

**Foodnet Meals on Wheels  
Board of Director's Meeting  
April 14, 2008**

**Present:** *Board Members:* Joy Blumkin, Chris Decker, Loren Gardner, Melissa Gatch, Bob Herdt, Sonya Islam, Lorraine Johnson, Mary Opperman, Jim Pratt, Elizabeth Schneider, and Bill Tomek.

Excused: Eloise Greene, Jim Henery, Cathy Paddock, and Margaret Washington.

*Staff:* Carol Ackley, Carolyn Arnold, and Stephen Griffin.

Vice Chair Bill Tomek called the meeting to order at 6:17. The agenda was reviewed and accepted as presented.

**Minutes of the March 10, 2008 Board meeting:** motion to approve by Bob Herdt, seconded by Lorraine Johnson and carried.

Mary Opperman joined the meeting and assumed the Chair.

**Special Report on Nutrition Outreach Project:** Carol Ackley, Nutrition Outreach Worker was present to report on her work funded through a grant from the United Way and Triad Foundation. She began this position on January 21, 2008 and her orientation has allowed her to meet with several key people at the Tompkins County Office for the Aging, Adult and Long Term Care Services, the DSS Food Stamp Unit, and the food stamp outreach worker at Catholic Charities. Her job duties have been primarily focused on two areas: completing assessments for home delivered meal clients, and food stamp outreach. To date, she has completed 60 client assessments and completed 6 food stamp applications. About 250 food stamp flyers have been distributed through food pantries and a mailing. There are additional plans to place several ads in some of the free weekly publications, and a short article to be submitted to the Senior Circle. Finally, as there are times when clients require services that Foodnet is unable to offer, there were several referrals to other programs. These included referrals for a bath rail, prescription assistance, subsidized transportation, and transportation to the VA hospital.

According to the Nutrition Consortium of NYS, in 2002 (the most recent figures available) there were 700 Tompkins County Residents aged 60 and above who were eligible for Food Stamps but not participating. With new rules for categorical eligibility that took effect in 2008, we estimate that there are now about 1000 eligible seniors who are not participating. Although the basic food stamp benefit is \$10 a month for a senior, the actual award in Tompkins County averaged \$55 for a single senior and \$89 for a couple in 2002. Carol and Carolyn have met with officials at Tompkins County DSS to clarify the new rules for categorical eligibility. Joy Blumkin suggested that her office or Ithaca Neighborhood Legal Services could help if people have difficulty qualifying for benefits under the new rules.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Development Committee/Loren Gardner:** \$23,481 has been raised to date, \$4000 of which is for sponsorship of the Wheel-a-thon. We are seeing a good return from our spring mailing "March for Meals", especially those that included a personal note from board members. The average gift is about \$100, but is \$140 for those that had a personal note. Lorraine Johnson offered to give some ideas for what to do with people who have not responded to our mailing.

**Finance/Bob Herdt:** The Financial Statements show that we are doing well. The recently adopted NYS budget includes an increase for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) which will be a great help to Foodnet in 2008-09.

Bob Herdt pointed out key information in the first quarter statistical report. Congregate meals increased but home delivered meals and overall attendance was down a little bit. That's O.K., because we need to be sure we are able to sustain our operation. Participant contributions have increased, which is another good sign. Our cost per meal, including everything, was up 1.9% compared to the first quarter of last year.

The draft audited financial statements for the year ended 12/31/07 were received today. It is a clean report. Financially we are in good shape, and we hope to fully cover depreciation costs this year.

**Buildings and Property:** No report.

**P.E.P. Committee/Chris Decker:** The next meeting will be April 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Executive Committee Report/Mary Opperman:** Challenge Industries has suggested a couple of potential collaborations:

- Lakeview Mental Health Services approached Challenge to operate the food service for 38 residents in a new residence being built on Third Street as a vocational training program, but the budget wasn't sufficient. Foodnet staff and the executive committee reviewed the needs, and determined we are not in a position to provide the comprehensive food service needed 7 days a week.
- Challenge Industries may start producing pesto using products from their greenhouse operation, and would need to use a kitchen a couple of days a week. We are open to the potential to lease our kitchen on the weekends for such a compatible use.

Steve Griffin was directed to communicate these decisions to Challenge Industries.

**Staff Report/Carolyn Arnold:** The grant-funded position of Nutrition Outreach worker is having a positive impact on our clients and the quality of our annual reassessments. I continue to conduct home visits and initial assessments with all new clients who are not case-managed by Long Term Care, and to make phone calls for the required 6-month contacts. Carol Ackley is visiting clients to do the annual reassessments and to assist with Food Stamp Applications. I still do a few of the annual reassessments by phone, and have made five referrals to Carol for Food Stamp application assistance.

Carol completes her three-month probationary period next week, and I am recommending permanent status (dependent on funding).

Tomorrow I am giving a 2 hour presentation on nutrition and aging to 18 to 20 home health aides at the Family and Children's Services. I will include how Foodnet works, how participant contributions are requested, and how home health aides can make referrals.

**Old/Unfinished Business:** none.

**New Business:** none.

Following a motion by Bill Tomek and a second by Elizabeth Schneider, the meeting was adjourned at 7:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Griffin, Secretary Pro-tem