

## Power of Together 2

### Meeting Minutes – February 19, 2019

The first meeting of 2019 was held at the Mystic YMCA beginning at 7:15. It was a great turnout with approximately 70 members and friends in attendance, as well as a reporter from The Day, Lee Howard.

Dave Schulz opened the meeting with a thank you to the Mystic YMCA for agreeing to host our meetings and for generously waiving the fee for using the Community Room. He also acknowledged the generosity of the VFW for hosting us for the last 3 years. As they have a conflicting program on Tuesday nights we are no longer able to meet there. They, in turn, were very grateful for the \$181 we collected for them at our November social.

After tonight, P.o.T.'s contributions will exceed \$100,000. Three new members were then recognized, as well as the fourth chapter of Power of Together whose first meeting is Feb. 26, at Filomena's in Waterford.

Mike Buscetto from Cactus Jack then spoke about how they can assist us when we are considering a cause that is not a 501(c)3. They are a non-profit which will manage the distribution of the donation. He spoke of how small communities often know of a family or person in need and how Cactus Jack can quickly move to help them. They would love to partner with us in the future. Mike is also a member of the Niantic Power of Together, as well as a founding member of the new chapter in Waterford, which opens with 75 members!

Lastly, we're planning on having a small focus group in May with a few volunteers to discuss how we are doing and to share ideas and suggestions to improve the way the group functions. If you are interested in participating, please email Gae Melford: [gaemelford@gmail.com](mailto:gaemelford@gmail.com).

### Prior Recipient Report

After thanking Lori Calobrisi for pitching Safe Futures to us, Dave introduced Melissa Zaitchik, their Development Coordinator. She described the significant growth they have experienced, beginning 42 years ago as a hotline to what is now a 15-bed shelter that is open 24/7 and provides immediate shelter, transitional housing, court advocates, counseling, and case managers with offices both in Norwich and New London. In 2018, they served 2,000 victims of domestic violence or sexual assault. Our funds will be used as an "urgency fund," that is, for needs that may arise at any time to aid an individual or family in crisis: housing, transport, food, clothing, hotel rooms, counseling. \$1000 pays for one person for one week in their shelter. They are extremely grateful for our contribution.

### The 3 Chosen Presenters Were:

1. Fran Hoffman, representing the Mystic Geriatric Institute, a local non-profit that seeks to improve healthcare for those 65 and over, the fastest growing population in our area. They are focused on creating a model of community-based wellness, one that engages the medical and service community to provide high standards of elder well-being. They are new and growing with great ideas and need to hire grant writers to further their important program. To learn more about their organization, please go to <http://mysticgeriatricsinstitute.com/>
2. Barbara Sahagan, representing the Women and Girls Fund, part of the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, which gives grants to non-profits to help empower women and girls. Their programs range from helping women provide economic security for their families and prevent domestic violence, to empowering youth to obtain better educations and careers. To learn more about them go to: <https://www.cfect.org/Donors/Give-to-an-Existing-Fund/Give-Now/Women-Girls-Funds>

3. Cindy Palmer, representing New Life Ministry of Southeastern CT, based in New London. No longer a ministry, but with the same goal they had when they began 20 years ago: to aid women who have been released from York Correctional Institution and need a place to live as they reenter society. They have two apartments, accommodating four women, who typically stay approximately six months. There is no staff, just a dedicated corp of volunteers who help them adjust to their new life. They have helped more than 200 women, 80% of whom have successfully transitioned. These funds would be invaluable in providing the monies for their rents. To learn more, go to <http://www.newlifeministryct.org/main.html>.

### **Selected Organization**

New Life Ministry received the most votes and is the recipient of our 1st quarter 2019 funds. Please make every effort to either mail your check or use Givinga within the next few days so we can make our donation within the next two weeks. Thank you!