

**SWFCAC Meeting
APPROVED MINUTES
June 19, 2015 ~ 9am – 1:30 pm
Hilton Indian Lakes Resort, Bloomingdale**

| Council Members Present | Council Members Absent | DCFS Staff Present | Award Recipients |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Boyd, Gladys | Barlow, Pauline | Arnold, Marilyn | Cohan, Erin |
| Cruz, Edith | Burris, Charlene | Dyer-Webster, Debra | Fox, David |
| Cugier, Allison | Coffman, Lee | Eyer, Gwenn | Henry, Chris |
| Enix, Judi | Dixon, Irma | McGlothlin, Terry | Henry, Sherry |
| Hart, Laura | Fargher, Kelly | Paulson, Paula | Kutlesa, Ines |
| Henry, Doreen | McDaniel, Mark | Ross, Carolyn | Lane, Nikki |
| Holt, Darrin | Olson, Sarah | | Perez, Jacqueline |
| Jones, Stephanie | Sheley, Carol | Guests | Roberts, Deb |
| Kalas, Kurt | Webb, Pamela | Barber, Angela | Schedin, Jackie |
| McCoy, Cathy | | Senz, Uli | Scott, Carlette |
| Norris, Kellye | | | Valentin, Cynthia |
| Simpson, Michael | | | Wheelock Kim |

Welcome & Introductions – Darrin Holt, SWFCAC Vice-Chair

Final SWFCAC Reports to Director – Darrin Holt for 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 May 6, 2015 Meeting

Mike Simpson made the motion to approve the minutes of the May 6, 2015 SWFCAC meeting. Gladys Boyd seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

NEW BUSINESS

Child Damage Reimbursement Program - Pamela Paulson

Pamela distributed brochures and other information about Child Damage Reimbursement for foster parents, noting that it is not the Department’s insurance policy, but instead is a support program reimbursed through Operations funds. Claims must be for damage of \$50 or more. The program covers damage to property and bodily harm. There is a \$5000 annual claims cap. Foster parents must first reach out to their caseworker to make a claim. Then they complete a reporting document, get the caseworker’s signature and submit with supporting documents including receipts. Value must be documented before reimbursements are made. Foster parents (and innocent victims) must file claims with their own insurance company first. If damage runs below the deductible, foster parents may provide a copy of their policy declaration page in order to file the claim with this program. A notarized statement must be provided if foster parents do not carry insurance. Damage caused to a rental property must first be reported to the owner of the property (the victim) since renters typically don’t have the authority to do repairs.

Update from the DCFS Guardian - Debra Dyer-Webster

Debra stated that we still don't know what is going to happen to our youth ages 18-21, so we are doing concurrent planning for this population. The Department recognizes that these youth are not typically ready to live independently. Debra said that we should start early to prepare our youth for independence. They are looking first at using federal claiming for these youth, based on criteria including being in school or employed. Programs will have to stay as currently written until the law is changed. If the law is changed in a year or two, the Department is looking at ways to continue to help the youth. There was a meeting in Bloomington on May 19th to discuss what to do if the law changes. Meetings will continue with the Department and stakeholders to develop a contingency plan for such a time as the law is changed. Debra invited the council to work with the Department on developing a contingency plan, helping to think of ways to stabilize their lives once youth reach the age of 18. Debra will send the meeting schedule to Terry for distribution to the Council. Some resources that have been discussed include the military, Job Corps, YMCA/YWCA, State Office of Employment and Training, college campus groups, homeless shelters, community college funds and vocational programs, access to Chaffee funds, etc. These are areas where youth can have their needs met. Not all of these programs are available statewide, so other services need to be identified or developed. The Family Advocacy Center is set to work with the programs to encourage them to give priority to our youth 18 and over. Funding is still a critical issue with regard to these programs. If the law changes, we will need to get 17 and 18-year-old youth into programs and services that they would typically access at age 21. Preparing them to leave the system earlier would not be a bad thing, as long as they are prepared. The Southern Region currently has access to only one Family Advocacy Center and that's a problem. Debra stated that they can add centers, so maybe this should be a focus. Once the bill is introduced it would be a good time for council members as individuals to call their representatives to note their opinions regarding the pending bill. Marilyn noted that Youth Summits are currently being presented, providing our youth with a lot of information regarding educational components, job opportunities and other resources, so it would be very important to have youth participate in the Summits.

PRIDE Training Update – Terry McGlothlin for Michelle Grove

In Michelle's absence, Terry gave a brief update. PRIDE pre-service for foster parents has been delayed and the curriculum is going to be reviewed by the administration. They plan to continue with the previous version until it's ready to roll out.

