

Open Access Connections Annual Report 2014

Mission

Open Access Connections facilitates communication services to encourage self-determination and stronger community connections for people in need. We are the leader in finding innovative ways to use communications technologies to provide opportunities for people in need to forge new connections to the community and to one another. These connections enhance dignity and independence and contribute to success.

Summary of Programs and Achievements

Open Access Connections primary service is our **Community Voice Mail** program. This service provides homeless and low-income Minnesotans lacking reliable phone access a consistent phone number to receive messages. Homeless and low-income Minnesotans are able to submit job applications, complete housing applications, and achieve other self-sufficiency goals. In 2014 we partnered with 310 nonprofit and local government programs to distribute 2,867 Community Voice Mail numbers to people in need across the state of Minnesota. 92% of our voice mail users were unemployed 68% were homeless. 63% of our voice mail users looking for work were able to find a job and 64% of our voice mail users looking for housing were able to find a home. 25% of our voice mail users were low-income families. 14% of our voice mail users are disabled and 8% are veterans.

In addition to our Community Voice Mail program, we provided the following programs and services:

Grassroots Outreach: We trained 6 Grassroots Outreach workers, all of whom with a history of homelessness and long term unemployment, to distribute our free voice mail services at Twin Cities nonprofit locations. This program distribute 284 voice mail numbers, strengthened relationships with our partner agencies, and provided relevant job experiences for our outreach workers

Generation 50+ Group: The Generation 50+ Group provides a forum for older people with history of homelessness to discuss issues affecting their community, and work towards building solutions. We held 18 Generation 50+ meetings with an average attendance of 32 members. Generation 50+ members worked on issues of healthy eating, voting, and housing.

Non-partisan Voter Engagement: Open Access Connections participated in a non-partisan voter engagement coalition led by Minnesota Voice. By mobilizing members of our Grassroots Outreach team and Generation 50+ Group, we were able to register 534 homeless and low-income people to vote for the 2014 Election. We also recruited 15 people to complete 118 door knocking and phone banking GOTV shifts before the Election.

2014 Open Access Connections Board of Directors & Staff

| NAME | AFFILIATION |
|-------------------------|---|
| Debra Bean | Hennepin County Human Services & Public Health Department |
| Kimberly Carpenter | Securian Corporation |
| Simon Carvalho | Current Open Access participant |
| Charles Crowley | Metro Work Center, Inc. |
| Anthony Elliott | Past Open Access Participant |
| Doug Fountain | Current Open Access participant |
| Monstuer Herring | Current Open Access participant |
| Tim Gothmann | Jewish Family Services of St. Paul |
| Erick Johnson | United Health Group |
| Gloria Johnson | Current Open Access participant |
| Ruth Johnson | Council on Crime and Justice |
| Cheryl Speeter Margoles | Speeter and Johnson Law Firm |
| Kissy Mason | Emerge Community Development |
| Mike Menner | St. Stephen's Human Services |
| Manuel Moore | Current Open Access participant |
| Wayne Oliver | Current Open Access participant |
| Marcellus Rose | Current Open Access participant |
| Rohit Tandon | Mayo Clinic |
| Rose Ann Urman | Current Open Access participant |
| Ann White | Hennepin County – Work Supports |
| Tom Wolfe | Community Member |

Officers:

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Chair | Mike Menner |
| Vice Chair | Cheryl Speeter Margoles |
| Treasurer | Charles Crowley |
| Secretary | Tim Gothmann |
| Executive Committee | Ruth Johnson |
| Executive Committee | Debra Bean |
| Executive Committee | Manuel Moore |

Board Demographic

38% of Board members are women

48% are people of color

43% are current or former Open Access participants and are low income

Key Staff: Mark Erpelding, Executive Director; Steve Fleming Outreach Organizer, Harriette Darrough, Training Specialist; Terri Uravich, System Administrator; Marielle Verano, Projects Specialist.



Free communication tools for people in need

Financial Overview

Major Program Expenses

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Voice Mail | \$114,782 |
| Grassroots Outreach | \$34,434 |
| Generation 50+ Group | \$22,957 |
| <u>Non-partisan Voter Engagement</u> | <u>\$19,131</u> |
| Total 2015 Expenses | \$191,304 |

Expense Allocation: 90% Programming, 7% Management, 3% Fundraising