

MEMO:

TO: Jerralynn and Linda

FROM: Elaine

RE: Care to Share

DATE: March 20, 1986

I was asked by Linda to write a memo about Care To Share in regard to my concerns about this organization.

As Director of Peoplebank I was invited by Pat Zandonnati to speak to a group of people interested in forming a group in Washington County that would network church food box programs. Peoplebank is a coalition of southwest Portland churches that network together to provide volunteer services to low income people of all ages in SW Portland including emergency services (food, lodging, rent, utility assistance, etc.). I met with them beginning in the summer of 1984 until March of 1985. I met with them numerous times during that 9 month period. Val Bozied and Becky Risner, then Vista Coordinator for Community Jobs and Resources Exchange, also met with them. Becky and I explained our respective programs, explaining how our services complemented each other and how the two programs could be made to dovetail nicely.

It seemed to me that everytime we attended one of these meetings, we covered the same ground over and over because, except for a few core people, there was always different representation present. They had trouble coming to a consensus on how they wanted to operate; everytime someone made a suggestion they thought was a good idea, they decided to incorporate it into their plan. In other words, I felt they were very "wishy-washy" with no clear goals. After several months, I decided it was not a wise use of my time to continue to meet with them and told my board that if they had no objection I was going to stop attending their meetings. They concurred. Shortly after that, Pat attended one of our Development Committee meetings at Peoplebank and said she wanted to use Peoplebank's name because of name familiarity in the county. I told her she could not do that unless they became a part of Peoplebank because of liability issues. She was very unhappy with me!

I was very concerned about their project during the period of time that I met with them because of what appeared to be a big difference in philosophy between our two groups. Peoplebank was started as a coordination effort by the churches in order to serve people in need in a more efficient and concerted effort. Even then Pat's group of folk seemed to want to police the low income and "stamp out duplications" of requests. I would often leave those meetings feeling as though our goals in serving people were miles apart.

As well as being involved in the very early stages of Care to Share through Peoplebank, I am also a member of Bethel Congregational Church in Beaverton. They have a food box program and are a member of TVFC. I was director of that food box program several years ago. I am still involved as a volunteer who occasionally delivers food. I feel very strongly about the need for our food box program and for the need to serve people with dignity as well as with food. I was invited by the Mission and Outreach Committee of the church to attend their monthly meeting on March 10 because Karen Frieze was speaking about Care to Share and they knew of my concerns. I did attend that meeting and I am very upset about the outcome of that meeting. I feel Karen did not answer questions directly or even at times correctly. One of my many concerns was her comment that she might visit a family that asks for food assistance, determine what they

need & help them solve their problems. Anyone who has ever taken any counselling courses knows that the goal is to help a person become self-determining. A counsellor guides a person in such a way that he/she, not the counsellor, makes the determination as to what he/she needs and assists in setting up a course of action in order to achieve those goals. Furthermore, if the family doesn't ask for anything but food what right does Care to Share have for presuming they know better than the family, what that family's needs are.

My gravest concern is the method of monitoring food box requests. Bethel has now voted to become a part of Care to Share. By so doing, when a person calls the church for food assistance, he/she will be told that their name will be turned into Care to Share. If the family does not want their name turned in, the church will not deliver food to them. However, if the name is turned over to Care to Share, a list of names is compiled of the duplicates. Those names will be given to the participating churches so they can "watch out for them." It saddens me to see how some of our churches are becoming so paranoid. I think the volunteers associated with the food box programs need training and support in what they are doing. When I was director at Bethel I talked a lot with the volunteers about the stress and some of the conditions people who ask for assistance can be under. I tried to offer the volunteers encouragement and training in working with people.

I wish that there were sufficient funds to hire someone through TVFC to run this program. The dedication of serving people with dignity is already present with the staff at TVFC as well as the expertise.