

MINUTES

Lane County Commission for Children and Families
Serbu Youth Campus – 2727 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard
Eugene, Oregon

June 25, 2008
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Judith Hampton, Chair; Chuck Boyer, Debra Depew, Debi Farr, Karen Hamilton, Rob Jerome, Teresa Kintigh, Kitty Piercy, Faye Stewart, Andy Whitmore, Ryan Stroup, Kevin Maloney, Commission members; Alicia Hays, Diana Avery, Mo Young, Matt Honoré, Serafina Clarke, Nancy Bischofs, DCF staff; Julie Harper, Nettie Day, Martin Rafferty, and Galen Phipps, guests.

ABSENT: Marty Beyer, Elizabeth Clewett, Sharri da Silva, Abigail Fender, Angel Jones, Peter Sorenson, John Radich, Joachim Schulz, and Shirley Swank, Commission members.

I. WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENTS, PUBLIC COMMENT

- **WELCOME**

Ms. Hampton convened the meeting and welcomed those present. She asked those present who attended the meeting in Florence in May to provide feedback during introductions.

Mr. Boyer related that the meeting had been “high energy” and informative.

Ms. Hamilton had been impressed by the turnout at the Florence meeting and the number of citizens who had spoken about childcare. She thought the presentation on homelessness in Florence had been very informative.

Ms. Bischofs remarked that she had been very impressed with the Florence area coalition on childcare.

Ms. Clarke echoed Ms. Bischof’s sentiments. Ms. Hays noted that Ms. Clarke had followed up by returning to Florence to work with the coalition.

- **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

- **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

II. CONSENT CALENDAR

a) Approve April 23 and May 28 minutes

Ms. Hamilton, seconded by Ms. Farr, moved to approve the minutes from the meetings of the Commission on Children and Families held on April 23 and May 28, 2008. The motion passed unanimously.

III. FAMILY SUPPORT & CONNECTIONS PRESENTATION

Julie Harper, Family Support and Connections Coordinator for District Area 5, began by circulating copies of literature for the organization, formerly known as the Community Safety Net. She explained that the program had originally been created as a safety net for families that were having child welfare calls made on them that were not actually meeting the need for entering the child welfare system. She related that the program had been created by the State in response to the death of a little girl in order to provide a way of triaging the 307 reports and to try to engage those families in order to stabilize to help keep their children out of the child welfare system. She said it had become a little more difficult to get the 307s and eventually the State decided to phase them out, after which time it became unclear what the referral stream would look like.

Ms. Harper stated that on October 1, 2007, Family Support and Connections began to receive direct referrals from Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) workers. She noted that at this time the State directed that the program's clients could include 10 percent "non-TANF families." She said the program was able to serve more families than this with the money it received from the Commission on Children and Families (CCF), families that were not quite eligible though they needed the services.

Continuing, Ms. Harper related that according to its contract with the State, the program was supposed to serve 117 families. She demonstrated to the commission the demographics in the Lane County area shows the program to have almost tripled the number of families served. There is a huge demand for family support workers and families are often placed on a long wait list. She said support workers are currently working with a caseload of 20 to 30 families, though they preferred to keep them at 20 or less.

Ms. Harper reviewed the program, which is family driven. Support workers sit down with the families and help create an assessment plan and decide goals. She said they worked with families for three to six months to resolve immediate needs, which often turned into more long-term services. She noted that it is a home visiting program. She listed the three most pressing needs of families in order: housing, childcare, and things like food boxes and personal hygiene. She stated that family support workers in the urban areas and Cottage Grove were going into the TANF offices once a week and presenting programs during the orientations and allowing the families to self-refer into the programs. She said where they had seen resistance before because workers would call the families because of the 307s, they were now empowering the families and they were more engaged in the process because of choosing to do so.

Ms. Harper related the story of a family that had been referred through the 307 process seven times, not willing to be engaged, but had self-referred to their TANF worker and were now in programs. She said they were fairly stable and were involved with Options, working with their

school counselors, and doing the Jobs Program and providing for their family. She noted that because the family had originally come in as a 307, the Family Support and Connections program had extended the length of time they could receive services so the program could stay in the family's lives as long as possible.

Ms. Bischofs noted that she had served on the steering committee for many years. She said when the program had changed so that it involved the TANF workers it had been to prevent children from going into foster care. She related that it had been a surprise that a lot of the families they had seen on the 307s were also TANF families.

Nettie Day, support worker for Family Support and Connections, stated that they were also able to work with the Department of Human Services (DHS) self-sufficiency workers. She said they are able to go in with families and meet with the workers in order to ensure they were working on the same things to help the family become self-sufficient and stabilized in the community.