Senior Deputy for Administration - Carolyn Ross

Ms. Ross commended council members for their work as foster parents. She noted that May was Foster Parent Appreciation Month, and expressed the Director's appreciation for the work foster parents do and thanked the Council for their work. Since the budget is still not final, she did not speak to any impact the final budget will have on DCFS. She referenced the two memos that have been sent to the Director, noting that they have been considered in their discussions on these issues.

Implementation Plan Awards - Carolyn Ross/ Gwenn Eyer/ Darrin Holt

Gwenn expressed her appreciation to Council members for their diligent and competent work on the Foster Parent Law Implementation Plan evaluation process every year. She then described the Foster Parent Law, noting that it passed 20 years ago, providing our Illinois foster parents

with 15 rights and 17 responsibilities. She stated that plans to implement this law must be submitted annually, and plans are scored twice, with at least one Council member scoring each plan. In addition to overall ratings, three to four agencies or DCFS regions are recognized annually for their outstanding efforts in at least one of the following categories: Dignity and Respect, Organization, and Foster Parent Involvement. She then invited Ms. Ross and Council Vice-Chair Darrin Holt to come forward to present the awards.

Association House received an award in the area of *Dignity & Respect*. Association House demonstrates an ongoing commitment to improving their collaboration with their foster parents and their plan strongly supports that value. They note their belief that treating their foster parents with dignity, respect and consideration as professional members of the child welfare system will not only promote a better relationship with their foster parents, but also will ultimately lead to better outcomes for their children in care.

Chaddock received an award in the area of *Dignity & Respect*. Chaddock's agency values pave the way to meet their mission through spirituality, responsibility, learning, relationships and caring. Foster Parents are viewed as integral members of the treatment team and are the experts on the children living in their home. Their foster care employees are committed to the agency mission and values, which support the positive, respectful, and dignified relationships that they have and strive for with their foster parents. Relationships are primary at Chaddock and their employees treat foster parents with integrity, respect and with open communication, providing a trusting relationship between foster parents and staff.

Guardian Angel Community Services received an award in Foster Parent Involvement. The Foster Care Program of Guardian Angel Community Services is accredited by the Council on Accreditation and adheres to best practice standards while serving their foster care children and families. GACS staff worked fervently on their implementation plan and made strong efforts to include their foster parents. Not only do they survey foster parents requesting feedback and input on how to enhance their partnership with them during the development of their plan, but they also involve them in ongoing discussions throughout the year. They regularly follow-up these efforts with postal mailings and e-mails to include as many foster families as possible. Through these efforts, Guardian Angel has been able to obtain significant input from their foster parents.

One Hope United received an award in Dignity and Respect. Foster Parents are one of the essential partners in One Hope United's ability to fulfill their mission of protecting children and strengthening families. They indicate that service delivery is a partnership that should be nurtured and respected by all those involved with the agency. Their plan is vital to ensuring that accountability is adhered to regarding their roles in the lives of children and families. Their plan clearly outlines, for all partners, what is expected in terms of quality delivery of service to children in their care in order that the highest level of positive outcomes can be achieved. Through their current process in the development of this plan, open and honest communication occurs, respectful relationships develop, and a greater understanding of the important roles each of us has is evident.

Awards Luncheon

Permanency - Marilyn Arnold

Marilyn reported that Pamela Mills will replace Cheryl McIntyre, the Statewide Adoption Administrator, upon her retirement. She also reported on the Fictive Kin Law noting that staff is currently being trained on this law. "Fictive Kin" refers to people who have a prior relationship with a child coming into care. With regard to a newborn it would refer to someone who has a prior connection with the parent(s) prior to the child's birth. The process is the same in that it starts with the investigator asking questions of the family member, but as the case continues workers will continue to explore the options.

OLD BUSINESS

Membership Update - Terry McGlothlin

Darrin Holt and Mark McDaniel are up for reappointment and both have accepted reappointment to the Council. Judi Enix and Doreen Henry were recognized for their work and dedication to the Council, as was Lee Coffman, in absentia. Terry noted that we currently have three openings for foster parents on the council. Representatives should come from Northern, Cook Central and Central regions.

Committee Reports

Adolescent Issues – Mike Simpson

No Report.

Policy and Legislation– Darrin Holt/Cathy McCoy

Cathy reported that the Policy Committee held their regularly-scheduled monthly conference call. She distributed three sets of agency review questions that are currently being reviewed and revised. Reviews are utilized to ensure that agencies are putting their implementation plans into action. Cathy identified the proposed revisions and requested that Council members review and send in their comments via Email to Terry.

