



STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Andrea Jackson Building, 9th Floor
502 Deaderick Street
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0800
(615) 741-2633 (FAX) 741-5956
1-800-264-0904

Youth Transitions Advisory Council

November 20, 2014

12:30 pm – 3:30 pm Central Time

Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee

MEETING SUMMARY

Participants:

Dave Aguzzi

Pamela Cash

Rebecca Carmack

Tyrone Copeland

Tameka Daniel

Karin Freyer

Kaila Gilbert

Joe Goldsmith

Ashley Harrington

Ginger Harris

Briana Johnson

Mike Leach

Melanie Malabanan

James Martin

Linda O'Neal

Jack Parks

Steve Petty

Clayton Ramsey

Erica Spencer

Sherry Smith

Jill Watral

Welcome and Introductions (Steve Petty)

- Petty welcomed everyone. Explained he would chair meeting in absence of Executive Director O'Neal.
- Petty introduced intern. Thanked her for assisting with meeting notes.
- Meeting agenda changed since September due to inability to secure presenter on transportation issues.

Acceptance of September Meeting Summary (Petty)

- Petty asked members to review the September Meeting summary and asked for revisions or edits.
- **IT WAS MOVED (HARRINGTON) AND SECONDED (DANIEL) TO ACCEPT THE SEPTEMBER 2014 MEETING SUMMARY. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Department of Children's Services and Office of Independent and Transitional Living Update – Michael Leach, Director, Office of Independent and Transitional Living, Department of Children's Services.

- Life Skills. DCS recently did life skills survey for 14-18 year olds and had a huge response rate of 949 surveys back. The survey asks for perspectives, knowledge, and confidence on life activities. There was strong variety of responses.

- December 5th, DCS holding two webinars for whoever wants to learn about life skills being addressed, along with weaknesses. There will be a morning and afternoon session. DCS will follow follow up with providers, etc and ask for improvements.
- Permanency Plan Redesign. Long-term project where experts can give insight and feedback on plan.
- New Federal Legislation, the Sex trafficking and Strengthening Families Act. Act includes credit checks for 14 year olds and up.
- Teachable Moments, curriculum for foster parents for teaching life skills. Survey results will be included in curriculum and training. Creates policies around reasonable and prudent parenting (more responsibility and decision-making for foster parents) Less oversight for DCS, more opportunities for foster parents to create normalcy for youth living in their homes.
- Currently updating handbook for foster parents.
- Walk to Beautiful, in October with Jimmy Wayne, 250 youth attended, over 500 present. Sessions covered employment, sex education and health.
- Meeting with HUD and housing authorities in Chattanooga tomorrow morning over phone call. Similar meeting in Knoxville for more info on transitioning youth.
- Collected data from 17 year olds 875 survey done by Youth Villages. Data from surveys sent to Administration on Children and Families. DCS will be doing similar survey on 21 year olds.
- Moved 5 kids up the waiting lists at Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology..
- DCS is doing more outreach among 21-25 year old youth to make sure they are aware of TennCare eligibility for former foster youth under Affordable Care Act.
- Began pilot for new program United Project. Collaboration with DCS, Pencil Foundation, and Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) for young people in foster care going to MNPS schools Meeting with business partners. Hopes to reach 70 young people in program, then spread word. Two young people now engaged in pilot.
- Leach comments we have more in extension of foster care now than we ever before. Mentions they have served many young people.
- Harris mentioned Youth for Youth (partnered with Youth Connections). Good attendance, functioning since September. Currently preparing youth for legislative day on the Hill. Blair, DCS Legislative Liaison came to speak with youth. Next meeting scheduled for December 10th. They are in planning process for statewide board. Petty asks if travel, etc is covered for youth. Harris affirms. Costs are covered for legislative day on the hill.
- Leach mentioned that Chattanooga starts Youth for Youth Board in late November. Hopefully 4 boards with youth involvement this year.
- Leach asks if anyone in attendance know youth who can be on a statewide board. Youth can do policy and legislative work while having fun. Trying to get youth voices in the system and explain their struggles and needs.
- Leach: Recommendations for Dropbox etc not enjoyed by DCS. Had conversation with Youth Villages in Florida on file sharing that is youth-built, but costs “a fortune”. Petty said it is great that they are trying to build access to necessary documents for youth.
- Leach asked for further questions. Petty thanked Harris and Leach for their work and the update.

