

**Park Avenue Faith Community
Second Planning Meeting
February 14, 2008**

Attending:

1. Brenda Banks, *Angels on Wheels*
2. Jodi Cooper, *Mosaic Community Development*
3. Jodi Durbin, *King of Kings Lutheran congregation member & local bible study leader*
4. Pastor Tom Emmett, *Metropolitan Community Church*
5. Christian Gray, *Mosaic Community Development*
6. Brittany Hanson, *Mosaic Community Development*
7. Kevin Marik, *Metropolitan Community Church member & deacon*
8. Pastor Kip Mickelson, *First Baptist Church*
9. Rev. Kate Rohde, *First Unitarian Church*
10. Heidi Sampson, *neighbor & local bible study leader*
11. Rev. Carlos Schneider, *Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church*
12. Dr. Dick Skelley, *First Presbyterian Church*
13. Dr. Russell Smith, *University of Nebraska, Omaha*
14. Stephen Stout, *Good Neighbor Ministries*
15. Mark White, *Angels on Wheels*

Overview

Members of the faith community in the Park Avenue neighborhood met on February 14, 2008. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and build upon ideas that were generated during the first meeting.

The meeting was held at Metropolitan Community Church from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. The meeting was facilitated and notes were taken for reporting back to participants. Fifteen people participated in the meeting and planning session (list attached).

The meeting opened with introductions, each person sharing why they had decided to participate in the gathering. Several newcomers were welcomed and shared their connection to the Park Avenue neighborhood. Additionally, Pastor Tom Emmett offered a few words of welcome and an opening prayer as host of the meeting.

Russ Smith reviewed the agenda (see attached agenda) and led the group through a reprise of the first meeting. The group discussed the list of issues and needs previously compiled, and identified a few "root" issues that address several of the listed needs:

- Hunger
- Poverty
- Love; relationship development

Small Group Work

Participants divided into two small groups: Group 1 and Group 2. Returning participants met in whichever group they worked with at the previous meeting, and newcomers joined either group according to their interest. Groups spent approximately 40 minutes building on ideas that were generated during the first meeting and focusing on addressing issues and ideas that will have an impact on the community and will be sustainable; everyone was encouraged to openly share their thoughts and viewpoints.

Each group reported back and shared ideas with the group as a whole.

Group 1 Report

Group 1 again focused on hunger and food insufficiency in the Park Ave neighborhood. A review of the group's previous discussion was given. This discussion was expanded and all agreed that it is clear that many neighbors are hungry.

The group wanted to avoid inaction and brainstormed some specific ideas and action points that could address hunger and food insufficiency in the neighborhood, namely developing a collaborative, relational community meal time.

Participants shared their previous experience in this area and deliberated about how to develop and train a volunteer and support base. The idea of each faith leader identifying and recruiting five potential volunteers from their respective congregations and parishes could be a good strategy. In addition, most perceived a need for identifying and possibly funding an administrator devoted to this project.

The importance of determining who the community meal would be geared toward was noted. Who would the group focus on serving? Many identified the near homeless in the area as the possible "market". The importance of client input is key; community meals may provide an appropriate and accessible setting in which to conduct a listening forum.

Lastly, the group discussed location logistics. While the eventual hope is to serve the community meal in a neutral location, such as a community center in the neighborhood, it will be important to start with what is already present: neighborhood church facilities.

Group 2 Report

Group 2 discussed several new ideas in addition to reviewing ideas generating during the previous meeting. The group focused largely on community events and resources.

In reporting back to the entire group, Group 2 identified a couple of key themes, several priorities and a series of short, mid, and long term goals and action points.

Key Themes:

- Building relationships together
- Get going!

Priorities:

1. Build working relationships with each other
2. Do something now
 - Build/develop something during winter for launching in the spring
3. Assembly of local resource guide

Short Term:

- (A) Resourcing existing pantries in the neighborhood
- (B) Community meal times

Mid Term:

- (A) Community events
 - "Carnival of services"
 - Dinner and a movie
- (B) Anti-graffiti response
 - Murals

Long Term:

- (A) Community center
 - Job development?
- (B) Rehab housing
 - Women coming off streets/out of prostitution?

The group talked about their desire to have events at neutral locations that are off church property.

Wrap-Up

As the meeting drew to a close, the many ways each groups' ideas intertwined were noted. It was agreed that each group has much more work to do and could benefit from some additional small group work before the next collaborative meeting.

Two taskforces were developed: Community Meals and Community Events. Several participants committed to meeting together to continue developing ideas and begin determining logistical details. These taskforces will report back to the group at the next meeting.

Some meeting participants identified faith leaders who were not present, and committed to personally contact these people, filling them in on the meeting and recruiting their future participation.

The next meeting time, date and location was set.

Date: March 6, 2008

Time: 12:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Location: First Baptist Church, 421 Park Avenue