

Tompkins County Office for the Aging

Advisory Committee Meeting

March 25, 2024

Hybrid

9:30am

Members present: Hart, Lesser, Dean, Roe, Hatch, Shearer, Mallison, Beyers, Izbicki, Hultberg

Liaisons: Lynch, Champion, Lesh, Evans, Burger, Wells, Lindhorst, Molloy, Stuart

Staff: Bullis, Monroe, Davis

Public: Tiffany Bloss, Presenter

1. Hart called the meeting to order at 9:30am.
2. February minutes approved.
3. Discussion: Tiffany Bloss, Executive Director Suicide Prevention & Crisis Service
 - Statistics from 2021: 11th leading cause of death in US is suicide
 - Estimated 1.7 million attempts were made
 - Men tend to be at higher risk than women with highest rates among white men by means of firearms.
 - 94% believe that suicide is preventable.
 - 85+ highest suicide rates by age in 2021; highest call volume at suicide prevention and crisis service is 65+
 - What brings these folks to thoughts of suicide? Loneliness, isolation, medical issues, loss, exhaustion, depression, financial concerns
 - Warning signs in older individuals: losing interest in things or activities they used to enjoy; cutting back on social interaction, grooming; breaking medical regimens; experiencing or expecting a significant personal loss; feeling hopeless, worthless; putting affairs in order, giving things away; stock piling medication; expression of suicidal intent.
 - Suicide Prevention & Crisis Service (SPCS) was started in 1969 by Cornell University Professor Rev. Jack Lewis after there were a lot of deaths in the community and at CU.
 - Mission is to provide prevention, intervention, and postvention. We will reduce the stigma about suicide through compassionate support and community education.
 - Ways to reach SPCS: 988 Lifeline, local crisis line (607-272-1616), all hours connect program, Early Alert Triage Program (text check in), Ithaca Warm Line, help@ithacacrisis.org
 - Ithaca Warm Line 24/7 line for individuals who may be feeling lonely and are in need of social connections. Not in crisis and not having thoughts of suicide. Calls are 30 minutes, every four hours. So far this year, 8,785 connections made.
 - In the last year, they had 2,844 calls from folks 65 and older (crisis line and Ithaca warm line)
 - SPCS also does a lot of community education

- Support group for those who are Survivors of Suicide. Meets once a month.

Davis asked if the Ithaca Warm Line was just for residents of Tompkins County. Bloss responded that it is not. People can call from wherever they are, whenever they need. No age limitations as well. Davis asked how you become a volunteer. Bloss stated that they can email them, they post on the listserv when they have openings for volunteers.

Beyers asked about their connection with 211. Bloss stated that they are part of 211's call in tree.

4. Liaison Reports:

a. Burger: Lifelong-

- Lifelong recently signed agreement with Frost Travis for the Library Place community room
- Spring Fling is May 3rd.
- April 4th The Klezmer Kings Event

b. Lesh: Foodnet-

- In 2023, delivered 139,360 meals, had 638 unique clients; of them 387 live alone and 147 are 85+
- Mac n Cheese Bowl is May 1st at the Ithaca Farmer's Market from 4:30-7pm

c. Champion: TC Legislature-

- If there are specific things that this group wants to hear from the county government or legislature, please let her know ahead of time and she's happy to answer questions off line.
- Assessments have gone out and a majority have gone up. Numerous conversations with assessment dept., complex issue.
- In the process of working on the Center of Government building on corner of Buffalo and Tioga. Will be a long process.

d. Lindhorst: Love Living at Home-

- Have settled into their new space up by Community Corners; 832 Hanshaw Rd. Drop-in hours are Tuesday through Thursday 9am -2pm or by appointment.
- Offers sponsored memberships, please let Thena know. They are confidential. Also offer 3-month pretrials.
- June 7th Volunteer Celebration-more details to follow.

e. Wells: Gadabout-

- Ridership has rebounded to pre pandemic numbers which means folks are getting out and about post pandemic.
- Still working on implementing their new schedule dispatch software. Currently have 2 vehicles on the road that are running the new software. Will start beta testing that within the next week or so.

Hart asked about Gadabout helping Foodnet for the Mac N Cheese Bowl. Wells stated that they do provide rides from the overflow parking. Lesh will check in about transportation.

Beyers asked Champion if she had any updates on the planned reconstruction of the East Hill Plaza intersection that was scheduled for 2024. Champion wasn't sure, thought it might be TC Highway Department project or Town of Ithaca project.

5. COFA Update:

- Monroe presented data on our PERS program for 2023.

Lesser asked about the process around our data collection considering privacy concerns and how we can use this data. Monroe explained that we have a secure Statewide Data base that we are required to enter in necessary data for use with all of our funding streams. Before any collection staff are required to obtain consent from all clients.

- Bullis reported that May is Older Americans Month and COFA will be holding our Annual Luncheon at the Hotel Ithaca on May 3rd from noon -2pm. Dr. Mildred Warner is our keynote speaker, and we will be recognizing our 2024 Outstanding Volunteers Brigid Hubberman and Nancy Schaff.
- In the process of interviewing for Outreach Worker and will hopefully be able to hire another HHA.

6. Members:

Izbicki brought up the issue of the potholes in the streets and the lighting. Wondering if this has ever been brought up. Monroe explained that we have not heard anything from clients and the City has not directly contacted us regarding this issue. Monroe can look into this to see if they are doing anything, especially with the creation of the City Manager position.

Burger explained that there is a way to report these things that is pretty easy on the website. Roe mentioned that there is a Facebook page where someone created a list of areas to avoid. Issue for people of all ages.

Champion suggested that this group could draft a letter to the city outlining concerns on this issue signed by the members. Izbicki offered to draft a letter.

7. No new business

Next meeting will be April 22, 2024

Meeting adjourned 10:30am