



**Stanislaus County Children's Council
Minutes
November 15, 2006**

Members Present:

John Sims, Children and Families Commission
Melda Gaskins for James Enochs, Modesto City Schools
Juan Ramirez for Jan Viss, Community Services Agency
Ken Patterson, Community Services Agency
Madelyn Schalaepfer, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services
Raul Garcia, El Concilio Community Center
Judy Kindle, Sierra Vista Child and Family Services
Linda Kovacs, District 4 Representative
Jill Silva for Jerry Powers, Probation
Jeanette Merchant for Nancy Millberry, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services
Mary Ann Lee, Health Services Agency
Rosemary Crippen, District 1 Representative
Rhonda Parker, Parent Representative
Keenon Krick for Martin Petersen, Superintendent of Schools

Staff Present: Cheryl Allen-Diaz

Guests Present: Sgt. Gary Crawford, Modesto P.D., John Bryon, Modesto City School District, April Befumo, Child Development and Local Planning Council, and Veronica Garcia from Child and Family Services at CSA.

I. INTRODUCTIONS – Ken Patterson, Chair

Ken noted that he is representing Lee Means as Chair of the meeting today, as she recently had foot surgery. He expressed his congratulations to Tom Changnon, who was unable to attend the meeting today, for winning the election as County Superintendent of Schools.

Ken then asked everyone to introduce themselves.

II. MINUTES FROM October 18, 2006 MEETING:

The minutes from the October 18, 2006 meeting were approved by acclamation. Ken noted that the minutes can be amended later if Council members notice a need for a change.

III. Schedule of 2007 Children's Council Meetings

Ken distributed the schedule of the 2007 Children's Council meetings. Cheryl Allen-Diaz pointed out that the schedule that Council members received by email earlier had incorrect dates for the February and March meetings. The revised schedule lists the correct dates, which are February 21, and March 21.

COUNCIL REPRESENTATION:

Dwight Bateman
Disability Resources Agency for Independent Living
Tom Changnon
Keyes School District
A.R. "Rich" Chubon
Stanislaus County Housing Authority
Adam Christianson
Sheriff
Rosemary Crippen
District 1 Representative
James C. Enochs
Modesto City Schools
Birgit Fladager
District Attorney
Doris Foster
Chief Executive Office
Lisa Henry
Local Child Care Resource and Referral
Denise Hunt
Behavioral Health & Recovery Services/Alcohol & Drug Programs
Richard Jacobs
Valley Mountain Regional Center
Judy Kindle
Sierra Vista Child and Family Services
Linda Kovacs
District 4 Representative
Judith R. Loretelli
District 2 Representative
Honorable Linda McFadden
Superior Court
Lee Honoré Means
District 3 Representative
Nancy Millberry
Child Abuse Prevention Committee
William O'Brien
Board of Supervisors
Rhonda Parker
Parent Representative
Ken Patterson
Community Services Agency
Martin G. Petersen
Superintendent of Schools
Jerry Powers
Probation
Madelyn Schlaepfer, PhD
Alcohol & Drug Programs
John Sims
Children and Families Commission
Margaret Szczepaniak
Health Services Agency
Jan Viss
Community Services Agency
Roy Wasden
Domestic Violence Taskforce
Helen White
Stanislaus Multi-Cultural Community Health Collaborative
James Williams, Ph.D.
Yosemite Community College District



Board of Supervisors

District 1 - William O'Brien
District 2 - Thomas Mayfield
District 3 - Jeff Grover
District 4 - Raymond C. Simon
District 5 - Jim DeMartini

IV. PRESENTATION (School Drop-Out Committee – Dick Jacobs)

Dick Jacobs stated that for the last couple of years, he's been a member of the Children's Council workgroup studying the school drop out problem. He asked if he could make a presentation to the Council regarding this issue, noting that at the end of the presentation, he'd like to have a discussion with Council members regarding the future of this workgroup.

