

# **Barrier Busters Network Action Group**

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**January 25, 2006, LLRC  
1:30pm—3:00pm**

**BBN Attendees:** Shirley Tarvis, Amity Walter, Mary Beth Lampe, Paula Bartha, Kirsta Girty, Efrion Smith, N. Price-Reid, Julie Steiner, Beth Manuel, Patricia Parker Self, Mel Batkins, Helena Prince, Jodi Trisdale, Paul Sher

**Staff Present:** Mike Scholl, Staff Coordinator HSCC  
Bethany Morton-Jerome – HSCC Graduate Intern

**Guests:** Emily Salvette, Thrift Shop  
Lakshmi Narayanan, Thrift Shop  
Bonnie Guest, ETCS (THAW Program)  
Dale Wanty, Salvation Army (THAW Program)  
Jennifer Brown, Salvation Army (THAW Program)  
Anya Abramzon, Jewish Family Services  
Zee Pace, THAW Program

## **I. Welcome/Introductions**

- Mary Beth Lampe opened the meeting

## **II. Public Comment**

- None

## **III. THAW Program Overview and Discussion**

- Zee Pace presented as a representative from the THAW Program, the Salvation Army and ETCS were also on hand.
- The THAW program is celebrating 20 years of being in existence.
- There is 12 staff members based out of Detroit. The organization has 25 Board Members and 126 program sites across the state.
- THAW facilitates payment through other agencies.
- There are broad program guidelines but they generally fund utility credits for families up to 200 percent of poverty.
- THAW requires a DHS decision notice, but it can be waived.
- The guidelines are not firm; each can be waived for extraordinary circumstances.
- The program is looking for new areas to expand. They are trying to expand their fundraising capabilities to provide additional funds.
- DTE will also match donations on a dollar for dollar basis.
- THAW receives funds from Skillman Foundation, FEMA and private agencies.

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- They are also looking for new agencies to partner with all the time.
- There are THAW co-pay requirements \$150 over the previous three months or 10 percent of the total bill for higher bills.
- They would like customers to stay on a budget and show some willingness to pay a portion of their bills.
- Zee Pace encouraged utility customers to make some payment on their bill even if it is a limited amount.
- Customers that show some commitment to pay even a portion of their bills are more likely to receive assistance from THAW.
- In Washtenaw County, Salvation Army receives \$10,000 for the THAW program and ETCS receives about \$25,000 for the THAW program.
- To connect your clients with THAW representatives in Washtenaw County, please call the following:
  - Salvation Army
    - Ann Arbor - 734/668-8353
    - Ypsilanti – 734/482-4700
    - Please indicate that it is an individual in utility crisis
  - ETCS
    - Bonnie Guest 734/544-6850
    - Walk in hours between 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM
    - 555 Towner, Ypsilanti

### **IV. Action Group Membership and Emergency Unmet Needs Fund Participation Agreement**

- We are renewing our commitment to the Action Group and the Emergency Unmet Needs Fund.
- There are two agreements one for the Action Group and a second for access to the Emergency fund.
- The draft-final agreement is presented for review by the Action Group membership.
- Please review and send comments to Mike Scholl at [schollm@ewashtenaw.org](mailto:schollm@ewashtenaw.org)
- A final membership agreement will be made available to group at the February meeting.
- We expect to receive the Emergency Unmet Needs Fund Participation Agreement signed by the March action group meeting.

### **V. Announcements**

- The additional DHS funds are coming online and we have funds for Ann Arbor residents through the city's CDBG grant contract.

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- McKinley Properties has tentatively made a commitment to the emergency unmet needs fund. Details will be forthcoming.
- Jewish Family Services, Salvation Army and the Thrift Shop all attending the meeting and are considering becoming members of the Action Group.

Adjourned 3:00 pm

***The Next Meeting is scheduled for  
Wednesday, February 22, 2006 - 1:30 pm – 3:00 pm @  
LLRC***