

National Alliance to End Homelessness  
2007 Annual Conference  
July 9—11, Washington, D.C.

Tuesday, July 10  
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Workshop 3.4  
Obtaining and Leveraging Rural Resources

MORE PEANUT BUTTER ON THE SAME SLICE

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Introduction:

I am here from Juneau, the Capital of Alaska, and its third largest city. Very few Alaskans would consider Juneau a rural community. For us, when you say “rural” it connotes isolated, subsistence-based traditional village of less than 500. And we have hundreds of such communities scattered over an area three times the size of Texas.

Yet, I suspect Juneau is very much like the rural communities you represent. Our capital city has a population of only about 30,000; stable for at least the last 10 years. Yet, for three summer months we play host to about 700,000 cruise ship passengers and other tourists. Our economy depends on government, tourism and natural resource extraction—fishing, timber, mining.

Like all southeast Alaska communities (and in a sense most Alaska villages) we are an island surrounded by hundreds of miles of wilderness and water. We have no road connection and no railroad. From the lower 48 (“Outside”) you can drive fifteen hundred miles up the Alcan, put your car on a “fast” ferry in Skagway and be in Juneau in about three or four more hours.

In addition to being a self-contained island community, Juneau is also a regional hub for the many villages located on a few of the hundreds of islands dotting the Inside Passage. We don’t have counties in Alaska, but if we did you could think of Juneau as a county seat. This is where most service providers are headquartered in our region.

There is a traditional cycle of migration from the villages to Juneau and back in search of jobs, health care and educational opportunity. When villagers come to Juneau or other regional hubs, they most often depend on relatives for temporary housing—“doubling up.” Some arrive with no immediate arrangements for housing. Most of our homeless are permanent Alaska residents. The climate and geography tends to discourage

transients from “down below”. Like many rural areas in the West, a large number of our homeless folks can trace their local roots back several centuries.

## MORE PEANUT BUTTER...

About ten years ago, my good friend Greg Pease, Director of Gastineau Human Services, was leading a discussion of the Continuum of Care Committee—now known as the Juneau Homeless Coalition. In his usual direct and passionate way, he was criticizing the trend of funding agencies to create more and more assistance programs to fund from the same inadequate budget line. **“Hell,” he said, “we’re just spreading the same piddling amount of peanut butter on a bigger and bigger slice!”** For me, it was an excellent description of how fragmentation of resources defeats us in our battle to End Homelessness. (It also works as an analogy for funding lines that do not keep up with need).

For ten years, Greg and twenty other agency Directors have been patiently building the Juneau Homeless Coalition. Its mission is simple—End Homelessness in our community. We will do that by covering that slice of bread with a whole lot more peanut butter from everyone’s cupboard. Bringing those jars of peanut butter to the table is what Obtaining and Leveraging Resources is all about.

The Juneau Homeless Coalition is the foundation of our community’s effort and the tool we use to obtain and leverage maximum resources to end homelessness.

## THE JUNEAU HOMELESS COALITION

### **Research and Planning**

Information is power. JHC agencies gather data from on-the-ground surveys, shelter point-in-time surveys and internal service records to develop the annual “Gaps Analysis.” We assess the changing need for infrastructure and services in our community. From this information, we devise short-term strategies like the composition of cooperative grant applications and long-term strategies like “Inclusionary Zoning” regulations for housing development. JHC agencies utilize the state-wide HMIS data base.

### **Outreach and Education**

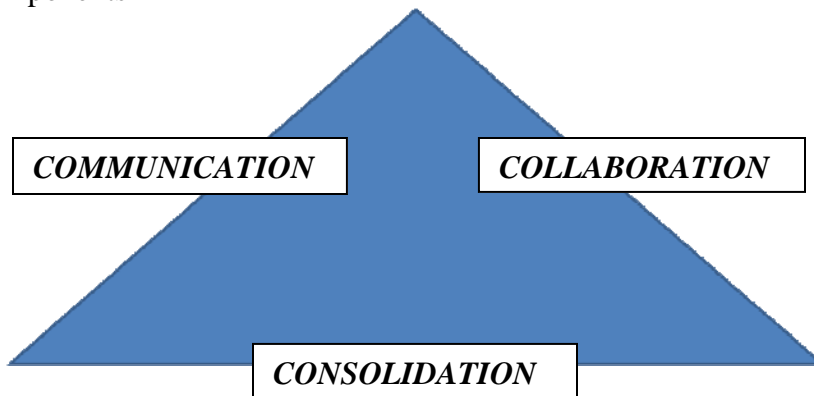
JHC is the venue where we work together on public education about homelessness. Under the leadership of the United Way, we produced “A Roof Over Every Head” calendar with photos and stories of local homeless individuals and the agencies that serve them. We created brochures about street homelessness for downtown merchants. We create and distribute materials at housing fairs and other public events and initiate media stories or sometimes submit rebuttals.