Update from Resource Centers

Pamela Cash, Youth Connections at Monroe Harding

- Cash says they continue to enroll youth in program. Trying to increase participation for Pregnancy Prevention program and Sexual Health Education. Asks members if they know any

young ladies who could benefit. Teaches youth how to make better decisions and keep themselves healthy and safe. Offers to give contact information.

- Received visit from Kelly Clarkson who is doing benefit concert December 20th at Bridgestone Arena. Monroe Harding and three other non-profit programs will benefit. Filmed a video with two youth at Monroe Harding Youth Connections. The video will be screened at the concert. Other artists also on the bill.
- Having graduation celebration this year for 20 young people who received GEDs through Youth Connections. One youth was outstanding and now qualifies for Hope Scholarship and just moved into Independent Living apartments. Gearing up for holiday celebration in mid-December. Cash thanked the donors who provide gifts, cards, and essentials.

Tameka Daniel, South Memphis Alliance

- Exceeded goal of getting survey for youth in program considered active.
- Starting Connections program in January aimed directly at juvenile offenders.
- Alliance continues to plan recreational activities and provide educational supports.
- In conversation with Job Corps for youth on borderline of dropping out of school and may need more structure. **Excited for implications for Memphis.**

Jack Parks, Chattanooga/Hamilton/Southeast

- Parks notes that they begin Youth for Youth board next month. We will be hiring youth to work for the board.
- UTC Criminal Justice Department and Crisis centers, reaching out to teach teens about domestic and dating violence.
- Opportunity Passport still enrolling. Career Development Program has four young adults.
- After school tutoring program has 3 young adults, tech-based reading has a few young men. Really trying to improve reading levels. Ramsey asks about resources and advice for youth who was unable to finish GED program. Parks asks to continue discussion afterward. Ramsey thanked him.
- Teamed up with Pathways Young Adult Program, They provide vouchers, they do case management. Hopefully begins December 1st.
- Local Blue Cross and Blue Shield hosting events for the rest of the year
- Mentions Jimmy Wayne event. 250 youth, no behavioral problems. Attributes this to foster parents and kids. Many young adults were involved in what was going on.
- In the implementation and planning period on many projects.

Michael Leach for Project Now

- Leach mentions that Project Now enrolling youth, a lot of work with Door Openers and KnoxWorks foundation in East Tennessee. Event coming up on workforce connections.

Update from Youth Villages Transition Living Program

Joseph Goldsmith, Transitional Living Coordinator, Youth Villages

- Goldsmith said that 13 offices have peer-to-peer holiday parties being planned. Finished NTYD surveys.
- 875 served this fiscal year with DCS and private grant, which is more than they served in any previous year.
- On clinical trial, began October 2010. Received initial impact results that are unpublished. Appears that they are achieving good outcomes in a number of life skills areas which suggest transitional living has positive impact. Have been waiting for results of clinical trial 4 years.
- February 11th is the Youth Villages Day on the Hill.

- Dec. 2nd, Department of Labor meeting with young adults to test out employment and resource tools.
- Goldsmith mentions meeting with Leach on policy forum and needs of youth. Leach says they were invited to speak about social capital and well-being in Washington. Good legislation coming out soon for child welfare population. Credits people around the country for being involved in advocacy works.
- One of their Memphis youth selected for highly competitive program in D.C. Now works as an employee D.C. and spoke in front of 2500 employees at Youth Villages conference.