Ms. Harper reiterated that one of the outcomes they are working toward is to reduce the number of children entering the foster care system. She related that in the beginning it seemed that the program would do the opposite as workers, once inside the homes, were seeing what really should have to be reported to child welfare. She said with the refund on October 1 the program had been given some "flex dollars" to be able to give directly to the families as part of the incentive program.

Ms. Day said family support workers met with their core teams monthly and a child welfare worker was on the team, as well as someone from the school district. She related that her team also included someone from DHS SSP and the Department of Youth Services (DYS).

Commission Member Piercy asked if workers were able to help clients with housing. Ms. Day responded that housing is a huge issue. She said the program has several property managers that work with them. She related that support workers are able to sit down with the families and advocate for them, help them with the application process, and take care of the issues they need to address before a landlord will rent to them.

In response to another question from Commissioner Piercy, Ms. Harper said workers do assessments of the families, which was as accurate information from the families in regard to the indicators of potential teen homelessness such as alcohol and drug issues and domestic violence. She related that workers did see a lot of multi-generational families.

Ms. Harper said one of the strengths of the programs is that some of the TANF workers can help at certain times with moving costs for the families.

Ms. Harper stated the program has served almost 300 families. She noted that in the last 10 days 27 referrals had been submitted and the wait list consisted of between 30 and 40 families. She commented that unfortunately while a family is on the wait list their phone numbers were sometimes disconnected.

Ms. Avery added, regarding the prevention of runaway behavior, that in Cottage Grove the family support worker also served as the runaway and homeless youth case worker funded through the

Oregon CCF. She thought this was a good example of how connections could be made between the different resources.

Ms. Day noted that the support worker in the McKenzie River area is also one of the coordinators of the Family Resource Center. She said the referrals in that area were often from the schools and the community.

Ms. Hamilton asked if the barriers in the housing and childcare issues were largely availability, accessibility of the resources, or affordability. Ms. Harper responded that it was all of those and the eviction records, what the criminal background looked like, and what landlords were willing to rent to someone that needed a second chance. She said most rent in Lane County exceeded a TANF check. She underscored that it was a matter of trying to get the family into a house, trying to figure out a way to stabilize that rent for two months while the family could actively seek employment and for them to stabilize their childcare long enough to go out and find a job. She noted that there were a lot of families that were going through the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) process, so they worked to help those families hold on until they could receive that stable income.

Ms. Hampton thanked Ms. Harper and Ms. Day.

IV. WORKING WITH YOUTH

Ms. Hays heard from a few CCF members who wanted to know how to gain knowledge to effective work with youth. She inquired if other commission members have ideas or interest in coming together for training in addition to the regular meetings. She asked youth representatives on the commission to share their thinking.

Commission Member Whitmore acknowledged his confusion in the beginning. He said it would be nice to gain more information on the commission itself for new members as it would help them to become more involved. He commented that Mr. Honoré's work to form a Youth Council is a great idea. He thought this will be a good place to ask for opinion.

Commission Member Maloney suggested the commission involve school governments in some of the decisions. He feels this is about placing responsibility in the hands of youth. He suggests having a representative of the Youth Council, once it was formed, to sit on the commission.

Commission Member Jerome commented in the past he drove youth members to and from meetings. He felt youth commission member would never call one of the adult members to ask questions, but when driving, they would talk and answer questions about things discussed during the meeting. He felt that finding someone who could provide rides is a way to mentor youth members.

Commissioner Stewart expressed interest in the Youth Council. He noted that Cottage Grove currently has a youth council, and a member sits on the City Council. He supports the formation of a youth advisory council, members of which could provide input to other advisory bodies.

Mr. Rafferty related that the Lane County Human Rights Advisory Committee resumed meeting and is very interested in having Ms. Young and him speak before the committee on the formation of a youth council. He noted they originally spoke to the Human Rights Commission of Eugene but it is currently in flux. He said the most important thing at this time is to find an administrative home for it. He feels having a countywide body benefits the area.

Ms. Hays noted that Mr. Honore had been researching youth councils and hoped to start something at a county level.

Commission Member Stroup asked if there were ways to recruit a wide range of young people. He felt that a lot of times when the word was sent out only a certain sector of youth will respond. He said it seems young people the department works with could help the commission the most.

Commission Member Piercy commented there were a number of youth groups, including the Leadership Education Adventure Direction (LEAD) teens. She said the LEAD youth represented a variety of young people from a variety of situations. She recalled another situation in which a youth group had been convened and ultimately had not felt well-utilized.

