



**Benton County Commission on Children and Families
Meeting Summary – June 12, 2008
Benton Plaza – Downstairs Meeting Room**

Attendance

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Padmaja Akkaraju | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mike Beilstein | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kerry Blum | <input type="checkbox"/> Jonathan Brink-Roby | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Valerian Challe |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sandy Chase | <input type="checkbox"/> Jay Dixon | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tom Eversole | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lynn Hall | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kathleen Heath |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stacie Heintzman | <input type="checkbox"/> Beth Hogeland | <input type="checkbox"/> Connor Murphy | <input type="checkbox"/> Jean Nelson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Karen Nibler |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Patrick Robertson | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Monique Schaefers | <input type="checkbox"/> Joanne Sorte | <input type="checkbox"/> Pete Tuana | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kathleen Walker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diana Simpson | <input type="checkbox"/> Janet Holcomb | Others – Amy Atchison, Luis Maciel, John Harrison, Jim Hogeboom, Paula Robinson, Erlinda Gonzalez-Berry, Rocio Munoz, Javier Cervantes | | |

CCF Staff

- | | | |
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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> JoAnn Miller | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Linda Stensgard | <input type="checkbox"/> Juan Sanchez |
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Meeting summary recorded by Linda Stensgard

CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS: The meeting was called to order at 5:30pm and introductions were made.

AGENDA: The agenda was approved as distributed.

APPROVE MEETING SUMMARY OF MAY 8, 2008: The meeting summary was approved as distributed.

COMMENTS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA: There were none

PRESENTATION – JUVENILE DRUG COURT – Amy Atchinson, Juvenile Counselor, Benton County Juvenile Department presented information and data about the Juvenile Drug Court. She is assigned to supervise the youth that are assigned to Juvenile Drug Court. Other members of the Drug Court Team include Judge Locke Williams, a representative from the District Attorney’s office, drug and alcohol counselor from the health department who serves all youth in outpatient treatment involved in the program, and a defensive consortium representative. The program is as individual as the youth assigned. Participants in the program self report their drug of choice is marijuana and some also report use of alcohol. Youth are taking about 17 months to complete the program at this time. There are 33 admitted at this time; all but one have relapsed at some time during the program; there 9 participants that have graduated from the program and 2 who had to be terminated due to other issues. The average age of participants is 16 years old. Kids call and keep in touch after graduation because they established some good relationships. There is some grant funding from Good Samaritan and Zonta. There are targeted dollars for purchasing residential treatment for some of the clients. Some of them have private insurance and some clients qualify for state assistance through Oregon Health Plan. The youth have to be engaged in some education program either in school or working on their GED. A screening tool is being developed to help identify other needs – food, clothing, shelter – at intake. Juvenile Drug Court is held every Thursday afternoon at 4pm and is open to the public.

CORVALLIS SCHOOL DISTRICT GANG TASK FORCE – Presentation & Discussion -

Jim Hogeboom, Assistant Superintendent of the Corvallis School District spoke first about the reasoning for and development of the group, who is on it, and what they are currently doing. There will be an opportunity for questions and open dialogue at the conclusion of each of the speakers. Back in April, Paula Robinson and Angie Stanbuck called Jim about some concerns they had. Other folks were called together to meet and discuss what may be going on. The group is just getting started, has met four times so far and is now taking a break during the summer. The meeting minutes of June 6, 2008 were provided to CCF members. [taken from June 6th meeting minutes - *One of the items considered was explaining the nature and purpose of the group to others outside of the school district. ‘Task Force’ did not seem appropriate as they have not been appointed by a government agency and most members are school-related individuals. The word ‘committee’ seemed a better way to describe themselves and they also decided to add the word ‘prevention’ to the name because awareness and prevention are the two key areas of work. The name was modified to Gang Awareness and Prevention Committee.*]

Paula Robinson, CSD building support specialist, serving Garfield, Lincoln, Linus Pauling and Corvallis High School, spoke next. She has been attending the Safe School Summit the past three years in Salem and this year's session focused on current gang activity in the Willamette Valley. She is the facilitator of the Corvallis School District student threat assessment team. There has been some communication from other areas regarding activity that has been noticed in Albany and Salem area. Her interest is to be proactive in the community and help prevent any gang activity from starting.

