

Focus Group
January 9, 2007 - 10am

- Greg opened with prayer.

What do we want to be once we're up on the hill and in our new church home.

Greg described his idea of the new vision...Jesus sitting on a hill, overlooking the town of Cochrane.

Described new paid staff position. Originally a part time youth/children ministry position.

Then two things happened...

- the bishop challenged them to think about how to serve the wider community.
- Then spoke to a consultant...think about your signature ministry. How will you serve the community.

The new paid position evolved into a fulltime position that will encompass a community outreach ministry.

Jack and Wendy have gone through various meetings to explore what is offered in our town and what's lacking. Jack outlined our community's many needs.

Latchkey kids.

- New people migrating to Cochrane.
- No transit.
- Stressed out single moms - no support structure.
- Seniors in isolation - no way of getting around and contact.

We want to address people's needs, both felt and spiritual.

What do you perceive to be the needs of the families in the wider community and what can we do to address that.

- We'll have more room to carry out programs.
- Are we prepared to let 'everyone' in??
- More affordable housing, new seniors centre, senior housing, etc...
- Influx of Mexicans/Philippinos in town...where are they working/living?
- How can we connect them into the community? ESL?
- Culture of Canada or Cochrane - help them learn, have friends, etc...
- Transportation is the biggest need in the community.
- The handi-bus is looking for more drivers or that service is in jeopardy.
- After school youth programs - quiet, friendship groups, adolescent youth.
- Senior transportation - to doctor's appts, shopping, etc...

- FCSS will help with almost everything if they can get help.
- More childcare is needed.
- Both parents need to be working to afford housing and living in Cochrane, then they're both tired, focused on jobs, no time for the kids, etc...high stress.
- The necessities for all communities are lacking here. Breakfast for kids, childcare, etc...
- Vacation bible school, Christmas camps, etc...
- Life skills teaching needs to happen more in the schools for the kids - budgeting, parenting, conflict resolution, etc...
- Parent courses offered along the same lines
- How do you break down stress???
- What is it all for? The fundamental question that needs to be answered.
- If you offer courses, who has the time or energy to attend?
- More social connections within our own church family. Couples nights, how do you meet more people in the church family, men's club, etc...
- We need to stay within our abilities and capacity.
- Constructive living is one of the best courses that you could take as far as learning life skills.
- Partner with the schools and have activities going on every evening.
- Uses for the rectory need to be discussed.
- Music nights, drama evenings, etc...
- Finding leadership is the key for all of these areas.
- The rectory could be our 'off site' location...for those that don't feel comfortable going into the church right off the bat.
- Start small and do well.
- Why do people take on the jobs/duties? Guilt? Responsible? Is this what they are wired for? Is it life giving for them and the people they're involved with? Keep asking the questions.
- Example of the small beginnings is the Thursday night choir night. Hardly anyone showed at the beginning and now there's about 25 meeting weekly.
- Bingo or bowling nights.
- Family potluck suppers.
- Some of the things that have fallen by the wayside will hopefully come back bigger and stronger.
- Food bank.
- Support and training for assistance group...single parents, isolated seniors, etc...
- Mentoring program after school with seniors and youths.
- Intergenerational communities can work.
- Lunch/breakfast program looked after by youth groups.

- Have to really watch that we aren't duplicating what already's being done within the community.
- Plot the families on a map to see where all the families fit and where they are.
- Micro scale: adopt families. Macro scale: Look after cancer patients, mainly cared for by cancer survivors.
- Rectory: Cochrane health and wellness centre – for all of the churches in Cochrane. And open to all members of the community.
- Need to partner with other groups that have similar values.
- Bethany is a signature ministry that we already have.

Needs in Cochrane

Neighbours with small children-lack of grandparents and extended family who would normally pitch in and help

A shortage of daycare spaces-(that's putting charitably)

Older people who need support to stay at home

Also tremendous strain on the middle aged who are also trying to raise their teenagers
As well as caring for aging parents

An example of a woman who was ill who needed to care for her family

Time and not money-people need help looking after kids, transportation etc.

Although you have to be able to afford the time

A new person would develop say a moms and tots and programming

Space is important

After school care

Mexican immigrants

Childcare out of the surplus space

The rectory could be a community centre

The other group that is out there-upwardly mobile young men who are lost other than their work-life. There is a need for them to have balance in their life.

How to help? Some of these folks are looking for help to provide answers-the way in through family life.

Less of a problem-but a need is to have venues around the arts.

Can a person can come in and work on projects that can be sustained-or short term

We need to know our limitations

Someone that we hire can also help to coordinate

FCSS is the envy of the rest of province because of its funding 20-80 funding model. We happen to be blessed with a particularly thriving FCSS. It would be great if we could be more effective in working together

Peace and quiet from stress from work and demands on their time from work and family

People who are terminally ill often need home care supplemented by neighbours-this is true in the county. Often though people do not need their neighbours.

A parish skill set would be helpful-skills and available time. If there was a project that needed help in a week who is available when.

Parish inventory

Youth can serve

A church can use its snow angel to help out the rest of the week

Relationships between husbands and wives-this is a big one

Couples do not have time to do things together

What they are doing together is working

Even if mothers are at home it is a point of stress to be at home-more stressful if you don't have family support-which a lot of people don't

Part of being rushed is nutritional skills a lot don't know anything about nutrition-the idea of a community kitchen keeps coming up

And then they have meals for a week or a month and then also learn things about nutrition-many don't know how to look after themselves

A little further west there is a population with very high rates of obesity and diabetes

We had talked regularly about a soup kitchen. May we could do something once a month etc

The many congregations could do something once a month

Snow clearing and lawn mowing-

A lot older people who want to stay in their own homes cannot financially do it

Advocacy

Family help with children, difficult children or handicapped children-parents need help with this. There is a parent link centre through FCSS

FCSS has credit courses on manage debt etc.

Affordable housing-it is just 10% below market

Drug use among kids-is very high

Things for kids for to do in the evening

Parking shiny league

Indoor skateboard park

People lined up to gamble on Sunday am

The VLT's are never quiet

A lot of husbands are gambling online-poker quite prevalent among 30-40 year old men. I know some men who do it all night.

Computer and TV you see a lot of violence. The whole thing about family life because everyone is on computer and TV-the isolation of it rather than the content-this is a very important issue

Suddenly we see nothing of the natural violence and sex in the world-it happens through violence and pornography

People have actually worked less-they have stress from the time they spend in with technology

The issue of volunteerism-ism is imp-that is the benefit of being a volunteer-the activity if volunteering is a healing activity. One of the things they can do is show them other things to do.

The churches can be a source of community surveys