



Present: Betsy Corbett; Allison DeMarco; Emily Earnest; Nyra Hill; Corey Root; Pamela Smith; Rachel Stern; Linda Textoris; Jackie Thompson

Agenda

1. Review survey results
2. Discussion
3. Finalize recommendations for next event

Recommendations for next Project Connect:

- Move the timing of the event back to a Thursday in Fall, back to Thursday, keep the duration the same
- Keep the scale of the event the same, not bigger not smaller
- Keep branding of the event as Project Connect, not incorporated into another existing event
- Articulate clearly the audience for the event
- Form an Outreach Committee to improve event communication
 - Wider distribution of event info prior to the event
 - Day of the event: volunteer group(s) walking/driving around letting people know about the event
 - Involve Spanish-speaking people on Planning Committee to get info out to that population
- Think about some meaningful giveaways to attract guests (socks, clothes)
- For internal communications, have a point person for each service area/agency to receive key communications; Coordinator should not send all information to all people
- Have an orientation for new volunteers
- Determine key stakeholders and make explicit asks of these agencies to serve on Planning Committee
- Better signs and information during the event to let guests know what services are offered where
 - Signs at tables
 - Passport with event map that guests can get stamped at various places?

Meeting discussion

Outreach – Why was it changed? Event should have better targeting. It would be good to have someone talk with homeless service provider staff about the event. Also helpful to identify one point of contact at each agency, have a planned communications approach; form an Outreach Committee. Big source of advertising has always been word of mouth by guests, one of the reasons for this is the services offered. Another reason is the experience of the event: having a joyful community celebration (for example a singer at lunch) made PC a better option than hanging out on Franklin St. In previous years the event was packed for lunch, there was a Judge who spoke who had a powerful story. Last year a man gave his testimony. Maybe this didn't draw people in, but having a program made the event nice.

Internal communications – the number of emails gets confusing for total number of volunteers
Make one contact person per service; Also tailor emails to each group, don't send everything to everyone.

Usefulness of event - Is it the case that the new Community House is providing services year-round to people who would have come to PC? IFC Director did not think this was the case. Is Project Connect still helpful or have we developed other services meeting the need? Should we instead do a scaled down mini-event a few times a year? Or should we scale event up and broaden target audience to include all people who earn low income in Orange County, not just people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness?

Guest demographics – This year there were no Spanish speakers, no people from Northern Orange, and UNC Horizons did not bring any clients.

Event timing - Changing event month was a big problem. March is a bad time and during Spring Break is a bad time; previously the event was always on a Thursday. Flu shots in got people in the door – could do this in the Fall. Could also do a colder weather event in Nov/Dec/Jan/Feb. Could combine the event with the Point-in-Time count, last Wednesday in January. Some nice overlaps there. BUT: dicey weather in January and it's a little late to get flu shots. Do we need a whole day for the event? We could look at just a morning or just an afternoon. If we have a place to note the time a guest arrives on intake form, we could know when people come. It seems like in years past there was a wave of guests at the beginning, and a wave later.

Dental services – The change in on-site services vs. referrals – did this impact turnout? Probably not as this change was not known to potential guests prior to event.

Guest attendance – The event intention was not to do give-aways – is this working? Clothing was a huge draw in the past. Is there a way to have giveaways that are meaningful to guests, not patronizing, that would also increase attendance?

Guest escorts - There were escorts at the gym, there were zone-specific escorts – this was effective and helpful – people got to the place they needed to get. Was it effective for the guests? Seemed hovercraft-y and less empowering. Before – gave clients the choice whether to have an escort or no, did this in the central location with intake. The Veterans area did not see escorts. Possible to divide the zones off more clearly?

Volunteer orientation – done case-by-case; some parts of orientation can be more clear; Hard to orient volunteers when they get there – maybe an orientation just for new volunteers. Had two different orientation meetings before.