

## **FOSTER CARE SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**Thursday, March 12, 2015**

6950 Levant St, San Diego

**12:00 – 2:00 pm**

**Present:** Sandra Boelter, Bernice Briggs, Wendy Curiel, Elizabeth Eittram, Rod Eisenbeisz, Ann Fox, Margo Fudge, Lucia Garcia, Sharon Ippolito, Shannon Jimenez, Linda Johnson, Brenda Jones, Alice Kennedy, Diana Macis, Dorothy Martin, Keila Martinez, Mary Jo Meer, Susan Moreno, Katie Olson, Mike Palomino, Twila Perucci, Jacque Pusateri, Alicia Rogers, Carol Kozik-Sproule, Dolores Scruggs, Marilyn Sprout, Danielle Zuniga

- I. Twila Perucci called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m.** All in attendance made introductions.
- II. Approval of Agenda/Minutes:** February 12, 2015 minutes were unanimously approved.
- III. Presentation: Foster Youth Educational Advocacy - Linda Johnson**
  - Provides educational resources for foster parents, social workers and parents who have open cases within the foster care system.
  - Additional assistance with children's education is provided.
  - Helping with getting assessments for special education as well as additional support for the kids.
  - Help with school for special and general education, school enrollment/credit issues.
  - Able to obtain partial credits for classes in order for graduation.
  - Is able to answer questions for foster parent, social workers or community member that may know of a foster parent that may be having a hard time dealing with educational issues.
  - Provide troubleshooting to see whether or not that Foster Youth Educational Advocacy may be able to assist with an attorney or you are able to do-it-yourself.
  - Services can be used for foster children, guardianship or open foster care cases, before adoption closes, or if it is a closed adoption you can contact Linda with questions. If it's not something she can help with, she can refer you to other agencies that can assist you.
  - If a child needs any additional help and needs an attorney to help with education, one may be appointed by the dependency court.
- IV. Discussion:**
  - HHSA & Child Welfare Services – Alice Kennedy**
    - The programs located at Levant Street office will be moving to a new facility, in the very near future. The new property is in the process of being identified.
    - The County is in the process of enhancing the overall experience of customer service to the residents of San Diego County. The County website has a link regarding the customer service commitment; "to provide customers with a positive experience." There is a County-wide training for employees in various departments. The acronym for this training is "HEART," Helpfulness, using expertise, being attentive, showing respect and timeliness in our work with the communities and families.
    - The Annual Live Well 5K event at Liberty Station May 30<sup>th</sup>. Registration can be completed online. Nick Hardwick (former San Diego Charger) will also be participating, he is a strong advocate for foster youth and families.
    - Work groups and forums were held over the last year to establish San Diego's new practice framework for Child Welfare, Safety Enhanced Together, (SET) through teamwork and collaboration. CWS is setting a course to Live Well San Diego. A SET booklet is being

prepared, and it describes how we intend to move forward, in terms of how we do our work in the areas of prevention, family engagement and to enhance the safety and welfare of children as a team and a community.

- New staff at the end of the month or in early April, there will be a new group of social workers being trained in CWS.
- Lynn Amabile will be retiring, and there will be an opening position for a new Hotline manager.
- Andrea Jackson will be retiring (middle of the month).
- Carol St. Cook will also be retiring this month.

### **San Diego County Foster Parent Association –Dorothy Martin**

- Sleep Train has had a change in management, and will begin donating mattresses to the Association, once the management has approved the donations.
- Information will be provided in the future regarding the distribution for shoes and pajamas.

### **Adoptions - Margo Fudge**

- MAP: the Adoptions public portal is moving towards an electronic based repository, which is currently in the internal testing phase, and is almost ready to be rolled out to the public. An applicant to pilot the process has already been identified. We moving closer to allowing people to complete applications and forms online.
- 10 new staff is being assigned to Adoptions. Training will occur to get them up to speed as the program continues to grow.
- Surveys mentioned last month which ties into the “HEART” customer service electronic adoption surveys which are getting closer to approval to start using in the future, and will touch on key areas for adoption in each phase; after orientation, after completion of the home study and finalization of adoption, we will ask for feedback.

### **Quality Parenting Initiative – Diana Macis**

- QPI Ambassador Program involves partnering a foster parent and a placement social worker in each region; goal is for that team to be a resource and bridge the gap for communication for foster parents and social workers. QPI Ambassador Program is being piloted by Central region, with Lorraine Mattox as the QPI Ambassador foster parent.
- QPI quarterly which is a “brown bag” meet and greet luncheon for the Child Welfare Services regionally. Currently working on topics and joint training for social workers/foster parents invited to come to these trainings as it provides feedback from other trainings that have already been completed.
- Introduction of the California QPI website, *qpicalifornia.org*, which contains training videos and resources for foster parents and social workers.

