



**MONTHLY TELECONFERENCE
FOOD BANK OF ALASKA
ANCHORAGE
DECEMBER 17, 2009
2:30 – 3:00 P.M.**

Toll Free Number: 1-866-316-1519 Participant Code: 723725

MINUTES

Participants

Vanessa Salinas, Alaska Food Coalition
Cliff Penn, Armed Services YMCA
AnnaBell Stevens, United Way
Sharon Wegner, Bethel Lions Club
Pat Luby (Guest Speaker), AARP
Doug Harris, JAMI
Clay Randolph, Wasilla Area Senior Center
Susannah Morgan, Food Bank of Alaska
Robin Stilwell, Food Bank of Alaska
Gloria Benson, Yakutat Healthy Community Coalition
Linda Swarner, Kenai Peninsula Food Bank

Welcome

Vanessa encouraged everyone to send in stories (one or two sentences would be fine) about what is going on in their communities to feed hungry people. These stories can go in our newsletter, and will be helpful to share with our legislators. She has received positive comments about the member update section of the coalition newsletter in November highlighting Thanksgiving stories.

Member Updates

Sharon Wegner/Bethel Lions Club,

Bethel has a food distribution the 3rd Saturday of each month. They generally operate in September and November through June. There is another agency feeding kids in the summer, and the hunger center fishes nightly in summer for salmon, anyone can participate. The food pantry generally serves 50 – 65 families/290 people, depending on the time of year. Oct. is slow due to PFD, so instead of doing a distribution, they supplement food stock with a local food drive. They have a new building for storing food. They also have a soup kitchen during food pantry hours, 9:30 – 1:30, which offers two soups and rolls and cookies. Anybody that comes to the pantry is offered a free meal. Friday 12/18 they will assemble 120 holiday boxes; they have purchased 150 turkeys, cake mixes, pumpkin mix, etc.

Doug Harris, JAMI

JAMI is the community mental health provider for adults in Juneau. They provide housing for 60 individuals in residential facilities. Each weekday, the drop-in center is open from noon – 2 pm for people to come in, socialize and have a meal. They recently doubled the size of case management staff; they are doing more outreach for getting the word out about the drop-in center. They currently serve between 15 – 20 consumers. Some are regular, some are not. Menu includes sandwiches, burritos, vegetables, fruit and juice.

Guest Speaker

Pat Luby, Director, Alaska AARP Chapter: Tips for Communicating with your Legislators

Legislators have a lot to learn very fast, and, in any given year, 20% are new people. Lots of people visit legislators for lots of reasons. AFC is fortunate; we have a good story to tell. Legislators love personal stories. Now is a good time to talk to them, before session gets started in January. Visit them in their home offices now. Invite them to visit your facility; get them to volunteer a day. Let the local media know that an official is going to be at your organization on that day.

Some non-profits are concerned about lobbying, but what you are really doing is educating. Non-profits are allowed to do some lobbying. Most non profits will most likely not reach the upper limits of what the IRS considers to be the maximum time spent lobbying.

Lately, the media has been covering stories showing increased need at food banks/pantries. Show growth in your program demands from year-to-year. Tell legislators real stories about the people you work with. These are the stories legislators will refer to when they talk on the floor during session.

Always leave behind a couple of copies of materials documenting what you have asked for, one for the legislator and one for staff. Be polite, be prepared. If legislators are less than attentive to your request, remember, they have a lot on their plates. It's a good idea

to build a relationship with the staffer, called 'friendshipping' - staff likes to work with constituents. Thank staff and legislators when you come in and when you leave. Make sure you are as specific as possible as to what you are asking for. Volunteers that worked to get your legislator elected make great messengers for your issue. Use the tip sheets from AARP (sent via email 12/14/09). Letters to the editor are read by every legislator. They will see letters written on your organization's behalf. Get your board and volunteers to write letters.

AFC Updates

AFC Mini Grants

Eleven AFC Mini grants were awarded, totaling \$10,538.46 for FY2010. Four were awarded to AFC agencies not on the road system. Only one award went to an agency allowed to submit after the first deadline. Vanessa complied reviewer comments to share with the agencies that were not selected in a effort to help them with future proposals. She plans to host an application review teleconference for the next round of grants in FY2011.

School Meal Program Funding Outreach

Outreach continues to school boards around the state. Yupiit, Lower Kuskokwim, Cordova, Pribilof, Yakutat and several others have either sent in signed resolutions or committed to putting the resolution on the January School Board meeting.

Linda Swarner, Kenai Peninsula Food Bank confirmed the Kenai Peninsula Food Bank Board has approved the School Meals resolution.

Vanessa encouraged AFC member groups to sign the resolution and to share with other community organizations. The more support we can show our legislators, the more successful we will be getting funding for school meals.

Annual Meeting/Travel Scholarships

There is still time to get your travel scholarships in for the annual meeting in Juneau. Contact Vanessa if you need a form.

Other Business

Clay from Wasilla Senior Center asked if anyone has any plans for a Meals on Wheels fundraiser in March, 2010. National Meals on Wheels conducts a national fundraiser at this time. Vanessa will poll the AFC membership to see who participates in the program and will organize a teleconference for anyone interested in discussing that topic.

Call ended, 3:00 pm