



REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 11, 2009
County Administration Center

Voting Members Present

JoAnne Bushby; Margarita deRuyter; Katherine Smith-Brooks; Hon. Susan Huguenor; Michele Linley (for Bonnie Dumanis); Greg Barnett (for William Gore); Mack Jenkins; Patty Danon (for Debra Zanders-Willis); Dr. Philip Hanger (for Alfredo Aguirre); John Philips (for John Sansone); Barbara Ryan; Loretta Middleton (for Randolph Ward); David Estrella; Pam Smith (for Nick Macchione); Lynn Ceresino Neault (for Constance Carroll); Michelle Soltero; Sandra McBrayer; Martha Crowe (for Sharon Lawrence); Dr. Vivian Reznik; Laura Mustari (for Paula Guerra); Donna Ewing Marto; Meredith Riffel; Rev. Rolland E. Slade; Mary Baum; Donald Stump; Walter Philips; Arun Ramanathan (for Terry Grier); Heather Nemour (for Margarita Holguin); Dixie Galapon (for Margaret Iwanaga-Penrose); Barbara Mandel Pache; Dawn Griffin

Alternate Members Present

Maria Mejia

Visitors Present

Lyn Angene (Juvenile Court); Mary Molony (HHSA CWS); Dr. Michelle Lustig (SDCOE); Laurie Campbell (SDUSD); Karim Bouris (San Diego Foster Youth Initiative); Claudia Bell (HHSA/CWS); Ken Nakamura (SDSU); Therese Fox (YMCA-Youth & Family Services); David Sheppard (South Bay Union SD); Cecilia Banvilla (Casey Family Programs); Roshawn Brady (LEAP Coordinator)

Staff Present

Renee Rambus, Harold Randolph, Tonya Torosian

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m. by Honorable Susan Huguenor, Chair. Everyone present introduced themselves, stating their name and affiliation.

II. Public Comment

Ryan Messel thanked the Commission for the opportunity to speak. He stated his organization Family and Youth Roundtable are pleased to announce they are hosting their first Annual Conference on Improving Services for Children and Families on February 26th and 27th, 2010. The theme is "Stigma and Disparities" and would like to request the support of the Commission to help get the word out for the call for presenters. Mr. Messel distributed a flyer for the Annual Conference.

III. Approval of the Minutes – May 1, 2009

- ♦ Motion made by Dr. Vivian Reznik and seconded by Barbara Ryan to accept the minutes of May 1, 2009. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. Report from the Chair

There are a number of important Commission sponsored events coming up in the next few months.

- ♦ The first event, "I Can Go To College", was put together to support foster youth in their efforts to go to college. The goal is to reach those foster youth that typically do not attend other college awareness fairs or benefit from the on-site outreach efforts that occur at group homes. As a result, the outreach focused on youth living with foster families. The event will provide foster parent training credits for parents who participate in the event as well as on-site child care for younger children in the foster family. The event will host approximately 200 people and will be held at USD on September 26th from 8:30am- 1:00pm.
- ♦ On October 1, 2009, the County-Wide Not to Be Forgotten Rally will be held in recognition of October being Domestic Violence Month. This year's theme is "Everyone *together* can stop relationship violence." Rally "walks" will be held concurrently in four regions (East, South, North, and Central) of the county from 10:00-11:00 a.m. Following the Regional walks, the main event with speakers, resource tables, food, and performances will be held from 11:30-1:30 at the Old Town Plaza.
- ♦ Family Day in the Park has been rescheduled to Saturday, October 10th, 2009. This event is the Commission's effort to provide a free resource fair for families. The event will be held in Balboa Park at 6th and Laurel from 10am-3pm. We will have over 75 booths with family activities, live music and performances throughout the day. The Chargers Girls will also be at the event. Please assist us in our outreach efforts to secure attendees for this event by forwarding the flyer for this event that was emailed to you.
- ♦ The Chadwick Center Conference, scheduled for January 2010, is an important annual conference that provides high quality training in the field of child abuse prevention and treatment. Professionals travel from all over the world to attend this outstanding conference. Each year, the Commission has co-sponsored a pre-conference training for investigators and is sponsoring this pre-conference opportunity on January 25th. This year, the Commission continues its commitment by also sponsoring an all-day post conference institute titled "Trauma Through the Eyes of Young Children." This will be presented by Drs. Joy Osofsky and Alicia Lieberman. Our sponsorship will allow San Diego County professionals registered for the conference to attend this additional institute at no charge.
- ♦ At the last meeting the Commission presented five options for the California Western Law School to consider for their Healthcare Problem Solving class this semester. They selected Mental health services for youth who are transferred from juvenile to adult incarceration facilities. There is a lapse in the continuation of mental health services for youth who age out of the juvenile delinquent system. The student healthcare team will investigate how to create better continuity in our mental health programs and eliminate the lapse in services.

