**Present:** Christine Craft, Troy Bradley, Sandy Cavanaugh, Rachel Stein, Roberta Lott, Ruth Birge, Jenny Nordine, Michael Absher, Sandra McNeill, Marilyn Kaylor, Nitiki Kilgore, Kristen Martin, Brynn Swayngim, Jamie Martina, Trisha Crout, Kathleen Lambert, Carol Tobin, Robin Hellman, Nancy Maravilla, Jenny Simmons, Kathaleen McWilliams, Jane Zecher, Brian Alexander, David Jacklin, Candy Mance, Marisol Tomas, Mary Murray, Todd Letterman

**Welcome and Approval of February 2013 Meeting Minutes—Christine Craft**

February 2013 meeting minutes were approved at common consent.

**Introductions and Quick Agency Updates**

* Christine Craft announced that the Henderson County Public Schools HELP program is hosting the annual Feed the Children Backpack Program for Homeless Liaisons in Western North Carolina, to be held in Henderson County on April 11th at Crosswalk Student Center from 11am until 1pm. Volunteers are needed starting at 9am. If anyone can help or need additional information, please contact Christine Craft.
* Brian Alexander shared that the Regional HOME Consortium met March 5th. HUD grants funds to the 4 county entitlement area of Henderson, Buncombe, Transylvania, and Madison counties. Homeward Bound received $25,000 from the city of Hendersonville for Tenant Based Rental Assistance. These funds are for folks up to 50% of Area Median Income. The funds will be granted this fall. Robin Hellman with Emergency Solutions Grant (Rapid Re-Housing) will manage those additional funds.
* Jenny Simmons shared that Western Highlands Network is working on implementation of the Department of Justice Settlement Agreement. Specifics about this work will be shared at the next MH/SA Provider Meeting, April 4th at 1pm at Western Highlands Network.
* Kristen Martin with Sixth Avenue shared that Sixth Avenue has a new agency name: Thrive. They are also looking to develop 4 to 5 apartments to house folks in Henderson County.

**Educational Session – Services for Homeless Youth**

Panel presentation and discussion about services for homeless youth in Henderson County.

Troy Bradley presented information on HELP: Homeless Education Link Project. HELP is a McKinney Vento funding program for homeless liaisons to work with youth who do not have a fixed and adequate night time residence (for example, staying at the Mission, Mainstay, hotel, doubled up, or in a car). Liaisons help with coordinating transportation to a student’s school of origin within the county. They refer families to Robin wit the Homeward Bound Emergency Solutions Grant Rapid Re-housing program. They operate a Homeless Assistance College Fund and manage a Crisis Closet at Balfour.

For the 2011-2012 school year:

* 311 students in K-12 were referred to HELP
  + 82 students unaccompanied homeless youth (not living with a parent or guardian)
  + 17 experienced domestic violence in their homes
  + 5 unsheltered – in cars, parks, back of school bus
  + 24 in hotels/motels

For the 2012-2013 school year thus far:

* 231 students in K-12 have been referred to HELP
  + 67 students unaccompanied homeless youth
  + 22 experienced domestic violence in their homes
  + 3 unsheltered
  + 14 in hotels/motels

Michael Absher President of Only Hope WNC presented information about his agency. They are currently working to obtain 501c3 status. They are hosting an art auction this Friday, March 15th. Art has been donated by students and a few teachers in Henderson County. They maintain a supply closet. They are in the final stages of developing a 24/7 Crisis Hotline for youth under 18 years of age. This hotline will be a cooperative effort with Henderson County DSS and the police. It will include GPS tracking and texting. Only Hope WNC also has an Assistance Fund to help fill in the gaps to cover items other programs cannot including yearbooks and sports uniforms. Upon obtaining their 501c3 status, they are looking to provide housing through a rental property. Last year they collected 1700 items and donated out 8000 items.

Rachel Stein presented information on the Children and Family Resource Center’s Adolescent Parenting Program (APP). They work with youth parents who include unaccompanied youth who are parenting. The program’s goals are to have participants graduate from high school or obtain a GED and to transition into adulthood with housing, employment or secondary education. APP staff meet with the participants to assess their needs. Staff provide transportation to appointments and lead group meetings with the teens once a month where different speakers are brought in to present information and a meal is served. 60 teens are served each year with 40 teen parents served at any given time. To qualify, one has to be in school, less than 19 years of age, and parenting his or her first child. Program has a 90% success rate with teens graduating and not having a second pregnancy before graduation. WCCA provides a “baby bus” to get parents and their babies to school.

Brynn Swayngim – works in operations at the Boy’s and Girl’s Club in the Green Meadows area. The Boy’s and Girl’s Club works with 6 to 18 year olds in after school programs. Some of the youth in these programs are homeless youth. The Boy’s and Girl’s Club has been in Henderson County for 19 years. The program started its work with 200 youth and now has a program that supports 1600 youth each year. Their after school program is from 3pm until 6pm. That time is extended to teens until 8pm. The Boy’s and Girl’s Club provides food, mentorship, tutoring, and simply a place to belong. The cost is $5.00 or free if one attends orientation.

Mary Murray with Juvenile Crime Prevention Council in Henderson County spoke about the need to network resources that target unaccompanied homeless youth. Mary mentioned looking for a property or one centralized location for unaccompanied youth to go to as a safe place.

General Discussion: The panel generated a discussion around a disconnect between realities of homeless youth, their needs and the community’s response or lack of response. There is a need to educate the community about needs, supports, and programs. The community needs to not be in denial about the presence of homeless youth and their needs. The group discussed updating Henderson county commissioners on youth homelessness in Henderson County. The commissioners meetings are broadcast on local television. United Way staff reminded folks of 2-1-1 that folks can call or access on their website to search for services. The Health Department has staff who coordinate services for children on Medicaid through case management. Staff positions are paid through Medicaid. Someone suggested having a benefit (music/food) to raise funds for youth who are homeless; however, the group discussed how right now there is not one agency that could collect and coordinate those funds raised. Brian Alexander suggested that the group needs to think about what the Henderson County Homeless Coalition can do to educate the community about youth homelessness and to consider what exactly the message is that we want to get out. Also need to specifically identify what people in the community can do to help. He suggested identifying specific commissioners/other stakeholders/individuals or groups who are passionate about this topic to just talk to about youth homelessness. Someone suggested getting the youth council in Henderson County involved.

United Way staff encouraged the group to focus first on its Mission, Vision, and Values so the group is clear before it launches into more specific work that needs to be done.

**Sub-Committees – Christine Craft**

Christine Craft to email those who signed up for the Mission, Vision, Values sub-committee regarding possible dates and times to meet.

**Balance of State Steering Committee Update – Christine Craft**

Brian Alexander is Regional Lead. HUD NOFA – Notice of Funding Availability may be released earlier than usual this year which would cause Continuum of Care applications to be due earlier than usual. Henderson County will be working on the AHAR – Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress through Balance of State (Point in Time Count and HMIS data). On March 26th there is a data quality call. The NCCEH – North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness blog regarding Point In Time information.

**Point In Time Count – Brian Alexander**

To be discussed at April 2012 meeting.

**Next Meeting:** April 9th, 2013 10:00am

Respectfully Submitted: Jenny Simmons