Hanover Area Council of Churches (HACC)
Strategic Conversations 12/3/2024:
Meeting Participants' Input

Notes:

Attendance: 2:00 meeting = 42; 7:00 Meeting = 15

Many thanks to Hanover Believers in Christ Church for hosting the meetings.

What makes you want to partner with Hanover Area Council of Churches?

- Smaller churches are given more opportunities to work with the community when partnering with other churches
- LifePath, a shelter in York has served 131 clients from Hanover and 138 from Glen Rock during the past year. Perhaps there is a way to partner.
- Great programs
- Community Aid recognizes HACC as a strong service provider and wants to support them financially
- Collaboration with and support from churches and businesses multiply what can be offered
- HACC is a great resource for providing opportunities to work together
- Belief in the mission
- It is the right thing to do. We are blessed and so it is our duty and desire to help.
- It is important to have these services locally, an urban hub of services. It is important that these services are born of, provided by, and managed by local people (York County Coalition on Homelessness)
- There is so much homelessness; need is a great trigger (Hanover Housing the Homeless)
- People in Hanover don't realize there is such a need and that there is a shelter in Hanover; Education is needed.

What excites you the most about the Hanover Area Council of Churches and its future?

- Everyone is upbeat and positive
- It is exciting for the organization to stop and pause and think about what is needed in the community
- HACC has been active for so many years
- HACC is trying and willing to evolve to meet the changing needs of the community
- The possibility of New Hope and HACC working together more
- HACC looking at and extending who they can take into the shelter

Survey Highlights: Our Strengths (Additions to those listed on PowerPoint)

- Radio communication - the interim executive director continues to be on WHVR the first Monday of each month
- Work with bilingual individuals

Survey Highlights: Key Areas for Improvement (Additions to those listed on PowerPoint)

- Interview or survey current and past program participants for their opinions
- Continue to focus on doing as well as we can with what we are currently offering, rather than overextending ourselves and not being able to do all things well
- Enlarge our vision of who we are as a service and church organization. We need to get other community and business people involved.
- Need to complement each other without stepping on one another's feet. Eric Saunders is happy to share if there is something he can teach us. (New Hope)
- Response to mental health and addiction issues. Training of staff. Bringing others in to help with those issues. Getting clients to go to and make use of the resources suggested and available
- A person needs to be hired who is focused on grant writing

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- Help is needed in the shelter. It is difficult to give the clients what they need and to stay upbeat when you are understaffed.
- Committee structure needs to be revisited
- Constitution needs to be rewritten and then reviewed by an attorney. Solicit law firms who will take us on pro bono.
- Board restructuring using a different model

Survey Highlights: Strategic Threats - External (Additions to those listed on PowerPoint)

- Dealing with PII (Personal Identifiable Information)
- Decline in volunteers (The response was that there should be no problem in getting volunteers. It is all dependent on the ways you reach out.)
- The attendance in many churches is declining and the average age of attendees continues to rise. However, when looking at the growing churches, who have younger people, their by-laws sometimes prohibit them from partnering with other church associations.
- Pastors are overwhelmed with the work of their church and have little time for participation in organizations outside their own church.
- Leadership is everything and going through leadership transition is always difficult. Beware of the "We've never done it that way before" mindset.

Survey Highlights: Strategic Opportunities (Additions to those listed on PowerPoint)

- This process should strengthen HACC's role as an advocate and leader in the community
- Find partners to provide services, especially in the area of mental health, within the HACC building
- Brethren Home residents may be a source of volunteers for the MOW program
- Consider moving towards Permanent Supportive Housing. Government funding is available if you are accepting of it. Look into working with the York County Coalition on Homelessness. An intensive level of case management time is needed and finding providers is extremely limited. Buildings within the Hanover Borough suggested to be considered include the old Glove Factory and the formal Print Shop.
- Collaborate with other organizations, i.e. New Hope, to partner in grant writing. Apply together. Funders appreciate when they see collaboration.
- Work with those hoping to develop Hanover into a "Blue Zone", providing better health choices and longevity with a better quality of life.