V. Action Items

The Commission has been able to partner with Foster Youth Services, just in time and Casey Family Programs to support the San Diego Foster Youth Initiative that was implemented four years ago through a grant partnership with Jim Casey Youth Opportunities. A few months ago, San Diego Foster Youth Initiative needed to transition from one provider to a collaborative group of providers and the Commission Executive Committee voted to support the Commission's interest in creating a Committee to support one aspect of the initiative- the Leadership Empowers All Possibilities (LEAP) Board. Since 2005, LEAP has served as the youth leadership board that assists the San Diego Foster Youth Initiative with engaging young people in the community effort and in planning for their own futures after leaving foster care. The LEAP board is made up of 15 current and former dedicated foster youth who are charged with identifying and developing strategies, activities and opportunities in the community that will help current, and former foster youth succeed. The LEAP Board acts as a representative voice for young people in care and allows for youth to play a vital part in engaging all foster youth to enroll and participate in various community services.

- A. Approval of new CCYF Standing Committee
Today's action will approve the addition of the Leadership Empowers All Possibilities (LEAP) Board as a standing committee of the Commission on Children, Youth and Families.

Motion made by Barbara Ryan and seconded by Mack Jenkins to approve the nomination for the addition of the Leadership Empowers All Possibilities (LEAP) Board as a standing committee of the Commission on Children, Youth and Families addressing the needs of former foster youth. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Presentations

1. Mental Health Services Budget Update – Dr. Philip A. Hanger

Dr. Hanger handed out a copy of the letters that are being distributed to clients and client families explaining the budget changes which will reduce managed care allocations and how it impacts the fee for services providers. Dr. Hanger stated that the State Budget problems will have a direct impact on our county and may affect the ability to provide the same level of mental health services that are currently available.

Although there have not been any final decisions, we are now studying the impact of possible reductions in services and determining what changes will occur. Medication services provided by a psychiatrist, will not be affected by the changes, if clients are currently seeing a psychiatrist and receiving medication, those services will not be changed. If they are seeing a psychologist, MFT, LCSW or other mental health professional, it is possible that those services will be reduced or terminated. If that happens, we will do our best to help them find good community based options.

The client or client's child current services will continue to be provided. United Behavioral Health (UBH) will also continue to perform authorizations for services. Effective August 10th, when current authorization comes to an end and the client and provider think additional services are needed, the provider will be able to request up to 13 additional sessions, if the client is under 18 years of age. If the client is 18 years and above, an additional 8 sessions will be provided. The numbers for new clients will be similar, 13 sessions for children and 8 for adults. The impact is a decrease in the overall sessions. The average utilization for children was 12 sessions and adults around 7 to 9, which will allow ample coverage for the general needs in the population.

