

Sampson County Meth Task Force
Meeting March 22, 2007
Minutes

The Sampson County Meth Task Force met on March 22, 2007 at Sampson Community College in the Warren Student Center Board Room.

Chair, J.W. Simmons, called the meeting to order at 8:30 am. The meeting was opened with prayer by Rev. Cory Oliver.

Present: J.W. Simmons; Amber Cava; Michelle Warren; Rev. Cory Oliver; Deleon Wilkes; Terry Miller; Rev. Rev. Dennis Newton; Oscar Rodriguez; Jorge Altamirano; Gary Connelly; Lillian Wells; Regina McNeill; Ray Honrine; Rev. Jennifer Slade; Becky Jackson; Pat Green; Lee Coble; Renee' White; Kenneth King; Norma Negron'; Jimmy Thornton; and Janet Rosenberger.

The minutes from the January 23, 2007 meeting were unanimously approved by the Task Force with a motion from Rev. Newton and seconded by Michelle Warren.

OLD BUSINESS

JW stated that they've requested cd's about the HBO Addiction Project documentary to be placed in the area school libraries. This project has been steered by experts and shows all sides of addiction from celebrities to the poor.

Rev. Newton introduced a recovered drug addict, Mr. Paul Sweatt to the group. Mr. Sweatt addressed the Task Force and stated that everyone needs to be patient and not give up on addicts. Behind every face of an addict is a person in need of help. They've been through hardships and feel they have no alternatives. They drag themselves down lower and lower but, there's a soul in there reaching out for better conditions. Some have to go down that path to decide they want and need help. God is an important part in his recovery. He has overcome crack and alcohol and drank from ages 13 to 35. It's not always the big things that help the addict. Even the small things you do will be remembered when they realize life has to change. The Meth Task Force is making a difference and all their efforts will be appreciated. You can't reach out soon enough to kids. He knows from personal experience that they start early with addictions. Please call him at 564-5567 if you think his testimony will be of assistance to someone, or refer someone to him, day or night.

JW reminded the group that Regina McNeill is now maintaining the website. Jason Miller with Interstar developed the website and has trained Regina to maneuver through it and keep it updated. He will assist her when needed. Rev. Slade suggested that the AA and NA meeting schedules be posted on the site.

JW stated that there has been a huge drop in rural Meth labs which can be attributed primarily to the removal of pseudoephedrine products from the shelves. This does cause more imported drugs though since the key factor driving production of Meth is that addictions determine the need. Information was handed out regarding a report about Mexican police seizing \$205 million in American currency they found while investigating chemicals being smuggled to the US that are used to make Meth.

NEW BUSINESS

Rev. Slade pointed out that one of the main goals is to get addicts off of drugs then deal with the mental illness side.

Rev. Oliver recommended that bios be created and shared for each Meth Task Force member. This could include their name, where they work, job description and how they contribute to the Task Force. Each member could send this information to Janet for her to compile the list by the next Task Force meeting.

Norma Negron' with Health Care Connections introduced herself. They are trying to open a detox center and would like information from the Task Force on anything that would be beneficial to them. Meth is not the drug of choice in Detroit where Norma is from. The center will be dealing with the Mental Health aspect of addiction. The building is ready but they are in need of a P.A. They're also in the process of writing policy. The center will be for both voluntary and involuntary commitment.

Rev. Newton added that there is a halfway house in the Delway area that has 19 beds and is initially a 45 day program. The phone number for them is 532-2175. There is a small fee of \$95 which covers their meals and utilities. There is bible study, chores, and community jobs for donations. Area people use them for lawn care and odd jobs.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

- 1) **Faith Based:** Rev. Oliver reported that their main purpose is to build on the mission of the Task Force. He's received Dr. Holley's faith based information. The subcommittee would like to put together something each church can adopt and add to existing programs already being used. They want to strive to create a program that could be available to people who want and need it. They discussed having interfaith worship service that would be inspirational. Jimmy Thornton offered their new conference room that's large enough to offer ministry for inmates. JW added that Dr. Holley's cd's could also be placed in churches.
- 2) **Schools:** Becky Jackson and Deleon Wilkes worked together on the S.A.S.S.Y. program. It's a more innovative and positive program and the idea behind it is to restore stability to family life. They've placed the programs in middle schools and materials are also being added to alternative schools. One of the local schools has requested a speaker to educate the parents about how to detect your child is possibly using drugs. One parent has called requesting drug tests for both her children. Becky stated that the requests for the drug kits are slow but, they are passing the word around. Another parent has gotten a kit to use to keep tabs on their child. Deleon added that this is building better communication between parents and schools. They've had articles on the program in the Sampson Independent, Fayetteville Observer and WRAL has talked about it. They are planning to have someone speak at the Nutrition Sites to the elderly about this program to help reach grandparents. Rev. Oliver stated that he'd select one person from the Faith-Based Subcommittee to also speak to them. Michelle Warren added that parents and grandparents have taken children to SRMC to be drug tested but, that they can't do this testing there. JW added that Stewart Hobbs and Gene Hales are both very supportive of S.A.S.S.Y., especially since there is a stigma associated with drug abuse. Families tend to keep quiet about family addictions.
- 3) **Business:** Amber Cava reported that 6 of the 7 members had met and had a round table discussion on the drug problems that exist in the county and what they could possibly do to provide more public awareness. The project they are working on now to be held at the Civic Center is to offer the local leaders the opportunity to come and hear Dr. Holley speak regarding problems in businesses with addictions. There needs to be more awareness addressed in local businesses, as well as training for farmers, utility companies and other public industry. Education about how to recognize Meth labs when they're conducting their business is needed. Retail companies also need to be made aware of excessive sales in matches and other things used in manufacturing Meth. The business subcommittee plans to meet monthly.

- 4) Event and Community Relations: Pat Green reported that the Hobbton School District is planning to provide funding for Dr. Holley to speak at their schools. The subcommittee is now working to combine those plans with the Task Force efforts. Dr. Holley will be arriving on May 14th, and will speak at the Expo Center May 15th and May 16th. They are working toward finalizing plans for a noon luncheon session for various groups on the 15th and an afternoon session on the 16th. On May 16th, Dr. Holley will be at Hobbton for a 10:00 am session. From 2:00-4:00 she will present to a faith based group. They would like to have handouts available at all sessions.

JW stated that Dr. Holley is nationally known and speaks often at high profile events. Local media will be interested in this summit. Star Telephone will again assist with the expense.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 am.