

Westmoreland Volunteer Corps Board

Minutes of meeting on June 8, 2014

Attending: John Graves, (chair), Joe Bush, Beth Ferris, Edrie Hough, Mary Sue Johnson, Chris Lawrence, Robert Mertz, John Pielemeier, Jane Williams (note-taker)

John G. called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m. and Chris read a Mary Oliver poem for the opening.

Mary Sue reported on contacts with the national office of the UCC and with the **Catholic Volunteer Network** regarding the CVN's appeal to **AmeriCorps'** parent agency for denial of funding for the upcoming year. The outcome of the appeal is unknown. There are several important facets of the connection through the CVN to the Westmoreland Volunteer Corps: the \$5,500 education stipend per volunteer at the end of the volunteers' year of service, the deferment of student loans' repayment, and the CVN and AmeriCorps Web sites as recruiting tools for the WVC. In case the 2014-15 WVC does not have the CVN/AmeriCorps connection and funding, the WVBC will do the following sort-term:

- Beth will draft a second letter to the incoming volunteers regarding the situation;
- Incoming volunteers will be advised that they could seek student loan deferment from their individual lenders during the low-income year of service on the WVC, if CVN/AmeriCorps connections are not forthcoming and Beth will draft a supporting letter from the Board that they may use with the lenders;
- John G will draft a letter to Congressman Van Hollen and other members of Congress urging federal funding through AmeriCorps for volunteer programs.

Joe said it may be worthwhile to look into the Church of the Savior's Year of Discipleship for a partnership.

John G asked board members' attention to the "weaknesses" portion of the Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats analysis from the spring retreat. Discussion focused on the **volunteer house** and its upkeep. John G said that consensus from the retreat was that clutter does us no harm and does not need to be a concern. Harmful or potentially harmful situations such as space heaters left on, opened food left out, etc. do concern us. Robert asked if the value of the house to the church may be compromised if the clutter masks other problems. Renewed efforts will be made with the incoming volunteers to make expectations for house upkeep clear, including a segment during orientation and written reminders posted in the house. It needs to be clarified how accountability for house upkeep is managed.

Beth chaired the second half of the meeting, as John G left to meet with the Board of Outreach Ministries. Various concerns regarding recruitment and agency placement were mentioned, including the lack of potential for "mutual matching," lack of criteria for evaluating candidates,

timing of applicants' visits, etc. Joe, John P, Chris and Jane were suggested as a sub-group to brainstorm possibilities to strengthen recruiting and to bring ideas back to the VCB in August.

Another challenge will be how to advertise the WVC positions if the AmeriCorps and CVN outlets are not available. Mary Sue will ask the CVN about comparative information on other volunteer programs' stipends, also identified as a weakness for the WVC.

Liaison roles can be more structured in future years. An opportunity is the VC's upcoming 30th anniversary year.

Upcoming events:

July 13 VCB meeting at 8:30 a.m., to include discussion of board roles and understudies
Beth will do the opening.

July 13 farewell party for volunteers at 5:00 p.m., at Pielemeiers' house,
Beth will circulate list of suggested items for each board member to bring.

Aug. 10 VCB meeting at 8:30 a.m., to include discussion of orientation for new volunteers and ideas from sub-group about recruitment for the 2015-16 year

Joe closed the meeting with prayers at 9:50.

The meeting ended at 9:50.