



**STATE OF TENNESSEE  
COUNCIL ON CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH  
YOUTH TRANSITIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL**

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Youth Villages  
3310 Perimeter Hill Drive  
Nashville, TN 37211  
June 20, 2019  
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Attendees:**

Phil Accord	Ryan Graham	Mactrice McCorkle	Jordan Scruggs
Jennifer Aitken	Debra Granger	Melissa McGee	Becca Seul
Jonathan Berestecky	Daniel Haile	Michelle McGruder	Wendy Shuran
Melissa Binkley	Tamara Hall	Teryn McNeal	Lindsay Sinicki
Hope Bond	Paul Highfill	Sarah Metter	Julie Smith
Tara Bray	Kurt Hippel	Jama Mohammed	Garrett Spurlin
Garla Camarillo	Kimberly Holst	Jerri Moore	Steven Taylor
Kelli Celsor	Laura Hones	Jessica Mullins	Heather Taylor Griffith
Katelyn Collins	Crystal Hutchins	Kayla Mumphrey	Jerresha Tinker
Rob Cotterman	Jalisa Jackson	Jill Murphy	Heather Tribble
Alex Davidson	Ashley Jasinski	Yolanda Neal	Eric Valinor
Fay Delk	Cheryl Johnson	Gigi Pasley	Joseph Valinor
Brenda Donaldson	Leslie Judson	Hope Payne	Keri Virgo
Anjanette Eash	Sumita Keller	Steve Petty	Don Walker
Kendall Elsass	Catherine Kercher	Taylor Phipps	Natalie Webb
Carey Farley	Caroline Kindiger	Laurie Powell	Tounley White
Brittany Farrar	Diana Kirby	Linda Powell	Alysia Williams
Laritha Fentress	Zykela Lee	Rosemary Ramsey	Bianca Williams
Krystal Fortney	Rebekah Lewis	Athena Randolph	Jules Wilson
Randi Finger	Pam Madison	Brent Robinson	Tammy Wilson
Jane Fleishman	Alicia Martin	Danielle Rochelle	Tonya Wood
Kim Fyke-Vance	Christy Martin	Willie Ross	Layla Wright
Mae Gordon	Courtney Matthews	Christine Samuel	

## **I. Welcome, Introductions and Announcements –Sumita Keller, Director for Statewide Partnerships, TCCY**

Keller called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m. She welcomed everyone and commended Melissa McGee for her work with CCMH and SOCAT, Steve Petty for his work with YTAC, and gave a brief background on each Council. Keller reviewed the agenda and highlighted some of the programs attendees would be hearing from today. She then invited TDMHSAS Assistant Commissioner, Rob Cotterman, to provide a welcome. He thanked everyone for coming and noted excitement for the meeting and valuable information.

Keller thanked everyone for making attendance a priority and asked for introductions and announcements. She thanked Youth Villages staff hosting the meeting and addressed a few housekeeping matters before moving through the agenda. She reminded attendees of August dates for the next CCMH and YTAC meetings and asked attendees to sign one of the sign-in sheets, as they are essential for reporting requirements related to the federal System of Care grant.

Announcements included:

- Keller noted that there are post-it notes on tables and placed throughout the room. These are for questions that you would like to share with the Young Adult Leadership Council during the final portion on the agenda.
- McGee reminded everyone to make sure they signed in.
- Keri Virgo, TDMHSAS, announced that Lindsey Sinicki is the new Program Manager for SOCAT.
- Phil Accord announced Chambliss Children’s Home is receiving a financial gift from a Chattanooga community member that will provide funding for a second independent living facility. This assistance will offer six to seven new units for transitional youth.
- Rosemary Ramsey announced that The Victory Lap, a program housing youth in assisted living, received its first client and are continuing to accept referrals.

## **II. Approval of Meeting Summaries**

**Motion to accept the April 25, 2019 CCMH meeting summary. Jill Murphy motioned, Keri Virgo seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

The May 2019 meeting summary for YTAC will be approved at the YTAC meeting in August.

