FAMILY CONNECTIONS OREGON

Task Force February 15, 2013 Meeting Notes

Present at meeting:

Pam Bergreen - DHS District 8 Jackson County Program Manager
Angie Blackwell - Youth and Family Advocate
Joel Broussard - DHS District 2 Community Liaison
Sandy Bumpus - National Federation for Families
Katharine Cahn - Executive Director, Child Welfare Partnership, PSU, Task Force Co-chair
Kevin Campbell - National Institute for Permanent Family Connections
Margaret Carter - DHS Director of Community engagement
Rene DuBoise - DHS District Manager/District 5
Carolyn Graf - Private Contractor
Melissa Sampson-Grier - DHS Safe & Equitable Reduction of Foster Care
Sonja Olsen-Hasek - DHS Senior Federal Financial Policy Analyst
Rhonda Helser - Volunteers of America
NeCola Henderson - Morrison Family Center Family Leadership
Leslie Johnson - DHS District 2 Family Services Unit Manager
Nadja Jones - Community Engagement Coordinator - Youth Development Council
Jennifer Kelly - Morrison Family Center Family Leadership
Ted Keys - DHS Office of Safety & Permanency (In-home Services)
Sarah Kopplin - Catholic Community Services
Sherrill Kuhns - DHS Federal Compliance/Systems of Care
Lisa Lewis - DHS Douglas County DHS-District 6 Manager
Marty Lowrey - Child Welfare Partnership, Director Workforce Development, PSU
Shary Mason - Juvenile Court Programs, JCIP Model Court and Training Analyst
Jennifer Myleneck - CASA Jackson County
Laurie Price - DHS, Innovations Lead, Task Force Co-chair
Sydney Putnam - DHS SDA 5 Program Manager
John Radich - DHS Lane County/District 5 Manager
Ruth Taylor - Morrison Family Center/Parents Anonymous of Oregon
Jimmy Thede - Morrison Family Center Family Leadership

On task force, not able to attend:

Charity Biggs - Morrison Family Center - Family Leadership
Bill Bouska - DHS Children’s Mental Health System Manager
Jerry Burns - DHS Multnomah County District Manager
Darline D’Angelo - Douglas County DHS-Child Welfare Manager
Tonya Ferguson - Morrison Family Center Family Leadership
Rolanda Garcia - DHS Lane County Program Manager
Maurita Johnson - DHS Deputy Director Office of Child Welfare Programs
Stacy Lake - DHS Differential Response Manager, Child Welfare
Doug Mares - DHS District 8 Manager

Brief Notes on the proceedings

I. Introduction / Overview

Laurie Price and Katharine Cahn presented the background of the grant proposal and how it came to be written and awarded to Oregon. The key point here was that Oregon is a recognized national leader in Family Meetings and Family Find. Now the goal is to be a national leader in making those practices sustainable and consistently available statewide.
II. Closer look at the model

Susie Barrios and Kevin Campbell presented and overview of the Family Connections Oregon Model, drawing on their combined experience with family meetings and family find in Oregon and nationally. Kevin pointed out the national research already underway, and spoke of the need for more states to ‘test’ family find and family meetings early in a family’s experience with the agency.

Quote (paraphrase) from Kevin’s presentation touching on the need for early and timely decision making:

*There is a statutory timeline, and there is a “timeline of the heart” … if you leave a child in a home long enough, the child and family will fall in love with one another. The longer you allow placement with this foster parent, the more complex the decision becomes regarding that forever home. We need to find family early on.*

III. Review of Infrastructure approach

Using a model of Implementation, Katharine Cahn presented the areas where infrastructure barriers needed to be addressed so that Oregon “makes it easy for workers to do what we want them to do”. A rich discussion followed:

- Need a communications strategy that includes the legislature and the public
- Strong support for family meetings prior to placement if possible.
- Need education and support for families… a navigator, an ambassador (Margaret Carter shared a model from NE Portland.)
- Remember to look at a trauma informed approach … what underlies family member behavior. *Quote: It’s one of those “you don’t know what you don’t know” things* (Rene DuBoise)
- Note that this is just one of many initiatives looking at how to keep children safe at home. DHS is working hard on the front end through such initiatives as Differential Response; Strengthening, Preserving, and Reunifying Families (S.B 964) and ISRS (Laurie Price)
- Need to add some missing roles to the Task Force
  - Youth Voice
  - Defense Bar
  - Formal Invitation to each tribe
  - Legislative influencers (or have a legislative strategy)
  - Foster Parents (need to engage and redefine their role)

- Closed with collection of input on key strategies.

IV. Meeting closed with dedication to families and children.