

Allied Partners Minutes
November 15, 2022

Present: Eric Aluan (JFF, Southwest), Erica Anderson (JFF, Allied), Rev Matt Aspin (Prairie Unitarian Universalist Soc) Jennifer Torres Barrera (ECI), Mary Collet (Quaker Meeting), Wynn Davies (First Baptist), Sue Hoffenberg (neighborhood volunteer), Laurie Meulemans (JFF, Southern), Helene Nelson (Heart Room, Orchard Ridge UCC), Molly Plunkett (Prairie UU Soc), Liz Schnee (The Road Home).

Molly Plunkett facilitated the meeting for Eileen Dresser. The October minutes were approved.

Heart Room (Helene Nelson and Liz Schnee)—Heart Room is a collaborative effort to help families keep stable housing and achieve their own goals. The aim is to help families move from survival mode to stability. The partners are Orchard Ridge United Church of Christ, The Road Home, Joining Forces for Families (JFF), and the Early Childhood Initiative (ECI, Rise). Families are referred by ECI and JFF. Each family is given a set subsidy, which covers part of their rent. Key components of the program’s effectiveness include a focus on family-driven goals and flexibility, coordination of services across agencies, and program duration (3 years). In addition to housing stability, measures of success include improvements in mental health, financial literacy, and completion of education or training. Heart Room is seeking to expand beyond current geographic neighborhoods. Contacts for the Road Home are Liz Schnee (lshnee@trhome.org) and Dominique Christian (dominiquec@trhome.org). Wynn will inform Allied Partners representatives about Heart Room. Molly is willing to call congregations to invite them to attend a meeting.

Treasurer’s report (Wynn)—The Treasurer’s report had been emailed to Allied Partners members and was not discussed. Wynn did note that the Special Projects fund is empty. The fund is important because it encourages representatives to come to meetings to express their needs.

Joining Forces for Families (Erica)—The trunk trick or treat party, held by Erica and the neighborhood police officer, went well for the kids. Some adults were off put by the police presence and did not attend.

Wellness Center (Rev Matt)—Rev Matt has been connecting with Bianca regarding a better space for the Wellness Center. Prairie Unitarian has a good space, but the location may not be optimal. Erica said that the JFF office is also lacking space and quality. She would like to paint the office, though problems go beyond cosmetics. “We’re doing the best with what we have.” Erica said that she considers Allied Partners as the “go to” place for her needs.

Mary Collet, secretary