

Commission on Children & Families

June 19, 2007

5:30 p.m.—ESD Conference Room

Minutes

Member's Present: Lois Allen, Les Esparza, Bonnie Ford, Bruce Justis, and Shirley Pettersen

Member's Absent: Dave Lee, Dan Forbess, Barbara Matthews, and Sandi Smick

Other's Present: John Ayer, Kelly Southern, Joanna Byford, Sam Moore, Susan Knight

Staff Present: Gillian Wesenberg, Debbie Wheeler, and Linda Witt

Lois called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Minutes: The May 15, 2007, minutes were not approved due to a lack of a quorum.

Chair's Report: Lois reported on the "Build Our Kids" campaign. She said that the campaign will focus on 7 of the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets. The Rotary Foundation and the Winston Area Community Partnership have agreed to partner with the Commission. Additionally, the Rotary Foundation will act as the fiscal agent for the campaign.

Lois announced that there would be no Commission meetings in July or August. Our next meeting is scheduled for September 18, 2007.

Director's Report: Gillian provided a legislative update. Currently, the Legislature is reviewing the Department of Human Services' budget. Additionally, the State Commission's budget currently has additional funds for CASA, Healthy Start, and Relief Nurseries.

Gillian reported that the Commission staff has been busy working on comprehensive planning. In June, several meetings were held to discuss the data and trends for the 19 high level outcomes. During the summer months, staff will be working on developing recommended focus areas. In the fall, community-wide meetings will be held to review the plan.

Youth Advisory Board Update – Stiles Gunn graduated in June, and was not at the meeting. However, the Club elected officers for next year: Brittany Gates – President, and Aaron Titus – Vice President.

Featured Topic: *Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Douglas County* ~
Susan Knight, Executive Director

Susan Knight said that CASA of Douglas County is a non-profit organization which uses volunteers to serve children in foster care. The State of Oregon has a CASA program in every county. In Douglas County, the CASA has served 160 children this year to date. CASA has 43 active CASA, with an additional 15 in training. Another training will be held in October 2007. CASA's goal is to have 75 trained CASA's by the end of the year and to be able to serve all children in care.

Currently, the Legislature is looking at adding additional monies for the CASA program. Susan reported that if these additional funds are approved, a group of private foundations will step to the plate and provide CASA state-wide with an additional \$2 million. The name of this project is "Get Ready! Get Set! Go!"

Locally, the CASA program has been conducting strategic planning meetings. The CASA Board is looking at solidifying their funding. Some of their goals include:

- ✓ Serve all the children in foster care in Douglas County. Our local CASA program will be one of the few CASA's nationally who serve all children in care.
- ✓ Establish a cash flow plan that brings in at least \$20,000 a month, with a 6-month reserve of \$120,000.
- ✓ Consider finding a permanent facility for the CASA program in the next two to three years. The Board would like to have a facility that had meeting space for their volunteers.
- ✓ Look beyond fundraising in Douglas County and state-wide to remain stable. Currently, some of the southern region CASA programs (Lane, Coos/Curry, Jackson, Josephine, and Douglas) are working together to possibly apply for Federal grants.

Adjournment: Lois adjourned the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Wheeler
 CCF