Commission Member Depew related that in her work at the Oregon Family Support Network (OFSN) is a presentation called Youth on Boards. She said it included a mock committee meeting in which the adults were given the roles of being the youth members and the youth members were given the roles of being adults. She felt it's a productive exercise as the participants become more familiar with Robert's Rules of Order and negotiating and other meeting skills.

Commission Member Hamilton thought if there were ways to staff a youth council at the county level and then educate them about the issues and to monitor the issues that all of the committees and commissions were considering, the council members could go to meetings "not just to sit at a particular meeting" but in a more focused way regarding items that youth would want to have a voice in.

Mr. Rafferty said one of the things he, Mr. Honoré and Ms. Young learned through their research is most models for youth councils consist of white, privileged students with good grade point averages. He would like to pick different areas of diversity to ensure that the council includes all different voices.

Commission Member Depew noted that her youth group met and then would go out and do things; they would self-select to present certain things. She felt it would help a council to have a staff person.

Ms. Avery noted that it was helpful to think about different levels of involvement. She felt it would benefit input to "meet peoples' readiness."

Galen Phipps, Director of Looking Glass, said in order for youth engagement to work the adults would have to make room at the table. He remarked that the youth, in his experience, were ready to step up. He recommended having authentic roles with meaningful participation.

Commission Member Piercy expressed concern that the financial situation would preclude the creation of something new that would require staffing. She asked if the commissioners could be “creative about how a youth advisory group could be put together.” Ms. Hays responded that one item of discussion would be whether to have a youth subcommittee to the CCF to provide input on it. She added that there was a staff member who was working on the Human Rights Coalition for Lane County, which she felt would be a natural place to start partnering.

V. SUMMER FOOD 2008 PRESENTATION

Mr. Honoré expressed gratitude to the Commission for helping Food for Lane County (FFLC) with the Summer Food Program. He said it had given the program a lot of validity in the community. He reported that June 23 was the first day, 2100 lunches were made and the program almost ran out. He related that FFLC was also making certain that cereal was available in case the lunches ran out. The two companies donating the cereal were Golden Temple and Grain Millers. He listed some of the people on the commission who had visited sites and noted that KEZI and KMTR had also been on site in the morning. He added that the State of Oregon had asked FFLC to develop a training film on how the program was created and administered. The sites would be in operation for the whole summer.

Commission Member Hampton asked Mr. Honoré to remind the commission members toward the middle of the season, when there typically was a slump in volunteers, and the commission members could help out.

Ms. Hays suggested that when the Duck football players were back in town that they contact some of them and ask them to make a public relations appearance on behalf of the program.

Commission Member Piercy suggested bringing a Eugene fire engine unit to the program to draw more young people.

Commission Member Farr related that a reporter had asked her how to find out where the summer lunch programs were located and she had informed him that it could be found on the FFLC Web site. She suggested that it would be good to have the media do some public service announcements (PSAs).

Commission Member Hampton noted that there were 30 lunch sites in Springfield, 2 in Oakridge, 1 in Mapleton, 1 in Westfir, 1 in Lowell, but she was not certain how many were in Eugene. She stated that the 2800 lunches made for the program had been only for Eugene and Springfield. She thought another place to disseminate the information would be at the Family Resource Centers.

Commission Member Jerome remarked that the public swimming pools attracted a lot of children.

Commission Member Depew suggested including this information when kindergarten registration was held in May.

Commission Member Stroup thought handing the information out at the Women Infants and Children (WIC) program would be a good way to publicize it.

VI. PYD END OF FUNDING REPORT

Ms. Avery stated that the contract with the Oregon Commission on Children and Families for the Positive Youth Development State/Local Demonstration Project was ending September 30. She felt they were on track in terms of administrative spending. She related they had three areas of sustainability: the concept of the formation of a Youth Council, finding support and a home for an iteration of the Youth Action Board (YAB), and finding a home for the Youth Celebration. She said Ms. Young, Mr. Rafferty and other YAB members are continuing conversations with City of Eugene staff regarding this.

Ms. Hays explained the reason they were talking with Eugene was the grant is specific to the city region.

Ms. Young reported continuing conversations with the city's Recreation Division about housing YAB, up to the age of 24. She noted that at present the Recreation Division's Youth Leadership development efforts focused on youth to the age of 18. She said they were trying to figure out what that would look like as of September.

