

- ◆ **Summary: Poverty in Metro Milwaukee**

Andrew Wehrheim welcomed attendees and informed everyone about the evening's agenda. He then introduced the first speaker, **Mr. Ralph Zick, Executive Director of the Hope Center in Waukesha.**

Mr. Zick's Presentation

- ◆ The Hope Center's #1 goal is to try to **prevent homelessness**. Recent records indicate that there are 3,500 homeless people in Waukesha even though Waukesha County is one of the richest counties in Wisconsin.
- ◆ Hope Center is a **daytime shelter** offering food, clothing, an outreach nurse, furniture, financial assistance, and legal services to guests. Volunteers also maintain a vegetable garden as well as a children's library.
- ◆ Guests include the homeless, those living in shelters, families on limited income and seniors on fixed income.
- ◆ The Center is operated by 14 employees (4 of which are full-time) and 1,400 volunteers.
- ◆ There were **40,000 meals** served in 2014. Many groups help serve, including St. Vincent DePaul and the Salvation Army. Breakfast and lunch is served daily, and dinner on Mon., Wed., and Friday.
- ◆ Financial assistance is given to people facing eviction or in financial crisis. Assistance is in the form of gift cards, bus passes, medical cards, or payments made directly to landlords, etc. No cash is given out.
- ◆ Future goal: Mr. Zick is working closely with United Way to establish a greatly needed **winter nighttime shelter for guests**.
- ◆ For further information and volunteering opportunities:
[Hope CenterWi.org](http://HopeCenterWi.org) or (262) 549-8726

Kathy Clarey then introduced **Trace Matabele, Educator at Hunger Task Force.**

Ms. Matabele's Presentation

- ◆ Hunger Task Force is the largest food bank in Wisconsin. It is a local, non-profit organization that is totally free to the community.
- ◆ Since 1974 its motto has been **“Prevent hunger today-end hunger tomorrow.”**
- ◆ In addition to distributing food, Hunger T.F operates a farm and a fish hatchery both located on the House of Corrections land in Franklin, WI.
- ◆ Various youth groups come to the farm and learn about proper nutrition and how to plant, harvest, and cook food.
- ◆ 171 sites will serve summer meals in 2015. In 2014, **828,682** summer meals were served. This is a sizeable increase from **382,000** meals in 2004.
- ◆ **Food Share Program** – 1 out of 3 in Milwaukee County are enrolled in the program: 40% children, 38% adults, 22% disabled.
- ◆ **36,000** people go to Hunger Task Force food pantries per month.
- ◆ Many recurring **911** calls from the zip code 53206 area are often related to food/hunger issues.
- ◆ 27% of calls to **211** are for hunger related issues.
- ◆ The Wisconsin legislature continually discusses plans to make changes to food programs which would cause additional stress on food pantries.
- ◆ Visit HungerTaskForce.org to obtain information, volunteer, or sign a petition entitled Voices Against Hunger to advocate for the hungry.

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Pat McKay introduced **Julie Kerksick, Senior Policy Advocate at Community Advocates Public Policy Institute.**

- ◆ The Public Policy Institute works at both the state and national level to provide citizens with “**pathways out of poverty.**”
- ◆ It is the responsibility of society to offer everyone the chance to **work** and take care of himself/herself.
- ◆ There are many people in the community who are working full-time and are still poor. We need to give people access to what they need to survive.
- ◆ The Institute’s goal: **To cut poverty in half**
- ◆ Three types of poverty:
 - a. The unemployed
 - b. The working poor
 - c. Those not in the labor market (senior citizens or those on disability)
- ◆ Solution: A policy package that focuses on **work**
 - a. Create a transitional jobs program
 - b. Increase in the minimum wage
 - c. Reform the Earned Income Tax Credit and eliminate the marriage penalty
 - d. Strengthen child care funding
 - e. Enact a secure retirement and disability income tax credit
- ◆ **Reducing poverty** will result in:
 - a. Lower welfare costs
 - b. Additional benefits: less crime, improved health, better education
- ◆ The cost for reducing poverty in the U.S. represents only a small share of the annual U.S. budget.

- ◆ Transform Milwaukee: A public-private initiative that focuses on creating **jobs** in the Milwaukee area
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- ◆ Currently \$11 million is being spent to create **jobs** in the Milwaukee, Beloit, Racine and some rural area
- ◆ Graphics in the Institute's brochure depicted the progress that some states are making in implementing the goals of the Institute.
- ◆ The challenge is to continue to advocate for changes on the federal level.
- ◆ Community Advocates Public Policy Institute can be reached at:
<http://communityadvocates.net/ppi/> or (414) 270-2974 Julie Kerksick