

Kent County
Family & Children's
Coordinating Council



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KCFCCC Meeting Minutes

February 5, 2002, 12:00p.m. – 1:30p.m.

Kent County Health Department
700 Fuller Avenue, NE

Members/alternates present: Kimberly Bolhouse (for William Forsyth), Judge Nanaruth Carpenter (and Jack Roedema), Candace Cowling, Sandra Davis (for Tom Czerwinski), Mary Dengerink (for Bonnie Huntley), Beverly Drake, Lynne Ferrell (for Milton Rohwer), Jack Greenfield (for Mary Alice Williams), Karl Hascall, Debra Holmes Garrison, Marvin McKenzie, Miles Murphy, Christine Nelson, Patti Nussbaum, Diana Sieger (and Wendy Jackson), Andrew Zylstra

Members absent (with no alternate present): Ruth Buntin, Linda McDonald, Cathy Raevsky, Mike Weiler

Others present: Bethanie Archbold, Mary Swanson (staff); Fritz Crabb, Richard Gritter, Barb Hawkins Palmer, Lynn Heemstra, Kate Scheid

I. Welcome, Introductions, and Approval of Agenda

Diane Sieger opened the meeting at 12:15pm and asked the participants to introduce themselves. Ms. Archbold apologized for the bad coffee. There were no changes to the agenda.

II. Approval of Minutes

Karl Hascall moved to approve the minutes of the previous Council meeting. Candace Cowling supported. Motion carried.

III. FACTS Update

Ms. Sieger introduced Fritz Crabb from the United Way. She stated that Mr. Crabb had a long history of working to bring in resources for the community's youth.

Mr. Crabb presented an update on the FACTS (Families And Communities Together for Students) program, a collaborative venture between the Heart of West Michigan United Way and the Grand Rapids Public Schools to recruit 4000 volunteers for the HOSTS reading program and after-school programs. He stated that the campaign has already recruited 1400 volunteers, making it the largest sustained effort ever for the Grand Rapids Public Schools. He stated that main partners include United Way (18 volunteers), the City of Grand Rapids (160 volunteers), FIA, (40 volunteers), and several businesses that have given time to their employees to volunteer.

Mr. Crabb stated that volunteers are placed in after school activities or the HOSTS (Helping One Student To Succeed) program, a program that matches volunteers one-to-one with students who need help learning to read. Ms. Holmes-Garrison added that the HOSTS program is based on a national model that has been proven to be effective. She stated that volunteering is easy – each

student's individualized plan is prepared in advance, and the commitment is only one hour per week. She stated that volunteering is a good way to see immediate positive results for one's efforts. Mr. Crabb welcomed support from any Council members who wished to volunteer or help with the effort. He expressed special thanks to Kimberly Bolhouse, who recently signed up to volunteer.

Ms. Sieger asked whether United Way had considered sustainability for the program. Mr. Crabb reported that State funding for HOSTS would be available next year, but they are unsure after that. Ms. Holmes-Garrison stated that the partnership continues to look at options for sustainability, such as discussions with corporate donors and considering options to make the program less expensive. She stated that the program would welcome any ideas or support.

Ms. Sieger asked whether State TANF funds would be available to support the program.

Beverly Drake stated that there are not enough TANF funds for services to welfare clients. She stated that many agencies are now asking questions about where the TANF funds have gone. Ms. Drake suggested that the Council members find out where TANF dollars were spent and work toward having a voice in establishing priorities for the coming year.

Ms. Sieger asked staff to explore the possibility of inviting Mark Jansen or Sharon Parks from the Michigan League for Human Services to present information on TANF to the Council.

IV. Committee Updates

A. Early Childhood Committee

Candace Cowling reported that the committee is looking at both short and long term goals within the five key service areas: health, developmental assessments, family support services, parenting education, and early childhood education and child care.

Ms. Cowling moved to add Mary Hockwalt, Maria Pruis, and Toni Turner as committee members. Mr. Zylstra supported. Motion carried.

B. Elementary School Years Committee

Wendy Jackson reported that the committee is moving forward on its efforts to increase the number of children who access the summer food service program. She stated that the committee is currently focusing its efforts on increasing participation at current sites in Grand Rapids. The committee had organized a meeting with 30 neighborhood leaders for January 31, but had to cancel it due to the weather. The committee is working on rescheduling.

Ms. Jackson moved to add Carol Bragg, Nancy Reenders, and Michelle Seigo as committee members, and to remove Beth Vanderkamp, who has asked to step down. Ms. Holmes-Garrison supported, motion carried.

C. Middle & High School Years Committee

Patti Nussbaum reported that the committee has determined that it will focus its efforts on the children who are most at-risk in our community, and solicit their input on what keeps them from getting involved in available opportunities. She stated that the committee will ask kids

for their perspective on what opportunities they would like to see. She stated that based on this input, the committee will develop strategies and establish priorities.

