

**Mohawk Valley Library System
Coordinated Outreach Council Meeting Minutes**

September 14, 2023

In attendance:

SAFE, Inc. (Schenectady)

Marcus Stanford, Street Outreach Coordinator

Schenectady Takes Action for Reading Success (STARS)

Kaela Wallman, Youth Services Department Head, Schenectady County Public Library

The Community Library (Cobleskill)

Kim Zimmer, Director

FMS Workforce Development (Fulton, Montgomery, and Schoharie Counties)

Mary Hill, Program Coordinator

Heather Pettit, Administrative Assistant

John Goldswor, Disability Resource Coordinator

Nancy Reccio, Business Services Representative

Betsy Hastings, Senior Resource Room Coordinator

Maria Young, Senior Workforce Advisor

Herkimer Fulton Montgomery (HFM) BOCES

Laurie Bargstedt, Adult & Corrections Education Coordinator

Mohawk Valley Library Association (MVLS)

Eric Trahan, Director

Beth Rienti, Public Services Consultant

Non Attending Members:

Andrea Fetting, Fulton County Office for Aging & Youth

Sarah Beekman, Schoharie County WIC

Mary Carrier, Mohawk Valley Library System

Meeting Minutes

Beth Rienti shared background information about MVLS, the services it provides to member libraries, and NYS requirements for library systems regarding outreach services. Beth also introduced **Eric Trahan**, MVLS Director.

Members took turns introducing themselves and sharing specifics about their organizations' missions and services.

Marcus Stanford shared that SAFE, Inc is a temporary respite for at-risk youth. They primarily serve ages 12-21 years. Youth under 16 years may stay for 72 hours; older youth (16-20) may stay up to 30 days. SAFE has a 12 bed facility. They assist clients up to age 35 with job training, housing, and life skills.

Mary Hill reported on the FMS Workforce Development Board which has three sites in Gloversville, Amsterdam, and Cobleskill. The organization focuses on job tutoring, job prep, work experience programs, resume writing, and job applications. Several other members of FMS Workforce Solutions were on the call, including Heather Pettit, an Executive Assistant.

Kaela Wallman shared about STARS, which focuses on getting books into the hands of at-risk youth from birth to eight years of age in the City of Schenectady. She partners with city social services organizations to distribute the books. Adults from group homes for differently abled individuals help with readying the materials for distribution. Kaela spoke about the importance of "in-reach" for libraries, which is the idea of actively drawing new people into libraries.

John Goldswor of FMS Workforce Solutions shared about his role in helping differently abled individuals find jobs and overcome barriers to employment. John also works with businesses on issues of accessibility.

Kim Zimmer told the group about Tabling Tuesdays, an ongoing program at The Community Library in Cobleskill which serves to educate staff and users about local social services resources, and connect persons in need with organizations that can help. Kim also shared about the growing population of unhoused persons in Schoharie County, and the challenges that libraries are facing in this area.

Nancy Reccio is a Business Service Representative at FMS Workforce Solutions. She helps employers with customized recruitment, attends job fairs, and offers employer incentives for providing ongoing training to staff. Nancy also works with the summer youth program.

Besty Hastings is the Resource Room Coordinator at FMS Workforce Solutions. She assists clients with job searches, online learning, cover letters, and computer skills.

Laurie Bargstedt coordinates adult and corrections education for the HFM BOCES. She oversees two Literacy Zones- Amsterdam and Gloversville. The Amsterdam Zone provides ESL

services. Both Zones provide GED preparation. Corrections education includes GED prep, workforce prep, and transition training.

Maria Young, also of FMS Workforce Solutions, helps clients with finding transportation, daycare providers, and covering costs of uniforms and tuition.

Discussion:

FMS Workforce Solutions suggests interested members could find additional services at the NYS Department of Labor and NYS Department of Social Services websites.

Kim and Marcus shared concerns regarding the need for services to unhoused persons in Schenectady and Cobleskill.

Beth shared some of the things MVLS is already working on: early literacy programs, partnerships with WIC and Headstarts in each county, sharing books with organizations for youth (birth - YA materials are available upon request). MVLS employee Mary Carrier provides adult literacy training and can also assist with training on Affordable Connectivity. MVLS also has information on job training, finance, and avoiding consumer scams for anyone who is interested.

Kim has been working to get a social worker into The Community Library, and noted the growing trend of combining outreach and social services.

Kaela asked about NYS requirements for using funding, and if efforts need to be targeted to any particular population. Eric shared that the state has changed the way funding is categorized and MVLS is talking about what that means and how it affects current and future projects.

Marcus asked about sharing flyers. MVLS is happy to take flyers from any organization and share them with appropriate member libraries.

Next meeting: March 13, 2024 at 2pm