Dick introduced Sgt. Garrett Crawford, from the Modesto Police Department, who was invited to provide a presentation regarding the Police Department's efforts to keep kids in school. Sgt. Crawford is also a member of the School Drop Out workgroup. Dick noted that later, John Bryon from the Child Welfare and Attendance Office at Modesto City Schools, will provide a report on what the school district is doing to prevent students from dropping out of school.

Sgt. Crawford shared a Power Point presentation that highlighted the many activities the Police Department coordinates to keep kids in school. He stated that the Youth Services Unit, that includes one other officer, Sgt. Mitch Paine, coordinates youth services and juvenile programs in the City of Modesto.

Sgt. Crawford briefly reviewed programs coordinated by the Youth Services Unit. Each of these programs target youths who are at risk of dropping out of school, and include:

- Assigning eight school police officers (SPO's) to local high schools;
- Assigning five school resource officers (SRO's) to junior high and elementary schools;
- WAKEUP (a program that teaches students to make better choices, and involves parents);
- GAPP (a program specific to students involved, or at risk of becoming involved, in gangs);
- Diversion (alternative to probation – students have been cited for misdemeanor crimes and are first time offenders);
- PAL (Police Athletic League) involves 1,500 kids in athletic programs. PAL Centers also provide computers and homework assistance to youths;
- GREAT (Gang Resistance Education and Training) – This program was developed in 1991 and since then, 8,000 law enforcement officers have been certified as GREAT instructors.

Council members thanked Sgt. Crawford for his presentation, and asked if they could have a copy of his power point presentation. Dick stated that he get a copy from Sgt. Crawford, and ask the Council staff member to forward it to Council members.

At this juncture, Dick introduced John Bryon from Modesto City Schools. John highlighted the programs at Modesto City Schools that focus on preventing students from dropping out, noting that these efforts focus on instruction. He pointed out that studies have shown that if students are not secure readers, they are likely to drop out of school. He stated that each school district has developed programs that focus on ensuring that students are secure learners, noting that there is no "cookie cutter" approach.

John highlighted some of the programs Modesto City Schools has developed that have instructional components, including after school tutoring programs, exit exam preparation, and afternoon classes that allow students to make up credits. He stated that if these programs weren't available, "we'd lose more kids."

Linda asked John for a list of all these programs, which would be of interest to probation officers. Keenon Krick, who was representing Martin Petersen, Superintendent of Schools, stated that the County Office of Education has this list.

John discussed the need for more counselors at the schools, particularly the middle schools, noting that funding has been provided by the state for school districts to hire more counselors. He stated that peer programs, such as the Link Crew, help students who are transitioning from middle to high school, and noted that the school district also partners with law enforcement and community agencies to focus on students who are at risk of dropping out. John stated that the Modesto City Schools District works hard to keep parents informed of student absences, and attendance clerks call homes on a daily basis to report absences.

John stated that, for the students who are not showing up at school, the district hires Attendance Liaisons who go to homes and knock on doors. Parents are sent letters notifying them that they have so many days to make sure their kids are back in school. Linda asked John what officers do when they see kids on the street. John stated that the school officers don't have arrest powers, so they don't pick students up, other than to drive them to school.

Dick thanked John for his report, noting that he would now like some direction from the Children's Council members regarding the future of the School Drop Out Committee. He noted that this committee was originally established due to concerns about the increased number of drop outs in the community; however, the work group has reached a point where it is "spinning its wheels." Dick pointed out that funding isn't available to determine which programs are working, and which are not working, noting that possibly a survey of students could determine the reasons that students drop out.

Dick stated that even with all the programs available, schools are losing thousands of kids, and noted that the Task Force members would like to know what to do next. He stated that continuing to meet and discussing the same issues over and over does not solve the problem, and possibly this is not something the Children's Council can resolve.

