**Community Board 17**

**Social Services Committee Virtual Meeting**

**Wednesday, May 4, 2022**

**Present: Guests: Excused:**

Jorge Tait CK Price Janice Reid

Muline Mickle Rev. Jennifer Bailey

Monica McKain-Brown

Sabine Jacques

Teres Rodney

Antoinette Smart

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The **Social Services Committee** Virtual meeting was held on **Wednesday, May 4, 2022 at 7:30pm.**

**Mr. Jorge Tait** called the May 4, 2022 Social Services meeting to order at 7:40pm. He will be chairing the meeting in Ms. Reid’s absence.

**Roll Call-**Jorge Tait, Monica McKain-Brown, Muline Mickle, Sabine Jacques, CK Price, Teres Rodney, Antoinette Smart, Rev. Jennifer Bailey

**Rev. Jennifer Bailey** said she is the Director of Pastoral Care for Kings County Hospital. She took on the roll in July 2021 and they have hit the ground running in terms of how they offer spiritual care to the patients, their families and the staff and what they see in the future of spiritual care going forward into the communities. She will talk to them about what they do and would like to do.

The Aftercare and Community Outreach Programs that they are trying to develop from the Pastoral Care Dept. They come from a multitude of different faith backgrounds, but what is really important to them is the emphasis on providing spiritual support to those in their care regardless of faith traditions and doing that, they are able to meet the needs of their patients, families and staff right where they are in that moment. While they do occasionally have wonderful celebratory things that happen, such as the birth of a baby. When patients get discharged, those are wonderful things and they celebrate that. A lot of times, they are often called to the bedside in crisis, so it is very important that they try and bring an attentive, caring and warm presence.

They come from a variety of different backgrounds, non-profits, healthcare, working in their own spiritual communities. Many of them either have their Master’s in Divinity or working towards their Master’s in Divinity, Pastoral Care or Pastoral Mental Health Counseling. They all have unique skills that they bring into this work and it is a really wonderful team and they couldn’t ask for a better group of Chaplains. The Chaplains are all divided up into rounds and they each take different areas of the hospital. This is a 627-bed hospital, level one trauma center, so they do get a lot of crisis in the ED and critical care units. They do rounds in the in-patient units, the ICUs and the medical surgical floors as well as the step-down units. Most recently, they started rounds on the out-patient units, which were not getting the same level of attention because they did not have the staff before. Now, they go into ambulatory care, cancer care, chemical dependency, behavioral health units, which there are 7 in-patient units alone, as well as several out-patient units. They go into the Opioid treatment center. They have a much more expanded presence to meet with patients who are only there on a short term or out-patient basis and they are there to support their families and the staff in those areas as well.

In light of current events with COVID-19, their healthcare staff took the brunt of that and had a really hard time and they really tried to lift up their staff. They do this by-way of groups and they just started a new **(INAUDIBLE)** group where they go to the units and do individual check-ins with the staff. If they don’t want to talk on the unit, they will make appointments to meet with them individually and they do follow up with them. They also do worship services and different kinds of sacred ceremonies with them. The worship services take place in their interfaith chapels and they just restarted the Catholic services for the patients, their families and staff in the critical care units through closed circuit TV. They are looking forward to expanding that services to different denominations as well as interfaith services for people to come and be part of that.

They do secret ceremonies such as baby blessings, baptismals, and funerals at the bedsides. The most important thing is they provide an attentive and listening presence. If requested, they will offer spiritual literature or prayer and they do try to meet specific spiritual needs. They do have a volunteer Rabbi to come in for the Jewish patients.

They want to work in partnership with the different communities around the hospital to expand spiritual care. First and foremost, they are looking to build community partnerships by meeting with local Community Boards and meet and engage with other community organizations to find out what their spiritual health needs are, their concerns and what matters most to them. They are looking to attend and participate in community events to introduce the residents to their services. They will be putting together a list of faith-based organizations and houses of worship. They do not want to replace anyone’s spiritual community, but be there as support in additional to whatever may be in place. They are looking to connect with local businesses and host community events at Kings County,

The aftercare program they are proposing has three steps involved, referrals, initial care and then support. There will be two kinds of referral processes, one for the patients who are discharged and get well, that is what they are hoping for. They will be coordinating weekly with the critical care units, ambulatory and women’s health. They are looking to identify those patients, through their discharge plans would be open to their department following up with them and the optimal plan is to have that as a part of their discharge plans and that someone from their department would be contacting them. The Chaplains will be rotated to reach out to each of those people, 10 days to 2 weeks post discharge. The staff will introduce themselves, explain their roles and the support that might be available. If they are recovering at home and cannot get out to their spiritual community, they would advocate on their behalf and link them with their spiritual community to make sure they follow up with them as they continue to recover and heal. A lot of the services will be provided by telephone. They will also be invited back to join groups and activities at Kings County Hospital.

