

# CTVSC Meeting Minutes

March 23, 2016

## Welcome and Brief Introductions of VSOs

1. Jonathan Leistiko - TexVet
2. Ro Roque - DaRT - Legal services
3. Eugene Edwards - Goodwill CenTex - Grant project supervisor - managed veteran grants. AFB
4. Eva Carwell - Nat Guard - Transition service advisor
5. Adrian Balboa - Military One Source - East TX
6. Megan Ballard - Vet Coord @ Travis County Correctional Complex
7. April Sullivan - VSA
8. Erik Bitar - Supervisor Vet Retention Serv
9. Darren McQueen - Case
10. Kevin Cross - Vet retention case manager - Good
11. (so) Lou Ann Maron - TX Army Nat GUard
12. Harvey Micklen - Army Survivor Outreach Services
13. Aaron Smith - TVC
14. Casey Wade - TX Workforce Commission
15. Blake - Like Casey
16. Pia Villalon - Program Manager TX Center Point
17. Jaclyn Powers - Caritas, AFB
18. Lauren Marcillia - ECHO - Landlord outreach
19. Jan Wenig - VASH
20. Cecilia Galliano - ACC Vet Programs
21. Jaclyn Polladr - Mobile Loave and Fishes
22. Jennifer Aaronson - VSN

23. Caroly COLly - Lone Star LEgal Aid
24. Bo Buell - A New Entry; case manager @ Weberville Transitional Program - AFB
25. Paul Julio - TVC Employment Services
26. Cindy Moore - TX Nat Guard
27. Christopher Araujo - MVPN

## VSO Partner Spotlight Mobile Loaves & Fishes, Alan Graham

- \* 27 acres (plus another recently-added 15) - \$14.5 million.
- \* Grand opening this Saturday (April 2nd)
- \* We have:
  - \* a “Funky Chicken Coop” that produces 20 dozen eggs per week > free food to the community
  - \* multi-acre organic farming
  - \* Goats, rabbits, and honeybees
  - \* aqua phonics tilapia and channel catfish
  - \* ...and 6 miniature donkeys
- \* We believe the greatest cause of homelessness is catastrophic loss of family; PTSD, living wages, affordable housing are not the causal factors. The vast majority of our residents came out of profoundly dysfunctional families.
- \* Community First! takes the housing first movement and changes it from a transactional model (build housing) and turns it into a relationship model (building relationships; building community), inviting the larger community into the process of mitigating homelessness.
- \* Structural issues damage those who live in extreme poverty and poverty. “When I moved here in '76, you didn't see panhandlers; you saw flower-sellers. We even elected one to the city council. Today it's illegal to sell flowers, lemonade, bottled water...” Last week, city council mandated licensing and regulation of trash-hauling. Upper-end trash companies are the ones who benefit.

- \* Alan notes that panhandling is a First Amendment-protected right. But it strips the person of dignity. There's no quid pro quo - it's purely taking. "We need to go into City Hall and remove the laws that prohibit people from transacting."
- \* This property has several micro-businesses:
  - \* The outdoor movie Alamo;
  - \* a missional B&B - staycations for the soul;
  - \* on movie nights, we have concession trailers operated by community members (averaging \$25 per hour in tips).
  - \* Landscaping and hospitality for B&B.
  - \* Art house: 2500 sq. ft.; we've sold \$100,000 in art (They get 95% of the proceeds) of art created by 9 homeless artists. (Homeless individuals are often emotionally distressed, which correlates strongly to creativity.)
  - \* Black smithing and hand-tooling shop; bottle openers, door knockers, hooks, etc. - we will open blacksmithing classes to the community, eventually.
  - \* Organic farming - 6 work events every week - all lead by formerly chronically homeless; tree grafting, animal husbandry; composting...
  - \* Free burger Friday out of air stream - will become a mobile catering business; again, our people average \$25 per hour when it's active.
- \* Alan: "This place is a KOA on steroids"
- \* Mobile home pads on one side, up to 140 micro homes on the other side.
- \* Health Resource Center - Medical Clinic staffed by by ATCIC; 5 on-staff-on-site case/social workers from ATCIC. Soon will have a 1/2 time Psychiatrist. The other side of building will have a community market designed by HEB.
- \* We have the most awesome dog park in Texas.

Q: How does housing process work. Transition out of here? Stay forever?