**III. Middle Tennessee State University- Next Step: Becca Seul, Associate Director, MT One Stop, MTSU; Danielle Rochelle, Coordinator of Outreach and Support Programs, MTSU**

- Becca Seul gave history to the Next Step program and the mission to encourage and empower youth, specifically those coming out of foster care, independent living as minors or facing homeless. The Next Step began in 2008 and has grown to serve over 2000 youth during the past school year, primarily through student mentors, as well as staff.
- The program recognized the needs of students in these circumstances, specifically a lack of access to basic needs, such as healthcare.
- Additionally, Seul explained the One Stop program at MTSU. As a large campus, an admissions recruiter has a job to help youth with admissions, housing, student support services, enrollment services, and financial aid. One Stop staff helps students navigate funding and other needs within these areas.
- Danielle Rochelle shared the importance to partner directly with community partners (DCS, YV, Rutherford County ATLAS, Greenhouse Ministries, Journey Home, CASA and many more) to find resources and assistance for the youth. Community Partners help with food pantries, housing, counseling, and more when needs arise.
- Rochelle also explained the Mentor Program, where current students from similar backgrounds assist the students in the program. Seul reemphasized the importance and need for mentors that are closer in age and background to the students and also some of the hurdles that arise include money for enrollment, housing deposits for year-around housing, program awareness to all students, and retention rates.
- Rochelle offered data to support continued emphasis on the program. Prior to One Step, retention rate was at 42% for this demographic; since One Step, retention has risen to 47%.
- MTSU also offers a food pantry for students in need with 5500 students served since the food pantry started in 2012, but need for continued partnerships and expansion was noted.
- Rochelle offered history on recent legislation (TN HB 1000/SB 763), just passed and will be effective July 1<sup>st</sup> that says all colleges and universities must have a staffed homeless liaison to assist students. This person does not have to be a new person, just a designated person to provide help finding housing and resources at the college or university.
- Rochelle also explained the federal bill (HEASHFY) helps to clarify and simplify the process of determining a student (up to age 24) as homeless or at-risk, including support for transitional youth to receive free tuition and housing. College and universities must actively recruit students of that population.
- Rochelle and Seul offered their contact information and websites for more questions and information.
- Question from Ramsey about tuition for students and how grants and other funding is accessed for students in need. Rochelle explained how searches are done with their help to find all students grants and funds to start and complete school.

**Keller paused meeting to mention that Phil Accord has proudly served as Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth Commission Member for three separate three-year**

**terms, with his last term ending recently. She asked everyone to recognize and thank Accord for his years of service to the Commission.**

**IV. Resource Centers: Youth Connections- Pamela Madison, Monroe Harding; Christy Martin - Project Now-Helen Ross McNabb; Partnership-Chattanooga-Catherine Kercher**

- Pamela Madison discussed Opportunity Passport program teaching youth budgeting to help students start and manage a bank account. The account has no fee and saved funds are matched by Monroe Harding up to \$3000 to help students move to independence and provide sound financial decisions.
- Madison explained the High Step Program to help students with anxiety and disabilities. They just celebrated 17 graduates; 16 HS and one college. One student just returned from a trip abroad to Australia with assistance from this program.
- Madison discussed other programs including work force assistance program, paid internships, sexual health education for females and males, Youth Connection, and Independent Living programs. Independent Living programs include 19 beds in Nashville for former DCS custody youth and Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) housing for youth. VOCA students are also strongly encouraged to attend counseling and receive assistance for daily living activities.
- Madison showcased a book published through Monroe Harding by some of the youth and shared a video from the annual Monroe Harding fundraiser with interviews and explanations from transitional youth receiving their services.
- Christy Martin discussed Project NOW at Helen Ross McNabb. Project NOW stands for Navigating Opportunities that Work and currently serves 55 active and inactive youth. Thirty-seven new youth completed Opportunity Passport classes with 481 youth attending 82 additional classes held at the Resource Center including cooking, sewing, and numerous other things.
- Martin also shared information about community partners who support the program, including Walmart, a local self-defense organization and officers who provide driving safety and instruction classes. Helen Ross McNabb also has a training department that volunteers to train youth in CPR, First Aid, and IED certifications. UT Extension provides nutrition, job skills, finance, cooking, and other hands-on classes to youth. Plans for next year include continuation of UT Extension classes with a showcase on special skills.
- Partnering with A Step Ahead has made sexual health classes available so that youth can learn about STDs, birth control, cost of raising a child, social media safety, healthy relationships and consent, and review of sexual health topics to males and females separately.
- Martin offered her contact information and Facebook page for further questions and information.
- Catherine Kercher from Partnership-Chattanooga, RCYC offered updates from the organization. Goal is to help youth find their path in life. VOCA grant (14-24) has helped to add therapy, art therapy, music therapy, college navigation, and expansion of Independent Livings. Funding has been received for sexual health education for both males and females. Kercher mentioned the RCYC rebrand is “for the youth, by the youth.”

