

FOSTER CARE SERVICES COMMITTEE

Thursday, March 8th, 2018

8911 Balboa Avenue, San Diego, CA 92123, Magnolia Room

12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Present: Amanda Amabile, Frank Andrade, Collette Best, Patty Boles, Lisa Castagnola, Miriam Curiel, Wendy Curiel, Paloma Martinez, Jorge De La Toba, Nancy Elizarraraz-Lopez, Brenda Jones, Nicole Kelsay, Mary Jo Meer, Jessica Morales, Daniela Murphy, Sarah Nolan, Jeannie Oestreich, Belinda Radovich, Mitsuru Ramirez, Shannon Steichen, Veronica Sarabia, Debbie Stolz, Martha Tavares, Jocelyn Waters, Barbara Wojtach, Kim Ayala, Joanna Smith, Jennifer Doud, Lisa Gilbert, Mary Mackenzie, Melissa Sargent

I. Debbie Stolz called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. All in attendance made introductions.

II. Approval of Agenda/Minutes: The February 2018 minutes were unanimously approved

III. Presentation:

Hearts and Hooves Therapy – Melissa Sargent

- Melissa Sargent, president and founder of the non-profit Hearts and Hooves Therapy, based in Ramona.
- Our mission is to enhance the lives of children and adults any age and ability with a different kind of therapy. We use miniature horses and animals from the farm to offer animal assistant therapy and animal assistant activities.
- The program was developed in 2014 to be of service to anyone in the community.
- There are 2 portions of the program:
 - On-site portion where children and adults in any age and ability can come and learn about horses at our ranch. We work with children who have cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome, who are wheelchair bound, have suffered severe abuse, and children from any background. We teach them horse safety, how to correctly have a relationship with an animal, and incorporate educational sensory based skills.
 - We also can travel with the horses all over San Diego County to help our clients.
- I developed Sessions for Siblings, geared for children who are in foster care but not in the same home. We offer this to the children in foster care, no charge to the foster families or the County. We are working on the transportation on getting the children to the ranch. The visits can be setup weekly, biweekly, monthly, or at any frequency that works for children and families.
- This weekend, Promises-2-Kids is hosting the family Camp Connect Cookout at the ranch on Saturday from 12-2 p.m. We have 45 kids who are scheduled to have animal interactions, crafts, games, and a BBQ lunch to be served. Planning another event in October.

IV. Discussion:

North County Foster Parent Association – Patty Boles

- Excited about an adoptive mom raising funds for special needs children. This is for things needed for our kids that may come in with delays and will help us to get them resources faster because we are non-profit. More information to come.

Health & Human Services Agency (HHS), Child Welfare Services (CWS), Deputy Director – Nicole Kelsay for Valesha Bullock

- Level of Care (LOC) will roll out on March 1, 2018 for all Foster Family Associations (FFAs) and it will be rolled out to everyone else on May 1st. LOC will be applied to initial out of home placements, change of placement, youth stepping down from a group home or transitioning from ISFC or therapeutic foster care, or will be assessed when a caregiver requests reassessment or the social worker requests an reassessment.

San Diego Foster Parent Association – Mary Jo Meer

- Mary Jo Meer is now the Vice President, no longer the assigned Treasurer.
- Emma Tidmore is now the second Vice President, no longer the assigned Secretary.

San Diego County Juvenile Probation – Frank Andrade

- We are focusing recruitment efforts to message to families that we do have youth that require a foster family. We will be present at the Family Safety Day on Sunday, March 25th at Pacific Highland Ranch. We will have a table there to get our messaging out that we too have a need and a population of a benefit from those families who would like to step up as a foster parent.
- The Grandparent Raising Grandchildren event held on Saturday, April 7th. Any grandparent who is raising a grandchild, if they register for the event, they will receive free admission to the San Diego Zoo. Once they register and make the connection, be on a mailing list for other services and events down the line.
- For our recruitment efforts, we would like to be invited to any events or activities. We can have a table to answer any questions regarding RFA, impacts on our youth, or any general questions.

YMCA Kinship Support Program – Shannon Steichen

- February report on referrals; 30 RFA families, 1 Voluntary case by prevention, and 17 non-CWS cases
- February report on emergency funds; \$17, 777 total for 27 clients, less than \$15,000 for 25 formal clients and \$3,000 for 2 informal clients
- Our family engaging events for Central held in April and held in May for North County.

HHSA, San Diego County Adoptions – Jorge De La Toba

- The Adoptions RFA workgroup has completed the recommendations of converting old process of completing home studies to the RFA process.
- Recent statistics show that the Adoption caseloads are decreasing. Last year, at the end of January, we had about 900 cases and this year we are at 719 by end of January.

HHSA, CWS Policy and Program Support – Veronica Sarabia

- Update on the issue regarding using respite hours for work during the time a child is suspended from school. There is nothing specifically in the law that states we cannot allow respite for work, but it does say you cannot use for “on-going” respite. We are looking into this issue.
- The Emergency Child Care Bridge program allows counties to participate in emergency childcare funding for emergency placement with relative caregivers, non-relative extended family members (NREFMs), and foster parents. San Diego County is opting in with the program and we are in the process of implementing in partnership with YMCA of San Diego County. Currently developing a process with the goal of keeping kids with their families.
 - Plan is to put them on the subsidized Centralized Eligibility List (CEL); one of the components is the emergency funding paid to the childcare provider. There will be a navigator establishing the long term subsidized childcare.
 - Requirement that we are asking that the childcare providers will be taking Trauma Informed training.
 - Eligibility is for children 0-5 years old and 6-12 years old if there is a special need. This criteria continues to be in review.
 - All other resources need to be exhausted, the care provider needs to be working or going to school.
 - Needs to be referred to the CEL.
 - We are asking for more childcare providers in placement to be able to provide the emergency childcare. We need to see if the current respite providers who are childcare providers would be interested in becoming part of the CEL to participate in the program.