A: We want them to live here for the rest of their lives. I don't believe in the transitional movement. We're not in the "fix and

repair" a human business. Home is a place of permanence. They're allowed to move, but we're happy to have them stay. We have a burial plot in the rear of the property; we'll have a burial this weekend. We have a woman in hospice. We want residents to love living here.

Q: Do they pay rent?

A: Everyone pays rent as low as \$225 a month all utilities included. *(Secretary note: \$225 is for a canvas-walled one-room residence on a stained concert pad (a permanent tent). Rent for larger/nicer homes was in the \$325 range. Most (all?) residences were wired for electricity, but none had running water/bathrooms. Exception: The mobile home/RV pads are wired for electric and have water.)*

Q: Finalized rent criteria?

A: <http://mlf.org/apply-for-a-home/> - all there. Apply through Coordinated Assessment via Caritas / Salvation Army / ECHO.

Q: Criminal histories?

A: We love criminals. We do a background check. We exclude registered sex offenders; I don't believe in excluding them, but we had to exclude them to maintain good relations with nearby neighborhoods. We're also cautious with people with severe, repeated domestic violence histories. I'd ask them to go to ATCIC's anger management program and see if they'd do that. We want to work with everyone

Q: How many homes are on the property.

A: When we're complete, it'll be 100 RV pads and 140 microhomes.

Q: How many residents?

A: Starting in May we expect to receive 15 / month. We have 15 formerly homeless residents now.

Q: How do they afford it?

A: They have to have an income source. Vet benefits; church donations...

Q: No zero income residents?

A: They can if someone underwrites their risk.

Q: Government funded?

A: None! All from private donors. No HUD. No requirements.

Q: Have full-time mission?

A: 20% of our residents will be missionaries, but we're not proselytizing. We love everyone.

Q: If someone had a missional call?

A: We'd move them through the "Missional Process" - We have some high-profile missionaries.

Q: Drug policy?

A: We have three covenants

- 1) Pay Rent.
- 2) Must obey civil law. (I don't always agree with or take it upon myself to enforce the law, but you can't disobey the law on premises in public view. We won't go in your house, but if you're outside, we'll enforce the law.) We have a number of "functional addicts." When we bring addicts off the street and into our community (He strongly recommends reading "Chasing the Scream" – Chapter 13 (*Sec Note: <http://chasingthescream.com/>*)) there's a phenomenal reduction in dependency.
- 3) HOA-style rules governing behavior in the community; ex: Keep your dog on leash; pick your dog's poop. No indoor furniture outside. No public consumption of booze or smoking. (Front porch ok. Walking round not ok.) Stuff like that...

## **Veteran Insider, Brian Rucker - Founder and CEO**

- \* In Austin for 9 months so far
- \* Army Vet
- \* Veterans career network.
- \* Prepare vets for jobs via data analytics.
- \* Take military experience and turn it into a refined resume and linked in profile; synthesize it into what their private sector skill set is. Hard skills and soft skills; HR terms. Match this to jobs in the private sector.
- \* 100% free for veterans.
- \* Value is
- \* I was a counterintelligence agent; I talked to people all day long. I fought with words, not with weapons. I learned to communicate ideas. When I transitioned out, I was encouraged to become an analyst. 6 months later, I could not find a job, because I was looking for the wrong kind of job. What I experienced is what lots of veterans are experiencing.
- \* Despite good veteran employment statistics, they're leaving those jobs rapidly because they're getting jobs, not careers. We're helping them transition into the right career - a meaningful career - for them.
- \* We're in beta right now.
- \* Our revenue comes from employers. We help them build their veteran hiring pipeline. Find the right veteran for your organization.
- \* I believe the right way for vets to find jobs is to make it easy for employers to find and hire them. We build talent buckets around veteran groups.
- \* We have almost 1,000 veterans in our network. We're hyper-focused on Texas - Central Texas.
- \* "You're trying to help veterans do something better. So are we. We want to help you do that - for free."

- \* We're building a VSO dashboard (35,000 jobs in TX). We can help you; we want to give you that info and let you leverage our algorithms. Come talk to me. We want to work with you!
- \* If you want to use tech to scale your ability to reach more veterans, reach out to me and let's talk. Let's figure out what we can build for you. In return, please direct veterans to Veteran [insider.com](http://insider.com).

