

Allied Partners

June 21, 2022

Present: Eileen Dresser, Eileen Ahearn, Erica Anderson, Debra Annen, Mary Collet, Wynn Davies, Ryan Estrella, Molly Plunkett.

Eileen D. opened the meeting with an inspirational quote. The May 2022 minutes were approved.

Joining Forces for Families (Ryan)—Ryan introduced Erica Anderson, who will be taking his place as social worker for the Allied Drive neighborhood. Ryan's new position is housed at the Verona Food Pantry; he will be working with Spanish-speaking residents in Allied Drive and Fitchburg. He will continue to have a presence at the Allied Wellness Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Ryan reported a rise in request for rent assistance; he has been focusing on finding affordable housing. He has been meeting with the new Afghani families every other Monday and is using his discretionary fund to assist them. The families, who are related to each other, are particularly stressed because they have only one car among them. Lack of transportation affects the children's schooling (they live in different school districts) and accessibility to ESL classes and other activities. ESL classes have moved from the Boys & Girls Club to Good Shepherd. Molly will explore the possibility of space for ESL at the Prairie Unitarian Universalist Society.

Ryan expressed gratitude for his partnership with Allied Partners. He said that this kind of involvement is rare. Erica also noted little collaboration between churches and associations in the Badger Rock neighborhood, where she previously worked.

Treasurer's report (Wynn)

Eviction Prevention— Bethany United Methodist donated \$1,000 to the fund in May. The fund was used to prevent eviction in three situations. Balance is currently \$10,136.

Scholarships—Current balance is \$1,700. The Scholarship Fund has been dormant. Wynn will set up a special meeting to brainstorm how to promote this resource. Could we collaborate with Madison College? Eileen A. offered to explore her connections there.

Do we need to change our policy of offering only \$500 per individual?

Special Projects—Current balance is \$400.

Wellness Center (no representative present)—Wynn noted that no money has been flowing to the Center through Allied Partners. It is not clear what relationship Allied Partners will have with the Center under its new leadership. Gloria continues to be involved in connection with Nehemiah, distributing essentials on Mondays and Thursdays. Molly serves on the Wellness Center Board and will invite the new coordinator, Bianca Cruz, and the Board president, Leslie McAllister, to our next meeting. Wynn will invite Gloria.

Outreach—Wynn invited Erica to bring community leaders to Allied Partners meetings. Molly will invite the minister of Lighthouse Church, which serves the Latinex community. An invitation will also be extended to the Allied Drive Alder. Wynn suggested that each meeting focus on a special topic; e.g., reentry of formerly incarcerated persons into the community, homeless situation. Ideas for topics should be sent to Eileen D.