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**Equity and Diversity**

Location: Scott County Government Center 9:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Bethany Tjornhom, FISH Executive Director, welcomed 30 people to the meeting. Information about FISH was shared as well as three filled FISH needs.

Chelsea Peterson from the city of Shakopee presented on all that Shakopee is doing to help bridge the gap and be more aware of racial disparities within our community. She talked about how all the staff in the city undergo to different trainings on these topics to better equip them within the community. They also created 4 goals they have within the city:

1) Partnerships with different organizations.

2) Open the dialog within the community.

3) Changing internal practices within staff and raising their equity standards.

4) Highlighting successes with organizations.

She also highlights how the city of Shakopee and Scott County in general has such a rich, diverse community, and they are always actively looking to have different events going on to get all cultures and communities involved and help everyone feel welcomed. For an example, they opened a woman’s swim program for adult women who feel more comfortable around only women with women instructors. They hold the private woman’s swim lessons at a pool where no men are or can watch.

The next speakers we heard from was Sahra from a Thriving Community. She is the executive director of the nonprofit which helps in Scott County, Hennepin County, and Dakota County. Their mission and values are to achieve positive health and wellness within these communities. She mentioned they mainly help in the Somalian community. Advocates from the nonprofit aid with the transition to the United States by helping with applications and resumes, helping find employment, helping find homes to accommodate large families, and scheduling and attending doctor visits. She explained a lot of these families are very nervous to do these things alone and A Thriving Community is a familiar face in the crowd to help them every step of the way. Their biggest need they have in this community from a survey they conducted is housing, healthcare, and emotional help since mental health is a stigma within the Somali Community. They even partner with Scott County Human and Health Services to have a vaccination clinic 2x a month. They also provide different groups for moms like one being Cooking Matters, which is a class moms can take to teach them some healthier recipes for their families and gives them an opportunity to socialize. Usually, they have around 10-14 people attend each time and have another session starting the end of September. Sahra also brought some Sambusas and a spiced tea to share with us all.

Our last speaker was Mary Hernandez, the executive director of Mi C.A.S.A. Mary shared her experience of moving to Shakopee as a young child, and being taught to fly under the radar and blend in as much as possible. She talked about how she also was the voice for her mother who only spoke Spanish. Because of her experiences growing up, Mary and a group of moms came up with Mi C.A.S.A to help other Latinos in the community thrive and help them become and feel apart of the community. Over the summer, Mi C.A.S.A held a summer camp for kids from July-August at Jackson elementary in Shakopee filled with snacks, sports, and other recreations. They even offered free transportation for the children. They also offer a free food drive through in multiple cities for anyone who may be in need. Mi C.A.S.A is that friendly face in the crowd that helps Latinos and anyone whom they come in contact with feel welcomed and wanted. Mary also brought delicious chicken tamels and Mexican pastries and cookies to share with us!

* 􏰀 2nd Harvest food distribution on the second Thursday of each month at Friendship Church in Prior Lake – 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. No eligibility requirements, everyone gets two boxes of groceries and only need an ID with your address.