

African American Advisory Council Minutes
Michael Burns, Chairperson
November 19, 2015

Attendees

PRESENT:

Diane Cottrell	Keith Smith	Michael Burns
Shirley Barsh	Angela Hassell	Fayette Coleman-Gill
Renee Heard	Lori Welcher-Evans	
Jataun Rollins	Rhonda Laye	
Millie Donelson	Tracy Marshall	

Phone: Carole Herman –Armstrong, Cheryl Dampeer, Rochelle Crump, Anthony Grady, and Michelle Carter

Order of Meeting

Meeting called to order at 10:20am

REVIEW OF MINUTES:

Minutes reviewed and accepted as read.

CHAIRMAN REPORT/PEP:

We extend condolences to Jataun for her loss, as well as Bremen Campbell and Anthony Grady for the loss of his grandmother.

Michael Burns updated the Council on the work and actions of the Peoria Permanency Enhancement Action Team. He shared the data report that is specific to Peoria County. He encouraged the Council to share the information with others. Members indicated that they would be interested to see where Cook County is in relation to the data that has been shared with respect to Peoria County's data. It was indicated that there are two judges in Cook County that is retiring as well. There was specific attention also giving to the Percent of Cases Achieving Permanency Outcome. In addition, it was noted

that Intact cases were combined with the Reunification data. The focus was in relation to how court role impact DCFS data regarding Outcomes.

There was additional handout from Southern Region Permanency Enhancement Project. It was noted that 7 of the poorest counties in the State are in Southern Region. It was requested that we read this prior to the next meeting and have further discussion.

Michael Burns discussed the proposition to have an Advocacy Center in the Cairo area. The staff that is in the area work hard to keep children from coming into care. Cairo has a large percentage of African American population and they do not have many services in that area. They have the 15th highest dropout rate in the nation.

Office of Racial Practice has been meeting with Training to implement a Racial Equity Practice Model. They are now in the process of how to implement this. The challenge is that there have not been any funds available to train both Intact and Placement staff. The Director is supportive of this project.

The data Workgroup with University Partners and QA met and they are committed to enhancing data provided to the action teams. They are also attempting to break down Cook County's data by LAN.

Michael updated the Council on a young man that aged out of the Department, worked in China, and is now back in Illinois. He would like to help other children. He has interviewed a few hundred youth that have been in the system, and currently have a Facebook page. He has also shared with Michael about experiences/challenges he and other youth had while in the system. He remains connected with 7 other individuals that were in a group home placement with him and they would like to volunteer their time to mentor other children.

MAN TALK:

It was a successful event, and there were many requests to make this an annual affair. The speaker spoke to the music, and how it impacts our youth. The youth indicated that they were appreciative of the attention. Dr. Grady was MC, and did a wonderful job. The youth appreciated the book bags, and all of the "love" that was extended to them by DCFS. There were 27 youth present with

22 along with 10 adults that completed surveys. The Council noted how the program was a success. It was also suggested that the "Real Talk" needs to be without adults in the room. It was stated that if AAAC did this again, the planning would need to take place now. The Council thanked Jataun for her efforts. It was noted that Communications took pictures. It was learned that many of the youth were taking individual pictures as they were taking pictures to share with their family. This was a great support to our efforts.

Michael shared that he received a call from someone to do something similar around employment and skill building. It was suggested that a target date be set for the summer. Jataun suggested that during Social Work month may be a consideration.

CONFERENCE: Tabled

NEWSLETTER:

AA SERVICES:

Rochelle will be returning to her regular position. The Springfield Office was closed, and everything was transferred to 1911 S. Indiana with the attempt to help Tracy Jones become acclimated to her position. Staff will increase, and some of the staff will be moved to the 2nd Floor.

There are a lot of complaints and needs for accommodations, and therefore has not been able to attend as many Action Teams. There are a lot of complaints in Rockford and Joliet area, which will need to be addressed.

TRAINING COMMITTEE: Tabled

STATUS REPORT/HOST FAMILIES:

The youth identified last month has not been responsive. Another youth, Breanna Sanders, has been identified. She is a freshman at Tennessee State. Upon confirmation, Tracy will provide her contact information. She would like to start fresh in January. Tracy has noted that she would like for someone else, particularly, Shirley, to fill her position as coordinator for Host Families project.

MEMBERSHIP:

No report, other than Lawrence is back and will be submitting a letter for reinstatement to the Council.

LEGISLATIVE: Tabled

FOSTER HOME RECRUITMENT AND STATEWIDE STRATEGY:

Today the Community of Promise with Faith Based Provider webinar rolls out at 11am. Central and Southern Region will be completed in December. They are asking people to make a commitment and a promise to not only foster children, but also support one another. This started in January/February but now it is coming to fruition. It was learned through this that everyone is not tech savvy.

There has been further discussion for a specific church to start up a camp for youth. In addition, there are number of youth who are autistic, and resources around the State are being provided. They are also going to reach out to the Training unit to develop one. This will soon be in the works. The hope is to also focus on recruitment after the training.

It is noted that churches or contact person can be added to the Recruitment list. They have the support of Journey Church who supports the Department who would like to mentor other churches, etc. Jataun suggested that in Central Region, Kevin Blickham should be contacted. The hope is by the end of FY16 there will be a focus of recruitment for those who are interested in working with autistic children. There are a few positions that are being posted.

There have been 117,092 inquiries on the website that have been made. Licensing has one person, and there are a lot of people are on backlog. Therefore there will be support given by Licensing where they will attempt to put those applications on fast track. Additional staff has been requested, but the request cannot accommodate it. They are able to break it down to who is inquiring by counties. There was further discussion re: full disclosure with foster parents.

Let It Be Us is another program that has mentors, services, and is assisting the Department in bringing Wendy's Child back. They have also secured Soldier Field to do a huge recruitment event.

The Department is revamping Licensing lists; whereas we would know what the inventory is that would be used by both DCFS and POS. The hope is to be more transparent.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **December Meeting**
 - It will be on 12/4/15 at the Harvey Office. The hope is to start that meeting at 9am.
- **Joint Meeting**
 - AAAC will be hosting the joint meeting in January. Jataun will attempt to reserve the room for 1/21/15. Millie will coordinate.
- **Black History Month/Rochelle Crump**
 - Michael is suggesting that we need a Black History Month subcommittee. Keith, Rhonda, Lori, Rochelle, Carole, Shirley, and Mille. Keith will be the chair.
- **Election**

Chair, Michael Burns and Vice Chair, Tracy Marshall were reelected. Lori Welcher-Evans was elected as Secretary. Fayette Coleman-Gill will serve as the backup Secretary.

Thank you to Jataun, Lori, Renee, and Veronica for hosting today's meeting.

Meeting Adjourned: 12:57

NEXT MEETING: December 4, 2015, Harvey Office