HHSA, Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) – Nicole Kelsay for Diana Macis

- QPI training was delivered from former foster youth from the California Youth Connections (CYC), this is in part of Youth Training Project (YTP), they presented on grief, loss, and transitions and their experiences in foster care. They trained four different sessions in two days in all regions. The training was well attended. They interviewed with the Adopt 8 segment to have them as a success story for youth to get involved in CYC and to show how remarkable our foster youth are and recruit more families willing to take older kids.

HHSA, Public Health Care Nurse – Jocelyn Waters

- Filled PHN position for Health Care Program for Children in Foster Care, working with the administration and supporting the PHN's out in regions.
- Two PHN's are assigned to Oceanside, North County area
- New PHN assigned to Central region
- Flu season has peeked but it is not too late to get the flu shot

HHSA, Polinsky Children Center (PCC) – Lisa Gilbert

- Heidi Blue is retiring this month
- Population is 38

Grossmont College Foster & Adoptive Kinship Care Education Program (FAKCE) — Barbara Wojtach

- Pink Book for March – April is out
- Training about teenagers is tonight at San Diego Foster Parent Association and at Straight from the Heart on April 12th. Training is called, "Come Be a Villager", talking about extended foster care. Tonight there are 4 people registered.
- A training called "The Exchange" is this Saturday, currently 25-26 people registered with space available. The National Conflict Resource Center will be presenting about conflict management and the four-stage process for resolving conflict. We encourage social workers, resource parents, and foster parents if they are having conflict with social workers or birth parents, this is a great opportunity.
- I would like to highlight that we received separate funding from the Chancellor's Office from the state to present trainings on Commercially Sexually Exploitation of Children (CSEC). A training will be held next week and in April.
- I would like to extended invitation to our Advisory Committee meeting held on April 2. The Advisory Committee meeting a forum for community partners, County, other agencies, to advise us as the educational arm for foster parents, Kinship parents, and resource parents. If you feel a need for a certain type of training, we would like to hear about it.
- We are currently working on the May-June pink book

HHSA, Resource Family Approval/ Foster Home Licensing (RFA/FHL) – Wendy Curiel

- We are working on conversion for our foster parents and relatives homes. For foster parents, you will receive a call if you qualify for the conversion process and informing on the next steps. For the homes forfeited by law, a letter will be mailed out in the next 2 months.
- RFA received 150 applications for the months of January and February.

HHSA, Foster and Adoptive Resource Family Services (FARFS) – Nikki Kelsay

- Reminder that the QPI Caregiver Appreciation will be on Friday, May 18th at the DoubleTree Hotel Mission Valley. Invites to come.

HHSA, Independent Living Skills (ILS) – Amanda Amabile

- Gearing up for graduation, the party will be on June 19th for the graduating seniors, after-care, and dependents.
- Just wrapped up the FAFSA challenge

Maxim Respite Care – Paloma Martinez

- Breanna Davila is on maternity leave
- Paloma Martinez is with Maxim as new manager
- We have an open contract with Regional Center for medically fragile children. Families can also sign up at Regional Center. Families are able to use respite hours with Maxim and also with Regional Center.

Placement Support – Miriam Curiel

- Just a reminder, that Special Care Rates is not going away.
- For Placement Quality Review Board (PQRB) we are in the middle of developing new policy and coming out in the near future. We are changing the process of adding Safety Organized Practice (SOP) tools and making it a mapping process.

Comprehensive Assessment and Stabilization Services (CASS) – Lisa Castagnola

- No waitlist since we took over contract in July and we aim to continue not to have a waitlist.
- Expanding the clinical team with a recent addition of 2 new staff that speak Spanish.

HHSA, Child Welfare Services Placement Specialists – All Regions

South Region – Belinda Radovich

- Recently had QPI trainings and it was one of the biggest attendance we have had. In attendance were resource parents, social workers, and managers. The social workers are interested in bring back CYC speakers to region to improve practice and be more supportive.
- South and Central collaborated for Respite Night, taking place on 3/23 from 4:30-7:30. The goal is to service 60 children.
- We are working on implementing QPI in South, working with the team and talking to our resource and foster families on what that will look like.

North Coastal Region – Mary Mackenzie

- QPI had a good turnout and well received. In attendance were managers, social workers, and foster parents. They requested to have this training during Social Worker Initial Training (SWIT) because they feel it would be beneficial to new social workers.
- We are working on our next QPI ideas and hoping to come up with a cheat sheet on what to do in a crisis moment when it is 9o'clock at night.
- Our educational liaison, Melissa Gutierrez, will be helping on the fundraising for special needs for kids.

East Region – Collette Best

- QPI training was held yesterday and it as well attended.

Central Region – Joanna Smith

- QPI training was held and it was well attended.
- We had our first Level of Care (LOC) Child and Family Team meeting (CFT) for a Foster Family Association (FFA) home.
- Collaborating with South for respite event at the Jackie Robinson YMCA, Friday 3/23.
- An area that we need support since we are placing a high volume of asylum children, diverting them from Polinsky and placing in foster home. They have no clothing and we have kids of all ages. We are looking for resources for clothing.

Roundtable

- **Nicole Kelsay** – Don Walfredo and Barry Fox are retiring in March.

V. NEXT MEETING:

Thursday, April 12, 2018

12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

8911 Balboa Avenue San Diego CA 92123

(Magnolia Room, 1st floor)

VI. ADJOURNMENT: 2:00 p.m.