

TOWN OF SHARON, VT

Opioid Settlement Advisory Committee (OSAC) Meeting

Wednesday, March 12, 2025, 5:35 pm

Steele Chapel, Sharon Congregational Church, Sharon VT

Attending: Scott Henkles, Julie from S. VT, Paula Duprat, Ella Harper-Schiel, Mary Stoddard, Deb Jones, Jack Jones, Eileen Lanza, Nicola Shipman, Nicole Antal, Dee Gish, Shana Hickman, Kevin Gish

Guest: Kristi Lenart-Rikert, Executive Director of Listen Community Services

1. Kristi gave a presentation of Listen Services and ways to help.
 - Listen services are low barrier. They do not ask for identification or financial information. They ask for hometown and number of people in the household.
 - Upper Valley service area includes Chelsea, Vershire, Fairlee and Orford in the north, and Woodstock, Hartland, Grantham and Springfield NH in the south.
 - Thrift stores – three locations and voucher program (\$25/person/household every three months)
 - Food pantry – open 5 days 12-4:30 at 60 Hanover Ave., Lebanon. Individuals can shop at the pantry once a week.
 - Community Meals at the Dining Hall in WRJ – serves lunch and dinner 5 days/week. Open to everyone. In 2024, Listen provided 36,338 meals. No drivers to deliver food, but family members can get takeout.
 - Heat Helpers – helps individuals with utility bills and fuel oil up to \$500 in one year. To qualify for this assistance, it is helpful if people have a shut-off notice. The need is more than Listen’s current budget allows.
 - Home Helpers – grants up to \$500 every 5 years to help with rent, mortgage, security deposits. Again, the need is greater than the funding available.
 - Seasonal needs including summer camp scholarships, school supplies and holiday baskets.
 - Special client needs on an individual basis through their case managers can help with gas, laundry, auto repairs and prescriptions.
 - Kristi is willing to come to another OSAC meeting and bring along a Listen case worker to help brainstorm ways of coordinating services in Sharon.
2. Ways to help:
 - Shop at Listen thrift stores
 - Financial contribution

- Join over 800 volunteers to help at thrift stores, dining hall or food pantry
- 3. Kristi suggests watching the *Just Getting By* documentary film
- 4. Other discussion:
 - Mary Stoddard from the Sharon Food shelf said it might be helpful for emergency backpacks to include a can opener, knives/forks, gallons of water, grill. If they need tents, can contact Listen and food pantry has specific shelf for transient members. Deb Jones noted that if there are standard supplies that food shelf doesn't normally carry, maybe OSAC can help.
 - Deb mentioned that she had a conversation with Windsor county Sherriff to let them know if there is a need, we can create an individualized backpack that could include a gas card.
 - A suggestion was made to contact TSA and WRVSU counselors and tell them that OSAC is here and can help at-risk families.
 - Eileen reported that at the Sharon Health Initiative meeting there was a discussion of a community social worker perhaps in place at the food shelf. This person could help people complete paperwork (3 squares, etc.) and connect them to services.
 - Kevin asked: How can we help people that don't want help? Ella suggested that the Haven is working on a low barrier shelter, but many shelter programs require that people are not using drugs, don't have pets, etc. Some people needing assistance are reluctant and need a dedicated person to work with them over time to gain trust.

Next OSAC meeting: Wednesday, April 16th at 5:15 in the Town Office