Community Volunteers is desired; this area will be researched and training will be coordinated.
- Meal Preparation & Service Teams are responsible to keep track of the number of meals served on their respective week; this number should be recorded on the sheet taped to the front of the Community Meals cabinet.
- Meal Preparation & Service Teams will be responsible for designating one volunteer to be the main contact at the Community Meal on their respective week; this will ensure that there is always one main person to send walk-in or new volunteers to each week. This main contact will help volunteers identify tasks and direct them to the Hospitality Volunteer Roles & Duties sheet posted in the kitchen, if necessary.
- REMINDER: If a guest is disruptive, violent, or intoxicated and refuses to comply with reasonable requests (leave the premises, etc.), please call the police. If possible, consult with another volunteer before placing the call.

The Forum was wrapped up around 7:30 p.m. Volunteers were encouraged to leave any additional comments or feedback on note cards.

Many thanks to all of our generous and dedicated volunteers! You are truly making a difference in our community!

Please don't hesitate to be in touch with any additional thoughts, concerns, ideas, or suggestions. Brittany Hanson can be contacted through the address, e-mail or phone number listed below.

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