

**Harney County Commission on Children and Families**  
**Annual Retreat Minutes**  
**January 12, 2010**

**Attending:** Dan Nichols, Chair; Ann Vloedman, Debbie Ausmus; Jean Hurst; Joyce Moser; Ramona Hofman; Sonni Svejcar; Cody Hodges; Patty Dorroh, Director; Maryanne Lovell, Prevention Assistant

**Absent:** Michelle Bradach

**Guests:** Jack Drinkwater, John Copenhaver, Glennda Hughet

**Call to Order.** Dan called the Meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. Guests were introduced to the membership.

**Approval of Agenda and Minutes:** A motion to approve both the Agenda and the amended December 8, 2009 Meeting Minutes, reflecting Shana Withee's corrected first name spelling, was made by Jean, seconded by Ann, and unanimously approved.

**CASA Update:** Glennda introduced herself by speaking about her position with Harney County and Grant County CASA. Glennda is presently going through her data bases and compiling data and documents. She meets in each county with its CASA volunteers once a month now and has four new CASAs in Harney County who are currently being trained. Approximately 37 Harney County children are currently being serviced by 14 CASA volunteers. Some CASA volunteers here have up to three cases they manage. In Grant County, there are 14-16 children being serviced with only six CASAs. Although both counties are close in population numbers, Harney County has had a heavier CASA caseload for many years and the reasons for that are not known. The CASA goal is to have one CASA for every child. Glennda thanked the commission for its \$2,000 donation for gas mileage this year. She has spent the first couple of months really getting to know the Grant County community, partners, and CASAs and is presently taking time to learn more about Harney County first hand. Patty stated that she is pleased with Glennda's work and has offered Glennda the use of our office when she is here in town.

**Local CCF Orientation Overview:** Patty presented an OCCF power-point presentation for the Commissioners. Topics covered an overview of the State Commission, local commissions, comprehensive planning, evidence-based practices, performance measures, community building, and resources.

**Discussion and Approval of Harney County Juvenile Crime Prevention (JCP) Plan:**

John thanked Patty for help in developing the Harney County JCP Plan, as this was the first time the document was required. The plan describes how the best investment for the JCP grant in Harney County is to continue to use the funding to pay staff involved with the JCP School Liaison Program. This program directly applies evidence-based prevention to the target population -- referred, unadjudicated youth who are at-risk of entering the Juvenile Court System as adjudicated youth offenders in the near future. It is a direct and effective use of JCP funds. Therefore, the Harney County JCP Plan for 2009-2011 is to continue the JCP School Liaison Program, seek local solutions for service delivery improvements, and if necessary, seek state level support to reduce a potential barrier seen in the current public school truancy statute, which we recommend be researched, clarified, and if needed, be revised to allow for earlier truancy intervention in the future.

During the discussion, John also noted that marijuana and prescription drugs are easier for youth to access than alcohol. He would like to see law enforcement on board and committed, keeping the momentum up on preventing teen drug use. There also has to be some way to assist parents to get the skills they need although there is no silver bullet for any of this. Prevention services are so important for these at risk youth who lack strong parenting support.

A motion was made by Ann, seconded by Jean and unanimously carried to approve the Harney County Juvenile Crime Prevention Plan.

**Partnership Agreement:** Commissioners commented that the Partnership Agreement, a biennial requirement, seemed straight forward. Patty read an email from Michelle, who is absent, but submitted her support to approve the document. Sonni moved, Joyce seconded, and the commission unanimously approved the commission recommendation that the County Court approve and sign the agreement. Patty will present it to the Harney County Court for their approval.

**OCCF Action Summit and Regional Meeting Notes:** Patty gave a power point presentation to summarize the Action Summit she recently attended. It was a good forum for revitalizing our work in the context of today's environment. At the most recent regional meeting, the "Community Schools" concept was discussed, which may be a model more suited to urban and suburban than rural communities. With Community Schools, kids can get all their needs, such as seeing a doctor, met. Sonni mentioned Cody's program, CHIP, as having a goal to offer a school-based health center to children.

**Lunch Break:** Maryanne thanked everyone who contributed to the generous potluck feast.

**Community Issues in Review:** Patty reviewed commission work and community issues such as the parent education program, the DFC grant, changes within the Kids Club, community outreach efforts, state commission requirements, and technical support provided by commission staff. There has been a lot of great work accomplished and some efforts are being sustained on their own, such as the Ready for Kindergarten program at the Crane School, which we initially funded.

**Comprehensive Plan Discussion:** Patty mentioned that the Comprehensive Plan on Children and Families Update is due to the state office by April 2<sup>nd</sup>. As an update, it will only address things that have changed and restate those that have not. The draft plan will come before the commission in March.

**Brainstorming:** A discussion of the job duties of our Regional Coordinator and others in the State Commission was held. Patty stated that the West side of the State does not utilize its Regional Coordinators like the East side does.

Sonni praised the Kids Club for what it is accomplishing in difficult financial times. Dan expressed his feeling that Great Start and the Kids Club are the most effective prevention efforts we fund now for our kids.

Jean sees that honing marriage skills is something that parents may need help with, as she sees a correlation about how parents get along with each other with how it impacts their children. Sonni knows of someone who teaches such a class.

People in Harney County have financial issues. The Burns Christian Church is offering a very good series, "Financial Freedom," which is expensive (\$90). Sonni suggested that scholarships be provided to those who cannot afford the classes.

Patty stated that teen pregnancy may be rising in Harney County. The Community Action Team (CAT) is trying to find out if kids are getting pregnant intentionally or if they don't have the information they need. Cody believes that having sex education available in school will help. He does not mean contraceptives. Sonni stated that the Big Buddy Mentoring Program was an eye opener for teens to see how challenging younger children can be.

Dan asked commissioners to consider funding and be thinking about how to make cuts if we have to do so. We need to identify what does not have alternative funding. Sonni stated that we are all on board, using our funds in the best way possible.

**Adjourn:** Dan thanked the Commissioners for all they are doing. Without further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maryanne Lovell  
Prevention Assistant