

THE ALASKA FOOD COALITION



The Alaska Food Coalition Quarterly Teleconference
Thursday, 27th October, 2005
3pm-5pm Frontier Building, 3601 C Street, Suite 336, Anchorage

Members Present

Sophia Gomma (Catholic Social Services), **Katrina Grundahl** (The Salvation Army), **AnnaBell Stevens** (United Way of Anchorage), **Stephanie Wheeler** (Alaska Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives), **Tara Horton** (Alaska Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives), **Linda Swarner** (Kenai Peninsula Food Bank Inc.), **Jim Crockett** (Bean's Café), **Julie Beatty** (Alzheimer's Disease Resource Agency of Alaska), **Ruth Elvsaaas** (Food Bank of Alaska), **Becky Parker** (Alaska Department of Health and Social Services), **Ron Klein** (Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Food Safety and Sanitation Program), **Jeff Barber** (Food Bank of Alaska), **Mike Rochin** (New Hope on the Last Frontier), **Nick Timurphy** (Bristol Bay Native Association Regional Food Bank), **Jetta Whittaker** (The Glory Hole), **Kenneth Farrow** (Alpha Omega Life Care, Inc.) and **Louise Charles** (Bethel Senior Services).

Report from the Western Region Anti-Hunger Consortium

On October 6 AFC president, Linda Swarner attended a meeting of the Consortium in Oakland, CA. At the meeting, Linda noted that other states in the consortium had a group which tracked state and federal legislation related to hunger issues. Linda asked if this kind of work was being done in Alaska. Ruth replied that Food Bank of Alaska has done this in a limited capacity. Linda suggested that this role would be ideal for the Alaska Food Coalition.

Impact of the Katrina Hurricane Disaster on the Anti-hunger System in Alaska

Members discussed the impact of Katrina on their agencies. AnnaBell and Ruth confirmed that all members had been affected in some way and that food and money donations were down.

Member Updates

Each member filled-in the Coalition on the work they had been doing or news from their organization.

Stephanie (Alaska Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives): funding opportunities can be accessed through this link: <http://health.hss.state.ak.us/fbci/funding/>

AnnaBell (United Way of Anchorage): emergency funds for rent deposits and utilities have been depleted; although they are anticipating new funds will be made available beginning November 1.

Katrina (The Salvation Army): clients report problems with meeting utility bills. The Salvation Army had also issued vouchers to hurricane evacuees for use in their thrift stores.

Sophia (Catholic Social Services): less waste in the food pantry since moving to client choice. Catholic Social Services were also incorporating nutritional information into their food pantry distribution.

Mike (New Hope on the Last Frontier): New Hope on the Last Frontier has two days for distribution (Tuesday and Thursday evening). At this time they are doing distribution only on Tuesdays. The Conoco-Phillips grant that funded the client choice pantry has been fully utilized and as of September they have no funding. An informal agreement with Food Bank of Alaska was developed and they are still accessing food. New Hope on the Last Frontier is still seeking funding.

Ron (Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Food Safety and Sanitation Program): The Alaska Food Code will soon be out for public notice. A period of 30-60 days of comment has been allotted. Ron added that information on food safety training was available at: <http://www.dec.state.ak.us/eh/fss/training/training.html> . The danger of distributing bear meat was also discussed and Ron informed the Coalition that the pathogens contained in bear meat were not suitable for those clients who are immune system compromised.

Becky (Alaska Department of Health and Social Services): A new commissioner for the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Karleen Jackson, was appointed on October 1st.

Ruth (Food Bank of Alaska): Food Bank of Alaska is addressing all food safety issues and has developed a manual and required all their agencies to become food safety certified, the bear meat issue and other wild game and native traditional foods is addressed. Anchorage agencies are required to attend the trainings; rural agencies can do it by correspondence. CSFP has been secure in the wake of Katrina with no diversion of shipments as of yet. Boxes will go out. TEFAP agencies have decreased in numbers. TEFAP commodities are not sufficient to the point that many rural Alaska agencies do not deem them worth accessing. Work has been continuing on the FDPIR program to provide food to individuals living in Indian Reservations (tribes) in rural areas. Food Bank of Alaska has been seeking a change in tax law to allow federal tribes to receive donated food. The suggested change is now in committee stage. Senator Murkowski is sponsoring this bill.

Julie (Alzheimer's Disease Resource Agency of Alaska): events for Alzheimer Awareness Month are at this link: <http://www.alzalaska.org/> .

Jim (Bean's Café): numbers are up with 520 meals a day and 500 kids' meals a day.

