

Commission on Children & Families

May 15, 2007

5:30 p.m.—ESD Conference Room

Minutes

Member's Present: Lois Allen, Les Esparza, Dan Forbess, Stiles Gunn, Dave Lee, Barbara Matthews, Shirley Pettersen, and Sandi Smick

Member's Absent: Bonnie Ford and Bruce Justis

Other's Present: Evelyn Smith, Vic Falgout, Roy Spurgeon, John Ayer, Harry Mullins, Gary Gries, Kathe Linden, Kelly Southern, Bob Matthews, Joanna Byford, Lynn Wilson, Susan Buell, Debby Burkholder, Tammy Mobley

Staff Present: Gillian Wesenberg, Debbie Wheeler, and Gail Phillips

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

Minutes: Lois asked Commission members to review minutes from the April 17, 2007 meeting. Sandi Smick made a motion to accept the minutes as written, David Lee seconded the motion and it carried.

Chair's Report: Lois reported that she and the Executive Committee members sent letters in support of Senate Bill 5504 to the Ways and Means subcommittee. The members asked the subcommittee to restore \$3 million in Basic Capacity Funds.

Director's Report: Gillian provided a legislative update. On Monday, May 14, 2007, the State Commission provided testimony before the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee in Salem. Today, the subcommittee heard testimony from others, including Healthy Start, Relief Nurseries, and CASA providers. Gillian and Superintendent Dave Gianotti (Riddle School District) also testified about the role the Commission has played in each of Douglas County communities.

On May 11, 2007, Dr. Ira Chasnoff, Professor of Clinical Pediatrics – University of Illinois, conducted a one-day workshop on the “Impact of Prenatal Substance Exposure on Infants, Children & Families” at the Douglas County Fairgrounds. The Douglas County Health and Social Services hosted the event with support from agencies such as

the Commission, Douglas County Individual Practice Association, Cow Creek Bank of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, Great Douglas United Way, and others. Dr. Chasnoff agreed to work with our local agencies in an effort to integrate existing services.

Recently, the Ford Family Foundation provided a conditional grant to the Homeless Youth Coalition for the drop-in center. Gillian asked Harry Mullins, chair of the Homeless Youth Coalition, to provide an update. Harry said that Casa de Belen will house the drop-in center; however, approximately \$79,000 is needed to renovate the spaced to be used for the center. Once operationally, the center will be used as a “way station” for homeless youth. Staffing will be provided by agency “volunteers” and the ultimate goal is to have the center operational 24/7.

Youth Advisory Board Update – Stiles Gunn reported the Keystone Club will be hosting a dance to raise funds for “Adopt a Child” in June. He reported the YAB is seeking volunteer activities for its members. The Club elected officers for next year: Brittany Gates – President, and Aaron Titus – Vice President. Additionally, the Boys & Girls Club’s remodel should be completed in June.

Featured Topic: *Douglas County Youth Voices ~ Guest panel members:*

- ✓ Stiles Gunn – Commission on Children & Families Youth Liaison
- ✓ Adrian Nelson – Phoenix School
- ✓ Tiffany Boggs – Phoenix School
- ✓ Kyle Page – Roseburg High School
- ✓ Megan Naff – JoLane Middle School
- ✓ Karlee Harting, JoLane Middle School
- ✓ Larissa Pierce – JoLane Middle School
- ✓ A.J. Riggs – Keystone/Youth Advisory Board Member
- ✓ Will Zhu – Keystone/Youth Advisory Board Member
- ✓ Erika Linden – Roseburg High School/DC CAPS Youth Network

Gillian facilitated the youth panel. She explained that the Commission wanted youth to provide input as to the strengths, gaps and barriers in Douglas County. This information will be used as part of the County’s next coordinated comprehensive plan – which is due to the State Commission on January 14, 2008. Gillian asked the panel a series of questions, and their responses follow.

1. *What good things are happening in your community for youth?*
 - ✓ Douglas County has friendly and connected leadership at school which works together (i.e., drug prevention and the Students Aren’t Ready for Sex – STARS – program)
 - ✓ Attention towards the problems of youth (i.e., Casa de Belen shelter, STARS program). Noted that the STARS program has high school students talking to middle school students.
 - ✓ A lot of after school programs for younger kids (i.e., programs at the middle school in Winston and the Boys & Girls Club)

- ✓ Night school at Roseburg High School – which helps keep kids in school. Casa de Belen is a good thing because kids now have a place to go.
- ✓ People are willing to reach out and help young kids
- ✓ Good after school activities in the way of clubs and organizations. A lot more clubs at Roseburg High School that keep youth active
- ✓ After school programs help keep kids off the streets – kids on the street are looking for somewhere to belong
- ✓ Keeping kids from trying to do drugs
- ✓ STARS and the Prevention Teams at the middle school.

