

**EASTER GROUP MINUTES**  
**September 21, 2009**

The meeting of the Easter Group was opened by facilitator Mim McConnell on September 21, 2009 at 7:05 P.M at the See House of St. Peter's Episcopal Church.. Present were Fr. Gordon Blue, Ginny Wood, Kim Hunter, Judy Johnstone, Roberta Modrell, Bonnie Elsensohn, Bridget Kaufman, Ted Laufenberg, Dorrie Farrell and guest Jamie Smeland, Alaska Coordinator of the Jesuit Volunteers. M/S/P Bonnie Elsensohn/Dorrie Farrell to accept the minutes of the August meeting as written

**Jesuit Volunteers**

Ms. Smeland gave a brief report on the history and work of the Jesuit Volunteers within Alaska, noting the 53 years of service in Alaska, 20 years of service in Sitka, and the four cities in Alaska currently served (Juneau, Sitka, Bethel and Anchorage). The five JVs in Sitka serve at Youth Advocates, Big Brother/Big Sisters, SAFV and SAIL and live in a community house where they share work, chores and are bound by the principles of spirituality, social justice and service. All hold at least undergraduate degrees, have undergone rigorous interviews to enter the program and are free of any specific religious requirement. Cost to an organization applying for the services of a volunteer are approximately \$15,000/year which includes a placement fee, rent, utilities, food expenses, a monthly \$80. stipend and health insurance. In response to a question, Ms. Smeland said it is possible for two organizations to share the yearly cost, with half-time services to each. The deadline to apply for a JV for 2010-2011 is Dec. 15, 2009; application forms are available online.

Ms. Smeland asked what position the group has in mind; no decision has yet been made how a JV could be useful to the Easter Group, It was agreed that a shared position would likely be most possible financially. .

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Jericho Road House**

Father Gordon presented an informative, comprehensive report on Jericho Road House and distributed copies of a first year evaluation of the project prepared by a local contractor. He spoke to the goal and function of the house; i.e., a worthy cause, providing a safe environment for both the staff and a maximum of four residents (there are currently only 2 residents) who suffer from chronic alcoholism. There has been great care given to selection criteria and while there is no counseling required or any provision that residents stop drinking, there is acknowledgment that it is important not to enable the behavior. There is close cooperation between Jericho Road and city agencies such as the police and hospital; the city benefits from the existence of a safe, secure shelter which reduces violence and crime on the streets while saving money for the city.

At this time, Jericho Road is facing a financial crisis as the grant from the State of Alaska has expired. Grants for 2008 totaled \$70,000 and for 2009 it was \$50,000 (figures are approximate). Priority is given to facilities with full capacity occupancy. The home is currently seeking funding sources until a new grant cycle comes up. As the structure is owned by SCAPS there are requirements that it be group living, continues to qualify as a beneficiary of Alaska Mental Health Trust, operate as a 100% charity and does not offer tenant rights (a requirement of a charity in the state.) Fr. Gordon said it is possible that individual churches might be interested in providing support.

### Homeless Summit

Ted presented a proposal for a meeting on homeless issues in Sitka, with participation by the Easter Group, the Police and Fire Departments and Sitka Community Hospital and other interested parties. He suggested an October date and, after discussion about conflicting schedules, October 29 was chosen for a half day meeting at Centennial Hall. Ted will contact the interested parties, will prepare PSAs and confirm dates, times and agenda with the Easter Group. It was suggested that the regular meeting of this group be held Friday, October 16 at noon to complete details of the Oct. 29 public meeting. Great work, Ted. (*See attachment.*)

### LRPED Affordable Housing Summit

Mim formerly served on the LRPED commission and summarized the status of an affordable housing summit scheduled for February or March, 2010. A subcommittee of LRPED will present findings before the City Assembly prior to a summit.

### Parish Reports

Kim summarized the role of the Lutheran Church Women in continuing support of the breakfast program at Baranof Elementary School.

Dorrie has contacted both the Catholic Church and the Methodist Church with info about the Easter Group and the wish to continue ecumenical involvement and meeting on a rotating basis in different parishes. She offered the lower church hall at St. Gregory for the October meeting (brown bag lunch model) and will confirm that site.

### School Breakfast Programs

As noted, Kim reported on the Lutheran Church Women in BES breakfast program. There was some discussion of expanding that service to other schools; however, SHS has bus schedule and space conflicts for such a program. No determination was made on KGH or BMS programs.

### Crop Walk

This item moved to 2010 by unanimous consent

### Fair Trade Fair

Scheduled for Saturday, October 24 at See House, St. Peters. from 10 A.M.-2 P.M. with St. Peter's parish as only participant. Merchandise all ordered.

### Habitat for Humanity

Ted reported that 2009 has been a difficult year for Habitat for Humanity with the economic downturn taking a toll. There is no expectation of improvement for at least 6 months.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### Homeless Summit

The planning and delivery of the meeting of interested parties will be the work for October. Ted will organize as noted above with contacts, space reservations, PSAs, etc. October 16 meeting will be a work party to complete preparation, with summit scheduled for October 29. (Bonnie is in charge of cookies!)

Bridget and Dorrie will try to have more info on school breakfast programs for Oct. 16 meeting.

*Note: See 2<sup>nd</sup> attachment for Agenda for October 16*