

WEST CHESTER ROTARY
COMMUNITY SERVICE AVENUE (CSA)
Community Needs Assessment Committee
Meeting: September 11, 2007
Final Report

Committee Members: J. Tadeo, S Quigley, M Bradley, D. Yoder, S. Founds, K. Walker, B. Hess, C. Palmquist, S. Karp, A. Korengel Lorgus, P. Jefferis, J. Polito

Purpose:

The Community Needs Assessment Committee was organized at the suggestion of Past President, Annalie Korengel Lorgus, to identify the needs of the greater West Chester community and to structure a community service avenue to meet those needs. The committee met several times over the course of the 2006-07 Rotary year.

Comments & Observations by Committee:

- 1) Our club is an excellent mix of great community leaders and this committee should look to these leaders for direction and guidance. It was concluded that this committee should ask club members for input because club support is essential for any successful project.
- 2) Some members were of the opinion that several CSA current projects were struggling for and lacking membership support.
- 3) The committee should look to community organizations who have conducted studies on community needs. Two speakers presented a club program discussing results of community needs studies.
- 4) It is important to first identify community needs and then decide where funds and energy should go.
- 5) The concept of need is personal and subjective. Therefore, identifying need presents some complicating factors. The committee does agree that there is considerable need in the community.
- 6) Cooperation among West Chester's community organizations can be improved. This lack of cooperation may be the result of each organization identifying need and structuring solutions differently.
- 7) Club survey appeared to be a rubber stamp of CSA's efforts. Most projects received support on paper although when there is a call to action, volunteer effort often comes up short.
- 8) Perhaps some of the projects which appear to have club support can be structured differently to achieve the needed support.
- 9) This committee acknowledged that our club consists of community leaders who are very actively involved in many other community endeavors.

Committee Findings:

- 1) The community has many diverse needs, many of which are unmet. However, two major unmet needs facing the community are transportation and affordable housing.
- 2) Some are of the opinion that the avenue sponsors too many projects.

- 3) The timing of this committee's work did not permit an opportunity to fully incorporate findings and recommendations into 2007-08 plan given that the survey was conducted in June, 2007. Some suggested changes have been integrated into the 2007-08 plan and additional changes will be reflected in next year's efforts.

Survey Results:

- 1) 72 Rotarians responded to the club survey.
- 2) Club membership supports both large and small contributions to community organizations and supports both large and small projects.
- 3) Because membership indicates on paper that it wishes to continue an existing project, this may not be a good enough reason to continue it.
- 4) Members have opinions and provided constructive suggestions for consideration.
- 5) Members wish for their efforts to make a difference and an impact in the community either through focusing on fewer major projects or making larger financial contributions to community organizations.
- 6) Numerous possible future fund raising projects were suggested.
- 7) Members appear to be most willing to volunteer time for projects which address needs of children and youth, housing issues, physically challenged, elderly and women.
- 8) Priority for financial aid should go to children and youth, elderly, housing and women.
- 9) The issue of need and how to define "needy" was raised by many Rotarians.
- 10) Many community organizations were suggested for future financial consideration which confirms that our club would like to financially support organizations other than the ones supported in the past just because that has been the tradition.

Recommendations:

- 1) Review of community needs should be on-going and an integral part of the CSA planning process each year. A committee consisting of 3 to 5 members should be formed with term being limited to a maximum of perhaps two years. This will provide all club members an opportunity to participate in and contribute to this process.
- 2) Consider supporting one agency/project/theme under each of the four primary committees each year.
- 3) Financial resources and volunteer efforts should be offered to a broader range of community organizations.
- 4) Make a difference and an impact!
- 5) Following each project, a report should be prepared evaluating the results of the project. This will provide data needed to make better decisions regarding continuation or termination of the project.
- 6) Findings and recommendations of this committee should be presented to the Board, to club membership and put on the website.