

**Behavioral Health Town Hall Meeting
Ketchikan
June 11-12, 2015**

ABADA/AMHB staff members Pat Sidmore and Scott Ciambor met with organizations and community members in Ketchikan. These stakeholders included Akeela, First City Homeless Shelter, Residential Youth Care, KAR House, Community Connections, Ketchikan Wellness Coalition, WISH, and community members at a meeting at the public library.

SUMMARY

During the visit to Ketchikan, there were a few common issues identified by most stakeholders:

1. Lack of detox facilities in Ketchikan puts a strain on providers, law enforcement, shelter, and other agencies in the community;
 - a. First City Homeless Shelter being used as sleep-off; Bartlett Regional Hospital in Juneau for ambulatory cases.
 - b. If treated elsewhere, nowhere to house these individuals once they return.
2. Opportunities to Impact Youth
 - a. School district: Need more cultural sensitivity training for teachers, to participate in the Youth Risk Behavioral Health Survey, and ensure IEP's are being done as they should.
 - b. Community meeting: Comments were made on the need to drug test middle school kids, and for FASD Training and Services.
 - c. Community Connections and Residential Youth Care – strong advocates for kids.
3. Housing & Homelessness
 - a. Fair market housing and housing for special needs, seniors, and the homeless is limited and expensive. Community Connections has difficulty housing staff; especially in Hydaburg where the housing stock is deteriorating rapidly.
 - b. First City Homeless Day Shelter is serving as a patchwork solution to a variety of needs for the community's homeless and chronic inebriate population. A dedicated volunteer board and a driven director ensure that this population has a place to stay and is fed (during the day, in the basement of a church.) The shelter has good community support (law enforcement, judges, volunteers) and serves as the sleep-off spot in the absence of detox services. No breathalyzer policy. 5 Individuals were on the floor as we visited.

The shelter operates on a limited budget (\$65,000/year) and sees a high volume (100 unduplicated persons/month based on intake statistics) of patrons.

Leadership that we spoke with were exhausted, looking for better ideas. Also, seemed frustrated with community partners – most of their clients can't stay at the night shelter.

Discussion of permanent supportive housing – the solution for the majority of their clientele -- was met with resistance (likely a combination of resistance to the concept and to not having the capacity/resources/energy to take on a development project.)

- c. Homelessness: In the Continuum of Care (CoC) diagram of model housing and services for the homeless, Ketchikan currently has First City Homeless Day Shelter, Park Avenue Temporary Housing (PATH) Emergency Night shelter, WISH domestic violence shelter, and Love, Inc. that provides short-term rental assistance through the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation Basic Homeless Assistance Program. (BHAP) The Ketchikan Wellness Coalition has a task force dedicated to assisting on this issue.
 - i. **Shelter Situation:** As Identified in the 2014 Ketchikan Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness, the current make-up of shelter space is not effective with significant gaps of temporary housing for families, people with physical disabilities, teens, and those with chronic alcohol/substance abuse issues. The restrictions (daytime, sobriety, and domestic violence) coupled with the lack of sleep-off center mean the most hard to house individuals have little to no resources. This has been self-identified as an issue but it isn't clear if a remedy can be found by the agencies themselves.
 - ii. **Data:** Agencies in Ketchikan have not participated in the Homeless Management Information System but have been offered training opportunities recently as the state has a new HMIS administrator, the Institute for Community Alliances. Ketchikan should participate in the annual Point in Time Count and once the 4 main agencies are on HMIS and the Ketchikan Wellness Coalition could facilitate the use of this information for local resident/Assembly education, and the acquisition of resources to combine/enhance shelter services and to pursue a Housing First permanent supportive housing project for the community. (Based on information available from separate entities, Ketchikan's homeless chronic inebriate population could be larger than Juneau's and has not been included in the State Homeless Count)
 - iii. **Housing First Permanent Supportive Housing education:** This best practice for chronic homelessness is a new concept for the community and one that will likely need a champion and consistent education similar to what took place in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau.



AKEELA

Staff at AKEELA met with us and highlighted the stable staffing and consistent programming offered since AKEELA stepped in to provide services in Ketchikan. Staff discussed community-wide observations and that they enjoyed creating partnerships in the community.