### **Advocacy**

Our coalition of 25+ agencies and individuals is a stronger voice for change than any individual agency could be alone. We advocate at the municipal and state level for effective homeless policies. We weigh-in on specific initiatives like the recently established Alaska Housing Trust, or quietly pursue local government, business and non-profit partnerships. Currently, we are involved in drafting guidelines for developments on city-donated land. We are building a name for ourselves in the State Legislature.

## SUCCESSFUL LEVERAGING—THE TRIANGLE

Experience has taught us that successful leveraging depends on three major components—



### COMMUNICATION:

The Coalition meets monthly as a diverse network of providers working on a common outcome. In some ways rural areas have an advantage—we know each other and we share a relatively small number of clients. Most agencies serve a distinct and limited client group—seniors or mentally ill or DV victims or re-entry offenders. The coalition brings them to the table on a monthly basis to share knowledge and resources to solve homelessness.

When we enter the conference room, we take off our St. Vincent de Paul hat, our Front St. Clinic hat, our Gastineau Human Resources hat and all put on the same JHC hat. Each agency, regardless of size or resources or client base has an equal voice. The street shelter and the domestic violence shelter, the mentally ill, the homeless families with children and yes, even re-entering felons, are all represented equally. Simply stated, we are there to address the whole spectrum of homelessness and not just the “consumer group” we fight for every day.

Communicate—NEED, RESOURCES, OUTCOMES (both desired and actual). **Evaluate, Refine, Revise, Adapt.** Communication makes sure we have a realistic picture in time--that means more likelihood of long-term success. The JHC is the conduit of communication between local agencies and the broader connection to statewide and

national venues—like the Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homelessness, and the National Alliance.

Communication between us helps set a pro-active agenda based on our community's need rather than as individual agencies reacting to the funder's priorities.

Communication is about people, not just need and dollars. It is about relationships between agencies at all levels, not just E.Ds., but also worker to worker serving the shared client. People are the real resources. They may be leaders at the Directors level, frontline workers or community volunteers and supporters. None can make their contribution without open communication.

Communicate outside your circle. To build political will, you need the broadest base of support. In 2006, when the Mayor convened a task force to address affordable workforce housing, the coalition had to fight to justify the relevancy of its place at the table. But, as we stayed engaged and built bridges with unexpected allies (developers, contractors, realtors bankers) we gained new political clout. The process meant some new thinking on our part—a consideration of housing needs for those above 80% MFI. What we accomplished is an elevation of homelessness as an equal component of the overall Affordable Housing crisis in our community. Today, 5 of 9 members of the Juneau Affordable Housing Commission are members of the Juneau Homeless Coalition—my friend Greg, for one!

**BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION**—Not enough time! Thank goodness for email!

**COLLABORATION:**

Successful collaborations depend on a willingness to **SHARE** and **TRUST**. The commitment has to be real.

Housing alone or services alone cannot solve homelessness.

Collaboration means we agree on a common outcome—permanent housing for our clients. Again, it is not about keeping our programs going, it is about seeing the homeless population decline. We must all agree that, “we are working hard to put ourselves out of business.”

About sharing...Just as we do not want to miss any opportunity to bring funding to Juneau Homeless Coalition, we also want to expend every penny we garner. If an agency has an allocation from any grant source that it cannot fully expend by closeout, then it works to see that the funds are transferred to an agency that can. No agency sits on a large unrestricted fund balance while homeless people sleep under the bridge.

**EXAMPLES OF JHC COLLABORATIONS:**

Below are some examples of collaborative grant applications and initiatives by the JHC and its member agencies. Again, I want to stress that collaborations are not just about

money. Using a common commitment to our clients to build trust on a daily basis opens the door to new ideas for collaboration. Stay focused on the client and the outcome.

