

Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families

MEETING SUMMARY

COMMITTEE: Citizens Council

DATE: Friday, March 16, 2007

TIME BEGAN: 8:10am **TIME ENDED:** 9:30am **FACILITATED BY:** Sarah Fox **SUMMARY BY:** Judy Buswell

PRESENT: Mary Alice Warner, Betty Anson, Micheline Roy, Rich Moed, Nancy Porosky, Rasim Gusinac, Christie Corrigan, Sue Smith, Sarah Fox, Gil Schohan, Emily Clement **STAFF:** Alan Robichaud, Judy Buswell **GUESTS:** Katie Brandt, Barnstead and NH Children's Trust Fund; Christa Clapp and Christie Schott, Division of Children, Youth, and Families, Laconia District Office

1. **Welcome and Introductions** Welcome extended to Katie Brandt, a resident of Barnstead, who is considering applying for Council memberships. Katie works for the NH Children's Trust Fund, a statewide organization located in Concord that is focused on the prevention of child abuse.
2. **Presentation on the Division of Children and Families (DCYF)** Christa Clapp, Supervisor IV for DCYF, Laconia District Office, shared information on child protective services, a part of DCYF functions, via power point and a packet of handouts. NH DCYF is guided by their Mission Statement: "We are dedicated to assisting families in the protection, development, permanency, and well-being of their children and the communities in which they live." NH is one of only a few states that has universal mandated reporting of child abuse and or neglect (RSA 169c). Anyone who suspects child abuse/neglect should report their concerns directly to DCYF Central Intake (or to local police departments if concerns arise during after regular business hours). Any policy requiring employees or staff to ask permission of their work supervisor before making such reports is in direct violation of the state statute. Allegations of sexual abuse and severe physical abuse require involvement of law enforcement for a joint investigation of these reports.

The Laconia District Office has five Child Protective assessment staff and one supervisor with a catchment area that includes all of Belknap County and southern Grafton County. DCYF staff use a "Structured Decision Making" (SDM) process to triage and then assess all reports. Face-to-face contact with the victim is required within 24-72 hours of report. Risk assessment is completed within 60 days. DCYF works to promote the Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being of all children under their care:

- *Safety* means that children are protected from abuse and neglect and that these children are safely maintained in their own homes whenever possible and appropriate.
- *Permanency* means that continuity of family relationships and connections is valued and preserved whenever possible.
- *Wellbeing* means that families are assisted in developing their capacity to provide adequately and appropriately for their children's needs.

When the reports merit further assessment, a Child Protective Social Worker (CPSW) will meet with the family and interview household members. Following the investigation, a determination of child abuse or neglect is made. If allegation is founded, the court will be petitioned for a hearing. The CPSW refers the family to available community programs. DCYF does not have the authority to remove a child from his/her home. Law enforcement must be involved. DCYF provides families with referrals for services including Genesis, the Step Ahead Program, and Giggles and Grins.

Other DCYF staff at the Laconia District Office includes a Staff Attorney, Domestic Violence specialists, Foster Care Health Nurse, Administrative Case reviewer, Family Connections specialist, Fiscal Specialists, and Administrative Assistants.

Identifying and maintaining adequate licensed Foster Care Homes is always a challenge. There are approximately 50 in Belknap County, with only 2 of those located in Laconia. Part of the difficulties in recruiting Foster Homes is due to the low daily compensation rate provided by the State. As well, Therapeutic Foster Care homes that house children with disabilities or behavior problems are reimbursed at a higher rate.

3. **Special Recognition** Shannon Swett, Outreach Coordinator for the CoRe Prevention Coalition, is leaving this position to assume the director position of a similar coalition in Concord, NH. Shannon has been with CoRe for more than two years, with half of this time as the sole employee. She has supervised prevention activities with youth from both Prospect Mountain High School in Alton and Inter-lakes High School in Meredith. She has also managed all administrative tasks for the CoRe, including oversight of a federal Drug Free Communities grant awarded three years ago. Shannon, along with Kim Mahon of Northern Health Services, also co-wrote the first Strategic Prevention Framework grant from Belknap and Carroll Counties. Through all of this she has remained positive and productive. She will be missed! Shannon was presented with an engraved glass desk plaque from the Citizens Council.



Shannon accepts gift from the Council to the enthusiastic applause of Council members!

4. **Director's Report – Alan Robichaud reporting** Alan distributed a one-page summary of his report.

- ***Education Forum*** Scheduled for Wednesday, March 28th from 2:45 to 6pm at the Opechee Inn and Conference Center, this event will feature NH Education Commissioner, Lyonel Tracey, and Dr. Russ Quaglia, who designed the Student Aspiration Surveys that all secondary schools in Belknap County have taken. Visit www.qisa.org for more information Registration required.
- ***Children of Trauma*** This workshop will be held on Saturday, May 12th at the NH Community Technical College. Presentations on the Greater Lakes Region Child Advocacy Center, Genesis, New Beginnings and Child and Family Services of NH are scheduled. Registration required.
- ***NH State Advisory Grant (SAG)*** Year Two proposal for Project P.R.O.V.E. It! was submitted on March 14th. Grant request is \$31,378. with a local match of \$39,178. These funds will continue the juvenile justice data collection initiative now underway in Belknap County.
- ***Website Enhancements*** The Council is beginning a discussion of website updates and enhancements. Certain steps must occur before any major changes: identifying the targeted audience and developing strategies for marketing the website to these audiences.
- ***Child Abuse and Neglect National Conference- April 18-20th*** Tammy Emery, Judge Willard Martin, and Alan Robichaud will travel with Karen Carpenter, Director of NH Children's Trust Fund, to Oregon, the site of this conference to make a presentation around collaborative activities in Belknap County that have involved UpStream and the Citizens Council.
- ***Incentives Bank*** This project with the Belknap County Reclaiming Futures initiative would be an ideal project for an interested Council member. Contact Alan for more information
- ***PALS Alumni Meeting*** Program graduates from the two PALS seminars held in 2005 and 2006 will be held on Tues March 20th from 5-8pm.
- ***CoRe Coalition*** A Strategic Planning Retreat is planned at Church Landing Inn in Meredith on Monday March 26th from 7:30am-1pm. Council members are encouraged to attend. Shannon

Swett recently completed the grant proposal for Yr 4 of the federal Drug Free Communities program.