2. *What else would you like to see happen?*

- ✓ Parents become more involved in children’s lives; have some way for parents to become better parents
- ✓ Parents help out with kid’s problems, and also help out at organizations that help youth
- ✓ Having parents and teachers be more supportive of youth – valuing everyone’s opinion and having a variety of clubs
- ✓ Families doing more things together
- ✓ Parents should be more involved with their children – they need to be there for their kids – having places and things for families to do together
- ✓ Ditto to all of the above. She lives at the Casa de Belen and doesn’t have her family, which makes it harder for her.
- ✓ Prevention Teams should speak more to other youth (i.e., school assemblies)
- ✓ More and better counseling for youth who have been sexually or physically abused. Perhaps a counseling class for families (outside of the school setting) – working with families towards healing.
- ✓ More family activities – activities, bonding time, special times
- ✓ Family dinners – his family sits at the table and ends up watching T.V. Perhaps a “National Turn Off the T.V.” day that coincided with a community event.
- ✓ More teachers talking to students about other things (i.e., future goals, personal life)
- ✓ Peer Mediation programs where students encourage and mentor

Sandi Smick of the Commission asked, “What do you need from the community?”

- ✓ Adrian said that Phoenix School provides a lot of support, but would like more support from teachers.

Les Esparza of the Commission asked if there was a need for mentors.

- ✓ Adrian said youth looks up to teachers at Phoenix.
- ✓ Tiffany said that she looks up to her culinary arts teacher, and wouldn’t be at the Casa de Belen if it had not been for him.

Dan Forbess of the Commission responded to the suggestion that teachers should talk to students more on a personal level. He indicated that some teachers are just more

approachable than others. In his district, they have a program called “21 Keys” that promotes positive communication tools for adults. Additionally, they have “Pathways to Excellence” for the high school students. However, with budget cuts have also come a reduction in counselors. Stiles said that he has a few teachers that are very approachable and they know everything about the youth. These teachers talk to the youth like adults. Stiles also said that he saw their counselor as only being there to help with schedules.

3. *If you were king or queen for a day, what would you do that would make life better for:*

You:

- ✓ Not allow youth to get away with doing what they want because they can. Force students to be nice (i.e., language) because some students treat the teachers horribly.
- ✓ Everyone have the same political mindset
- ✓ People should be more accepting and nice – have random acts of kindness and more people helping others
- ✓ Acts of kindness of people towards each other
- ✓ Get together a group of people and go to neighborhoods to clean them up. Also, more law enforcement in neighborhoods.
- ✓ Kids should be more accepting of each other and less critical. People accept each others lifestyles so that people will feel safer and more accepted.
- ✓ People should be more accepting of one another and less judgmental of how they look or dress.
- ✓ Take labels away

Parents:

- ✓ Parents should care more and be there for their kids. Parents should stop doing bad things (i.e., alcohol use)
- ✓ Get closer to her father. When she was born, her father did drugs, cheated on her mom, and wasn't there for her.
- ✓ Parents should know that their actions affect their children – especially when the parents make bad decisions.
- ✓ Parent's fighting affects their kids.

Brothers/Sisters:

- ✓ Would like to be more in touch with his older sister who is at college.
- ✓ Would like her older sister to be less protective of her.
- ✓ Would like more contact with his brother who is at college, and would like to be able to communicate better with his younger brother.
- ✓ Would like his older sister to stop telling his parents how to treat him.
- ✓ Wouldn't change anything about her siblings.
- ✓ Her sister is 4 years old and would like her to stay out of her things.

- ✓ Would like to see her sister more.

Neighborhood:

- ✓ The west side of Roseburg (along Harvard Blvd.) is “dead” and would like to see more businesses.
- ✓ Have communities be more accepting.
- ✓ Have neighborhoods come together more, i.e., BBQ
- ✓ More homeless people put into housing – more places for the homeless to go
- ✓ More activities for youth and bigger malls
- ✓ More people being more open-minded, especially towards youth (not all youth have done drugs and those who have can recover)
- ✓ Smaller neighborhoods, and more neighborhood get togethers.
- ✓ Get rid of drugs – you don’t need to go looking for drugs, they find you
- ✓ Know your neighbors
- ✓ She lives in the country, and only sees her neighbors when the cows get loose. But, would like to get to know them.

Gillian then asked “*Why do some kids leave Douglas County and why do some kids stay?*”

- ✓ Roseburg has a feel of being a timber town and is only semi-progressive. For a young person, this does not seem alluring and is not synonymous with “spunk” for him.
- ✓ Some stay because Douglas County is pretty, clean, and has parks. Others leave because a lack of “spunk” – not a lot to do here.
- ✓ Bigger opportunities outside of Roseburg. However, others stay because of good opportunities here and because this is their home.
- ✓ They want to learn more and see what else is out there. While others stay because of their families.
- ✓ Youth leave because of job and social opportunities.
- ✓ Some youth leave because they like the big city feeling, while others stay because they like the small town feeling.
- ✓ Some stay because Douglas County is all they have ever known and are afraid to leave.
- ✓ We should not “hang onto” our youth. Rather, make Douglas County a family-friendly place, so that as youth leave, families will come.

Evelyn Smith asked the youth to talk about the things they would like to do in terms of activities.

- ✓ Paint balling
- ✓ Would like to feel safer in her neighborhood and be able to walk alone.
- ✓ More opportunities for local bands to play.

The panel discussion ended, and Lois Allen thanked the youth for participating. She also encouraged them to continue speaking out.

Adjournment: Lois adjourned the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Wheeler
CCF