The letters went out in July and August and were implemented in August. This is not a letter saying that services are going to be terminated, but it is possible, that if they don't meet criteria, they will either be urged to move toward a clinic or an organizational provider. At this time we have adequate funding to continue services, but we are managing them on a tighter level so we don't have to discontinue services. We are fortunate in San Diego County and will continue for as long as we can, but under closer scrutiny.

A question was asked: on the letter it was stated that the client could contact their child's teacher for additional information; how are the teachers being informed on how to respond to the students? Dr. Hanger stated that the second document, the providers, went out to the schools that had school based services. We didn't directly contact the teachers; we contacted the providers based in the schools with the expectation they would tell administration of the school and give them an update of what services would be available.

A question was asked: why did this happen? Are you trying to make money go further? Dr. Hanger stated that money was already cut from the managed care dollars at the State level so our County does not have as much. Fortunately, we had allocated or had a budget that would allow us to continue if we were a little more stringent. So we are being more careful so that we can continue. It was asked: what is the difference in the criteria? The difference in entry criteria should still be the same; they still have a need for ongoing services from both the organization provider and the fee-for-service provider.

2. LEAP Board – Tonya Torosian – CCYF Executive Director

The LEAP Board joining the Commission was a very important process. We were approached two or three months ago with the idea of the LEAP Board becoming part of the collaborative group that would support foster youth initiatives and we are honored to have them join the Commission. We have been looking to have youth voices represented on the Commission. We were able to take one step toward that by filling our youth consumer position with Candy Morales, who is also on the LEAP Board. A few months later we were approached by this opportunity and it seemed like a perfect fit for the Commission to have a standing committee that looked at issues impacting existing and former foster youths from their perspectives. It was discussed in the Executive Committee and Karim Bouris made a presentation to the Executive Committee and explained the LEAP Board's history which originally started in San Diego about 5 years ago.

Ms. Torosian stated that this effort has become what it is today with many youth actively looking at issues, not only in terms of what needs to be fixed or what they feel was a negative experience, but really highlighting the positives and things that are out there for former foster youth today that maybe weren't available for them. One of the things that we discussed was the process of looking at things, for example advocacy or taking a position on different legislative actions or local policies. There was lots of discussion because that was really the core of the mission of what the LEAP Board did, but coming under the Commission we wanted to be very clear that we weren't going to necessarily be advocating one way or another on legislation, but would like to provide a voice to the committee to present to this body. If the LEAP Board had issues or topics they wanted raised it would be welcomed and appreciated here. Cake was provided in honor of the LEAP Board becoming a standing committee with CCYF. Ms. Torosian thanked the LEAP Board and said they would be a really important part of the Commission.

3. Child Welfare Services – Support for Former Foster Youth – Patty Danon; Assistant Deputy Director – CWS & Genevieve Bromley; CWS Manager for ILS and Special Projects

Ms. Danon presented a PowerPoint presentation and commented on a couple of the Child Welfare Services programs. All have a role within the County Health and Human Services Agency and some type of partnership with the community or another governmental agency to enhance services leverage funding. The programs include:

- Independent Living Skills (for Dependent and Delinquent youth)
- Foster Youth Mentor Program
- HOME Emancipated Foster Youth Housing
- THP-Plus Supportive Housing for Aftercare Youth
- Volvo "Keys to Success"
- School Success program
- Fostering Change Website

Nationwide there are approximately 24,000 young people that "age out" of foster care each year. Only about 30% enroll in college, according to the latest study from the Chapin Hall Center for Children Midwest Study (2007). There were a large number working for pay at some time during the year, but the amount earned per hour was very low, so the living wages for youth are very low and some have even experienced homelessness for at least one night.

Each year in San Diego, approximately 370 teenagers either emancipate or "age out" of the foster care system. Twenty-four percent are between the ages of 15 and 19, our target population for the independent living skills program. There has also been a history of low high school graduation and/or completion among this population. San Diego County has made significant stride since 1999 and is continuing to see improvement each year for homelessness after age 18. There is a certain risk of unemployment, which has impacted youth more than any other working age group leading to the risk of dependency on welfare and/or involvement with crime.

