



By Marianne Chabot, VIA Welfare Committee Chair

The committee held its first Annual Roundtable Meeting since 2019 on April 13th at 9:30 a.m. We welcomed twenty guests from fourteen Social Service Agencies.

Ann Silverman Community Health Clinic

The clinic, which is located in Doylestown Hospital, was started twenty-seven years ago as the Free Clinic of Doylestown Hospital, offering medical, dental and behavioral health treatment to uninsured people in the community, including immigrants, many of whom are working in the area. Last year visits increased by 300% for dental and 100% for medical and mental health needs. The clinic treated 1,600 individuals for a total of 5,000 visits.

A Womans' Place

Clients come in through the 24/7 hotline. Victims Response Program provides legal services, custody and divorce support. Eminent Danger Victims get immediate housing. Children's Advocates work with children who are in shelters with their moms. AWP staff provides Prevention Education to students in grades 4 through 12. Domestic Violence rose 40% 2020-2021 from pre-pandemic numbers. AWP is the only source of legal representation to help in violence custody and divorce. It provides counseling for 10 months or more as needed and helps to place women and children in housing through Bucks County Housing Group. The service is also available to men living in abusive relationships.

Bucks County Housing Group (BCHG)

The BCHG is in its 42nd year of placing homeless families into housing. BCHG has 39 units in Morrisville. The 6 units in Doylestown are the largest family shelters allowing up to 8 family members per apartment. The wait for housing for single homeless people can be long. During COVID, BCHG Food Pantry switched from clients choosing items from pantry shelves to drive up receipt of pre-packed bags of food items. The pantry also created mobile delivery to the elderly. BCHG partners with Philabundance.

Lenape Valley Foundation (LVF)

The LVF provides mental health services to over 13,000 clients per year, 4,500 are children. Clients are seen at LVF location, and through Doylestown Hospital Emergency Dept. where a separate waiting area and counseling rooms are on site. Mental health counseling is available 24/7, also through mobile crisis services. Telehealth was utilized during COVID when cases increased dramatically and Outpatient Therapy wait list was up to 800 individuals.

Doylestown Hospital Pharmacy

Uninsured patients being discharged from the hospital may need medications they simply can't afford. Programs through manufacturers are sometimes available, but they aren't always enough and not all drugs are covered. The VIA Welfare Committee is often called upon to provide payment for those who cannot afford medications. In addition to helping our neighbors, the Doylestown Hospital Pharmacy funds World Outreach Humanitarian Efforts by sending meds to countries experiencing natural disasters, and most recently, to treat victims of the war in Ukraine. Groups of Doylestown Physicians have also traveled to countries in need to treat patients.

Doylestown Hospital Case Management

The department assists Emergency Dept and hospital patients, providing counseling on applying for veterans' benefits, health insurance, and housing. The VIA Welfare Committee pays transportations for the homeless to return to the living space, whether it be a tent or a car, and to those individuals who need rides to their homes.

FISH

Over the last few years, FISH reported increased requests from clients for food, heating oil, utilities and a dramatic increase in the need for short term temporary shelter in local motels. For Marijane Harris, the newly elected President of FISH, this was her first time at the VIA's annual meeting and she praised the work of the Welfare Committee.

Valley Youth House/Synergy Project

Valley Youth serves homeless youths ages 18 – 24. These are kids on the street, both male and female, some of whom are being trafficked for sex or work. Other Nomadic kids illegally ride trains to travel around the country, as many as 20,000/year and there are 4million homeless kids nationally, many with mental health issues.

The Synergy Project is a street outreach program to get youth off the street, build trust with kids and let them know that people care about them. VYH/Synergy Project Rapid Housing representatives go out on the street to meet with clients. VYH encourages job seeking, helps set up job interviews and then get youths into permanent housing. It provides first, last month's rent and security plus 3 months' rent. A Transitional House is located in Croyden where clients can stay up to 90 days while receiving counseling.



The Council of SEPA - PROACT Women's Recovery Center

PROACT addresses urgent needs and housing. The Recovery Center located in Bristol has a full census of 11 clients who came into PROACT housing through drug treatment court and drug treatment programs and it connects people to the support groups they choose. Clients pay a fixed rate per month to live at the Recovery Center. Recovery Specialists provide counseling to families to talk about how they can support their loved one who is abusing drugs or alcohol.

Central Bucks School District

Social Workers and Foster Care Liaisons work with a team to transport homeless students to school. They also provide tutoring. ***There are currently 75 homeless students in the Central Bucks School District and that doesn't include their siblings who may be too young to be in school or those who have completed high school.*** The goal is to keep students in the CBSD, however, when students need to transfer to another school district, the district will help them to transition.

Coalition to Shelter & Support the Homeless

Code Blue operates from December to March each year. CSSH was founded in 2011 with shelter provided by local churches. Last winter the shelters were open for 65 nights and 59 individuals were given food and shelter. During April to December, CSSH outreach assists clients with license and registration fees, phones, food and gas cards, transportation to the DMV and medical appointments.

Meals on Wheels

The organization was established in Central Bucks 50 years ago. The group is working out of the Doylestown Senior Center to assemble the meals. Food is purchased from McCaffrey's who prepare meals on Mon, Wed, Fri. BTC Foods of Philadelphia provides food Tues and Thurs. Hot meals are delivered to clients five days a week, totaling 600 meals/month. Clients pay \$9/day for 2 meals. Most clients are senior citizens but there are occasional younger clients recovering from surgery or illness.

Village Improvement Association of Doylestown

From Marianne Chabot: There are no words to truly express our gratitude to the agencies that provide ongoing support to people in need in the community and who help the VIA in serve struggling families and individuals." The VIA Welfare Committee is one of several committees supporting the VIA's mission to "Enhance the health and welfare of Central Bucks County and surrounding communities."