Q: What's the future look like outside of TX.

A: If we stay on track, we will expand to DC, NY, LA, SF and Denver later this year; Nationwide in Q1 '17.

Q: Criminal background?

A: I'm happy to take them. We have to be smart; not in bringing them in (easy), but how we're connecting them with employers; their willingness to accept them.

We try to leverage network effects - instead of competing with LinkedIn (10% accidental veterans)... We hold lots of happy hours - Round Rock Express; we're working with them - April 21st, we're having a tailgate at 4:00. We work to build bridges to contacts in a specific org; mentorship; veterans to veterans.

This is critical to facilitating a real opportunity for vets with criminal backgrounds to get interviews and get employed.

[veteraninsider.com](http://veteraninsider.com) also Facebook and Twitter.

## Texas Veterans Commission, Kathryn Schoemer

- \* Workforce center employment rep - ACC Highland campus
- \* Help vets with barriers get jobs (low income, disability).
- \* We brainstorm career option and pursue accommodations.
- \* We also work with vets With felony backgrounds.

- \* 5,000 employers in our "second chance" system.
- \* Job fairs with "SC" employers - one-on-one meetings.
- \* Help with resume, help them get interview skills up (mock interviews, etc.)
- \* Jobs range from software to warehouse. A very wide range.
- \* I help them tap into the job market. Learning about the companies and their culture.
- \* Also have access to City of Austin job fairs.
- \* Lots of referrals; disabled vet gets referred to the accommodations and housing they need.
- \* Training for low-income people. Free Training for CDL and/or Licensed Nurse. License renewal; uniforms. Must be eligible (income).
- \* Classes on resume writing, state application, etc. Assessment testing (typing, JAWS, self-assessment tools).
- \* Wage claims; discrimination complaints.

Paul: Cathy is our Vet Career Advisor. She's really downplaying her awesomeness. She doesn't take no for an answer with employers. She asks the hard questions. She's a SME for vets with background issues. She helps fill that need. Get her contact info! She has employers who will hire those veterans.

## Old Business / Updates CTVSC Veteran Career & Resource ROM (10 mins)

- Pia extended thanks to all who are working hard. We have a good number of employers.
- VSOs: Please extend intake/enrollment to be ready to take them on-site. Don't just pass out information. We want them to have connections with you after they've met with you.
- Co-chairs: Stay to clean up!

- 2-8 PM, March 30
- GOODWILL LEARNING CENTER (6505 BURLESON RD., AUSTIN)
- Open to Veterans, Spouses, Adult Dependents

## **Austin Furniture Bank**

- \* In March: successful impromptu donation drive & completed deliveries to veterans.
- \* New partnerships: C3 Austin, Conveyance Movers, Greater Austin Movers
- \* Spring Cleaning Donation Drive April 2 – 3, 2016
- \* 14 veterans housed at oak creek all at once - had a drive - little guys movers - 16 donations overfilled the truck (Bo's garage); delivered 14 rooms of furniture to those veterans the next week. Lots of great volunteers.
- \* Mayor Adler's office - supporting us with Tweets, etc. Nice dovetail with the Mayor's challenge.
- \* Partners: Victoria Fuller got on the phone and called movers. Got 2 more to offer their services once-per month. Conveyance and Greater Austin movers.
- \* Making a partnership with c3Austin - Christian Compassion Center in Cedar Park. Move-in kits - they're doing it already - a room full of kits. We'll give them material, then help them distribute them.
- \* Upcoming: Spring Cleaning donation drive; April 3rd (only). Flyer for it as well as a webpage. Also local listservs.
- \* 22 Veterans being housed at Oak Creek this week. We need more furniture!
- \* Please volunteer!
- \* Pia: Volunteers – Our focus is to help veterans. We need to pull together. We'll create a volunteer form for you to volunteer. Choose a day and volunteer!
- \* Chris: How far in advance will you know? I have people who need and want to do community service.

- \* Casey: Civilian emails will work better than professional email addresses.
- \* [afb2volunteer@gmail.com](mailto:afb2volunteer@gmail.com) is the volunteer email address
- \* [austinfurniturebank@gmail.com](mailto:austinfurniturebank@gmail.com) - General stuff

## **2nd Year Anniversary for CTVSC on May 2016**

- \* Paul and Casey will co-chair the meeting.
- \* Hosting at Goodwill.