Ms. Danon stated that there are still a lot of resources in San Diego County in spite of the budget cuts and bad news. The Independent Living Skills Program serves dependents and wards of the court that are 16 to 21 years of age. Each year there are approximately 1800 youth who are eligible for these services. Social workers and probation officers make referrals when the youth is 15 ½ and the service is mandated, but the participation is voluntary. A few years ago the County had an opportunity to partner with San Diego Workforce Partnership. Both agencies had contracts coming up for renewal or complete processing and were serving similar populations in areas in the county. There were duplicated services in some areas and multiple case managers working with the same youth. The County engaged in an extensive redesign of independent living skills and issued a joint RFP with the Workforce Partnership in 2007. The goal was to have seamless service delivery and to get rid of the duplication and make sure we were maximizing our limited resources. A joint statement of work was processed and resulted in two contracts; one with the providers and the county and another with the providers and San Diego Workforce Partnership. South Bay Community Services is the umbrella provider and contracts with four other regions and subcontract with San Diego Youth Services and the YMCA and ACCESS serve in two regions as well.

The statistic for contract Outcomes 08-09 of the youth 18 and over who were served is, 70% completed high school and, of the aftercare youth who were served, 71% achieved full-time productivity (full time employment or full time enrollment in school or a combination of the two); 60% achieved stable income for 6 months; 76% achieved housing stability for 6 months and the greatest, 82% had established relationship with supportive and safe adults.

Ms Danon stated that the Foster Youth Mentor Program is a separate program that has a partnership with Aging and Independence Services and the County Office of Education Foster Youth Services. We currently have 227 dependent matched with mentors. There are about 165 children/youth on the waiting list who would like/need a mentor.

HOME Emancipated Foster Youth Housing Program is a partnership between HHSA and Housing and Community Development that provides transitional housing for youth age 18-24 and is a Section 8 voucher, 2-year program. Former foster youth are eligible and pay 30% of income for rent, while working on furthering their education and career goals with hope of being in the program for 2 years they can transition into their own apartment. Currently there are 60 youth enrolled in the HOME program.

Transitional Housing Program Plus (THP-Plus) is a new program that didn't take a substantial cut with the State budget. San Diego County originally had 20 slots and when the State opened up the door to the THP-Plus Program and made it 100 percent state-funded. The County submitted a proposal and walked away with more slots than any other county. An RFP was done and 6 providers were brought on board and provided 170 slots county-wide, providing case management services and support for youth. Slots have been overfilled to ensure the entire state allocation is spent. There are seven hundred youth on the wait list who have been referred.

Ms. Danon stated that the Volvo "Keys to Success" is a partnership with Volvo Scholarship Program to assist foster youth in obtaining Driver's Education and Driver's Training. The County of San Diego partners with Promises to Kids who manages the funds while the County makes referrals. The goal is to get kids into Driver's Ed/Driver's Training so that when they leave the system they have a license. Today, 206 youth have applied and 85 have received their driver's licenses. Volvo also helped with insurance for some of the youth who had a car.

The School Success Program is a new program that has been a work in progress for a number of years. The Stuart Foundation was approached and they provided funding. QUALCOMM and Casey Family Programs have come aboard as well. The grant money was used to leverage federal dollars and contracted with County Office of Education who have hired seven education liaisons. They are out stationed at the Child Welfare offices. The goals are to directly work with youth and school districts to make sure the youth are getting into the services and programs that they need in order to succeed, and making sure Child Welfare and the social worker team understand and embrace the education community. The program began January 2009 with all of the staff on board. It is a three-year pilot with referrals to date of 904 youth.

