

# Harney County Commission on Children and Families

## Regular Meeting Minutes

### 04/10/07

Attending: Ann Vloedman (Acting Chair); Ramona Hofman; Jean Hurst; Lou Davies; Joyce Moser; Michelle Bradach; Sonni Svejcar; Kristi Curtis, Assistant; Patty Dorroh, Director

Absent: Debbie Ausmus; Dan Nichols

Guests: Debbie White; Mike Simpson; Gwen Haigh; Chris Phillips; Ruby Bottom

#### **Call to Order/Introductions**

Ann called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. Introductions were made.

#### **Public Comment**

Gwen reminded the commission that the Harney Partners Volunteer Banquet is coming up on April 26<sup>th</sup>. Ruby mentioned Diamonds in a Glass will be April 21<sup>st</sup>. Auction items include an African Safari, a week at a time share, and diamonds.

#### **Approval of Agenda and Minutes**

The agenda for today's meeting and minutes for the March 13th meeting were approved as written. The minutes from the Annual Retreat, January 16<sup>th</sup>, were approved. The date of the retreat was added to the minutes.

#### **Community Stewardship Corps- Program Update**

Debbie White introduced the new crew leader, Mike Simpson. The program has had two turnovers in the crew leader position this year. The students participate in the program three times per week to earn elective credits. Currently, there are three students in the program, but six students have been served since September. Three students from the program plan to graduate this year. Debbie receives referrals from the Alternative School, Gwen, and self referrals.

In September, the crew worked with the Ford Foundation on the library beautification project. This month the crew will begin clean-up at the Radar site. Debbie has one female student that will begin clerical work and mentoring at the TEC office soon.

#### **DHS Prevention Work: Changes**

DHS has recently begun implementation of the Oregon Safety Model, which puts the focus of child protective services on child safety. Oregon is one of the first states in the nation to take on this model. In 2004, Oregon had three deaths from child abuse that were highly publicized, which prompted the Governor to seek an evaluation of DHS by a national organization. The result of the Oregon Safety Model. In the past, DHS had made referrals and included case work that involved issues of the well-being of the child; now the focus will be child safety

and engaging families. Chris anticipates that there will be service gaps around child well-being that the community will need to fill. These gaps have not yet been identified.

During the months of January, February, and March, reports of child neglect have been rising in Harney County. Chris stated that neglect is hard to prove, and most reports don't have concrete evidence of harm. Neglect does the worst damage to child of all the different types of abuse. Most of the reports are of children in grades Kindergarten through Third grade. DHS would like to fund a home visitor to aid the parents of kindergarten students who are at-risk.

Chris mentioned there is a need for community parenting classes. The only parenting classes being offered right now for DHS parents are those by Steve Bull at HBH. Grant County used to offer parenting classes with a meal and childcare for six to eight week sessions. Michelle commented the tribe has offered parenting classes over the last four years. According to a survey completed by tribal members, members would like to have more parenting classes. On April 25 & 26, the tribe is bringing in a woman from Portland to talk about Positive Native American Parenting.

#### **Provider Reports on Funding and Program Capacity**

The Commission budget will be finalized this summer and numbers are still uncertain. We are not planning to conduct a Request for Proposal (RFP) process until Spring 2008. If some of our funding streams are increased, the providers were asked if and how they would expend additional funds.

Patty reported that Donna Schnitker would use the extra funding for Great Start and Healthy Start to increase program service (supplies and staffing), since both programs are underfunded.

Ruby from Boys and Girls Club stated she would use additional funding to provide programs for teens, and to replace or repair game equipment and increase local staff training. When Patty clarified that the funding she receives is targeted for quality child care or after school programs for children ages 6-12, Ruby assured the commission that any additional funding would be used for approved purposes, such as staff training and programs.

Gwen from Big Buddy Mentoring said she would use the funds to work with the Boys and Girls Club to pay for more field trips and activities. The Big Buddy Mentoring program would also like to look at having a website.

Debbie from Community Stewardship Corps plans to use any additional funding for salary, serving more students, and placing more students in jobs. The alternative school has between 20-30 students.

A motion was made, seconded, and it was unanimously approved that current providers be re-funded for another year without the need for a new RFP process. Should additional funding become available, the current providers would likely receive the additional funding unless other urgent local needs have arisen by that time.

### **Families in Transition: Update**

The homeless program has changed their name to Families in Transition. This program has served 40 kids this year. Gwen stated there is a need for transition housing and school supplies. Gwen has received some boxes of hygiene products from *Feed the Children*. Office Depot in Redmond has an abundance of backpacks that they are giving away, if anyone is interested.

### **Director's Report**

#### Provider Update:

- Quarterly Reports from providers are due this Friday. Data will be entered into the Fiscal Monitoring and Outcome Reporting System (FMORS) database.
- The Harney County Healthy Start program will undergo a site visit/ inspection on May 14<sup>th</sup>.
- CASA management is improving under Christie Timko's leadership.
- The answer to the question Ann Vloedman posed to the CASA Director was if the CASA program can receive donations specifically for the purpose of defraying the mileage expenses of the CASA volunteers. Christie Timko looked into it and the answer is: Yes, it's a local program decision that is allowable. Not only can such donations be accepted and used for that purpose, but state general funds are not prohibited for this purpose. This means that if the Grant-Harney CASA program receives an increase in funding for the next biennium, they can budget some of their CASA funding for that purpose.