Ms. Avery said they are excited about the conversations with the Recreation Division because they seemed to understand the value of the "stream of youth leadership development." She noted that by being able to take over the structure for YAB, they could add that next level of leadership on. She explained that they had opportunities for middle school aged youth, high school aged youth and would now have leadership opportunities for the older group. She said there would be support for the "gap age" and there would also be a venue for young adults to provide leadership to high school aged youth.

Ms. Avery stated the next step is to talk with the city staff about what that would look like. She said activity planning would occur after July 15.

Additionally, Ms. Avery reported that they would be working with Metro Affordable Housing and the WOW Hall to plan a mural project for the side of Metro's new building. She felt this provided an opportunity for youth/adult partnerships and for youth to gain skills in project planning, artwork, and project completion.

Mr. Rafferty noted that another mural had just been completed on Willamette Street. Ms. Avery called this a "trial run" for a YAB mural project.

VII. REVISIONING FEEDBACK TO OCCF

Ms. Hays stated that the packet included a memorandum from the State Commission Executive Committee called the revisioning recommendation. She hoped commission members had the opportunity to review it. She related they had come together to do a day long workshop to discuss where the commission system should go over the next five to ten years. She said a small work group arose from the meeting and arrived at the recommendations for a collaborative vision statement, a mission statement, and for guiding principles to guide the commission system

statewide. She explained that the State Commission is asking for a “thumbs up” on this. She ascertained that the commission supported the recommendations.

VIII. DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Ms. Hays asked Commission Member Piercy to discuss the work currently being done to improve childcare in Oregon.

Commission Member Piercy stated that she had served on the Oregon Commission for Childcare for approximately ten years. She said of their mission’s is that there is an understanding that children did not just need childcare, but they needed quality childcare. She said they were trying to obtain enhanced childcare funding targeting TANF families.

Ms. Clarke added 70 percent of childcare providers were friends and neighbors. She said the increase in payments and the increase in education affected a large number of families.

State & County Budgets—Ms. Hays reviewed the budget process with a document entitled *Impact on Prevention & Social Services*. She remarked that the County Commissioners and the Budget Committee had taken money out of reserves, which meant there would be a road fund crisis two years sooner. She felt the Budget Committee had done an excellent job of maneuvering “through some hard places with some vision.” She related that a couple of the Commissioners had suggested that members of the Executive Committee write a letter of thanks to the Budget Committee.

Commissioner Stewart related that when they had started the budget process, the direction they had given to the administration was to try to stabilize the budget for three years and the road fund for two years. He said the programs had been restored but at the price of reducing that stabilization to 18 months. He believed that there was a commitment between the elected officials of Springfield, Eugene, and the County to start working toward finding an answer to the problem. He added that the State also recognized the importance of helping the counties out. He hoped they could find an answer in the next 18 months. He noted that in reviewing the cuts they had to find ways to add back as much as possible to the potential cuts. He related that one of the ways they were able to pay for the Human Services Commission was to add five resident deputies with the revenue they received for writing tickets used to fund it.

Commission Member Farr commented that one of the State’s proposed solutions had been a local option levy.

Commission Member Piercy thought they should keep the pressure on the State and the federal government.

Commission Member Farr, seconded by Commission Member Depew, moved to send a letter to the Budget Committee to thank them for their hard work on the budget.

Commission Member Jerome asked if it would be better to confine the letter to more specific items. Ms. Hays preferred a less specific note of thanks for not placing all of the funding into public safety. She noted that the Budget Committee had voted unanimously to reconvene if more money came in.

The motion passed unanimously.

Board of County Commissioners Presentations & Proclamations—Ms. Hays reported that they had talked about proclamations and there was some question as to how they were chosen. She explained that when working with the community partners and the partners were interested they would give them assistance and act as a conduit to the County Commissioners. She noted that the recent proclamation in regard to mental health had been a good way to come together in a collaborative project.

Commissioner Stewart believes they are good because proclamations raised awareness. He recommended that proclamations occur at the beginning of the month.

Ms. Clarke noted that the recent proclamation had occurred at the end of the month due to the budget process.

Commission Member Depew wished to acknowledge Ms. Clarke's hard work and diplomacy in asking everyone's opinions and including them as best as she could. She felt Ms. Clarke had done a great job.

Future Meetings Calendar—Ms. Hays reviewed the meetings calendar. She related the November meeting would probably be held on the third Wednesday because of the November holiday.

Ms. Clarke noted that a group was trying to set up a child care center in Cottage Grove. She said it sounded promising.

IX. TRANSITIONS

Outgoing members were celebrated with certificates of commendation and cake.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

(Recorded by Ruth Atcherson)

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