Ms. Danon stated that Jeff Hancock, from San Diego Futures Foundation, was slated to speak about the Fostering Change website but was unable to attend today. She said there was some seed funding from the County of San Diego County Board of Supervisors and a partnership was formed with Promises2Kids, Betterworld Together Foundation and the -- to -- and maintain a website for former foster youth. A series of focus groups were hosted with current and former foster youth to make sure the design was something that would work for them. The website is in its second round of upgrades and the goal is to make it a one-stop-shop.

4. Fosteringchange.org – Jeff Hancock; Chief Operating Officer – San Diego Futures Foundation; Monya Tabor; Child Welfare Services, Adolescent Services Division

A website has been created and is partially up; additional information will be forth coming.

5. Probation Event – Foster Youth to College Event – Lyn Angene – Juvenile Court

Lyn Angene, Special Project Manager, Juvenile Court gave a brief overview of events that the Juvenile Court initiated; The Dependent Population and the Delinquency Population. Passport to Life targeted the delinquency population and this project was developed by one of the Delinquency Judges, Judge Carolyn Caietti. She was dismayed because she saw so many kids in the court room that have no plans for their future or had little hope for their future because they were on probation and didn't think their dreams could come true. She had the idea of possibly offering a career in education expo for kids to expose them to some possibilities for when they got older. She talked to the Delinquency Judges about it and approached probation and ended up putting together a committee including the Courts, Probation, Workforce Partnership and several sections of the County Office of Education. City College offered to host the event on their campus on August 13, 2009.

The program consisted of the opening section where there were a couple of motivational speakers to give the kids some ideas that you really can come from a difficult past and make a future for yourself. One of the speakers was Adam Jeffers, who is an ex-felon and is now a career counselor at San Diego State University and Doug Wolfsburg who grew up in an impoverished environment and is now working on his Ph.D. at USD. After the opening section, five different workshops were offered to the kids to attend. One of the most popular workshops was 'How to overcome the barrier if you have a probation background', which addressed some of the myths about the restrictions their probation background might have and how to seal records. There were about 53 exhibitors who represented education, potential employers, military, training resources, etc. The juvenile court judges agreed to offer up to 10 community service credit hours to the kids attending different parts of the events. The responses from the kids were overwhelming. The week of the conference over 700 kids were pre-registered to attend and over 600 actually showed up for the event. The Probation Department, the Gang Suppression Unit at San Diego Police Department, the Gang Suppression Officer at San Diego State and City College Security did an outstanding job on security.

Ms. Angene stated that most of the evaluation responses from the kids were positive. One of the favorites was an email the Committee received from Judge Caietti. She said "One of the kids who attended Passport to Life appeared earlier this morning in my court room mention getting a lot out of the program. August 13, 2009 was the first day she had ever set foot on a college campus. She said if it were not for Passport to Life she would not have enrolled in college; she is slated to start next semester at City College." Judge Huguenor said their goal is to make this an annual event.

Judge Huguenor's idea Foster Youth to College Event is to provide exposure to college to young people living in individual foster homes or living with kin or extended families or family friends who generally do not get this type of information. We want to reach out to the caregiver and give them the same information so they can reinforce college as a possibility. Caregivers will be invited and can bring any of the kids in their home foster children or not. If the children are 12 or older they can attend the program, if they are younger childcare will be provided. The caregivers will also be given credit for attending. This event is on September 26th and has been extended to 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. to give more time with the exhibitors. USD will be taking them around on the tour and giving them information on campus life. Students and caregivers will come together for a box lunch and listen to a presentation by a panel of former foster youth who have gone on to college. They will talk about how they made their transition from foster care to college and answer questions about their experiences. Judge Huguenor asked if anyone was interested in joining the planning for next year's event to email her and she would forward it to Lyn Angene.