**South Memphis Alliance was unable to attend meeting.**

## **V. Legislative Session 2019 Wrap Up, Steve Petty, TCCY**

- Petty provided explanation to his 2019 Legislative Summary. Petty highlighted changes to several bills and approved funding. Highlights include:
  - Changes to the statute of limitations to juvenile offenses committed after July 1, not current or prior offenses.
  - Expansion of the offense of indecent exposure to public restrooms.
  - Legislation addressing school safety. He said this bill provides funding for more school resource officers. It allows every school to fund and hire a post-certified resource officer for every school.
  - Increase and addition of funding, including mental health funding, with some identified for children's mental health services .
  - Legislation allowing children with severe health needs to apply for healthcare without consideration of parents' income.
  - An increase in funding for home visiting services. He said the increase in funding is non-recurring. \$1M.
  - Additional funding for TN CASA increases current programs with 3 new counties to total 59 CASA programs/counties.
- Petty noted a bill proposed so the Governor can create a block grant to supply funding for TennCare program without penalties for accepting the block grant for TN.

## **VI. Networking Lunch**

## **VII. Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs: Jama Mohamed, Youth Program Coordinator, Family Voices of Tennessee**

- Jama Mohamed from Family Voices of Tennessee serves as Youth Program Coordinator and a father of a child with special needs. He is an artist, so he worked with Family Voices of Tennessee to create a short film and screen the film to spread awareness about using art as a tool for coping.
- He discussed how art can be a form of communication without a facilitator or an interpreter. His background in art and design helps him be creative with his work with families.
- Youth Programing and their Youth Advisory Council helps the center to be more youth-driven and empowers youth to tell their stories. These programs help youth grow and learn from each other. "Advocating 4 U(S) is an upcoming event to allow youth to gather and talk about transitions. Mohamed mentioned that everyone can follow in social media through Instagram.

## **VIII. YVLifeSet: Youth Villages**

- Heather Tribble presented about YV LifeSet, began in 1999 to improve foster care outcomes by focusing on youth who are aging out of foster care. Specialists help youth identify

educational goals, resolve housing issues, gain life skills, address physical and mental health needs, and learn about healthy relationships as well as set up and attend college tours.

- In February 2019, YV has taken over case management for DCS and extension of foster care.
- YV LifeSet has strategies in place to help staff understand the legal system for youth and young adults better and have implemented trainings for staff and the youth they serve. Legal representation for young adults (with prior charges) also improves positive outcomes is also a goal.
- Philanthropic dollars are available to provide services for a limited amount of youth who have not been in DCS custody.

**IX. DCS: Courtney Matthews, Independent Living Director**

- Courtney Matthews spoke about the Office of Independent Living through the Department of Children's Services. This office is for youth populations ages 14-16 custodial youth and ages 17+ for custodial youth with a Transition Plan.
- Matthews also shared about the Extension of Foster Care (EFC) program transition to with Youth Villages in February of this year for youth who turn 18 while in foster care. Tennessee participates in EFC while some states do not. Two new eligibility criteria have been added: the youth has to have aged out of foster care, completed high school, enrolled in college, community college or vocational education program, and/or unable to work or participate in a secondary education program due to health.
- By transferring EFC to Youth Villages, the eligibility criteria for LifeSet has been adjusted, including expanding age qualifications to 16-22 years, young adults who were in a congregate care placement at age of 18, young adults who have been adopted, young adults who are currently or previously placed, among other changes.
- Matthews shared information about Leadership Academy Camps and Glam Camp. It is the 2<sup>nd</sup> year for Glam Camp with approximately 31 girls while the boys attended the Jim Casey Convening 2019.
- Matthews showed a video of youth participating in the Leadership Academy Camps. She reported that these camps allow youth to build relationships, connect with each other, and participate in curriculum when they attend.