Ken noted that the School Drop Out Committee was formed by the Children's Council about 18 months ago, at a time when the Council members wanted to become more informed about the drop out situation in the community. He thanked Dick for his presentation, and stated that he understands Dick's concern that the Council doesn't have the resources to resolve this complex problem. Ken stated that he is impressed with what is being done in the community now to reduce the drop out rate. He noted that Tom Changnon, who was just elected as County Superintendent of Schools, talked about this issue during his campaign, and Tom stated that he will make it a priority in his administration.

Raul agreed that a lot is being done by community based organizations; however, noted that Spanish based organizations need to be involved in the plan to reduce the drop out rate. He pointed out that a large number of Latino students are dropping out of school, and if the Council decides to adopt strategies to reduce the drop out rate, the demographics of the community need to be considered. He suggested that leaders in the Latino community be invited to the table during discussions to present a different perspective.

Dick agreed with Raul, noting that the Committee looked at these issues as well. He stated that if the Council had resources, a next step for the Committee might be to identify a control group to survey, as well as to involve university expertise in doing a study of why students drop out. However, in addition to a lack of resources, he noted that it has been difficult for committee members to attend meetings due to everyone's busy schedules. Dick noted that, as he said earlier, this problem is probably too big for the Council to have an affect on, and if not the Council, then "who and how."

Jill noted that if the Committee continues its work, objectives need to be clearly defined. Ken acknowledged that this issue is very complex, and suggested that the Council Executive Committee propose the next steps. He asked if Dick would send the Executive Committee members a one page summary of this issue, and they will make a recommendation. Carol suggested that the new officers who are elected today should also participate in this discussion.

V. STATUS REPORTS BY DOMAIN

Ken invited members to report on their domains.

Community Based Organization Domain:

Carol Shipley noted that Raul Garcia, from El Concilio, had to leave the meeting. He asked her to let Council members know that El Concilio will be presenting "Christmas in the Valley" on Thursday, December 14, where food and musical entertainment will be provided. A post card with information regarding this event was provided to Council members.

Law Enforcement Domain:

Linda McFadden reported that on November 29, a meeting will be held at CSA to address concerns about runaway youths. She stated that this is a big problem in the community, and noted that "we need to find a solution."

Carol announced that a County Family Violence Center will be created due to the work of Linda McFadden who organized and is chair of a steering committee that looked at the issue of violence in the community. Carol noted that the Family Violence Center has been a goal in the community, and may now become a reality.

Linda expressed appreciation to the DA's office and to CSA for "stepping up" in planning this project, and noted that a Family Violence Center can be instrumental in reducing violence in homes.

Health Domain:

Madelyn Schlaepfer announced that a stakeholder meeting will be held on November 29th to develop BHRS's five year Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Prevention Plan.

Education Domain:

Keenon Krick, representing Superintendent of Schools Martin Petersen, reported that more school sites will be provided with funding to offer after school programs. He noted that since the passage of legislation that provided state funding, every elementary school and Jr. High school in Modesto will now offer an after school program.

Social Services Domain:

Ken commented on the recent child abuse case that occurred in Modesto, noting that it has been a tough week at the Community Services Agency. He stated that the County has been fortunate not to have had serious child abuse cases reported. Council members discussed this tragic case, and how the community might prevent it from occurring again.

Dick pointed out that one of the aspects of child abuse that should be emphasized is that it is one of the leading causes of mental retardation and long term developmental problems. Carol suggested that the Modesto Bee might want to do a story about this issue.

Housing Domain

Ken stated that the Housing Authority is in the process of hiring a director, noting that once he or she is hired, the Children's Council Executive Committee members will do outreach to this person.

VI. DISCUSSION REGARDING WORK PLAN COMMITTEES:

Given the presentation regarding the School Drop-Out Work Plan Committee, Ken stated that the Children's Council Executive Committee members will have a discussion about the future of the other work plan committees.

VII: ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

Ken distributed a copy of the ballot for election of Children's Council officers for 2007. He pointed out that the Council bylaws were changed to allow a Council member to be the Chair, even though they are not a director of one of the County departments (which is what the previous bylaws required).