- **Strategic Prevention Frameworks** The collaborative proposal from Belknap and Carroll Counties for \$100,000. to provide strategic planning and implementation of substance abuse prevention in the two counties (Region C) has been approved.
- **Safe Schools Coalition** Council member Ruth Castonguay made a presentation to the Safe Schools Coalition in the Winnisquam Regional School District on AA and other recovery programs available in Belknap County. The coalition is now planning a Community Forum
- **Council Budget 2007** Budget Hearing on March 5th for Council CFY 2007 budget was approved.
- **Other**
 - Help is needed in collecting contact information on current School Resource Officers; please contact Alan
 - Patrick's Pub is sponsoring a United Way fundraiser on Wednesday, March 21st. 50% of meal prices will be donated to United Way

5. Work Group Reports

- **BALANCED AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE (BARJ) – Gil Schohan reporting** The committee is working in sub-committees, including efforts around Victims of Juvenile Crime.
- **ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (ABCD) – Christie Corrigan reporting** Christie is developing connections with the New Hampton Day Care.
- **PREVENTION WORK GROUP – Micheline Roy reporting** Franklin Superintendent Jo Ellen Divoll and Jay Bachelder shared information with this Workgroup on how they reduced their very high drop-out rate. Jay Bachelder from NH Child and Family Services shared information about the course he teaches at Franklin High School targeted to teens at-risk for leaving school. Called "Healthy Choices", this course uses research-based curricula and consciously makes meaningful connections with these at-risk teens.
- **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Sarah Fox reporting** Strategies for identifying and recruiting Council members was discussed. A "Membership Committee" will be appointed to identify and recruit members, to mentor new Council members, and to foster good communication with current Council members. Anyone interested in serving on this committee should contact Sarah. Plans are underway to hold an "information and get acquainted session" for the County Convention. Sarah will meet with Alida Millham to discuss the best approach for this planned discussion with the Delegation.

Council members were asked to update their contact information in their packet and to list their areas of skill and expertise on this Contact Sheet. This information will be used to determine voids and will assist the new Membership Committee in member recruitment.

Sarah's report led to the following discussion points:

- *Nancy Porosky* thinks that Council meeting should include a formal opportunity to discuss other areas beyond the work of the standing Council committees. For example, Nancy is still involved with developing the Parent Support Group that she started last fall.
- *Sue Smith* reminded the Council that Workgroups are intended to be temporary and focused on specific tasks.
- *Emily Clement* thinks that Council members should be directly involved in their communities as well as serving on Council committees and Workgroups

- *Christie Corrigan* has used the Thank You notes, distributed last month to all Council members, to thank a New Hampton resident
- *Emily Clement* asked for a clarification as to what constitutes a “conflict of interest” for potential Council members. Alan explained that some service providers can be Council members if their work is done outside of Belknap County. The Council is able to deal with some perceptions of conflict of interest. Anyone who has someone in mind as a Council member but has questions re any conflicts should contact Alan first.

6. **Approve Minutes of February 16, 2007** A motion to accept the summary of the January 19, 2007 meeting of the Council was made by Rich Moed with a second from Micheline Roy. Motion carried.
7. **Public Comment** Katie Brandt from Barnstead commented on her interest in joining the Council. She is a new resident of Barnstead and is interested in helping to connect Barnstead residents to Council projects.
8. **Other** Sarah Fox read an email communication from a local teen who attended a recent presentation at a local middle school by Michael Prichard on “Bullying”. This communication shows the plight and desperation of many of our teens. The email follows:

Dear Mr. Pritchard, Thank you so much for coming to our school. You made a great impression on all of us. Everything you talked about really made me feel better and feel like I could stick up for myself and others. You know that girl you talked to that goes home to take care of her younger brother and sister, that’s just like me except my mother doesn’t have cancer, she has a jerk for a boyfriend that she’ll be marrying for the 5th time in May. She is always in the hospital with asthma attacks. It’s so hard at school because I try to make my life look perfect but it is not. My life is extremely hard. My sister is 15 and she does drugs and has been pregnant twice. Her first born died. My family isn’t really a family. It’s more like a place to live till your 18 then you move out. 11 of us kids have different fathers. Mine died in 911 and people at school make fun of me a lot because of it. I also get called fat and a whore and stuff like that. It hurts a lot and I cut myself because I could never take it out on my friends or my sister and brother. I have talked about people behind their backs and it comes back and hurts me twice as much. I guess it is a way to take out my pain along with cutting. There are so many people that needed to hear that. There’s so much at our school and homes that need work. Unfortunately things can’t change overnight. But thank you. You are a very amazing man and I’m glad you came to our school and got me and some others thinking. Thank you.

NEXT MEETING

WHEN: April 20, 2007 8-10:00am

WHERE: River Level Conference Room, Busiel Mill, Laconia, NH