

Harney County Commission on Children and Families

Regular Meeting Minutes

3/13/07

Attending: Jean Hurst; Joyce Moser; Ann Vloedman; Ramona Hofman; Kristi Curtis, Assistant; Patty Dorroh, Director
Absent: Michelle Bradach; Debbie Ausmus; Lou Davies, Dan Nichols, Sonni Svejcar
Guests: Maryanne Lovell; Gwen Haigh; Christi Timko

Call to Order/Introductions

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

Public Comment

No public comments were offered.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The agenda for today's meeting and minutes for the January 16th retreat were tabled for approval at a later date because there were not enough commissioners present for a quorum.

Harney County Safe Kids and Safe Communities Coalition

Maryanne Lovell, the Coordinator for the Harney County Safe Kids and Safe Communities Coalitions gave an overview and update. The coalitions are funded by ODOT and the Alliance of Community Safety. The coalitions meet monthly on the third Thursday at noon at Glory Days.

Maryanne said their biggest project is providing car seats for the county. There is not a retailer in Harney County that sells car seats. She says she sells at least one car seat a week. The coalition has car seat clinics in June and September. They sold thirty car seats at their last clinic. There are two certified car seat technicians in our county, with one more receiving certification soon. The coalition charges \$35 per car seat if a family has a WIC or Oregon Trail card. If a family does not have a card, they are charged \$54 per car seat.

Another thing the coalition does is provide bike helmets. They sell bike helmets for \$5 each. Children can bring in used or cracked helmets to get a reduced price on a new one. The Bike Rodeo is scheduled for June 2nd. Children are taught the rules of the road by law enforcement and can license their bicycles.

On May 3rd, the coalition will be sponsoring a Safety Fair at Slater School. Students will learn water and fire safety, power line safety, medicine identification, etc.

At the high school level, the coalition does car checks, drug and alcohol prevention, and promotes safe choices. The coalition most recently brought the school zone flashing light to the front of the high school. The coalition would like to be able to get a flashing light for Hines Middle School. Funding is the big issue.

CASA Director's Report

Christie Timko, the new Grant-Harney County CASA Director, was introduced and provided an update. The CASA program is state mandated. Once a child is in the system, a CASA is assigned to the child. A CASA assesses the needs of the child and advises the court on the child's case. A CASA meets once a month with the child, foster parents and/or natural parents.

Our CASA program is a joint program with Grant County. The CASA program receives approximately \$12,000 per year from Harney County; Grant County provides a similar amount. There are nine CASA volunteers in our county. There are 44 children in care and each CASA should only have two cases at a time. One of our CASAs has nine cases right now.

Christie stated that the CASA program has recently moved into an office space at Grant County ESD. The ESD is providing many items for the office, but there is a lack of confidentiality at the office. The CASA program is in need of locking file cabinets to keep their files confidential.

There is a need for more CASA volunteers. CASAs are required to have 40 hours of training before they begin. The commitment for a volunteer is at least two years. A CASA spends about ten hours with their cases each month. They are required to attend court hearings and meet once a month with the other CASAs in the county. Christie would also like to have volunteer recruiters and volunteers to research funding opportunities. There is also one position open on their board. Currently, there are three Harney members and three Grant members. Christie has volunteer applications available. Patty suggested that we may be able to put the volunteer application on HCCCF website.

Ann asked whether HCCCF could help with reimbursing CASA volunteers for their mileage. Christie will look into that and report back later.

Director's Report

Provider Update:

- Providers are doing well. The 7th Quarter of the Biennium ends March 30th. Target outcomes are being met or exceeded.
- Our Healthy Start program will probably have a site visit/inspection from the OCCF Healthy Start office in May. Pam Eggleston is the new Family Support Worker. She replaced Jeanette Vinson and has received her training so she can do the home visiting now.

- The next Big Buddy Mentoring event is tomorrow night at the Boys & Girls Club.
- The Boys & Girls Club continues to attract children and youth. Their attendance numbers continue to grow and they offer a variety of positive activities.
- Gwen Haigh was selected for a prevention coordinator training series, which will require four trips to the Salem area over the next few months. This will build capacity in our community across many prevention areas. The school district will assist with her travel and lodging as far as they can; Patty offered to defray Gwen's travel and lodging once their funds for that run out.

