

**Caring for Kids Advisory Council
July 9, 2014 3:00 pm
CCDJFS Community Room**

Present: Marie Campbell, Jacquie Whitehead, John Hersh, Jami Bates, Susan Allison, Mary Kay Washam, Marcy Patton, Danielle Dillon, Tim Weigle, Ann Weigle, Tracee Capron, Jill Wawrosch, Georgia Farmer, Carol Harvey, Rachel Ketterman, Eileen Dray-Bardon

Eileen Dray-Bardon welcomed members and thanked them for coming. Members introduced themselves.

Reports/Updates

Treasurer's Report / Financial Updates

Carol Harvey reported that receipts since the May meeting totaled \$158.40 (\$8.40 returned from birthday allowance money and \$150.00 from the envelope fundraiser). Expenditures totaled \$1,000 (4 birthday allowances at \$250.00 each). **The balance in the Caring for Kids account is currently \$152,004.01. The \$25,000.00 CD which comes due in August will be cashed in and added to the account at that time.**

Birthday Gift Allowance Report

Rachel Ketterman reported that foster care worker, Jen Thompson, put through a birthday allowance request today. Many of the kids in foster care have never had birthday parties or gifts. The kids, foster parents, and workers (Jen and Katie Sudol) are very excited about this program.

Child-Specific Needs Update

Rachel reported that there are currently no child-specific needs. Workers regularly search for and put in requests for items that the kids and families need as those needs are determined. They are fortunate to have access to various funds which are available for most of the needs that arise.

Georgia Farmer asked if her **quilting guild could make small zipper travel bags for the kids in custody. They would like to use fabric designs specific to each child's gender and interest, so Rachel will give Georgia a list of the boys and girls in custody and their specific likes and dislikes by Monday.** The group had been making quilts for each boy and girl who turned 18. **Georgia also reported that she has another group of women who would like to make fleece blankets for the kids in 2015.**

Old Business

Two Annual Fundraising Initiatives

Carol reported that the **envelope fundraiser** is easy to do and brings in nice donations. She would like to continue this as one of the annual fundraisers by kicking it off at the Annual Dinner in April and continuing it through May. She would like to work on improving community awareness and wider distribution of the envelopes.

She suggested holding a second fundraiser perhaps in the fall (October or November). She asked members for suggestions.

Tracee Capron stated that in her experience, Christmas and Mother's Day were very good times of the year to hold fundraisers as people are very receptive to helping kids especially at those holidays. She suggested perhaps holding a food event/auction where local vendors and community members donate the food and auction items. Making it an annual event or a tradition would raise community awareness and support by keeping the cause for helping kids in the public eye.

It was agreed this will be investigated and discussed further.

New Business

Child Activity Information

Rachel reported that **there are currently 67 kids in permanent and temporary custody of the agency.** Since the May meeting, they have received 5 more children into custody (2 sibling groups due to drug use by the parents and 1 teenage boy who will emancipate in a few months). Also, in that time period, 2 kids were placed in the custody of other non-relative families, and 4 kids emancipated (turned 18).

Foster Parent Picnic

Rachel reported that **the annual picnic has been sponsored and organized by the Columbiana Rotary Club since 1948. It is not advertised or open to the public but is an invitation only event for foster kids, foster parents, and Children Services workers. It will be held at the Columbiana Firestone Park on August 5th starting at 2 pm with swimming, games, prizes, and crafts followed by a picnic dinner at 6 pm. This year's theme is a Hawaiian Luau.**

Levy Information

Members reviewed an informational flier on the levy. Eileen asked for their input on the information provided. The flier showed the number of kids in custody and the annual net cost of caring for these kids. **Eileen will be taking a Resolution to the Commissioners on July 23rd asking for their approval to put the Abused and Neglected Children's Levy on the ballot in November. This will kick-off the levy campaign.**

She stressed that all of the levy collections are used solely for the provision of food, clothing, shelter, medical treatment, and counseling for kids in foster care. The cost of caring for the 67 kids in custody can vary up to as much as \$350.00 per day depending on the type of care/treatment they need. The agency does receive approximately 60% in federal reimbursement for the care of kids who are eligible.

After some discussion and review of the flier information, members made the following suggestions for revisions in some of the language. Terry MacAleese will make these changes:

- Change the phrase "This tax is a renewal" to "This **levy** is a renewal"
- Change the wording "levy obligation" to "cost of care of foster children"
- On the chart showing levy receipts and cost of care, make the word "receipts" in blue font and "cost of care" in red font
- Add to the bullet points that "100% of levy collections are used for the provision of food, shelter, clothing, medical treatment, and counseling for children placed in agency custody"

Georgia and Tracee suggested blowing up the information flier as a poster to display at events around the county.

Eileen reported that **there are 3 primary campaign strategies that were used in the last levy campaign:**

1. Public speaking at different community/social service group events (includes participating in the County Fair and the Johnny Appleseed festival) - use profiles of some of the kids in care
2. Fundraising for campaign costs
3. Post card mailings and placement of levy signs around the county

Eileen read a sample post card from the last levy campaign which Carol had updated with current information. Jacquie felt that it was too wordy and that people may not read it. **Marcy Patton suggested using bullet points to highlight the most important information. The post card language will be shortened and revised.**

Post cards are given to volunteers to handwrite a note and the addresses on them to send to potential voters they may know. **John Hersh and Tracee both suggested using e-mail and other multi-media strategies to get the information out to more people. Tracee suggested asking for Jenny Pike's advice since she has done more of this with the Humane Society.**

Eileen and Rachel reported that they cannot put anything about the levy on the Children Services facebook page as it is a political issue and has to be kept separate from agency activities. **However, it was pointed out by some members that other community partners can put it on their facebook pages and distribute fliers by e-mail to their contacts.**

Carol reported that **last campaign, 1500 post cards were mailed. Postcard postage is usually paid by volunteers who send them out. Current post card postage is 34 cents.**

Eileen passed around volunteer sign-up sheets for members.

Carol reported that she currently has 153 signs left over from the last campaign which will need an address revision since we moved to the new building. She will purchase some address labels to be revised and placed over the old address on the signs. This will cost about \$65.00. She showed members a picture of the sign. She will need to order 100-200 more signs with wires for a cost of \$550.00-\$910.00 depending on how many she orders. There are also 2 very large levy signs which are used at various events and then displayed in strategic parts of the county.

Carol estimates that with the cost of printing post cards, purchasing additional signs and sign labels, and the paper and printing cost of the information fliers, they will need approximately \$1400.00-\$1500.00. There is also a cost to hang the large sign on the fence at the county fair. The levy campaign fund currently has a balance of \$697.00. She reported that if they do the envelope fundraiser and distribute 50 envelopes, they could bring in \$1,265.00 (they would all have to be filled and returned).

Members agreed that Carol should purchase 100 additional levy signs. The 50 envelopes will be distributed by August 8, 2014 and will be due back in by September 30, 2014. Marie Campbell suggested including the flier in the envelope.

Meeting adjourned at 4:10 pm.

The next Caring for Kids Advisory Council Meeting will be on Wednesday, September 10th, at 3:00 pm in the DJFS Community Room.