



Central Place Council Minutes for January 11, 2010

In attendance: Cathy Beck-Cross, Shirley McClelland, Pam Last, Elaine Collet, Marti Kline, Kelly Sievers, Pam Freeman, Denise Moore, Amy Daugherty, Judy Hamlin, Jeff Longman, Sally Duer, Rachel Buntenbach, Heather Nell, Margaret Ludington, Jennifer Kise, Tim Hummel, Brett Handy, Kathy McElree, Terri Walker

- Cathy Beck-Cross welcomed everyone and introductions followed.
- Jeff Longman provided a handout on community education updates. Winter programs began Monday, January 11, 2010. Information for each program can be found in the Unifier and on-line at www.centralplace.org. He is still fine tuning some programs to find the right combination of class size, length, fees, etc. to maximize participation. There is a core group of continually strong programs and others he is trying to get off the ground. He will continue to expand programming each season. Spring programs will be listed in the March Unifier. Community education received a \$3,200 Prairie Meadows grant to help support the youth summer enrichment program.

The facility reservation process is still ongoing. Updated school board policy regarding the process was reviewed Tuesday, January 12, 2010. He is hopeful to begin taking requests by February 1. Heather Nell asked if there would be fees associated with the new reservation process. Jeff relayed fees would be dependant on certain items such as whether a group was non-profit or not and whether they already were insured. He stressed the process needs to be operated with the size of our district in mind.

Cathy asked Jeff to name the three most popular classes. The top three are Tae Kwon Do, water aerobics and yoga. Cathy explained Rachel's role as the first point of contact with the public requesting facility needs. There is continuous communication between Jeff and Rachel. Heather asked how far in advance a group must request reservations. Jeff said they are still working on wording and terms within board policy. The reservation process will require that each reservation have a contract, which could include a deposit, plus details pertaining to that specific reservation. Marti Kline interjected that for many years no cost was charged to cover district reservations however the school district cannot continue to absorb the costs. Cathy added for the salient reasons of being fair and not losing money, community education needs to be profitable by recouping costs. Marti also added the district wants to be accommodating however not at a monetary loss. Cathy reminded everyone to let Jeff or her know of any questions or concerns they may have.

- Elaine updated the council on Season of Sharing. The total number of families served was 287 which amounted to over 1,100 individual family members. The total number of donors was down from 2008. This year, there was a total of 242 donors, with the number of donors directly sponsoring families totaling 197. This meant 90 families were shopped for by Central Place, which resulted in 158 shopping hours by volunteers. Volunteers met Central Place staff at Lutheran Church of the Cross in Altoona on December 19, 2009 to review the shopping process, and then shopped at Target and Wal-Mart in Altoona. Both stores were wonderfully accommodating. Over \$10,000 was put back in the community from the monetary donations for Season of Sharing.

The total hours volunteers contributed for Season of Sharing was 502.5. This is over 12.5 work weeks, and is another example of how integral volunteers and donors are to Central Place for programs like Season of Sharing. Volunteers save us time and donors save us money. We had the good fortune to have several corporate and community organizations volunteer in large groups, such as Principal Financial, Kiwanis and the East Polk Rotary. Mike Beckett from the Altoona Kiwanis volunteered as Santa to make deliveries to families with no transportation. Elaine passed around "Save the Date" opportunities for volunteers at Central Place this year, including 2010 dates for Season of Sharing. She also relayed volunteer comments regarding the annex as a wonderful place to process and to distribute items for Season of Sharing because it was warm and organized.

- Pam talked about the VITA Tax program which will run every Monday and Tuesday, 4-8 p.m., January 25 through April 13. This is the third year United Way and ISED Ventures has asked Central Place to help host a location for the volunteer tax preparers. Adventure Life Church in Altoona hosted for the past two years and this year the program will be located at Central Place. The IRS provides the training. Appointments are preferred. Last year, 146 families received \$230,405 in refunds, including \$97,563 from Earned Income Tax Credit. Most families do not have a computer therefore cannot use a computer tax program. Other families cannot afford \$100 to pay an outside service to e-file for them. "Super Saturday," a day-long tax preparation marathon, is February 6 from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Cathy added how nice it will be to have everything under one roof where families can see our brochures as to what other programs we offer and support. The three preparers who will see clients each week have the potential of serving over 500 families. Heather asked about fees to the district. There are no fees and any insurance issues are covered by ISED. Because it is backed by the IRS there should be no audit issues. There is an overseer who checks each volunteers work. Any person earning under \$49,000 may qualify for help, larger families

have more flexible income guidelines (e.g. a family of eight making \$52,000 would not be turned away). This service is open to the public, not just Southeast Polk families, so it is important to encourage families in the district to make appointments now.