#### Staff Update:

- Kristi continues to participate in various meetings.
- Patty attended the Eastern CCF Directors Meeting in Baker City on April 2<sup>nd</sup> where the comprehensive planning process and child care development funds were discussed.
- Patty will be attending a Data Analysis training in Pendleton on April 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Between now and the end of May, Patty and Kristi will be conducting interviews and conversations with community partners regarding the comp plan issues and potential strategies.
- Kristi will be taking a leave of absence beginning June 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### Legislative Update

The Governor's Recommended Budget provided restoration of some of the Basic Capacity (local staff and planning) funds that were cut beginning in 2003. The

Co-Chairs (Ways & Means Committees) budget provides no restoration of any of can't hire to hire to the 2 FTE level or leverage the funding and pursue grants with matching funds to the degree we'd like. The Co-Chairs budget also failed to fund anything for Homeless Youth and Community Schools, two state-level initiatives.

#### Community Partners

- Harney Partners: Volunteer Award Banquet will honor more categories of volunteers this year: scheduled for April 26<sup>th</sup>. A Farmer Comedian will provide entertainment.
- Diamonds in a Glass fundraiser for the Boys & Girls Club will be held on April 21<sup>st</sup> at the Elks Lodge.
- Community Action Team (CAT): Is on a good roll as it brings key partners together to work on sustainment of the Boys & Girls Club and strategies to reduce underage drinking, tobacco, and drug use.

#### Grants

- Patty submitted a grant application for our Healthy Start program by the March 30<sup>th</sup> deadline to the Childrens Trust Fund Oregon. We won't find out until June whether we were approved. Funds would help increase staff capacity for the short term and help phase in more community support to help the program be less dependent on external funding.
- Work on a Drug Free Community Grant for Harney County will begin in earnest this fall.

#### Burns Times Herald Article

April is Child Abuse Awareness Month and the BTH ran an article detailing our improvement in the direction of our child abuse and neglect rate.

#### Parenting Education and Training

Sonni is on the agenda to explain the *Love and Logic Program*. Over the next several meetings, we will hear about other programs so that we can become familiar with some of the successful programs available. Our comprehensive plan and the focus areas we come up with will further lead us to recommendations later in the year as to which, if any, programs we may want to pursue.

#### Reconnecting Families

Reconnecting Families is a state initiative with DHS and OCCF to incorporate further efforts to place children taken from the home into the custody of relatives, rather than strangers. Locally, Colleen Smerski has received the training. Local CCFs (Grant-Harney-Malheur) will be meeting to collaborate

on ways to make this happen in our region without the benefit of additional funding resources.

### **Comprehensive Plan on Children and Families: Local Process**

The commission is state mandated by Senate Bill 555 to create a Comprehensive Plan every six years. The commission needs to approve the local process before we begin. Patty briefed the steps that need to be taken to complete the Comprehensive Plan. The local process will be very inclusive in gathering community input. In addition to community partner groups, we will be seeking input from employers, the faith community, and individual citizens. The comments from under-represented groups, such as families at-risk, also be sought. Once input has been collected and statistical and data analysis is complete, Patty will be presenting the results to community groups. Patty would like to have the Comprehensive Plan drafted by August or September, commission review in October, commission approval in November and County Court approval in December. The Comprehensive Plan needs to be to the state office in January, 2008.

The motion to approve the local comprehensive plan process was made, seconded, and unanimously approved by the commission.

### **Love and Logic**

Sonni researched Love and Logic parenting classes on the internet. The basic concept of Love and Logic is to help adults raise responsible children and to teach children coping skills. They have parenting resources available in book, DVD, and CD formats. There are two parenting class facilitators in Bend and seven in Boise. Their classes are recommended for teachers and parents. A wide range of speakers are available for hire for seminars. Sonni will look into the cost of facilitators and speakers. This may be something that Harney Partners would like to take on for their Spring Conference next year.

Lou Davies mentioned the parenting classes offered by Steve Bull of HBH. Patty will try to arrange for Steve to be on next month's agenda.

### **Best Practices Topic: Juvenile Crime Prevention**

Kristi presented information on Juvenile Crime Prevention from the OCCF website. The most effective programs focus on reducing risk and enhancing protective factors, with an emphasis on primary prevention and early intervention. Prevention programs that work focus on identifying the risk factors for children in a particular community, ensuring programs are intensive with several contacts per week, building on juveniles' strengths, and beginning early in a child's life. Programs that don't work as well use scare tactics (pictures of violent scenes), separate aggressive students into a special group, or use programs that are too brief without positive support from the school. Risk factors include history of early aggression, rebellion, friends who engage in problem behavior, poor monitoring at home, poor emotional attachment to caregiver, parental drug or

alcohol abuse, lack of commitment to school, poverty, and high levels of transience and family disruption. Examples of best practice programs are Life Skills Training, The Perry Preschool Program, Second Step: Violence Prevention Program, and Bullying Prevention Program. Our community has a few of these programs in the schools.

**Late Items**

The commissioners would like to have an Executive Session at the next commission meeting to discuss the Director's salary.

**Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:58 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 p.m., at the State Office Building.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi Curtis