Ballots were tallied, and the vote was unanimous for the election of:

Carol Shipley as Chair, Dick Jacobs as Chair Elect, and Jill Siva as Vice Chair

Ken congratulated the new officers, and expressed his appreciation for their willingness to serve.

VIII: JOB DESCRIPTION – CHILDREN'S COUNCIL STAFF MEMBER

Ken distributed draft of a flyer announcing the job opening for the Children's Council staff person, which was prepared by Doris Foster. He asked Council members for input, noting that the flyer notes December 12 as the application deadline. He stated that this date may have to be pushed back to allow for Council input and to allow time to sufficiently advertise the position.

Linda asked whether Ken had an idea of the salary for the position. Ken stated that the salary wasn't listed on the flyer, as he would like to see what is proposed by potential candidates based on their experience. He stated that the salary could be between \$25 and \$30 per hour; however, since no benefits will be provided, the salary may be higher.

John suggested that the number of hours the position will require be stated on the flyer. He also asked that, under General Information, it be noted that the Board of Supervisors "created" the Children's Council, they did not "appoint" the Council.

Ken stated that he will share these comments with Doris, and revise the flyer.

IX: COMMITTEE REPORTS

Child Abuse Prevention Council:

Juan Ramirez distributed order forms for the 2007 Child Abuse Prevention calendar, called "Through the Eyes of a Child." He stated that the purpose of the calendar is to raise awareness of child abuse. He noted that the calendars cost \$10 each, and contain the art work of children in from local schools.

Ken stated that last year, Lee Means bought several calendars to give as Christmas gifts. However, Lee told Ken that she would not give them as gifts this year as some of the recipients felt the art was a bit "too gripping." Lee suggested that the artwork be more balanced, and include positive examples of nurturing parenting, and asked that this suggestion be shared with those who produced the calendar.

Juan stated that "good art makes you think," noting that sometimes it's not easy to look. He stated that the CAPC group could consider a different slant when the next calendar is published, noting that they had never gone in that direction before. He also stated that the calendar contains great information about CSA partnerships that work hard to prevent child abuse in the community. Ken acknowledged that the calendar has been very effective in increasing public awareness of child abuse.

Children and Families Commission:

John Sims reported that the Children and Families Commission updated its strategic plan, noting that they are in the 2nd year of a 3 year plan. John stated that this year, the only changes are "fine tuning" of goals and strategies, and there are no major departures from "where we're going."

He also reported that the next CFC meeting will be December 5, and will be held at the West Modesto Community Center. He noted that the agenda and all backup materials for meetings are available online, at the County website. Some of the agenda items for the December meeting are a presentation by BHRS, and a report on the 211 program, which was developed in partnership with the United Way. He stated that implementing the 211 program has been challenging with the change in leadership at United Way.

John also noted that on November 21, at 6:30 p.m., he will present his annual report to the Board of Supervisors. After this presentation, the report will be distributed to the community, and will be in the Modesto Bee and other local newspapers. The report is available in English and Spanish.

Child Development Local Planning Council

April Befumo, of the Child Development and Local Planning Council, reported on several activities being coordinated by the Council. She noted that the Council just completed its 4th annual Program Review, which looks at services in available to children in the county. She stated that the report will be released to the public soon.

April also stated that she brought hot and cold jell packs, and asked Council members who have contacts with the public to distribute them.

Promoting Safe and Stable Families Committee:

Juan noted that the next meeting of this committee will be January 26, 2007.

X. ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Carol invited Council members to attend the open house celebration of the new DA's office on Tuesday, November 21, at 4:00 p.m. She stated that tours of the new building will be provided, and noted that everyone is happy to be in the new facility. Juan noted that the "Through the Eyes of a Child" artwork will be displayed at this new facility in December.

Ken thanked Rosemary Crippen for providing the chocolate from Hershey's at each meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

VIII. NEXT MEETING:

January 17, 2007

Respectfully submitted by Cheryl Allen-Diaz