

Town Hall- Novato

1

Novato THM: 4-18-08

Introduction and welcome to women and girls in Novato by Pearlene Leary and Ericka Erickson

Examples of THM issues in West Marin:

- poor response to DV calls
- lack of food in food pantry, ie. Formula
- services for Seniors, healthcare, transportation and childcare

Participants input:

Provides Spanish language services to community through the library. When this happens, the Latina community need child care while learning or attending an event or training through the library

Huge need for childcare across the board; several other providers that work hard to raise funds to help families. Costs high to ensure low ratio child/teacher; still can't meet demand. There is a centralized county waiting list (cel) centralized eligibility list. Several childcare providers that work to have a subsidized program. Subsidization comes from money from the State and Cal Works (welfare system in CA)

Childcare needed for people attending formal education and more importantly informal education such as many programs put on by the County.

Cal Works: have to be working 32 hours minimum, legal permanent residents, so no childcare subsidies. Headstart: waiting list of 300 children, to be eligible is 20K. think outside the box for subsidy, instead, support family units—trade off childcare between part-time workers; co-op situations that don't require licensing because if you don't have an ID, can't get live-scanned. Like carpooling/child-care sharing. A lot of agencies are trying to provide services for people and families, but they can't provide child care for these events but have all these issues—liability, good people.

Is live-scan preventing people from doing volunteer childcare? Having mentors work with teens requires background checks for some programs. How about grandma's and grandpa's that could volunteer?

A lot of the community colleges have childcare programs available. The continuing education requirements pose a problem. Another issue is County of Marin is the largest employer, should consider having a childcare part of the Civic Center. The workforce needs moms, and we need childcare.

Transportation and isolation for seniors. For WHistlestop, must be within 5 miles of a bus stop to qualify. No transportation to go to a movie, out to lunch, the library

Town Hall- Novato

2

Update: transportation, Arnold got a 15K grant to improve the local service of Novato. 70 year old mother can't catch a bus in San Marin on the weekends, no service. Novato shuttle—people think it's only for Seniors but it's for everyone ie. Mothers with children. Meeting Wed May 7, 5:30-7:30 NUSD office 1015 7th street, rm 107.

NMC: connecting local community with incoming immigrants. Big gap. Moms struggling. The incoming immigrants are not able to reach out very well. No outreach directed at them.

Substitute teacher for NUSD. English as second language classes. One of the biggest barriers is language; greatest asset we can give them is classes.

Finding interpreters is difficult and prevents outreach.

Many ESL classes being offered, many are full. Issue of transportation and child care for attendance. One program has a class for children while moms are in ESL.

Perception that immigrants are not interested in assimilating, in learning the language. The priority is putting food on the table and learning the language comes second to care for the children. Willingness is there, but there are barriers, such as working 3 jobs to put food on the table.

Separatism: ie. When there are parties at a park in a non-English language, there is no mixture. Separatism even on the playgrounds at parks.

Nobody to practice English with for ESL students. People trying to learn Spanish also have nobody to practice with. Library is trying to start a book club—Marin Literacy Program.

Novato School Readiness: ages 0-5 can get together in a playgroup, multi-lingual. Gets health info to families, interactive. The only reason it hasn't grown more than it has is not enough people to help. Agencies have some funding to have people in the school site, bi-lingual, job is to get to know families and share resource ideas.

Staff have established really strong relationships with teachers, families, community. Huge growth and progress. All staff are legally required to report issues to CPS. Just this week in one school, staff had to file a report. Child was bruised, etc. If potential criminal act, PD starts their own investigation. It's a hard, delicate situation, especially with immigration/customs enforcement, to begin with, but the parents were deported. The trust now is broken down; kids will be afraid to report or get help. However, County of Marin does try to keep families together and work with the family rather than automatic separation.

This may be an issue to bring to the HRC.

Town Hall- Novato

3

People who are qualified to apply for citizenship, are having trouble because the system is broken.

This deportation involved a serious felony action and why parents were put in jail. Immigration comes once a week through the jail. This was a unique situation but it made the community perception change such that if you call CPS, you get deported. Also works the other way—the kids use it as form of abuse to the parents—you can't discipline me or I will call CPS.

Help families prepare for deportation situations ie. Helping the children get passports who are US citizens, so they can join or visit their parents who have been deported. To get a passport, need parents' signature.

Teenagers have nothing to do, nowhere to go. 14 year old son, good kid, hangs with good kids, shocked at lack of parental supervision evident from the police logs. No destinations for them. Leadership programs, sports programs, church programs, if parents work too much. With all this open space, can't we have something? A destination with a purpose—learn CPR, host a dance for Seniors, tutor, learn how to DJ.

A program in San Fran taught kids how to DJ, or taught life-skills so they could do outreach to other teens. They received a stipend.

Teen librarian: new program. Can talk with her. Her job is to create teen programs.

Expansion of the teen center? It closes at 6:30, Novato City run.

The Novato community programs sound great, but they're too expensive to attend.

Teens are simply hanging out, not doing anything wrong, say at a shopping mall. But, police get called, and the kids get asked to move along. The kids then will be forced to go out to open space or a "hidden" place where they are more likely to get into trouble.

Marin Public Defenders office called to have SAGE (standing against global exploitation) talk about prostitution by teens. Teens are brought by their pimps from the East Bay to work in the Canal, from Oakland, Richmond, etc. to commit crimes and prostitute. Services and crisis intervention help needs to be given to these girls when they are put into police custody.

MWC will make a report and share it with the BOS.

Inter-bus transfer needed to get kids from Ross to Lagunitas. Working single mom. Kids on Lagunitas side have a school bus, and Ross has a school bus. 2 school districts need to collaborate. Drake highschool kids are serviced. They contract with Golden Gate. 56 children involved. 33 families.

YMCA provides childcare after school but it's very expensive. 8\$ an hour

Town Hall- Novato

4

One child lives 1.9 miles too far, and can't get her child on a bus. You have to be 2 miles in order to get a bus. Bus will help global warming, keep kids safer than walking/riding bikes without adults.

Housing: very difficult for single women and low-income families to afford to live in this County. People want a law to limit number of cars per household, when the bigger issue is that people have to share with other families in a house. Some children in schools are actually living in cars and nobody knows this is happening.

Grants are being given to city's to recapture foreclosures, with tax breaks, etc.
Foreclosure Prevention Act.

Need more innovative thinking and County support to look at alternative models of business, organizations, Co-ops. Need collaborative plans. People are too isolated, not creative. County needs to promote this.