Ms. Nussbaum reported that the committee's chair, David Van Rooy, has stepped down due to personal reasons. The committee will be considering options for chair at the next meeting, and will make a recommendation to the Executive Committee.

Ms. Nussbaum moved to add Brittany Barber, Jim Madole, and Kathy Humphrey-Vaughn as committee members, and remove David Van Rooy, who has asked to step down. Mr. Hascall supported. Motion carried.

D. Ongoing Family Support Committee

Sandra Davis reported that the committee is intentionally remaining small as it creates its action plan. She stated that the committee is committed to providing support to the caseworkers and meeting the needs that they identify. She stated that the first effort will be to develop an ongoing training program to help caseworkers identify substance abuse problems, engage the family in seeking treatment, and access community resources for treatment.

Ms. Davis moved to add Paul Cartright as a committee member, and remove Candace Cowling and Andrew Zylstra, who have asked to step down. Ms. Cowling supported. Motion carried.

V. Updates & Administrative Items

A. Annual Report

Ms. Sieger drew the Council's attention to the final 2001 Annual Report, included in their packets. She stated that she would be presenting the Annual Report to the Kent County Board of Commissioners at its February 14, 2002, meeting. Ms. Archbold added that extra copies of the report were available. If anyone is interested in additional copies of the report, please contact Ms. Archbold.

B. Letter to State re: Multiple Placements

Ms. Sieger directed the Council's attention to the draft letter to the State regarding the State's method of calculating repeat placements for Kent County. Mr. Gritter stated that the letter should acknowledge that we should be diligent in ensuring that every child is cared for with minimal disruptions, but that we should not be penalized for good respite placements that save placements and our humane system for receiving children into care.

Mr. Hascall stated that the letter should state Kent County's current responses to these children. He stated that by including current efforts focusing on these children, the letter will be stronger with its request that the counting method be different.

Mr. Gritter suggested that Doug Howard, Jim Boer, and the State representatives be copied. Ms. Sieger directed staff to make the changes.

C. SF/SC Multi-Year Planning

Ms. Archbold reported that the ad hoc committee has met and begun planning for the next multi-year plan. She stated that the committee is currently reviewing the community's

progress on the required SF/SC indicators. She stated that there was a consensus among the committee members that SF/SC funds should continue to be directed toward currently funded services.

D. PIT/MPCB Standing Committee on Housing & Homelessness

Ms. Archbold reported that the PIT Crew had issued a request for MPCB volunteers to serve on a joint MPCB/PIT Crew committee to address housing and homelessness. Ms. Archbold stated that one possibility would be to invite a member of the Housing Continuum of Care to be the Council's representative. She stated that having a Continuum of Care member as a Council representative would potentially strengthen ties between the two coordinating groups. Mr. Zylstra stated his support for the suggestion, and recommended that staff contact Betty Zylstra (no relation).

VI. Other Community Information & Updates

Mary Dengerink reported that Kent CMH has almost finished its Application for Participation, the document necessary for Kent CMH to continue to serve as the administrator of mental health services for the County. The document is due to the State February 22, 2002.

Mr. Zylstra reported that the Governor was to announce an early retirement incentive for State employees. He stated that the last time this happened, it had a very destabilizing effect on the system.

Mary Swanson reported that the Kent CMH board had recently voted to recommend to the Kent County Board of Commissioners to allow Kent CMH become an authority. She stated that the proposal would go before the Board of Commissioners' Legislative and Human Resources Committee in February, and, if recommended, to the Board at a later date. She stated that the process would incorporate opportunity for public comment.

Ms. Swanson announced that the recommendations from the Task Force on Health Care for People of Color would go before the Board for a work session on February 14.

Candace Cowling reported that Healthy Start has lost \$400,000 (approximately half of the program's budget) due to cuts. She stated that the program is looking at creative methods of funding, as well as considering the possibility of changing the distribution of clients between the home visiting and phone call components.

Mr. Zylstra reported that the State is currently emphasizing marriage and fatherhood programs. He stated that State funding will be made available for these initiatives shortly, and asked anyone interested to contact David Shroeder.

Ms. Sieger asked whether the purpose of the funding was to promote marriage. Ms. Drake replied that one of the four goals of TANF was to increase marriages, but only Oklahoma has made a significant effort toward that goal. She stated that the goal was now being pushed in both the State and Federal arenas. Ms. Drake stated that she was concerned that there were no concrete, proven programs being proposed. She stated that the community should be careful to use the opportunity in a thoughtful, positive way.

VII. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:30pm. **The next Kent County Family and Children's Coordinating Council meeting will be April 2, 2002, from 12:00pm – 1:30pm at the Kent County Health Department, 700 Fuller, N.E.**