6. Guardian Scholars; Alex Smith Foundation – Pam Smith

Ms Smith stated that the purpose of the Alex Smith Foundation is to develop and promote programs that achieve forward progress for foster teens in transition out of the system. The Foundation focuses on how to help through partnerships and teamwork with a define outcome of how to move forward with former foster youth. Alex was not a foster youth and came from a very large family with a very large extended family and understands the value of family. This led him to get involved with the issues of foster kids. The week after Alex was drafted he visit the San Pasqual Academy. He met 18 years old who were going to be stepping out on their own. He learned more about what would happen and also had a chance to meet Antwone Fisher.

There are over 100,000 California children and teens in foster care and over 4,000 foster care teens "age out" of the California system yearly. Within 2 years of leaving the system, 1 out of 2 ends up unemployed; 1 out of 3 needs public assistance; Almost 1 out of 3 becomes homeless; Less than 1 in 10 goes to college and 1 in 100 actually graduates. The foster teens are probably the least ready kids in the world to be turned out at age of 18 and many of them come back into the system through the justice system and often live at poverty level. This is what got Alex's attention; he is local; he went to Helix High School; graduated from the University of Utah. In 2005 he was the number one pick from the NFL draft to the San Francisco 49ers. When Alex went to college he was on an athletic scholarship and with the athletic scholarship you have lots of support to assist you. The work he is doing with the Guardian Scholars is some of the same support he is offering to the kids.

The Foundation core value believes in collaboration and not to duplicate services, but work very closely with other services. Alex personally underwrites all the administrative costs of his Foundation and any dollars that come in go one hundred percent to kids and services. The Foundation supports the youth in activities and links them to other programs that are available. Some of the Foundation partners are San Diego State University, The Stuart Foundation, Andrus Family Fund, Consensus Organizing is key, Casey Family Program and New Alternatives – THP+.

Alex advocates for foster youth because so many people are not aware of the foster youth story. He has testified in Sacramento which has generated media coverage around the state. He did a statewide video with other foundations that tell the story of foster youth which was produced by foster youth. He also did a national United Way and NFL spot on foster youth to help keep media and legislative focus on the needs of foster youth.

Alex launched the Guardian Scholarship Program at San Diego State. There were twenty-two other Guardian Scholarship Programs around the state, but not one at a university as large as San Diego State. He met with Dr. Weber and launched the program three years ago and was committed to it being the best and then partnered with Consensus Organizing. Consensus Organizing is the "go to" on campus because they check on the kids to make sure they are going to class, check their attendance and have them sign waivers.

Ms. Smith stated that the Kids along with some community members create a financial board. If the kids have a need they could apply for a grant or an interest free loan, but they had to show how they would pay the money back. As a result of this, the request for extra money plummeted. The requests and pay back plans came in more solid and all loans have been paid back. Dr. Stephen L. Weber, President, SDSU said *"This is the most comprehensive scholarship in the history of San Diego State University."* The Foundation also does a high school component through Consensus Organizing which target sophomores and juniors foster kids from around the county to take the Social Work 120 Class. There are 25 foster children who take this semester class on campus. It is a regular college class with

community service projects that they have to do. About 90 percent of the kids that have taken the high school class have gone on to college and some have become Guardian Scholars.

The Foundation is in 3rd year and has over a 90 percent retention rate of foster youth in college. The grade point average overall of our foster youth is higher than the average grade point average at San Diego State. The secret that helps the youth is the intense support and accountability. Ms. Smith stated that it takes about \$20,000 to go to San Diego State including housing and other expenses and the kids qualify for about \$10,000 worth of aid and grants. The Foundation contribute \$10,000 per kid a year in addition to the Consensus Organization which is a full time staff working with them. The Stuart Foundation, the Andrus Family Fund and currently 20 Guardian Scholars at San Diego State have supported the Foundation. Janet, who you heard earlier, from the LEAP Board is in year two of our Guardian Scholar Program and has done very well. The Alex Smith Foundation's goal is to educate people to become part of the efforts of having great outcomes and a way to really break cycles to help these kids may it to a successful future.

VII. Additional Business

VIII. Announcements

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Written by Renee Rambus