John Harrison, Linus Pauling Middle School counselor shared that in the fall of 2006, he started a Hispanic Counseling Group, 'Voces' in an attempt to address some activities that had emerged such as a fight club that was taking place after school. He began interviewing and talking with the kids and discovered there was a climate in the schools of disaffected, disengaged children, primarily of Hispanic background who were engaging in activities to find some sort of a footing with their friends in their culture that had nothing to do with school. The purpose of Voces is to engage these kids in a conversation – cultural awareness was a huge piece of that. From the work over the past two years, we have learned a lot about cultures in our schools, poverty, teenagers, family – areas that Corvallis, as a whole does not seem to be tapped into at times. By engaging the kids and their parents in conversations, we find that a group that was unintentionally uninvited is now being engaged. At the school level, there are 43 Latino students active that were at one time at risk status. Other things that rose from discussion with the kids were: academics were not important, no club soccer opportunities, white dominated society, concerns of immigration status of their families, education level or poverty level of their families.

At this time we think the kids have a naïve and immature sense, "comic book" fascination, so proactive efforts are important at this time. The intent of this committee is to be proactive as a school district and a community to engage children and families in what is a key to success, education. The group has made a concerted effort to invite people from a broad range including multiple agencies and ethnicities. The group is focusing on all disenfranchised kids, not just the Latino students. The group members believe when students' needs are met, trouble is less likely to happen.

Luis Maciel, Benton County Juvenile Department, and member of the Gang Awareness & Prevention Committee will speak about the awareness, education and outreach that this group is trying to do. There is information flowing back and forth from kids in middle schools of Corvallis and Albany so we are attempting to gather that information and make some decisions about the direction of the committee. Some of the activities that we are seeing in the schools could boil into a major problem and we, as a group are trying to be proactive. We are trying to educate the kids, parents, families, and the community. Committee members are working with a lot of different members of the community, including law enforcement officers in Benton and Linn County. Luis reported that a lot of the kids, Latino, African-American, Asian, and Caucasian, are showing signs of ideation of gang behavior so this committee is trying to combine the information to formulate a proactive approach to help these kids. He gave some examples of things the school staff have observed: tear drop on their eye or tattoo-type markings on their skin – when asked if they understand these things, most reply they have seen it but don't really have an understanding of what they are doing.

Jim Hogeboom wrapped up the presentation by adding: The first meeting involved trying to figure out who should be in this group and at this time the following have been at the table, school district people, administrators, counselors, behavior specialists from the secondary schools, an officer from the Corvallis Police Department, a sheriff officer, 3 staff from Boys & Girls Club, juvenile department probation, and Albany police. We have divided into two main areas: (1) What is happening and (2) What are we going to do about it? At the beginning of each meeting there is informal sharing about activity for example tagging at Aquatic Center or other buildings, police department may talk about some things they have experienced or had reported to them, drug activity, etc. The more exciting part is the work – education, outreach and inclusion. At our last meeting we talked about parent involvement and there was brainstorming about how to get that piece rolling. He asked that folks keep in mind the newness of the committee and their intent is to be proactive.

Questions, answers and discussion took place with CCF members and audience participants.

- What about Garfield families? – many of the Garfield kids are siblings of Linus Pauling kids, so the committee is doing outreach to families of those kids; there were 60 people attending parent night, conferences and Voces parent night were held simultaneously and Latino families participated in an OSU study that John conducted. Garfield has had excellent parent attendance at the various activities that have been held.

