

Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families

**CITIZENS COUNCIL
MEETING OF AUGUST 17, 2007**

SUMMARY

Attending: Sara Fox, Laurie Belanger, Micheline Roy, Rich Moed, Katie Brandt, Betty Anson, Rasim Gusinac, Sue Smith, Emily Clement, Nancy Porosky, Gil Schohan, Christie Corrigan, Mary Alice Warner.

Guests: Deb Rosato, Judge Martin, Dr. Jim Pilliod. **Staff:** Alan Robichaud

1. Welcome & Introductions – Sarah Fox convened and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Additions/Amendments to the Agenda – There were no additions or amendments. The agenda was accepted as distributed.

3. Overview of Early Learning Initiatives – Deb Rosato presented substantial information on various initiatives being performed in the region under the auspices of the Belknap County Early Learning Council (BCELC). She distributed information packets which explained the origins of the BCELC and its sub-components along with a visual of the networks helping to move the efforts along. Included were depictions of organizations involved in early childhood and family support initiatives, grant and funding opportunities, readiness activities and other programs and services that comprise the network of early childhood.

Deb mentioned the Strategic Plan performed by the BCELC last year and the four goal areas including as follows:

- Launching Early Childhood initiatives with the community;
- Engaging families and building relationships;
- Expanding and enhancing access to services; and
- Enhancing consistent quality in early childhood settings

Other services and programs that support early care and education of children include family resource centers, such as Giggles and Grins, where parents will find play groups for their children and resources and networking opportunities for themselves. These centers exist in Laconia, Alton, New Hampton and soon to be in Plymouth under the oversight of the Lakes Region Community Services Council. There are also childcare resources and referral services which coordinate professional development opportunities for childcare center employees and a Step Ahead program that provides court advocates for parents.

Community Partners for Children is the project to which Deb Rosato is most connected. Funded by carryover resources from a grant from Providian Bank, the Lakes Region United Way, and the WLNH Children's Auction, this project encompasses several initiatives such as readiness indicators (schools, families, services, communities, etc.); Success by 6 (a national United Way effort that focuses on Early Childhood); and Born Learning, a community outreach effort involving all sectors in the early learning and development of children.

The Citizens Council is a member of the Belknap County Early Learning Council and actively participates in many of the initiatives. Within the strategic plan, the Citizens Council was identified to connect the business community with the Early Learning Council. Together with Deb Rosato, Alan Robichaud will be hosting a group of business leaders at a luncheon presentation on August 22. The purpose will be to request business community participation in the early learning efforts through access to their members and communication channels.

Deb Rosato mentioned other upcoming events including a community event at Meadowbrook on November 1 featuring Jeanine Fitzgerald, a speaker in the early childhood field. Deb will send out more information as the date draws closer. She also mentioned the launch of a new website where all of the information she discussed along with other information for parents and professionals can be found. It should be up and running this week and can be accessed at www.lrecfr.org.

Katie Brandt, through her work with the NH Children's Trust Fund, spoke about the initiative to place parenting resources in every library in the state over the next couple of years. Kits containing DVDs and informational materials will be given to local libraries for giving out to parents. To date, kits have been prepared for the Center Barnstead library, Belmont and Laconia. The Citizens Council will be developing a press release and photo ops for the Belmont and Laconia libraries in the near future, and will promote the relationships among the Citizens Council, the Early Learning Council and the NH Children's Trust Fund.

Council member feedback on the presentation included comments about placing information in birthing clinics and doctors' offices; finding ways that volunteers can staff places where mothers go; personal presentation of information to parents about resources and initiatives; showing parenting tapes on LRPA; and connections to video stores and libraries where families can access information on DVDs, CDs, etc.

4. Council Member Recruitment Update – Betty Anson spoke about aligning Council initiatives with subsections of the Proclamation that will allow Council members to see a corresponding relationship between what we are charged to do and what we have done. This may make members more comfortable in describing what the Council is and how it fulfills its responsibilities. Betty further suggested that we ask the question: “What would not be happening, what wouldn't have gotten done, if the Council did not exist?” In lieu of having an outside speaker at the September meeting, the Executive Committee will entertain having a more facilitated discussion on this topic at its next meeting. This information will be helpful in not only developing recruitment strategies but also for upcoming budget discussions, public awareness information, convocation themes, and the like.