Staff Update:

- Kristi continues to attend and participate in Harney Partners, CAT, Reinforcing Positive Youth, and Underage Drinking Prevention meetings.
- Patty continues to participate in the Head Start Parent Policy Council, Child Care Advisory Board, Local Interagency Coordinating Council, and CAT.
- Kristi and Patty were part of team of CAT members who conducted community interviews on the topics of availability and access by minors to alcohol and tobacco, and to marijuana and meth. The next step is to combine the individual interview scores to find our combined and then calculated score, which will indicate our community readiness level. From there, the CAT members can discuss ideas for appropriate action for our level of readiness.
- Patty will be on the agenda at the Harney ESD Board of Directors meeting tomorrow and plans to appear soon at a Hines Common Council meeting to orient and update them to the commission and its roles, to discuss the comprehensive plan, and answer questions.

OCCF Work

The OCCF staff has been busy finalizing the comprehensive plan guidelines. They kicked the process off on Feb 28th with a statewide teleconference attended by many state level community partners voicing their support for the comprehensive planning process.

The Leadership Institute scheduled for April was cancelled due to scheduling changes in the legislative session and required presentations by OCCF.

Community Partners

- CAT: Community Needs Survey had high participation. The greatest needs seem to be jobs and alcohol/drug issues. In April, the community's readiness level for addressing the availability and access to alcohol, tobacco, and drug by minors will be presented. After that, and as part of our comprehensive plan process, we can start to look at strategies for change.

- Harney Partners: The Volunteer Award Banquet is scheduled for April 26th at the Burns Paiute Tribe Community Center. More categories of volunteers will be honored this year.
- Reinforcing Positive Youth: 2nd Trimester event to reward youth who are on track across the areas of school attendance, passing grades, and no discipline referrals will be held next week.

Grants

- Our Healthy Start program did receive the \$3500 grant from the Community Action Agency (CAA). We may also receive it for a second year, as the CAA plans to reauthorize the funding of the 2006 programs for 2007.
- Kristi helped Patty with a grant we will be submitting to the Children's Trust Fund Oregon for Healthy Start. It's due March 30th. It's a two-year grant to 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.
- In the months to come, community partners will be deciding how to go about putting together the application for a Safe and Drug Free Community Grant. It will require a lot of work and coordination. Kristi and Patty are trying to get ahead on the writing side of things.

DHS Staff News Feb 2007

Patty was interviewed via phone by a DHS reporter and the result was an article detailing our improvement in the direction of our child abuse and neglect rate.

Comprehensive Plan on Children and Families: The Local Process

This year will be focused on developing a new Comprehensive Plan. We will need to identify 3-5 focus areas for the next six years. Funding will be tied to the comprehensive plan. Community partners will provide input. Patty and Kristi will begin interviews in April. Christie suggested having round table discussions with community partners. The approval of the local process will be on the agenda for next month. The commission will need to approve the Comprehensive Plan in November.

Best Practices Topic: Reducing Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Kristi presented best practice information from the OCCF website on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, focusing on youth prevention. Substance abuse leads to other problems such as truancy, teen pregnancy, and juvenile delinquency. Best

practices focus on the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse to reduce risk factors and increase adolescents' ability to succeed.

Based on research, several components need to be present to be considered best practices. These components are theory (principle and goals), low attrition (retention of participants), replication (used at many sites), cultural and age appropriateness, interactive teaching methods, family and community involvement, and long-term programs.

The Center for Substance Abuse has identified six prevention strategies for designing community prevention programs. Those strategies are information dissemination (lectures, brochures, etc.), prevention education, alcohol, tobacco, and other drug free alternatives (community activities/events), community-based processes (coalitions, community assessment), social policy and environmental approaches (changing policies and laws), and problem identification and referral (early intervention activities).

Best practice model programs include Life Skills Training, Reconnecting Youth, and the Seattle Social Development Project.

Local Research: Why do High Risk Families Come to Harney County?

Patty talked with several people in the community including the counselor at Slater Elementary School and Chris Phillips from DHS, about the perception of our increasing numbers of transient and high risk families. There is no objective data available on if/why high risk families are moving to Harney County. Some speculate the low cost of housing and the high unemployment rate may attract some families. One agency estimated that 80% of new students' parents are receiving unemployment benefits. Harney County has excellent services, such as housing and energy assistance. The reason may come down to those families having connections (family or friends) in the county, rather than a reason related to services.

Late Items

Jean mentioned her church members would like to start a parenting group/class. They would like some direction from the commission. Christie suggested talking to Linda Harrington from Grant County about their parenting classes. Patty and Kristi will do some research on best practice parenting classes and look into available curriculums. Findings will be discussed at the next meeting.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:44 p.m. The next HCCCF meeting is scheduled for April 10th at 2:00 p.m. in the State Office Building conference room.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi Curtis