

Commission on Social Services
Minutes May 12, 2011
Wilton Senior Center

Attending: Ed Raposa, Roseann De Simone, Nate Shipp, Peg Koellmer, Cathy Pierce, Beth Mason, Betty-Jo Corridon, Judy Zucker, guests Liz Salguero and Dawn Ladenheim

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Peg Koellmer at 5:35 pm. The minutes of the April 14, 2011 meeting were approved.

Program:

Liz Salguero, Co-Founder / President of Circle of Care, and Dawn Ladenheim, Co-Founder / Treasurer of Circle of Care

Liz and Dawn presented the story of Circle of Care, a not-for-profit organization founded in 2003 under the sponsorship of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics' Foundation for Children, Inc. The stated mission of Circle of Care is "to provide immediate and ongoing support for children with cancer and their families through our in-hospital programs and by guiding them to local services and resources."

The concept for Circle of Care came about when the Salguero and Ladenheim families, along with a third family, met during their own children's battles with pediatric cancer. They learned through their experience that an urgent need existed for information, a sense of belonging, and mutual support for children and parents during treatment. They began their program with the Bags of Love project (a day-of-diagnosis care package), and have since expanded the organization to offer 6 programs throughout Connecticut:

- Purple Pages, a pediatric cancer resource guide;
- Lifeline, a peer counseling telephone network;
- Lifeline Emergency Fund, a discretionary financial support fund;
- Connexions, which provides laptop computers to hospitals for in-patient use;
- Circle of Care Hospital Volunteers, providing respite care at clinics and hospitals during treatment;
- Art From the Heart, which creates "dream rooms" for children during treatment and recovery.

Circle of Care's board includes 19 members from around the state. Its financial support comes primarily from private sources (families and individuals), some grants and corporate gifts, and fundraisers.

New Business

Director:

Cathy Pierce reported that funding from the Federal Energy Assistance Program will suffer drastic cuts in aid to the state (reported \$40 million down from \$113 million). The impact on Wilton's ability to assist residents in need would be very severe.

Arrangements for pickup and delivery of the Post Office's May 14 Food Drive were made and confirmed, thanks to help from Commission members and other volunteers.

12 volunteers are currently signed up for the Red Cross emergency shelter training session on June 3.

Commissioner appointment:

Judy Zucker announced her reappointment to the Commission, replacing Steve Lanza who has resigned.

Arrangements for the Commission's June 9 end-of-year dinner meeting were discussed. Attendance is expected to be 25-30. Commission members volunteered for assignments as follows:

Nate: chicken

Ed: pasta

Roseanne: crudites & salad

Betty Jo: fruit salad

Judy Z: drinks & bread

Peg: dessert (cheesecake)

Beth: table décor

Set-up at 4:45 pm; dinner will be served at 6:00.

Nominating report:

Beth Mason, on behalf of Nominating Committee members (Beth, Ed Raposa, and Sue Chalons-Browne) presented the following proposed slate of officers for 2011-2012:

Chair: Peg Koellmer

Vice-Chair: Betty-Jo Corridon

Co-Secretaries: Judy Mabley, Beth Mason

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Mason

Co- Secretary