Jetta (The Glory Hole): increase in numbers at The Glory Hole with some nights double seated.

Ken (Alpha Omega Life Care, Inc.): Approximately 70-75 people are registered in two box programs from the Fairbanks Community Food Bank. The two programs combined serve approximately 150 people. Alpha Omega reports a good store of food for emergencies and has a small FEMA grant to distribute vouchers for use in local grocery stores. The Alaska Food Coalition helped fund an insulated building but refrigerators are dated.

Louise (Bethel Senior Services): Bethel Senior Services has moved to the Native Council. There has been an increase in service. Many elders are using their dividend checks for heating this winter with gas prices as high as \$4.50 a gallon.

Nick (Bristol Bay Native Association Regional Food Bank): increase in numbers at the food pantry

Linda (Kenai Peninsula Food Bank Inc.): The Kenai Peninsula Food Bank had experienced a 100% increase in service provision from 2004-2005. 30-40 new families a month access the pantry. There has been a slight decrease in the number of meals served. People have called to ask what is on the menu for a particular day hoping to save on gas if they do not like what is on offer. The Empty Bowls fundraiser brought in \$45,000 in August.

Coordinator's Report (Henryk Szadziewski)

The coordinator informed the members that:

1. Membership now stood at 30, which is a drop in number from the previous year. The introduction of dues for this fiscal year was seen as the main reason for this fall. A list of target members is being compiled and the coordinator asked the members for any suggestions to be sent to him.
2. FY 2006 mini-grants are in the review process and the results should be available mid-December 2005. The coordinator added that \$29,000 has been set aside for the mini-grants this FY and 20 applications were received for the awards.
3. The release of the hunger study has been delayed until January because of statistical anomalies and the panel set to review the results before publication has been informed of the delay.
4. The capacity-building project was underway. The process and goals of the project were explained by the coordinator in these points
 - There are two initial strands to the study; one is to collect community information from around the state and the second is to collect information on the condition of facilities and equipment in food pantries across Alaska.
 - The survey is ambitious as it is going to try to include all food pantries in the state including those not affiliated with FBA.
 - It is attempting to identify agencies where more clients could be served as well as areas of Alaska which are not covered by an anti-hunger agency.
 - The study asks agencies if you can meet expanding client need through material resources. For example, if agencies have enough storage or refrigeration.

- Once all the information has been collected models for “ideal food pantries” will be created in order to have a clear idea of the costs involved in opening pantries in new or existing buildings. These models will also help in assessing the capacity-building costs of currently-running pantries.
- The final stage is to write “Final Community Assessments” which include the material gleaned in the previous stages and highly specific data collected by volunteers in each community.
- The goal is to submit the assessments as a large grant proposal to the USDA or Denali Commission in order to fund agency expansion or the creation of agencies in areas off the anti-hunger network.
- The target for this fiscal year is to complete the community and food pantry surveys.
- So far the community information survey is 50% complete with some outstanding poverty data needing to be collected. The food pantry survey has been finalized. An initial version was drafted and tested on four agencies in Anchorage. This experience resulted in revisions to the original document. In addition, the need to create a user-friendly database on Microsoft Access to store all the information necessitated further revisions. The surveys are being sent out next week to FBA partner agencies and I am contacting city officials to identify pantries not part of the FBA network.

Treasurer’s Report (Susannah Morgan)

	Q1 Actual	Q1 Inkind*	Annual Budget	Remaining in Budget
Personnel Services	3,560	1,000	22,000	17,440
Travel			9,200	9,200
Supplies	340		1,000	660
Other			41,000	41,000
Total	3,900	1,000	73,200	68,300

** Inkind is entirely a donation of FBA staff time to supervise Alaska Food Coalition Coordinator.*

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) Questionnaire

The coordinator informed the members about the annual BRFSS questionnaire conducted by the state. The questionnaire tracks major health risks among Americans through a randomly selected sample of participants. The questionnaire is conducted by phone. Questions can be added to the survey by organizations at a cost of \$2500 each. Susannah Morgan had previously suggested that this would be a good way to find out detailed information on poverty and hunger in communities across Alaska and recommended six questions to be added to the questionnaire. The funding for this would come from three sources, one being the Alaska Food Coalition. Kathleen Wayne of the WIC Program is generously providing all the funding for the BRFSS questions this year.

The meeting was adjourned by President, Linda Swarner, at 5:00pm.

Minutes prepared by Alaska Food Coalition Coordinator, Henryk Szadziwski.