



STATE OF TENNESSEE  
**TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

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**Youth Transitions Advisory Council**  
October 4, 2018  
12:30 pm – 3:30 p.m. Central Time  
Goodwill Industries of Middle Tennessee  
937 Herman Street, Nashville, Tennessee 37208

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Participants:**

Dave Aguzzi  
Jon Berestecky  
Liz Blasbery  
Chelsea Clark  
Katie Creighton  
Fay Delk  
Jane Fleishman  
Carla Garrett  
Betsy Holmes  
Kim Holst

Mike Leach  
Zykeia Lee  
Pam Madison  
Christy Martin  
Courtney Matthews  
Melissa McGee  
Jessica Mullins  
Steve Petty  
Marisa Rust  
Christina Scott

Natasha Smith  
Shelley Smith  
Ned Andrew Solomon  
Jacqueline Talley  
Jasmine Taylor-McHaney  
Jerresha Tinker  
Heather Tribble  
Caitlin Vasser

**Welcome, Introductions, Announcements and Acceptance of August 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting Summaries – Steve Petty, Youth Policy Advocate, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY)**

Petty welcomed the group at 12:32 p.m. He expressed his appreciation for those attending and asked for introductions and announcements.

**IT WAS MOVED (SOLOMON) AND SECONDED (FLEISHMAN) TO ACCEPT THE AUGUST 9, 2018 MEETING SUMMARY. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**Department of Children’s Services, Office of Independent Living Update – Courtney Matthews, Incoming Director, Dave Aguzzi, Assistant Director and Jerresha Tinker, Youth Engagement Coordinator, Office of Independent Living, Department of Children Services**

Matthews provided a brief update of activities within the agency since the August meeting. She reported they finalized the Jim Casey Three-Year State Plan 2019-2021. The key focuses of the plan are

Permanency; Stable Housing; Educational Success and Economic Security; and Pregnancy Prevention and Parenting Supports. Matthews reported Independent Living conducted a two-day all staff meeting in Nashville recently for team building and training. It provided her an opportunity to meet everyone out in the field offices.

Matthew announced there is a new supervisor for the Independent Tennessee Children's Home in Clarksville. She reported they are starting with three females and three buildings with the capacity to host 33 female youth. There are plans for a male facility as well. Matthew also reported there is a new Regional Administrator Joseph Combs who will work in the Tennessee Valley Region.

Matthew talked about partnering with High Impact Ministries (HIM) to provide High Impact Gear survival bags for youth in transition. The High Impact Gear Bag is a backpack filled with the essential items a foster or fatherless youth needs when faced with a transition. It includes a toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, soap or body wash, deodorant, stuffed animal, spiritual journal, Bible and another book, and a small blanket. They are taking donations each month and average around 100 bags per month. It costs \$55.00 to purchase and fill a HIG backpack. The bags will be dispersed to the regional offices for youth in need.

Aguzzi provided data to be included in the YTAC Annual Report. He reported there was an increase of 54 episodes with 29 of those from Williamson and Wilson counties alone while the Tennessee Valley Region has 17 or more. There was also an increase of scholarships and students using federal funding. Aguzzi reported the state funded scholarships was down by seven percent.

Aguzzi said the report will show an increase in the utilization of data. He also shared a change in the annual report because they are recording the wrap around services differently than years past. Aguzzi explained the data will be more consistent moving forward. There is a disclaimer note in the report explaining this change. Aguzzi did highlight an increase in expenditures for custodial services and graduation of \$10,000.

Tinker reported she has a youth camp next week where the representatives from Jim Casey will participate and facilitate the sessions. She also announced a new Jim Casey Young Fellow in Chattanooga.

## **Update from Resource Centers**

### ***Project NOW! – Christy Martin***

Martin highlighted accomplishments since July 1<sup>st</sup>. She said there have been five new youth in Opportunity Passport with two matches each for education and vehicle and one in housing. Martin highlighted several activities they have like self-defense, weekly cooking classes, character education, human trafficking awareness, Sisters Savings Sisters, Safe Driving for Youth and Opportunity Passport.

Martin said she is concerned about the number of youth who transition out of the program without the proper driving instruction with a mature adult driver. Through a collaboration with the Knoxville Police Department and Fox Toyota, an officer and vehicle will be available to provide driving time with a youth who is in or has been in foster care.

Martin also shared a new collaboration with the Job Corps where two youth have gone to two sites in Kentucky and three more youth are pending the completion of paperwork. They are happy with their decision. She said working with the American Job Center allows her to be directly involved in the first ever Knoxville Youth Force Coalition Inaugural Job Fair.

