

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Executive Office of Mayor Muriel Bowser



Office of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services

Ward 8 Advisory Team Meeting

October 18th, 2018 | 7:00pm

MEETING MINUTES

Welcome and Introductions

Director Branch opened the meeting and shared and expressed his excitement about Community of Hope joining the STFH program as the provider selected to operate the Ward 8 site.

Update on the Plan to Close DC General Shelter

DHS staff shared that the agency is on track to close DC General by the end of October 2018. As of today, only 29 families remain at DC General and the goal is that every family will move to permanent housing by the end of this month.

Updates on the Ward 8 Program

DHS announced that Mayor Bowser will be hosting a ribbon cutting ceremony at the site. Fliers were shared with the Advisory Team to distribute to community members.

Once the Short-term Family Housing program has opened, DHS is planning a party that will include a resource fair where District agencies will bring resources to the community. Community of Hope will participate in the event, and music, food, and activities for children will be included. DHS would like feedback from the Advisory Team about what should be included at this event. Advisory Team members shared that the event should include:

- Mental health and substance use disorder resources
- Tenant advocates from the Office of the Tenant Advocate
- Coat drive distribution
- Connections to social services agencies
- Providers, including Martha's Table, UPO, and Salvation Army
- Community Prep Adult Charter School

About Community of Hope

Kelly McShane, Executive Director of Community of Hope, shared the organization's excitement at being selected to provide services at the Ward 8 Short-term Family Housing site because it is the organization's home neighborhood. Community of Hope shared details on the services they already provide in the neighborhood and throughout Ward 8. In 2018, 1200 families experiencing homelessness will be served by Community of Hope, and the organization has expertise in providing these services. Community of Hope also runs several health centers across the District that serve over 12,000 individuals in the District, including at 4 Atlantic St SW near the Short-term Family Housing site.

Kelly provided an overview of services that will be provided at the Short-term Family Housing program. This will include:

- 24/7 hour staffing with security staffing that is approachable and friendly
- Case management, including during evenings to accommodate family work schedules
- Supporting families with document replacement
- Supporting families with credit checks, repairs, and support with debt
- Education about tenant rights

Question: Do you track how long families stay in the permanent housing they exit shelter to?

Answer: Yes, we track for two years whether a family has reentered the homeless services system.

Question: Do families exit to low-income housing?

Answer: Most families exit homelessness using a rapid rehousing voucher that helps families afford an apartment in the rental market.

Question: What will a day in the life of a family at this shelter be like?

Answer: Families will be able to go about their day just like they would if they were living at an apartment building. They will also be able to access common rooms and study rooms and will have access to programming.

Question: How can people volunteer at the program?

Answer: We are really happy to have volunteers join our team. We will be serving breakfast and dinner at the program and need a team of hospitality volunteers to support those meal times.

Question: What is the volunteer vetting process?

Answer: There is a formal process for completing background checks for all volunteers. We will also have a robust safety program in place to ensure safety for families.

Community of Hope shared that they will be reaching out to Henley ES and Southeast Children's Fund to build relationships with both entities. Community of Hope also works with Project Create to provide arts programming for families, as is interested in partnering with the Hoya Clinic to provide health services. Community of Hope also shared that they are open to more partnerships that Advisory Team members recommend.

Community of Hope is hiring for 36 new positions for the program, and wants to hire as many Ward 8 residents as possible. Community of Hope provided a website where resumes can be submitted for these positions and details about an upcoming hiring fair at the DC Infrastructure Academy.

Question: What efforts are happening to recruit in the neighborhood?

Answer: We will be taking walk ins on October 24th where people can apply, and are open to learning about more opportunities where we can share details.

The Advisory Team co-chair Commissioner Henderson also shared her excitement that Community of Hope was selected to operate the site because they are trusted in the community.

Building Name Process

The Advisory Team discussed the naming process for the building. After reviewing the names suggested through the community voting process, the Advisory Team voted unanimously to name the building *The Triumph*.

Good Neighbor Protocol

Since the last time the team met, the Good Neighbor Protocol was reviewed, and DHS shared updates on a few changes made to the language of the document.

The team discussed the future of the Advisory Team. The Good Neighbor Protocol will now be co-chaired by Community of Hope and a community co-chair designated by the ANC, and the team will meet in person at least two times per year. The Good Neighbor Protocol will be reviewed annually by the Advisory Team to evaluate if it needs to be updated.

Question: Where will people be able to smoke on the property?

Answer: People will not be able to smoke within 25 feet of the entrance, and a designated smoking area is being determined now. Community of Hope will also be encouraging people to take a walk in the neighborhood if they need to smoke so that they are not congregating in front of the building.

Question: Can more frequent updates be provided over the next month about the transition of families into the program?

Answer: Yes, we will share updates as they arise over the next few weeks, including about construction updates.

The Good Neighbor Protocol was finalized, and will be posted online so that everyone can access the document.

Next steps

Moving forward, the Advisory Team meeting will be co-chair by Commissioner Henderson and Community of Hope. The next Advisory Team will be hosted in January.