- Mentioned that youth services provide pay for other services;
- Issue with peer supports that they cannot bill if more than one-on-one services;
- Clients with co-occurring issues have a difficult time in Ketchikan; nowhere to go.
- Typically they see a summertime drop-off in clients but not this year;
- Post-treatment options are limited as well
- Lack of detox services; use of Bartlett Regional in Juneau comes with logistical hassles

First City Homeless Shelter

FCHS has developed into a pretty amazing resource for the community since the last AMHB/ABADA visit in 2010. At the time they were just getting started:

- First City Homelessness has successfully opened a day center. The center is open weekdays from 9-4 within the Methodist church and partners with the Salvation Army to offer a soup kitchen once a month. – October, 2010

With the success of providing meals and day shelter, FCHS has expanded to providing for more clients (100 unduplicated per month), hired staff, and serving as the emergency sleep-off in order to meet the mission *“To offer the homeless access to a safe, non-judgmental shelter and referrals to local resources.”*

However, the shelter isn’t set-up to handle the most complex cases and the sleep-off arrangement seems to be a band-aid solution to the lack of detox services in the community. The shelter is keeping its own numbers of clients served.

Board members were open to joining HMIS to facilitate the data for the community, less responsive to the concept of Housing First Permanent Supportive Housing even though a good portion of their clients would be candidates for this type of housing.

Residential Youth Care

Staff met with RYC staff and learned about their programs. They serve statewide clientele and have a good relationship in local schools. Recognize that there is still opportunity to educate school system staff administrators on behalf of their clients in cultural/disability sensitivity, the importance of increased

supports. School district has a number of older generation teachers not fully on board with more recent trainings, techniques, and approach with students.

KAR House Residential Program (AKEELA)

Staff met with the director of KAR House. KAR House is a small, 12 beds, co-ed program that provides a modified Therapeutic Community modality of therapy, and services for co-occurring disorders. The property was donated by the City and renovated for the program. Participants are 100% court-ordered and the beds are always full.

Community Town Hall Meeting at the Library

Roughly 25 people attended the community meeting that was cut short because the library closed promptly at 6pm.

Housing was a topic that came up in a variety of forms; Housing for FASD clients, workforce housing for social service agencies, and Scott presented on permanent supportive housing. Drug use in middle school was mentioned and positive feedback for Safe Baby Courts through the local infant learning program was discussed.

Ketchikan Wellness Coalition

The Wellness Coalition is an umbrella organization that works on a number of wide-ranging community-wide public health and wellness issues.

- Substance Abuse Task Force
- Building Healthy Communities
- Empowering Youth
- Promoting respectful Relationships
- Seeking Community Homeless Solutions
- Strengthening Cultural Unity
- SPEAK; Suicide Prevention
- Financial Foundations
- Tongass Community Foods Alliance

The Coalition gained some traction with the local Assembly recently on the tobacco tax issue; providing insight and guidance for the Assembly and possibly opening the door on other issues.

Staff mentioned needing assistance with the SPF-SIG process for the planning grant and that there has been talk about the structure of the Ketchikan Wellness Coalition – with the large amount of task forces and to find more ways to be effective locally. (The sense is that political leaders are somewhat entrenched and not to open to finding/funding solutions to Coalition priorities).

Overall, the Coalition is a great resource for the community.

WISH

Great meeting with Executive Director and staff who seem to have a great understanding of the community (for clients, politically) and are a collaborative entity in town. Well-versed in trauma-informed care and open to the idea of participating in the Homeless Management Information System to provide better details on the homeless in town.

Community Connections

Community Connections offers an early learning program, children's mental health services, developmental disabilities services and older Alaskan and Adult Resource Services. Pat and I met with the Executive Director, staff, a therapeutic foster parent, and skyped with staff in Hydaburg.

Community Connections recognizes a huge housing need, have developed some housing in the past – but this was difficult because they aren't efficient developers. Housing affects recruitment/retention of the workforce, especially in Hydaburg and surrounding communities. Childcare offerings are limited/expensive – making it difficult for workforce families.

In Hydaburg, staff discussed great relationships in schools although it took some time to win over community trust – was initial concern over their roles, acceptance.

The ED wanted to highlight Hydaburg as well as let us speak to one of their most successful foster parents and an energetic staffer that works especially well with clients.

Community Connections offers a broad array of services so communicating what they do is a big component of what they do; overall a positive organization and resources for Ketchikan.