They have a dedicated space in the “T” Building, located on Clarkson and East New York Avenues, in the lobby that they are going to convert into a group and activity space. They will have daily open hours for any kind of creative expressions. They have a Chaplain that is an artist and she is very passionate about spiritual care and the arts. She has created a program where they would have different activities available for people who are waiting for services or appointments. They are also going to have dedicated groups going forward. This is a community of care and they want to be able to continue that and keep those connections as they continue to heal and recover as they continue on their journey.

The other part of the referral process is when they have a death in the hospital and this process would be talking about bereavement support for those families that have lost someone. In this situation, they would be working with **(INAUDIBLE)** care to identify those families that would be eligible and **(INAUDIBLE)** to hearing from them. the services would be offered to them upfront, so they will not be calling them out of the blue and the Chaplains would be applied on a rotating basis. They would contact them 2 weeks after the death and by then, things would have started to settle down and this where they go in and check on them to see how they are coping and how they are doing and if the family is receptive in that conversation, they would go on to explain the bereavement support that is available to them. That can be one-on-one calls or virtual sessions, and then eventually, in person groups. The need is so great, they are already working with several families right now, and they expect that number to grow. Support might be linkage to their spiritual community, if they don’t feel emotionally well enough to go out into the community, they would advocate on their behalf and have someone check on them once a week to see how they are doing or do they just need someone to be a listening ear. They will specifically have bereavement groups for support. They would work with the family’s schedule for a group or individual session.

They are doing this because they hope that the benefits would be that the patients in the community would feel supported as they are recovering in their healing journey and that families would feel supported in their grief journey from their loved one’s death. These groups will learn coping strategies for recovery, which will help empower them.

The bigger part of this is creating a community within a community, which would be a community of care which would really strengthen and foster a sense of connection in the long run for them. Most importantly, they want to hear from Community Board 17 and they would love for them to think about what they feel would be most important for their own spiritual needs or the needs of the community and what would be helpful because they do feel this would be a collaboration so they can find a way to make this experience as supportive and enriching as possible. If anyone needs to reach out to her, they can send an email to [baileyj9@nychhc.org](mailto:baileyj9@nychhc.org) and call the Pastoral Care office at 718-245-3706. Her direct extension is 718-245 5588.

**Ms.** asked if the services were only available to the Kings County geographical area and how far are they willing to go if people need these services?

**Rev. Bailey** said she would rather not limit it, if it were possible, but that might be a longer road to travel, but if they could extend it and make it available and accessible as possible, but they will start with their catchment area.

**Ms.** said in dealing with a very culturally diversified, mixed population in the areas they are looking at. There is a level of comfort, not culture or race so much, but how can you utilize the service for her Father, who speaks Creole.

**Rev. Bailey** said they do have a Chaplain that speaks Creole and they would go in and ask the person what they feel comfortable with. They want it to be person centered and respectful care.

**Mr. Tait** asked how many languages do they support?

**Rev. Bailey** said right now, they have Creole, French, Spanish and Hebrew.

**Mr. Tait** asked if the Chaplains were from this area or different parts of Brooklyn?

**Rev. Bailey** said most are from Brooklyn, some from the Bronx and Queens and what calls them to this work is they consider this to be Holy ground because they love engaging with the people and being present with people who might initially be strangers and something happens within that interaction, and they are strangers no more. Their staff is so skilled and gentle, with a wonderful sense of humor.

**Mr. Tait** said Community Board 17 will be having a health fair on Saturday, June 18th.

**Rev. Bailey** said their Public Affairs Dept. is looking to have a table and Pastoral Care wants to have a space with information about what they are doing.

**Mr. Tait** thanked Rev. Bailey for her presentation and information.

For the approval of the minutes, they will table the minutes for the next meeting because they do not have a quorum.

**Chairperson’s Report**

**Mr. Tait** said at the last meeting Minister John Williams from the New Creation Community Church asking for a letter of support for the use of the space at the African Burial Ground, which is not in our Community Board, where he wants to hold an event. They did support him and gave him a letter of support.

For the health fair, the date was changed to June 18th because Brookdale Hospital will be holding their health fair on June 11th. They received the permit for the park today. The event will be from 10am to 3pm. They cannot distribute food in the park, but they will have water and snacks for the participants and residents who attend. The permit also prohibits loud music. They are planning to have another meeting before the event to finalize the plans.

The Housing Committee will also be hosting an event in the park the same day as the health fair, but on the corner of Albany Avenue and East 40th Street.

They have 7 vendors that have confirmed and they are waiting on the rest to confirm their attendance.

On June 4th, the Parks & Beautification Committee will be cleaning up Paerdegat Park and planting some flowers. The event will be from 9am to 1pm. Anyone interested in volunteering, can contact him or the Board office.

He asked if there was any unfinished or new business to discuss? Having heard none, he asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**Ms. Monica McKain-Brown** made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:36pm.

**Ms. Muline Mickle** seconded the motion.

Meeting adjoirned.