**X. Oasis Transitions: Austin Lewis, Program Manager, Oasis Center**

**McGee announced the Austin Lewis had a family emergency and could not attend.**

**XI. Emerging Identifies: TDMHSAS Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC), Jules Wilson, Youth and Young Adult Coordinator, TN Department of Mental Health; Mae Gordon, Statewide YALC Member; Rebekah Lewis, Statewide YALC Member; Gigi Palsey, Statewide YALC Member; Jordan Scruggs, Statewide YALC Member; Joseph Valinor, Statewide YALC Member**

- Wilson explained YALC and how they help with technical assistance for SOCAT, Healthy Transitions, and wherever else needed. She also shared additional information about the upcoming Youth Leadership Academy.
- Wilson introduced members of the Young Adult Leadership Council and their presentation on Emerging Identities of youth. Lewis discussed the goals of YALC, including the desire to be voices within the community to help understand more about resources within the community to share with youth and young adults.

- Wilson asked everyone to think about who is not in the room that may need to have a voice in the conversation. Do you have all organizations represented with all races, ethnicities, and religions?
- Valinor discussed autonomy, asking “What is one way you’ve had your autonomy taken from you in a big way? How has it negatively impacted your life? If you could change that situation so that you retained your autonomy, how would it be different?” Members of the panel took turns sharing their answers.
- Valinor discussed how autonomy as it relates to trauma-informed care is important. Wilson talked about how traumatized youth can be re-traumatized and their autonomy is taken away when systems become involved. How to keep autonomy when dealing with traumatic experiences is important for youth to know.
- Scruggs discussed how young adults are the experts in what youth and young adults need, with organizations being the resources. Both are needed in the room for support, trust, and opportunities. Scruggs discussed reaching out to others “step into your own power.” Scruggs trains other to use social media as an entrepreneur.
- Palsey discussed differences within individuals when determining needs and finding paths to take for needs and discussed achieving equality by removing stigma and shame. People forget to keep the individual-ness when trying to be fair.
- Gordon discussed not being invisible. Gordon talked about how only two percent of black people seek mental health treatment and how black youth may struggle with being ashamed, afraid, or unwilling to identify with a mental health disorder.
- Lewis discusses youth and “their place at the table.” Lewis talked about making her disability as invisible as she can and how living through mental health is hard. She suggested organizations make safe spaces for youth to have better conversations and consider who else needs to be in the room. Lewis thanked everyone for inviting them to talk and everyone for listening.
- Wilson answered audience questions about how to become involved if you are a youth between the ages of 18-30 by inviting and encouraging them to participate to learn, share, and join other youth who understand.
- Scruggs and Palsey also answered how to help youth manage and navigate life and the importance to be independent and learn basic life skills, health care, and access to resources. Lewis suggested education should include neuroscience from as early as 7<sup>th</sup> grade so that youth can better understand how the brain develops and how medication affects the brain.
- Audience participant asked “What do youth need?” The panel all answered “You” to the audience, in reference to organizations, resources, and help navigating systems. Gordon also reiterated the need for safe spaces to learn and network about available opportunities and resources. The panel also suggested Social Media as a way to learn. Lewis suggested reducing the age requirement for youth to be able to work with some organizations to help youth gain knowledge and experience sooner.
- Wilson closed the session with a reminder that everyone does not have to be perfect or have all the answers. Young expertise is valuable even with inexperience and without knowing everything.

## **XII. Closing**

Keller thanked attendees for being present until the end.

**Next CCMH Meeting Dates:**

Thursday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>

Thursday, October 10<sup>th</sup>

**Next YTAC Meeting Date:**

Thursday, August 8<sup>th</sup>

Thursday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>

Meeting adjourned at 2:46 p.m.

**Council on Children’s Mental Health Purpose Statement**

*Design a comprehensive plan for a statewide System of Care for children and families that is family-driven, youth-guided, community-based, and culturally and linguistically competent.*