- Cathy updated council members on the Central Place annual planning day, held Tuesday, January 5, 2010 at the Pleasant Hill Library. It was an all-day intensive meeting, working together as a team to plan program improvement and set program dates for the upcoming year.
- Kid's Café has been funded by Caring Hands for the last five years, plus support by other money from various grants Central Place was fortunate enough to receive. This year however Caring Hands is focusing all their funds toward the mortgage for the new site that houses its Christian Community Food Pantry and Central Place's Clothes Hanger. Kid's Café ran for eight weeks this past year, and participants received lunch and a book, plus additional family members could attend for lunch. The program's overall cost was \$6,700. Without Caring Hands' help, Central Place will likely have to scale back this next year. Central Place will apply for a Polk County Community Betterment Grant however the results won't be known until May. We'll apply for another grant from Polk County Decategorization, however, even if granted, it would only be for a few thousand dollars.

Cathy will talk with Joe Nelson, principal of Mitchellville Elementary as to how he would like the program to look. Last year summer school was held at Mitchellville Elementary at the same time, however this year it will be at Delaware Elementary. Because of summer school, Kid's Café might not be held at Delaware Elementary this year. At this time, Kid's Café will be held at King's Broadway however because funding is in the air, it may held twice a week for only four weeks or follow some other variance in scheduling. It takes a tremendous amount of planning from the licensed teachers, food service personnel and Elaine, our volunteer coordinator. Cathy asked for ideas from the council for fundraising for Kid's Café. She relayed Caring Hands members are still willing to ask their church congregation members to individually donate to Central Place for Kid's Café. She also asked for suggestions and concerns from the council. Heather Nell expressed how sad it would be if Kid's Café ended. She added her kids attend each year, she volunteers, it is a very worthwhile program and it needs to be saved. Elaine agreed it is very worthwhile in that families teach children to give back by volunteering for the program. Cathy added Central Place tries very hard to diversify sources of income for each program so if an entity that funds a program ends its support we don't lose that program entirely.

- The Clothes Hanger usage for calendar year 2009 increased 254% from 2008. Clothing items given out totaled 19,553, household items totaled 1,183, and the number of families totaled 355 which equaled 1,328 individuals. Cathy relayed from Cheryl McBride, the volunteer coordinator, that there are more multi-generational families being served. Very nice gently used donations continue to be dropped off on a regular basis from the public.
- Cathy reminded the council that for years Central Place has been talking about sponsoring an adult clinic in addition to the children's clinic. Wendy Gray from Free Clinics of Iowa has been meeting with Cathy periodically to update her on the status of finding a medical director for the adult clinic. It has been very difficult to find someone to oversee the adult clinic as she had hope of Des Moines University finding someone for us however no one has stepped forward to volunteer. Cathy relayed Free Clinics of Iowa may have money to put towards a makeover for an adult clinic when personnel is in place.
- Since May of 2008, the children's clinic has been based out of a dedicated room at Christ the King Lutheran Church. A structure change within Lutheran Church of the Cross where the clinic had been for years initiated the move. Free Clinics of Iowa has been interested in running the clinic out of the annex at Central Place. Marti Kline asked where Season of Sharing would take place if that happened. Cathy showed a visual of the inside of the annex and explained how the room areas would work for the clinic. Various council members were concerned about having people waiting in the main building area and walking to the annex for their appointment. Two council members were concerned the location would not be centrally located and that we could not handle both clinic schedules. The adult clinic would be held on a different day and it would be walk-ins. The children's clinic is currently scheduled by appointment. They also asked why it couldn't relocate to the current Caring Hands building. Cathy explained currently there is no room for the clinic as they have a substantial amount of equipment to set up each time it is open. Caring Hands would eventually like to have the clinics located on their grounds, however that time frame may be five years or more down the road. The council agreed the annex would work if the public could wait somewhere within that same building for their appointment. Cathy reminded the council she needed their input and ideas so that Central Place would have thoughts about the change from a different perspective.
- Wednesday, January 20, EPIA will feature poverty workshop speaker Dr. Donna Beegle. The EPIA Board had hoped for around 100 participants, however there are over 150 already registered. Interestingly, large teams from organizations have registered to attend. In April, our spring EPIA showcasing volunteers will feature speaker Dolph Pulliam. This meeting will be located at the Southeast Polk Senior High School. Breakfast and registration will be from 7-8 a.m. in the high school commons. The volunteer recognition will start at 8 a.m. in the auditorium and finish at 9:30 a.m.

Submitted by,
Judy Hamlin, Administrative Assistant

Upcoming meetings will be:
March 8, 2010 May 10, 2010