- There was a family evening activity held at Lincoln Elementary School
- There has been great effort to involve kids, now what happens when they get to high school? What about cultural awareness training and support for staff in district elementary, middle and high schools? What connections can be made for kids that are older? – Boys & Girls Club is a great place for the younger kids, but high school kids do not hang out there.
 1. This committee is a great forum to address these concerns – we will continue to share awareness and information. High school administrators and counselors attend the meetings and are prepared to continue the efforts that are working at the lower levels.
 2. The school district is taking diversity issues seriously. During the Community Vision for Education in Corvallis, one of the recommendations was to have a safe, welcoming and inclusive school. We realize we have some work to do in this area and have begun by forming a diversity committee. Terryl Ross at OSU is going to help the district – surveys of teachers, students, and parents are being implemented and the plan is an action plan will come from the information gathered from the surveys.
 3. Voces is in it's infancy, John has been in discussions with the high schools and the school district. There have been positive responses of extending the Voces program into the high schools.
 4. The students involved in Voces want to get involved in service learning projects especially in the elementary schools and mentor the younger kids.
- Concerns about what to do with the at-risk kids during the summer? What can we, the community, provide as other options for kids during this time out of school; this is not just a school district problem – it is a community problem.
- The lay out of Corvallis High School is more open. There are many kids at any given time not being supervised – this lends to the safety issues? The way kids dress at Corvallis High is a problem – will it be addressed? The staff members that are African-American, Asian, Latino need to be more visible and interacting with the kids outside of the classroom.
- Comment – the purpose of education is to prepare every student to be productive citizens not prepare them not to become gang members. Schools are not all culturally aware nor are staff teaching students with cultural (whether it be ethnicity, poverty, status) proficiency.
- Why do I, as a parent have to go to a meeting about gang activity as opposed to a meeting about educating our children, enriching their lives, making them productive citizens, giving them the best education we have?
 1. John commented – school staff observed behavior that disengaged kids were doing and by so were disengaging others and creating a climate of intimidation and fear. During group counseling sessions, kids were talking about wanting to be in gangs and school not being important – and that is what originally started the conversations. After the first four meetings the committee has recognized the need to educate and bring awareness to parents, families and community members and is in the process of figuring out ways to get that accomplished.
 2. There is a movement in America to talk about “At Promise” as opposed to at-risk, sponsored by America Promise Alliance.
- Students are not disengaged because they are poor, have language barriers, or cultural barriers – it is because the schools are not meeting their needs.
 1. True to a degree; there is a huge break down and the information gathered in the study being done will be shared with district staff and schools across the state. We are going to be better schools as a result of what we have learned – that is the proactively we are engaged in.
 2. Giving the kids a voice and safety to share their concerns has made the biggest impact for them and their families.
- Paula Robinson added – “we have not identified a gang in Corvallis; we have been notified that in our surrounding areas they are there and we choose to be proactive so there is not a foothold of a gang in Corvallis”.
- We are talking about surrounding area gang activity, we are looking at tagging that is the same as the gangs in Salem, we are looking at some serious things ... so we can say to kids, “do you realize this is real, do you realize that if you play this game, you can be bringing danger on yourself”. This committee wants to identify the reality and be aware of it so we can teach. If we ignore the reality, we put our community in danger.
- Rocio Munoz, BCHD, spoke about herself as a young person and how counselors and people who cared and were paying attention in her community, made a difference for her. Bringing up these issues is good for youth, community organizations and agencies to hear.

- Kathleen and Karen thanked the group for coming. Other commission members echoed their appreciation for the presentation and agree this is a volatile topic, but also agree that being proactive will better serve the youth and families.
- What is the rest of the community going to do? It is not the school districts responsibility alone.
- Dedicated people working on this issue will make a difference to students and the educational climate in the schools.
- JoAnn mentioned the Teen Outreach Project that is funded to give an opportunity for kids to be active in positive activities through out the summer. Please talk to Juan Sanchez, the Latino Projects coordinator after the meeting.
- 4-H also provides activities for kids through the summer – for their contact information you can call CCF.
- John added some final comments:
 1. The schools lost the SRO's (student resource officers)
 2. Sometimes tough conversations are difficult – the name of my group is Voces, it is about communication and its about learning to understand and appreciate each other.
 3. Thank you for the opportunity to present this evening because it allowed us to explain and the hope is that we all walk away with an understanding of what this committee's intentions are.
 4. Please come to a Voces meeting next school year
 5. I hope this presentation has will allow for us all to work together
 6. I would like to bring the OSU presentation before the commission when it is ready

CCF COMPONENTS DOCUMENT – Components of the LCCF System document and Benton County Self Assessment document were provided electronically to members prior to the meeting with the following explanation: The Benton County Commission on Children and Families (BCCF) self assessment of local commission functions is required each biennium, by June 30 of even numbered years. The self-assessment process which includes staff and membership, should address BCCF strengths, weaknesses and express technical support needs in relationship to the Components document. It should be presented at both the local commission meeting and the local county Board Of County Commissioners (BOCC) meeting and signed by the local Commission chair and the BOC chair. Members were also asked to complete the survey monkey attached to the email by June 17, 2008. This is an excellent opportunity to share your viewpoints regarding the Commission on Children and Families system.

Tonight we need approval of the assessment document to move forward with possibilities that some changes/additions will be made using the information gathered from the survey monkey. The report will be sent out to CCF members for one last review prior to the Benton County Board of Commissioners meeting on June 24, 2008. The completed signed document will be submitted to the state commission by June 30, 2008. Patrick Robertson made a motion for approval of the assessment document to move forward with possibilities that some changes/additions will be made using the information gathered from the survey monkey. Kerry Blum seconded the motion. *Vote* – motion passed unanimously.



STAFF REPORT: A staff report was written and provided in member packets.

YOUTH COMMISSION UPDATE: JoAnn reported that Jonathan Brink-Roby is in Washington DC at a conference and Connor was unavailable this evening.

OTHER – Sandy Chase provided brochures “DHS At A Glance” – fast fact about DHS and the people we serve



ANNOUNCEMENTS: none

ADJOURNED:

NEXT MEETING: CCF RETREAT – SEPTEMBER 11, 2008
 10:00AM – 4:00PM
 CORVALLIS-BENTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY