

**SWFCAC Meeting  
APPROVED MINUTES  
January 16, 2015 ~ 9am - 3pm  
Clarion Hotel, Joliet**

<b>SWFCAC MEMBERS PRESENT</b>	<b>GUESTS</b>	<b>SWFCAC MEMBERS ABSENT</b>
Pauline Barlow	Robyn Harvey	Lee Coffman
Gladys Boyd	Marvin Koenig	Allison Cugier
Charlene Burris		Carol Sheley
Edith Cruz		
Irma Dixon		<b>DCFS STAFF</b>
Judi Enix		Marilyn Arnold
Kelly Fargher		Geneva Byrd
Laura Hart		Debra Dyer-Webster
Doreen Henry		Gwenn Eyer
Darrin Holt		Michelle Grove
Stephanie Jones		Sharva Hampton-Campbell
Kurt Kalas		Vanessa James
Cathy McCoy		Terry McGlothlin
Mark McDaniel		
Kellye Norris		
Sarah Olson		
Michael Simpson		
Pamela Webb		

**Welcome & Introductions** – Sarah Olson, SWFCAC Chair

**Final SWFCAC Reports to Director** – Sarah Olson

There were no final reports to the Director. The monthly report to the Director from the SWFCAC Chair was emailed to SWFCAC members.

**Approval of Minutes from November 21 Meeting - SWFCAC**

*Gladys Boyd made the motion to approve the minutes of the November 21, 2014 SWFCAC meeting. Doreen Henry seconded. The minutes were approved as written.*

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Office of the Guardian - Debra Dyer Webster**

Debra reported that today is Director Gregg's last day in this position. Cynthia Tate will start her tenure as Interim DCFS Director on January 19<sup>th</sup>. She will serve until a new director is confirmed. It has been indicated that she will serve for only 2-3 weeks, but she could serve for 60 days.

Residential Care

Many council members have heard about the hearings that came out of the Tribune article regarding residential facilities. Debra noted that the Department had been looking at what we can do to get our youth out of shelters/residential placements into foster homes. All children in the shelters and those who are medically ready to step down should be placed in foster care rather than in group homes.

Now we will partner with other stakeholders to move this along more quickly, doing targeted recruitment to meet the needs of our older youth who are troubled.

Discussion:

- Debra noted that many youth may not need specialized care, but may just need a place to form attachments and continue to mature toward independence.
- George Vennikandam is developing a plan to work with private agencies around these issues.
- Sharva noted that they will need to provide specialized training for this population.
- Cathy noted that early identification of the foster parent resources would enable matching and relationship building rather than just moving from a shelter into the foster home.
- Darrin mentioned that his agency offers weekly staffings for youth in the shelter, with the ability to move them faster.
- Many of the youth are dually involved, coming to DCFS from the Delinquency Court, through a Juvenile Justice Judge.
- Is there a segment of this population due to sexual behavior problems, and are placement resources, including specialized training, being considered for these homes?
- Training, Foster Parent Support Specialists, and other supports will be necessary for these foster parents.
- We have to remove the fear factor from this scenario, not quickly jumping in to blame foster parents when things happen.

**DCFS Training - Sharva Hampton-Campbell**

Sharva thanked the council for providing feedback on the new PRIDE curriculum, now called PRIDE Illinois. It will be offered in the classroom, in a hybrid model, and online. The TOT was scheduled to be held in January, but now has been scheduled for March with the full roll-out in September. Social media information is included in this new training. They are listening to input from foster parents and changes are being implemented. Sharva reported that the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancies and others are interested in our Sexual Health training and we are working toward sharing with other agencies.

**Permanency – Marilyn Arnold**

Marilyn, the Deputy Bureau Chief for Permanency, has been with the Department for many years. She reported that at the last meeting Debra reported on the 500 in 50 Days initiative and they were actually able to finalize 512 adoptions. These were children and youth who were already in the works, just waiting for subsidy, court dates, etc. Marilyn acknowledged Debra Kennedy, the lead on the project. The Department is still focused on permanency and they're working with the Casey Foundation to look at the Department's permanency initiatives. Children need to have lifelong permanent connections. We are currently looking at some cases in our permanency track where parental rights have been terminated and, regardless of the age of the child, we are working hard to get these children and youth into permanency through adoption or subsidized guardianship.

**Presentations:**

**Status of Scoring Implementation Plans - Gwenn Eyer**

Gwenn reported that SWFCAC members have scored the majority of the plans assigned to them. She held a scoring session for new members the night before the meeting and scored plans with others via phone. Approximately 2/3 of the plans received this year came in electronically. Based on a show of hands, the majority of the council members preferred or were satisfied with scoring those

plans. Discussion addressed ways to improve the system, with Gwenn suggesting that we ask for plans with no tracked changes, rather requesting that agencies state in their Annual Report which sections have been revised. (We only score revised sections.)

### **SWFCAC Member Orientation - Gwenn Eyer**

Gwenn, Terry, and council leadership gave an overview of the council and the roles and responsibilities of council members. They began by sharing their own life and work experience and their roles on the council. Gwenn then shared the history, background and purpose of the council, noting that the council will be 20 years old in 2015. Gwenn noted that individual council members represent all foster parents and foster children in Illinois with a collective voice, influence and power to advocate on their behalf. Terry described the experience and expertise reflected in council membership. Gwenn briefly read through the list of council accomplishments, noting that legislation has been passed based on work done as a council and as individuals. She then described members' responsibilities and expectations, stressing professionalism. Sarah and Darrin addressed ways we work to conduct efficient and effective council meetings. Gwenn and Terry then discussed some of the final details, including representation outside council meetings and completing paperwork. Binders containing pertinent information were distributed to each council member.

### **Work Plan for FY15 - Gwenn Eyer**

Gwenn briefly addressed the Council work plan as it relates to committee work. Prior to the committee breakouts, she asked council members to suggest topics for consideration by the committees. She also referred back to the previous meeting for direction for the Legislative/Policy Committee.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **Review Committees' Membership and Assignments - Sarah Olson**

Sarah reviewed council members' committee assignments and Terry will provide updated lists for the binders. The Legislative/Policy Committee and the Respite Committee met briefly to set work plan goals and plan meeting dates.

### **Adolescent Issues – Mike Simpson**

Mike will go to the Southern Region's Youth Advisory Board meeting in early February.

Their committee met in early December and developed a work plan. Now that the committee has combined with the Policy committee they're going to work on a joint work plan.

Legislation passed January 1<sup>st</sup>:

- HB 4495 temporarily allows 16-year-olds to be placed in DCFS custody for delinquency (currently the age threshold is 15).
- HB 4773 The Statewide Youth Advisory Board Act has been legislated. Policies and procedures are in place.
- SB 2909 requires DCFS to track and monitor families with safety plans; plans must be written, signed by parents/guardians, and provide other data.
- SB 3283 The Fictive Kin rule and procedure will roll out in the summer, so policy is being developed at this time. This law allows DCFS to place children with "fictive kin"; people with close ties to the child or family but are not related by blood or marriage. (Fictive Kin are not required to become foster parents.)

**Policy - Cathy McCoy**

A conference call has been scheduled for February 11<sup>th</sup> at 9:30. The priorities include addressing the residential step downs issue, regarding the foster parent's role. They also plan to address implementation plan and agency review procedures.

**Foster Parent Support Specialists - Edith Cruz**

They will meet via conference call January 28<sup>th</sup> at 9:30.

**Respite - Gladys Boyd**

This committee met briefly and has set a couple of goals. Gwenn will chart respite arrangements reported in the 2015 implementation plans. This committee plans to meet the night before the next meeting to will work to define respite and review the ways various agencies and regions provide respite.

**Reports from Other Councils/Committees/Workgroups:**

**CWAC - Cathy McCoy and Darrin Holt**

The next meeting is scheduled for February 26<sup>th</sup> so they probably won't report until the March meeting.

**IFAPA - Gladys Boyd**

They hold quarterly meetings in Peoria. Gladys will share the meeting dates and action items with the council.

**Social Networking - Cathy McCoy**

Social networking is now covered in policy and procedure.

**Board Rate Review - Edith Cruz**

No Report

**PII Workgroup - Sarah Olson**

No Report

**P315**

Marilyn Arnold reported that the permanency workgroup includes stakeholders working to enhance our permanency program for DCFS. It's now divided up into small workgroups and they're looking at getting this in place in the spring or by the beginning of the fiscal year. Work groups will report back on their sections at the end of March. Policy will be out for review and feedback before the roll out. Marilyn will report more at our next meeting.

**Regional Reports**

**Northern Region – Marvin Koenig (Guest)**

January's meeting was cancelled due to weather. They are working on enhancing communication between key members and expediting permanency. Their next meeting will be February 5<sup>th</sup>. Meetings are typically scheduled for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month.

**Southern Region - Mike Simpson**

No report. Meetings are held quarterly.

**Central Region - Stephanie Jones**

Stephanie runs a foster parent support group online, and they have a Facebook presence. She has not been to the regional meetings but was given information so that she can attend future meetings.

**Cook North - Edith Cruz**

Their meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month. The previous main speaker was a no-show.

**Cook South - Kellye Norris and Pamela Webb**

Their next meeting will be held next Tuesday.

**Cook Central - Doreen Henry**

January meeting was cancelled due to weather.

**Adjourn**

*Judi Enix made the motion to adjourn. Gladys Boyd seconded and the motion carried.*

**Potential Agenda Items:**

Letter to Director to request that FPSS funds be attached to FY '16 contracts.

Jeanette Long and Paul Alferink could do a VTC training re: what to find/ how to find information.

Kristine Herman or Larry Small could talk about the GOHIT (Governor's Office of Health Innovation and Transformation) program.

Foster parent involvement in step-down or step-up, Michael C. Jones

Programs available for youth transitioning out of care, i.e., Youth in College, Youth in

Employment, Scholarships, etc. (Kim Peck)

**Next Meeting** – February 20, 2015 at the Eastland Suites, 1801 Eastland Drive, Bloomington