**1998**—St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) completes Transitional Housing facility utilizing Community Development Block Grant, HUD Continuum of Care and Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) funding of \$1.1 million. SVdP secures HUD Continuum of Care, Supportive Housing Program funds and contracts with Catholic Community Services (CCS) to locate case management and childcare services at the SVdP campus. The grant is extended for a total of five years at \$125,000 per year for CCS services.

**2000**—Juneau Alliance for Mental Health, Inc. (JAMHI) and SVdP secure one year AHFC Homeless Assistance Program funding for Placement and Prevention services. JAMHI administers the grant and provides accounting services. SVdP processes intakes and distributes funds to landlords and utility companies.

**2003**—SVdP, JAMHI, Gastineau Human Services, Juneau Youth Services, The Glory Hole Shelter and the AWARE shelter form a Board of Directors for a non-profit General Partner to develop Channel View apartments, a SVdP Low-Income Housing Tax Credit project, twenty-two units, \$3 million. SVdP secures Shelter Plus Care five-year grant to help JHC agencies house their disabled homeless at Channel View and throughout the community.

**2006/2007**—Juneau Homeless Coalition utilizes Homeless Assistance Program from AHFC and HUD Supportive Housing Program funding for Placement and Prevention, Childcare, Medical aid for homeless. Two year total, \$250,000. SVdP is grant recipient.

**2007**—Juneau Homeless Coalition clients meeting “Chronically Homeless” definition are assisted by HUD two-year operating grant for Paul’s Place SROs. AHFC HOME funds provide renovations and upgrades. \$52,000 HUD, \$455,000 AHFC. SVdP is recipient.

**2008**—SFY 08 Homeless Assistance Program funding from AHFC plus Community Development Block Grant helps four shelter agencies make critical facility upgrades and provide essential supportive services for All JHC homeless. These include Placement and Prevention, intervention, medical aid and childcare for working homeless families. Grant funds are \$569,306, agencies’ match is \$618,816 for a total of \$1,188,122. Another \$25,000 will likely come from the Alaska Mental Health Trust through the United Way. Gastineau Human Services is grant recipient and responsible for accounting and grant administration.

Barriers to Collaboration—Distrust, Me first mentality. Complexity.

CONSOLIDATE:

This is scary to small non-profits! Relax, it is not about consolidating organizations--we need small specialized agencies that focus on special needs—We want to consolidate Functions!

Some of the obvious areas small agencies can consolidate--

Grant Writing and Management

Accounting

Auditing

Service Intake forms and procedures

Information management—data bases

Location.

Reception

I challenge the notion that every small non-profit needs to adopt a strategy of “capacity building”. Rather, focus on delivering services to clients and consolidate your administrative burden with other non-profits with similar missions.

We small non-profits have to ask ourselves—“What is my job? And who are my customers?” Where do we put limited resources? Do we improve service delivery to our clients or expand administrative capacity to meet the compliance requirements of our funders? Both, of course!

Consolidation of administrative functions can free your small staff to concentrate on what your agency does best. This is not a new or revolutionary concept—in many parts of the country the United Way does some level of this now.

Our current vision is a Southeast Alaska Non-Profit Center. This will bring many agencies, including the Juneau Homeless Coalition, under a single roof. The physical co-location will be supported by consolidated “back office” administrative services—accounting, grant preparation, data management etc. The front office—reception, information, referral will be jointly funded as well.



Southeast Alaska Non-Profit Center

Barriers to consolidation—CONTROL ISSUES. Need to integrate diverse corporate cultures.

CONCLUSION:

Getting more peanut butter for our slice of bread is not just about money. Like most successful social justice campaigns, it is about UNITY vs. FRAGMENTATION. It is

about people networking and building relationships of trust. Establishing a serious coalition dedicated to ending homelessness is a good way to begin.

## COMMUNICATE

Communicate Needs, Resources and Outcomes. Follow through, Evaluate, Revise, Adapt. Look for Outcomes that meet the need, not the “Programmatic Opportunity.”

## COLLABORATE

Share, Trust. Neither housing alone nor supportive services alone will end homelessness. In rural areas, few agencies can do it all.

## CONSOLIDATE

Administrative functions. Look for ways to share administrative costs with other agencies of similar missions. Free your people!

Two Quotes to Remember:

“Never, never, never, never give up!”

--Winston Churchill

“A pothole in the road does not require a workshop. Fill it!”

--Nthenya Mule