During Knox County's fall break, two days will be set aside for job seeking young people in Knox County. The fair is open to all youth, but the youth identified in several programs including Project NOW! will be encouraged to attend. On October 8<sup>th</sup>, youth will be able to attend a resume writing workshop and get tips and practice in interviewing. The Job Fair will take place on October 9<sup>th</sup>.

Martin reported she will work in collaboration with Jerresha Tinker from DCS to host a pilot STD Prevention Class for young men on October 18<sup>th</sup>. She said using some of the Sisters Saving Sisters materials and other information, a small group of young men will participate in a 1.5 hour class providing information and practical advice and experience in STD prevention. She said Steven Jeter a recruiter with the Job Corps has volunteered to be there as well. The young men will be asked for their input after the class on what needs to be included or deleted from the information presented to them.

Martin shared an update on their Facebook page, Helen Ross McNabb – Project NOW! She was happy to report that as of October 1<sup>st</sup>, the Facebook page had 184 likes and followers. She said they average 72 per week. The page has reached over 1,000 users since July. Martin shared the page has grown exponentially and is proving to be a great communication tool with youth and other stakeholders.

Their new address is 3006 Lake Brook Blvd., Building 2, Knoxville, TN 37809. Martin's can be reached at 865-544-5000 ext. 2667 or by cell at 865-256-5613. Her email address is [christy.martin@mcnabb.org](mailto:christy.martin@mcnabb.org).

### **Youth Connections at Monroe Harding – Pam Madison**

Youth Connections is a resource center for young men and women, ages 16-26, who are currently in or have aged out of foster care or state custody. They provide assistance with all aspects of employment, housing, understanding credit scores and how to strengthen them, HISET tests, post-secondary education planning, sexual health education, and financial education classes.

Madison reported the average number of visits is 150-170 visits per month. For August, there were 350 visits. She reported the number of youth tripled because of visits to the food pantry. Madison also attributes the increase to the beginning of the school year where many youth visited because

they needed help with tutoring, financial aid, and other assistance related to school. She believes the numbers for September will be about the same.

Madison reported Regions Bank facilitated a Stations of Life event where the youth were given careers and salary and the youth had to make choices using the salary they were given. Other events included the Rock the Vote event at the center last week where students from the Vanderbilt Law Center came in and talked to the youth about the importance of voting and got them registered. This was a nonpartisan event where the discussion were based around issues important to them and how each election affects their lives. The youth felt the choices they had to make were hard and much more difficult.

Madison was happy to report on an event where fifteen established men from Philadelphia came to visit for the Titans versus Eagles football game. These men choose an organization each year to visit and perform community service. They consist of doctors, lawyers, bankers and are well into their careers. These men spoke to the youth about perseverance, obstacles and going forward in life even when you fail.

Madison announced they are taking applications for their housing. The application is on their website at <https://www.monroeharding.org/housing-application/>. The purpose of this program is to support the provision of services to victims of crime between the ages of 18 and 24. Priority will be given to victims of child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, and victims of violent crime who were previously underserved. The recipients do not have to be in extension of foster care, so there is an emphasis on employment where they will have 30 days to have a job or obtain one.

Friday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, Monroe Harding will be celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary called *Fostering Joy*. There will be a live silent auction. The items are listed on the website at <https://www.monroeharding.org/>.

### **Youth Villages LifeSet Program Update – Heather Tribble, Marisa Rust and Chelsea Clark**

Tribble reported the data showed 692 youth served statewide. The average is 695. She said 46 percent are funded by the state while 54 percent funded by private dollars. Tribble reported the Holiday Heroes program is gearing up and is mostly sponsored by individuals and agencies.

Rust is an YVLifeSet Scholar and was never in custody. She was in a program called Intercept through LifeSet. Rust shared her story and talked about how LifeSet helped her through trying times. She also said how thankful she was for the backpack giveaway each school year. Rust does not believe she would have made it this far without LifeSet.

Tribble introduced Clark who was in foster care for 12 years and is an YVLifeSet Scholar. She shared her story and journey of how she connected with the staff at LifeSet. She had 12 placements in DCS custody and five caseworkers. Clark is grateful for foster care, DCS and Youth Villages for helping her grow up.

Clark will graduate this year with a degree in Behavioral Studies where she intends to work with the three percent of foster children aging out of the system.

**Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Update and Healthy Transitions Initiative and First Episode Psychosis Initiative– Jessica Mullins, Youth and Young Adult Initiatives Project Director, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services**

Mullins highlighted the Youth and Young Adult (Y/YA) Initiatives to assist Tennessee Y/YA in improving their health and wellness, leading self-directed lives, and reaching their full potential. She reported they completed the Peer Leadership Academy in August through Systems of Care Across Tennessee (SOCAT) in partnership with Tennessee Voices for Children (TVC). There were 50 parent and young adult peers in attendance. Mullins reported 19 of those were young people.

Mullins said the youth and young adult track focused on helping them gain the skills to become empowered leaders and speak out about mental health issues. There were speakers and presenters from NAMI Davidson, YouthMOVE National, and Southern Word, as well as keynote sessions that focused on prosocial leadership and implicit bias.

In September, they held the System of Care Across TN Conference in partnership with TCCY and Tennessee Association Of Mental Health Organization (TAMHO). There were 360 registered for the conference. Mullins reported there were four tracks, including youth and young adults with a variety of topics like how to understand and support LGBTQ youth and leadership strategies that support elevating the youth voice.

Mullins shared that all three FrameLabs, in partnership with TCCY and the TDMHSAS Statewide Young Adult Leadership Council were completed. They were held in Knoxville, Memphis, and Nashville. TCCY trained community partners on the importance of using effective messaging strategies and to facilitate group conversations by brainstorming ways to more effectively develop messaging around youth/young adult mental health.

Mullins announced they were awarded the Community Outreach & Programs (CHR-P) grant for youth and young adults at clinical high risk for psychosis from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). She said they are partnering with Case Management Incorporated in Shelby County and the University of Memphis for evaluation. They will utilize the lessons learned from Healthy Transitions and First Episode Psychosis. Mullins said there was an Announcement of Funding to add a site in Hamilton County. It is due on October 15<sup>th</sup>. Other funding opportunities are listed on the TDMHSAS website and/or circulated on the listserv.

Mullins announced the SOCAT Training and Technical Assistance Center (TTAC) launched and has many upcoming trainings/events on TTAC. She also encouraged everyone to visit [socacrosstn.org](http://socacrosstn.org) to see training opportunities or to sign up for the SOCAT listserv for newsletters and updates. They are looking for Content Experts (individuals or organizations who would like to share their expertise through training or consultation) to be a part of our technical assistance network.

Mullins highlighted upcoming events. She reported four individuals (Mullins, Jules Wilson and two from local providers) are becoming site-based trainers in Transition to Independence Process model. In collaboration with Youth Era, they are in the process of developing a toolkit for providers on youth and young adult engagement (as well as mini booklet with quick tips). Mullins said the Curriculum for Child and Young Adult Peer Support Specialist (CYAPSS) program is in final stages of approval and we hope to have our first training cohort of young adult peers by the end of the year. Other Healthy Transitions focus groups are coming up this month that will include those who have received services from Healthy Transitions as well as those on our statewide Young Adult Leadership Council (YALC).

### **Tennessee Housing and Development Agency (THDA) – Toni Shaw**

Petty shared Shaw's report in her absence. He reported updated information on the grant that was awarded to Woodbine Community Organization during 2018. THDA accepted applications on September 27<sup>th</sup> for the 2019 Fall round and received applications from two agencies proposing to serve the housing needs of youth transitioning out of foster care. The applications have not been scored yet, but Shaw is encouraged by the fact that they are still receiving applications. The next grant round will be in March 2019. The application workshops will occur in January

### **Review 2018 YTAC Annual Report Draft – Steve Petty**

Petty explained the report for the General Assembly is due October 31, 2018. He reviewed recommendations, accomplishments and corrections with the Council. Petty will send out the recommendations worked on and would like any changes back by October 15<sup>th</sup>, so that he can deliver the report on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. TCCY will be away the following week.

### **Next Meetings**

The next meeting will be May 2, 2019 at Goodwill Industries. The 2019 proposed meeting dates are:

June 20, 2019 (in conjunction with CCMH)

\*August 8, 2019 (date may change)

October 3, 2019

### **Other Business/Future Meeting Topics**

Carla Garrett is the Youth Grants Program Manager at the Department of Labor and Workforce Development Workforce Services. She provided a brief synopsis of her program and services provided. Please feel free to reach out to her at [Carla.garrett@tn.gov](mailto:Carla.garrett@tn.gov) or 615-313-4912. Petty will add her to the May agenda.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:31 p.m.