Darrin reported on a few pieces of pending child welfare legislation. These bills have passed both the Senate and the House and are awaiting the Governor's signature.

- **HB3684** – Foster Children Bill of Rights - This Act provides that every child and adult in the care of DCFS who is placed in foster care has certain rights.
- **HB 3507** amends the Children and Family Services Act. It states that when the Department assumes guardianship of a child, staff will work to identify grandparents and other adult relatives who are ready, willing and able to provide care to a child.
- **SB1763** Amends the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, expanding the definition of "abused child" to include a child abused by a professional working with the child in his or her professional capacity who inflicts corporal punishment.
- **SB0013** – DCFS Advisory Council amends the Child Care Act of 1969, requiring DCFS to revoke or renew a license for failing to report the suspected abuse or neglect of children within a facility.
- **HB1530** – DCFS-Youth Shelters provides that no facility authorized by DCFS to provide temporary residential shelter services of wards shall permit any child under 18 to leave the facility for any period of time prior to the child's complete discharge from the program.

- **SB1775** – Creates the Safeguard Our Children Act, providing that any child or person in DCFS care who is placed in a residential facility under contract with the Department shall be reported as missing to the local law enforcement agency within whose jurisdiction the facility is located when certain conditions are met.
- **HB3172** – DCFS Suggestion Boxes must be placed in each residential treatment center that accepts DCFS wards, allowing them the opportunity to place comments and concerns to be addressed by the Department in a locked suggestion box. A Department employee must check the locked box at least weekly.

Council members may go to the ilga.gov web site to input bill numbers to check the status of any pending legislation.

Foster Parent Support Specialists - Edith Cruz

No report

Respite - Gladys Boyd – Gladys stated that the IFAPA will meet July 11 in Pontiac.

Nominations/Results from the Elections of Officers – Judi Enix

Sarah Olson, Chairperson

Laura Hart, Vice Chairperson

Reports from Other Councils/Committees/Workgroups:

CWAC – Allison Cugier

No CWAC meeting since our last call.

IFAPA - Gladys Boyd

No report.

PII Workgroup - Sarah Olson

The call was rescheduled to May 7th.

P 315

Laura said that subgroups are working on their sections.

Regional Reports

Northern Region – Judi Enix, Cathy McCoy – No Report

Southern Region – Mark McDaniels, Michael Simpson, Sarah Olson

Sarah sent the following report.

Some new licensing workers have been hired. The region is still waiting on the new PRIDE rollout, looking to October for goal date from what they have been told. Several offices had celebrations for Foster Parent Appreciation Month in May. Some offices had dinners for foster families and other offices took foster parents and children to a minor league baseball game in Marion. This is the 30th year of the DuQuoin State Fair where foster families get to come and play games, ride rides and have fun. Audrey Olden stated that the Lifebook trainings are required

for foster parents, noting how important the Lifebook is for children in care. Derek Hobson will be taking another position, so he will step down as Regional Administrator. Susanne Loss, Lead Foster Parent Support Specialist, is retiring and her absence will certainly be felt.

Central Region – Carol Sheley, Lee Coffman, Stephanie Jones

Stephanie reported that they formed a new support group with pretty good participation. Central Illinois Foster Adoptive Parent Support Group. Foster parents from all three agencies in the area participated.

Cook North - Edith Cruz, Irma Dixon

They had a good turnout for the Foster Parent Appreciation Month activity. Pamela Paulson attended a meeting to talk about Foster Parent Reimbursement.

Cook South - Kellye Norris, Pamela Webb

Angela Barber said that Cook South participated in the joint dinner and their local appreciation activity was at the end of May. They combined it with recruitment and by having foster parents bring guests to the Family Fun Night. Three guests went into a meeting with the Resource and Recruitment Team and those who were interested are moving forward.

Cook Central - Doreen Henry and Charlene Burris

No report.

Adjourn - Judi Enix made the motion to adjourn. Laura Hart seconded.

Policy Committee Issues to be Determined:

Approve the revised Interview Questions, 3 sets

Implementation plans

Electronic

Clean plan, score all

Clean plan, score identified changed narratives

Ask SWFCAC for areas to be addressed, i.e. special program changes like 18+

Gwenn will send out sample Tips and Tools

Agency Reviews

Consider revising award categories

Next Meeting:

July 17, 2015 – Clarion Hotel, Joliet