### **Comprehensive Assessment/Stabilization Services (CASS) – Jacquie Pusateri**

- CASS staff is attending regional unit meetings to educate CWS staff about the CASS program. One region remaining. This will be done twice a year as new social workers come in.

### **Developmental Screening & Enhancement Program – Katie Olson**

- DSEP staff completed over 80 developmental screenings during the month of February.
- Focusing on attending Team Decision Meetings
- If caretakers or social workers have concerns about child’s development and emotional needs, DSEP is able to re-screen children.

### **Grossmont College-Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Care Education Program – Twila Perucci**

- Currently working on Foster Care education website, and will hopefully be up and running by the time that the pink flyer comes out by mid-April. There have been a few glitches, please call the office if you are experiencing problems with the website.
- New Facebook Page: Grossmont College FAKCE. Please visit us on Facebook and “Like” us”!
- Working on Super Saturday, this year expecting a better turn out than last year. Can receive 8 hours of training by attending the classes that day.

### **Foster Home Licensing — Lucia Garcia**

- Sending four new staff members to the New Academy Class in San Jose
- Currently on the last draft of “frequently asked questions.”
- If there are questions about licensing please provide the number to FHL main line which is our effort to continue with the County’s initiative “HEART” customer service.
- Focus on putting together lessons learned from issues involving recent cases. The State has been collaborating on an ongoing basis to provide FHL with the training that they need, as 65 percent of the staff is new to Foster Home Licensing
- ”Avoiding Allegations by Knowing the Regulations” class has had a very good outcome. Classes are being offered in both English and Spanish. It is recommended for foster parents.

### **Foster & Adoptive Resource Family Services Operations—Ann Fox**

- 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Foster Parent Appreciation Banquet will be held on May 22 – Save the date!
- Social workers for each region in the County will submit names of foster parents who they feel have gone above and beyond in their region to serve children and families. The banquet committee will select from these nominations to select the Foster Parent(s) of the year.

### **Maxim Respite Care—Mike Palomino**

- Maxim moved to the new office.
- Maxim has hired a company which will conduct CPR and First Aid classes on an as needed basis.

### **Child Welfare Services Placement Specialists - All**

- **East – Shannon Jimenez:** February was very busy, received 41 kids with placements. Working with PPAU to identify best first placement and avoid multiple moves. We have also been helping out South region. Two kids returned to Polinsky from foster home because the home didn’t work out, which we want to avoid by finding the best placements possible
- **South --Wendy Curiel reporting for South:** South has been having lots of babies coming in to custody and they have been busy looking for foster homes. There have been obstacles with placement for siblings, matching licensed foster homes with the needs of the children; only Spanish speaking foster homes are available. They need more foster homes in the South Region area. South has only two children at Polinsky for the last month.
- **North Central - Bernice Briggs:** There has been a lot of emergency foster home assessments, and sibling placement issues. Taking Care of Business Day coming up March 28<sup>th</sup> for new foster parents.

**Polinsky Children’s Center (PCC) – Marilyn Sprout**

- PCC population has been averaging between 50 & 60. ESCU and placement in the regions are still experiencing difficulty finding placement for young kids in need of group homes, as well as junior boys up to the age of 17.

**Kinship Support Services – Ann Fox for Danielle Zuniga**

- Will be done with the Emergency fund in the next few weeks. They have used \$2000 in March and are working on getting funding either internally or externally until the end of the fiscal year.
- Will be hiring a new family foundation navigator within the next month. Have been receiving between 40 & 50 referrals a month for both formal and informal support groups.
- Started a new English speaking support group in the South, and is offering free membership for any Kinship support groups.
- iFoster and Youth Ambassador Agency fair, coming up in May and they will explain how the portal and the system work.
- In April, there will be a Kinship Family Service event, flyers will be sent. Two more events in 2015, one in North County and one in South Bay.
- Finalization of the grandparents raising grandchildren handbook is underway; once it is completed it will be distributed County-wide.

**San Diego County Office of Education – Violeta Mora**

- Fundraising with USD for Easter backpack program. USD purchases a backpack and an item of a \$20 value identified by the foster parent regarding something the foster child needs or wants. The backpacks will be distributed prior to Easter.

**Hugs Foster Family Agency - Rod Eisenbeisz from San Bernardino County**

- Guest from San Bernardino County attending to observe the San Diego County Foster Care Services meeting and how it functions.
- He oversees medical fragile homes which service four different levels; and non-medically fragile homes for children in the Riverside and San Bernardino areas.
- They have Adoptions and Fostering agencies (AFA) meetings in their Counties but they do not have as many of the community partners at the table as San Diego County does.

**V. NEXT MEETING:**

**Thursday, April 09, 2015  
12:00 pm – 2:00 pm  
6950 Levant Street, Room 1 A/B  
San Diego, CA 92111**

**VI. ADJOURNMENT: 1:05 pm**