5. Director's Report – Alan Robichaud distributed the monthly Director's Report (see attached) and focused his comments mostly on the current discussions of program integration between the Youth Services Bureau and the Belknap County Restorative Justice program. In framing the future of juvenile justice services in Belknap County, the Council was asked whether they felt the resources of the Citizens Council were to be considered part of the mix of realigning existing resources to meet the needs of children and families. At issue is the purpose for why the Council exists; not to provide services and programs but to stimulate systems change, enhance services to children and families and provide a voice for advocacy in the political, funding and programmatic arenas of prevention, balanced and restorative justice and community development. Hence, Community Justice, not simply juvenile justice. For purposes of discussing the future options and vision for children and families in Belknap County, the Council voiced approval to proceed with discussions with the Program Integration Committee in creating options for future consideration by the Council and the County Commission.

6. Work Group Reports

BARJ Work Group – Gil Schohan and Laurie Belanger updated the Council on the Victims Rights subcommittee in both the planning for an October School Crisis Team workshop and the development of a Victims Satisfaction Survey. Sarah Fox suggested looking at the use of Survey Monkey as a means to tabulate the return of victims' surveys.

Prevention Work Group – Micheline Roy reported on discussions regarding how the community engages in the Student Aspirations component of *Follow the Child*. Deb Rosato has been developing alignment of early childhood indicators with the eight aspirations developed by the Qualia Institute and the work group is continuing to process other age categories to find relevant ways for the community to understand their contributions to youth. Dan Kusch of the Appalachian Mountain Teen Project has been asked to consider ways for youth to conduct focus group discussions with various sectors of the community as a means to

inform the work group of next steps in framing community responses to aspiration for youth. A combined meeting of the Upstream Professional Development Committee and the Council's Prevention Work Group will be held on Monday, August 20, at 1:00 at the NHCTC campus to further discuss community sector identification and focus group approaches. All are welcomed to attend.

Executive Committee – Christie Corrigan reported that Multi-Cultural Market Day is scheduled for Saturday, September 8. Council members are encouraged to attend and assist in supporting local groups or simply bring their families and enjoy the festivities. The committee also directed the staff to use paid ads in addition to other strategies for recruiting Council members.

Other comments - Katie Brandt reminded the Council of the NH Children's Trust Fund Annual Meeting on October 18th. The Council will host a table of up to ten people and the Council should plan to have a display for the event. Katie will approach Amy Hall to assist in developing a Council display for this. Katie will send information for registration to Alan for distribution to Council members, when it becomes available.

7. Approve Minutes of July 20, 2007 Council meeting – On a motion duly made and seconded (Emily Clement/Nancy Porosky) the Council approved the minutes.

8. Other Business – Sarah Fox announced that she will be leaving her position at the Department of Education to accept the position of Court Training Specialist for the Family Division of the Administrative Office of the Court, as of September 6, 2007. Good luck Sarah!

9. Public comments – There were none

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Robichaud

<p style="text-align: center;">NEXT MEETING DATE: Friday, September 21, 2007 TIME: 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM LOCATION: Busiel Community Room and Gallery Busiel Mill, Laconia</p>
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Director's Report

Citizens Council Meeting

August 17, 2007

CATEGORY	TOPIC & SPONSOR	STATUS
Community Forums	United way/Upstream Health Forum	September 18 th at Woodside Taylor Community – Theme: Chronic Illness
	Convocation - 2008	Save the date: January 22 nd and 24 th .
	Multi-cultural Market Day	September 8 – Downtown Laconia
Initiatives	Victims Rights Committee	Developing a Victims' Satisfaction Survey. Currently going through a committee vetting process. Seminar scheduled for October 18 th .
	Legislative Initiative	Legislative committee to meet on September 12. (Juvenile case tracking)
	UpStream Professional Development Session	Juvenile Justice Services in Belknap County – October 3, 2007 Woodside at Taylor Community
	School Crisis Team Workshop	Victim Rights Committee – Day-long series focused on safety and victim's response in schools – October 18, 2007
	Policy Summit	To identify needs of children and families in Belknap County and plan future collaboration among state, county and local partners.
Coalitions	Community Prevention Coalition (CPC)	Awaiting contract approval by Governor and Council (Expected 8/22/07)
	Follow the Child	Prevention Work Group to consider focus group discussions with various community sectors – w/AMTP Initiative continuing with Belknap County Early Learning Council – Chamber of Commerce and other Business Leader luncheon – August 22
	Safe Schools Coalition (WRSD)	Open Space Forum being planned for October 13th.
	Program Integration Committee	Youth Services Bureau and Restorative Justice examining potential consolidation scenarios
	Community Assessment	Preliminary discussion with United Way and Lakes Region Partners for Public Health – Development of a comprehensive community assessment and plan
Council Business	Council Recruitment and Community Outreach	Membership Committee to activate recruitment initiatives
	Chapter 263 – Funding for youth services	Monitoring Commission progress on legislation. Ongoing to June 30, 2008