Stakeholder Priorities (Additions to those listed on Powerpoint)

- Keep dialog open and churches engaged

Stakeholder Vision for HACC (Additions to those listed on Powerpoint)

- New Brand Suggestion: "Changing Lives - A Service of the Hanover Area Council of Churches - A faith-based organization providing shelter and more"

What structure will empower HACC to serve and thrive? [Board, Committees, Church roles]

- be mindful of how church has changed over the last decade
- much simpler
- need less demand on pastors
- make sure corporate serves the spiritual
- have a nonprofit methodology that allow all churches to engage with HACC, even if the churches can't be part of a "council"; cast a wider net
- a "council of churches" has huge value but a nonprofit structure would benefit the service provider activities that HACC oversees
- need nonprofit Board structure, instead of a "large church council"
- smaller board [4]: more effective; provide greater dedication vs. larger, less committed group
- have odd number of Board members for voting (e.g. 9 or 11 members)
- define Board duty of care, duty of obedience, financial and legal
- Board duties need to be separate from staff duties [governance vs management]

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- clarify church membership/church roles [4]: better communication and understanding of guidelines; need clear, concise details on who from member churches can vote at HACC Board meetings
- change Board composition [2]: Board is very important! Board members with varied experience, not all pastors; rotate church representatives; Board represents service recipients and region served; different denominations represented; include business leaders, financial players, younger members; make it exciting
- Board members have specific programs to oversee/provide expertise
- Term limits for Board members: 3 year
- new communication structure: Board members to report to/converse with specific churches/pastors
- rebrand [2]: change the name; brand, promote "Changing Lives" as a service/program of HACC
- strengthen leadership: resolve leadership issues, incompetencies; clarify leadership roles
- more input from committees, staff, volunteers to the Board; need bottom-up communication/input
- more community input
- define policies more clearly
- train volunteers, espec for MOW
- bring joy back to volunteering
- Have Erika continue as Operations Manager and hire community liaison to inform community of HACC's purpose, going church to church and organization to organization; include grant writing in this new position
- increase staffing
- add full-time social worker

How can we engage more effectively and strategically with churches and other partners to meet the communities' needs?

- rethink tradition
- leadership structure in place first so roles are clear
- think "community" as unity, not judgment; allow the freedom to do what we need to do and all to participate
- include and allow a broader range of organizations, churches and individuals to be part of this work
- collaboration [2]: churches, organizations, community, clients; join together to expand stakeholders and contributors; better inter-working
- strengthen, build partnerships [5]: rental companies, social services, life skills, investment firms that can encourage donations; embrace the partners you have and strengthen those relationships; work more closely with the Borough of Hanover; Hanover Economic Development Corporation, Hanover Area Chamber of Commerce
- better accessibility to tools and partnerships with so many of the organizations in the community -- police, TrueNorth, Lifepath, etc.
- What would it look like for a merger with Lifepath Ministries? Might be a good opportunity in a season of transition.
- pursue PANO (PA Association of Nonprofit Organizations) great resources, sample bylaws and policies, training
- York County Coalition on Homelessness can help Changing Lives form more partnerships, access funding, learn innovative resources, and attend trainings to strengthen staff roles
- use existing partnerships to creatively apply for funding with 2 or more partners on an application to show collaboration
- reach out to colleges for assistance with grant writing
- currently there seems to be no one capable of making partnership decisions
- need follow-through; meetings have happened with partners but there has been no follow through on plans
- reintroduce yourselves
- outreach/public relations/communication [7]: utilize word of mouth; presentations, coordinated outreach; staff, grant writer, volunteers speak with pastors, congregations, businesses; local radio does a good job promoting HACC; get newsletter out to larger group of people; hand deliver, eblasts; increase social media a lot to generate interest; more active outreach and education on changes happening -- build excitement!
- how to get them in the door? churches' buy-in and support is critical; get churches working together

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- possibly giving churches an area of focus each year
- entice younger members to the church (i.e., Church of God has large number of activities for kids, and their parents come, too)
- mission moment with member churches
- HACC participation at member churches' meetings
- utilize parish and their social media and websites, bulletins for outreach
- engage with new churches that are growing, maybe not as HACC members but as supporters of HACC services
- invite people into provide more than just services; include spiritual work, too
- need greater emphasis on inclusion of current/past program participants; advisory committee?
- make empowerment a priority
- build volunteers/volunteer base [2]: train volunteers; recruit volunteers from Cross Keys Village

Next Steps

- An online site/link will be dedicated to communicating what is happening as we move forward.
- A monthly report of what we have done will be available.
- Contact information will be made available.
- The Strategic Planning Committee will be meeting approximately every two weeks beginning in January, 2025.

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