Update from Treatment and Recovery for Youth Grant

Ashley Harrington, Centerstone

- Harrington mentions that Tanguay not here, but wanted to pass on that Annual report is submitted and enrollment numbers at 102% of target.
- Working to increase Youth Voice, inviting clients to participate in meetings like this, but must be cautious because of truancy.
- Hosting information settings (Knoxville, Memphis, Nashville) to talk about the model Centerstone is using. Meetings will be held in late January, trying to reserve spaces. More information will be emailed soon to confirm dates and locations.
- Would like to ask for help of group concerning surveys. Presented to 150 people about services and grant. Survey completion rates are low (the day of and thirty days later). The second component presents complications that cause low turnout. Centerstone is catching up but started off behind due to late notice and would love guidance on surveys. Mentions that survey takes two minutes. Would love staff to fill out survey.
- Petty says share it with him and he will spread it to the group. Advises that she share it with McGee for CCMH group.
- *Clayton Ramsey and Erica Spencer, Pathways*
- Ramsey says that Pathways is focusing on finding jobs for their transitional youth. Received some favorable results. Spencer says 100% of youth have reported finding employment to be important goal of treatment. 8 youth found jobs within 3 months. Spencer credits the therapists for their dedication and approaches for year one success. Currently has 17 youth enrolled.
- Grant funding helped Pathways to locate clothing for interviews, helped out tremendously. Program appears to be working well.
- Spencer says looking at college applications and jobs for youth and many youth have requested clothes, items for cleanliness.
- Petty thanked them for sharing and filling the room in on details.

Update from Tennessee Housing and Development Agency

Sherry Smith, THDA

- Received approval to partially fund Monroe Harding with grant. 4 applied, 3 were in middle TN, 2 received them. Typically, they do not fund large centers Shelby, Knox, Davidson. Groups have been informed (though Cash says she was not aware.)
- Housing trust fund and emergency solution grant will have workshops on January 22nd and 23rd. Applications will be on website, due March 13th. ESG and Housing Trust Fund. Funding would come July, 2015. Leach says this gives more time for organizations. Smith says these are matching funds. They are waiting for federal government to approve funds, due Dec. 11th for current fiscal years. Waiting for D.C. to pass budget.

- Smith informs group of grants available for transportation issues, usually \$250 youth can apply for once or twice a year. Smith asks if youth are aware of it. Petty says he doubts it, wonders if transportation grants are tied in with TANF.
- Petty says he will be watching for the email and will send grant information out.
- Leach thanks Smith for coming, helping them get involved and think through issues revolving around housing. Smith asks for information to events happening within members' regions.

Update from TN CASA

Karen Friar—TN CASA

- Friar says Fostering Future grant from national organization allows them to train volunteers on the specific needs of older youth, as opposed to just advocating for younger child. Training in Franklin, Crossville, and Athens. Goal is to churn out 50 volunteers for the year; 35 training now. A few anticipated in West Tennessee. Early Tennessee trainings appear to go well, many opportunities to spread resources.
- Having trouble pairing up CASA volunteers with older youth involved. Goal 50 but only 8 paired up. Trying to get judges to appoint volunteers with older youth. Petty asks if they have met with judges and communicated their goal of working with 50. Friar says they have not; director has been meeting with several judges elsewhere. Leach asks Friar to clarify way she needs help. Petty offers aid on having these conversations, Leading meetings and co-facilitating meetings with CASA staff.

Feedback on Annual Report delivered October 30, 2014

- Petty mentions that report was submitted in timely fashion with few numeric changes. Asks for feedback. Smith says it read very well.

Future Meeting Topics

- Smith recommends speaker from Fair Housing Council for a resource at future meetings.
- O'Neal says previous meeting suggested TN Disability Rights representative might be relevant for presentation in May. DCS has done much for DIDD youth but other youth with other disabilities may not be benefited as well. Briana can provide information on this topic; recently received disability grant that can provide additional information if they do move in that direction. Will meet with Susie Bork and see if they can tie the two together to be beneficial.
- Petty asks for any other ideas or issues people would like to bring up. No response. Mentions that it is 1:55 but people are free to stay in room until 3:30pm.

Other Business

- There being no other business, the meeting adjourned.