## **New Business**

### **Bikes for Vets Initiative. Paul Julio (10 mins)**

- \* Process to provide vets with bikes to commute
- \* Yellow Bike Project - They provide free bikes to Caritas (12 or so). Can you supply more bikes? They can build more for veterans. Caritas may provide those bikes to veterans. I will follow on with Caritas.
- \* YBP (odd hours 6:30 in the evening) has more bikes in storage than they can build. They have a 99 year grant for the property, so they're stable. Purpose is to help people fix their own bikes. Individuals learn to build and keep their bike.
- \* Program to get veterans involved in the process. What's the best way to help vets and then present that project to hte YBP. They're a collective, and they're very open to input from us.
- \* We need to present a workable solution that fits in the parameters of their mission.

## **CTVSC Outreach Committee - Jonathan Leistiko**

- \* maintaining membership. How to promote increased engagement in CTVSC, how to keep ppl coming
- \* wants to create an outreach/engagement/retention committee. Recruiting ppl to be battle buddies with 'missing' CTVSC groups.
- \* Eugene- make a survey for why ppl want to come to CTVSC
- \* Clarification was requested- retention means keep ppl coming to CTVSC, not just come one time or spotlight one time.
- \* Make CTVSC email blast more available.
- \* Set schedule of WHEN to send the CTVSC announcement email
- \* ME - MAKE THE ROSTER ACT AS A LISTSERV - needs to be a CiviCRM thingy.
- \* ME \_ GET HER EMAIL ADDRESS - ON THE ROSTER

## **Upcoming Veteran Events**

- \* Job Seekers Network Veterans Event, March 28, 2016, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- \* City of Austin Career Expo, March 29, 2016, Noon – 5pm. Palmer Event Center - HUGE (100 employers)
- \* DAV/Recruit Military Hiring Event, April 7, 2016, 11 am – 3 pm.
- \* VA Welcome Home/Military Appreciation Night Texas Stars, April 8th, 5 – 7 pm. - Welcome Home: Parking lot will have a tailgate with VSOs & a job fair before the game.
- \* Art for Vets, Tuesday/Thursday April 5 – May 26, 2016, 5 – 7:30 pm. – Also starting a writing class in mid-April on Sunday afternoons. Flyer coming soon.

ME: GET THE PDFS OF THEM FROM BO TO INCLUDE IN THE MINUTES

- \* Chris A: 3rd Friday every month - Cigar Night for vets at the Brass House. 6 PM to 10 (but goes later. (for Smurfs) Move to this Friday this week because of SXSW. We spotlight one org each month. This week, Shiner will be there with free beer. Don't have to drink or smoke.
- \* Eugene Edwards (Goodwill): Recruiting Case Workers now. Part-time with monthly living stipend. 6 months working with veterans. Great opportunity for veterans looking to learn how to work in social work. 3 spots. Need to fill them quickly!

## **Success Stories?**

- \* Chris: HUD/VASH VA - called me; helped with vet emergency fund. Got a vet out of the place she was in (safety) got her money for food and such.
- \* Bo: Cameron Osteron - Easter seals - Got 30 beds from AFB - called me and said "I need htem moved today!" I realized that Easter Seals has a truck; so contact via Easter Seals
- \* Megan: Veteran got out of jail ; homeless; went to coord assessment; call trying to locate him from Caritas ; I was talking with Pia who happened to see him. Another vet who got out of jail called me who happened to be the veteran they were seeking. He contacted Caritas. Pia - He showed up Monday for his appointment; Theresa hooked him up. He's on track.
- \* (Blue guy) Goodwill - lady on my case load (53) homeless since 1996; works in health care, but all under the table. August 2015, CNA course at Goodwill. 2 months ago, job in housekeeping. Will use that as a stepping stone to get into nursing. Has own apartment (via Caritas w. Deposit and 1st month's rent). First independent living in a long time. She looks so much better! (Face, hair, etc.!) She doesn't look tense or burdened any more.

## **Spotlight and Chairperson for CTVSC meeting April 2016?**

Megan - April 18 from 2 to 4. Paul Charing.

Casey will chair May

Concluded with a guided tour of Community First! Village, led  
by Alan Graham.

Corrections? Please email [jonathan@texvet.org](mailto:jonathan@texvet.org)