

Family and Friends (Support) Group (Formerly Siblings Group)

The meeting was called to order by Jody Zacharias at 10:30 on Saturday, October 6, 2007. There were in excess of 30 people attending.

As is customary, those present introduced themselves not only by name, but by their relationship to the resident of Beverly Farm.

The Board had joined the meeting and was dismissed to return to their meeting after it was determined there were no questions for them.

The first item on the agenda was the name of the group. Jody explained a little about the history of the group, her reason for forming it, and noted that it was 8 years old now. She noted that it had outgrown the name "Sibling (Support) Group", because many others attended regularly. It had also outgrown its original mission of giving siblings of residents a way to explore growing up in a family with a developmentally delayed sibling, as well as explore what it meant to be the next generation to be taking care of their sibling as parents aged or deceased.

Jody noted and honored Kenneth Moore who was considering retiring from his volunteer work here. Mr. Moore and his children were some of the original group members, supporting their now-deceased son and brother. Ken tearfully accepted the groups' long applause.

After discussion, the group decided that The Family and Friends' (Support) Group was an appropriate name. There was discussion of calling it the FFBF or BFFF, but people felt that the initials took away the sound of the meaning of the group to them.

It was noted that this group was the only group where people were asked for their ideas and opinions, and those ideas and opinions filtered into the power structure of the organization.

This brought up the subject of the mission of this group. Jody introduced Steve Schmidt (his resident sister is Liz) who has been sitting in on board meetings for 2 years now. He is very enthusiastic about building community through participation, and believes that this can be done through emphasizing participation in fund raising for the farm, as this is one of the greatest needs.

This started a long discussion on the appropriateness of phone solicitation for funds, and people's concern with that. There were, as usual, many constructive suggestions for funds.

At this point, Karen Hamp made a short presentation on communication between family and management, in order that information could be spread in both directions when there was a need. There are many families that live close by and could help out in an emergency if they knew what was needed. Unfortunately, most of those families do not

attend this group. One tool that was mentioned by Karen was a focused email list which was private and spam free and could include anyone who wanted to belong, in either management or families. There are privacy issues, but it is thought that with the privacy of the group, this could easily be resolved.

The communication, mission, and money issues were discussed concurrently as people felt the need. One conclusion was that fund raising could be part of this group -- if people were interested -- without destroying the "human factor" in the group. Another was that, at least for now, fund raising would be kept separate from the meetings of the Family and Friends group.

Other ideas that were discussed were 1) a raffle (one of the cottage groups has used that for many years to raise money for the employee bonuses). 2) Obtaining a list of siblings from Maureen which could be added to our list for contacting people. 3) The idea of possible new resident families being able to contact families already involved being done.

A final discussion was held on "the next generation". Many of the siblings are getting to the age where it is becoming more difficult to take responsibility for their sibling. The discussion was on how to involve their children and grandchildren without inundating them with requests for money. A separate mailing list was discussed.

Probably the least clear conclusion of the meeting was on the mission of this group. However, it has continued to evolve over these 8 years, and will likely continue meeting the needs of Beverly Farm Family and Friends.

The meeting was adjourned.
Acting Secretary,
Karen Hamp