



Online Meeting Minutes: March 15, 2022

Guest Speaker: Essentials First, Nicky Sheriff (nicky@essentialsfirst.org) and Khizer Sheriff (khizer@essentialsfirst.org)

- Essentials First serves to close the gap in Humanitarian Services, addressing hygiene poverty.
- The pandemic has highlighted the challenges in finding resources for hygiene products. First priorities are shelter and food, however there are over 2 million people in WA State that can't afford basics like laundry detergent, soaps, deodorant, feminine products, and more.
- SNAP coverage does not include hygiene products
- This lack of resources impacts spread of disease, mental and behavior health, and mental stress for all ages.
- Less than 5% of hygiene products are available at food banks
- This gap in services will be a large issue for the next 8-10 years (Feeding America)
- There are no statewide or national organizations that currently provide consistent support for these products
- Essentials First began in 2017 as Kits For Peace, a youth-run organization providing help to those on the streets, with a \$1 coin and a resource list for local services. In 2018, received 501(3)c status, and expanded to include meal cards, some essential products, and resource information flyers.
- From 2019-2021, with the pandemic, deeper outreach to provide products to families experiencing hardship, as well as collaboration with schools and local nonprofits. Larger bags with more products provided for distribution. In addition, initiated market research on needs assessment and quantify the increased demand
- July 2021, rebranded as Essentials First. Leadership reflects more than 30 years of humanitarian service experience, as well as developing younger leaders.
- Current focus: 1. Increasing capacity and distribution of kits with added staff and additional partnerships. 2. Increase procurement volume and distribution capability by leveraging existing infrastructure like food delivery systems and organizations. 3. Build organization infrastructure to support planned growth
- Current needs: 1. community endorsement from leaders 2. Access to manufacturers and wholesalers to be able to order pallet-sized quantities at lowest costs. 3. Introductions to potential leaders and philanthropic investors. 4. Capacity building support to expand across Puget Sound region
- Concurrent with growth plans is being able to quickly pivot to address new and urgent needs, such as heat waves and entrance of new refugees to our area. During last summer's heat wave, distributed thousands of kits to local shelters and organizations (water bottles, fortified drinks, sunscreen, etc). In addition, have delivered 13,000-20,000 kits for local Afghan refugees.
- Welcome partnerships in advocacy for showers in our local communities
- Everyone is welcome to schedule a tour of Essential First building, and volunteer with packing parties.
- Presentation slides to be posted on INN website with minutes

Guest Speaker: Ria Mohan, Youth Ambassador for Organ Transplant Awareness, TRIO

- As a high school student, spearheading a new Youth Ambassador program with TRIO to raise awareness of the need to register to be an organ donor, and to educate how organ donations save lives.
- Each registered organ donor has the potential to save 8 lives, however donors must be registered to donate.
- According to Donate Life America, while 95% of U.S. adults support organ donation, only 54% are actual registered donors
- United States has an explicit consent system to respect the autonomy of individuals so it is the responsibility of each individual to register

- Goal of Ambassador program is to increase the number of registered organ donors, and ultimately save more lives.
- Youth Ambassador program provides other teens with the skills and tools to initiate their own local community campaign. Ambassadors can create contests, organize presentations with State legislators, or host educational webinars for teachers or local organizations. Training is also provided.
- Orientations being held every Friday through April 1, at 4:30pm. Contact NWYouthAmbassadors@gmail.com for details and registration.
- Presentation slides to be posted on INN website with minutes

Sammamish Human Services Commission, Joyce Bottenberg

- Human Services grants opening across many cities, with workshops to learn more

YMCA Seattle, Nicole Lowe

- Making connections to provide meals when school ends for summer. Currently working with Imagine Housing in Issaquah, and partnering with Issaquah School District. If you know of opportunities for the Y, contact Nicole nlowe@seattlemca.org

Eastside Friends of Seniors, Linda Woodall

- Everything currently going strong
- Special project: connect with clients to ensure they have received the free Covid testing kits. Many do not use internet, so providing assistance.
- Hiring a part-time administration position, at \$17.50/hour.
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Madeline Fish, Community Member

- Working with church to connect volunteers to community organizations on Eastside
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Issaquah Sammamish Interfaith Coalition, Elizabeth Maupin

- Elizabeth Maupin from Issaquah Sammamish Interfaith Coalition and Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council, eli410 Maupin@gmail.com or 425 677 8043 (landline).
- Wanted to let people know that there will be a peace prayer vigil for people of all faiths on Thursday March 17, 24, and 31 from 12:10 to 12:50 between the library and the city hall in Sammamish. This Thursday the focus is on the refugee crisis
- Looking for assistance with email newsletter and website (Lisa Haynes to follow up with Gibson Ek possibility)
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City of Issaquah Human Services, Monica Negrila

- Human Services grants open, and recent work on strategic plan will be used to prioritize
- Recent success with King County Housing Authority in receiving 11 housing vouchers for local individuals experiencing homelessness. Five people have already been placed in permanent housing, and work continuing for 6 additional people in apartments. Appreciation for collaboration with IFCB and Issaquah Community Meals
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Hopelink, Case Management Donata Brenner

- Part of case management team working with families to find housing and other needs

- Donata Brenner, Case Manager, Hopelink (425)985-6287 dbrenner@hopelink.org

Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank, Interim Executive Director, Laura Skelton

- Has been at IFCB for about one month, and will remain until a new permanent Ed hired

NAMI Eastside, Brenda Freeman

- Upcoming events on website, and can connect with her for resource referrals Brenda@nami-eastside.org

Lake Washington United Methodist Safe Parking Program, Kirkland, Karina O'Malley

- Providing Safe Parking opportunity to women and families and connecting with resources.
- Contact Karina if you know someone who can benefit from this program
- Karina O'Malley karina@lakewaumc.org 425 922 8051

Issaquah/ Renton Seventh-day Adventist Church, Angelique Cadwallader

- Tentative plans for a mobile dental clinic at the Flemig Music School, April 2022. Stay tuned!

Issaquah Food & Clothing Bank, Lisa Haynes

- Lunch For The Break coming April 8. Families must register on IFCB website
- IFCB operations have returned to indoor shopping, with a limit on number of people inside at a given time
- Currently hiring for a Communications Coordinator
- Power Packs program serving hundreds of students each month with distribution through the schools
- Home Delivery program still in high demand

Upcoming INN Meetings:

April 19, 2022 Guest Speaker: Marnie Maraldo, Influence The Choice

May 17, 2022 Guest Speaker: Linda Woodall, Eastside Friends of Seniors