

Caring for Kids Advisory Council Meeting
January 28, 2020 3 pm @ CCDJFS

Present: John Hersh, Georgia Farmer, Christy Dolby (Cox), Mary Kay Washam, Jennifer Thorn, Naomi Wells, Erin Stauffer

Erin welcomed members and called the meeting to order. She announced that Naomi Wells, who has been the Senior Services Levy Administrator, was recently appointed by Commissioners as the CCDJFS Assistant Director. They will be holding interviews soon to fill her SSL Administrator position. Rachel was unable to attend today due to an out-of-town meeting.

Treasurer's Report/Financial Update

Naomi distributed and reviewed the report through December 31, 2019. The Birthday Allowance Report showed 171 children served for a total net cost of \$15,143.45. She compared the 2019 number of children served and the net cost to the 174 children served in 2018 and a net cost that was almost double - \$29,612.79. In her research, she determined that the big change in the cost was most likely due to the changes in birthday allowance amounts which the Council implemented at the beginning of 2019.

The Caring for Kids account showed an ending balance on December 31, 2019 of \$113,797.58 (receipts were \$4,869.53, and expenses were \$20,806.76).

Donations received through 12/31 designated for Christmas in 2019 were \$3,692.00. Gross expense for Christmas gifts was \$9,900.00 for a net expense due to donations of \$6,208.00. 66 children were served at Christmas.

Naomi reported that she and Erin had been discussing fundraising ideas to keep replenishing the Caring for Kids account:

- There is a **payroll deduction option for county employees** to donate to the care of foster children. This was originally implemented years ago when the agency was in the old building on Nelson Avenue. There are still some county employees contributing to the fund. Naomi stated that they are **going to work on an awareness campaign to get the word out so perhaps more employees would like to start participating in the payroll deduction program.**
- Another idea was to have a **"Christmas in July" fundraiser this summer – a letter or postcard campaign in July asking for donations for the county's foster children.**
- Members suggested **other fundraising ideas – selling Handel's pint cards; selling Roadhouse rolls; Bob Evans or Ponderosa fundraiser for percentage of proceeds from diners. Georgia reported that her teacher organization, Delta Kappa Gamma, is saving \$1 bills with "F" on them for foster kids and will donate those.**

Erin reported that both the Children Services and the Senior Services levies will be on the ballot in March. They are both renewals. All monies collected for the Children Services levy is solely used for the care of the children (food, clothing, housing, etc.) – no monies are used to pay staff

salaries. If anyone is interested in having a speaker come to their agencies/groups to share information about either program, they can contact Erin. She or other CCDJFS staff would be glad to come.

Erin reported that she has been speaking to pre-school and elementary school staff, and teachers were very receptive and surprised at the information they received – what Children Services can and cannot do under the law. **They are often under the misconception that workers don't do anything when they call with concerns, but there are legal and confidentiality constraints workers must adhere to.** Speaking to smaller groups of people has been very productive since they seem to ask more questions, and she can spend more time answering them. Erin reported that it is **very important that the public be educated on what Children Services workers do every day to ensure the safety of children and, at the same time, adhere to the laws and rules under which they operate.**

Child Activity Report

Erin reported that there are **currently 66 kids in agency custody** (22 in permanent custody & 44 in temporary custody). Activity since September 24th, 2019:

Children entering custody:

- An 11-year-old male (who was previously in care) for dependency
- A 16-year-old male for dependency
- A newborn “safe haven” female who has terminal health issues
- Infant female twins for dependency
- Infant female twins for neglect
- An 18-month-old female for neglect
- A 4-year-old male for neglect
- A 5-year-old female for neglect
- A 6-year-old female for neglect

Children leaving custody:

- A 14-year-old female reunified with parent
- A 3-year-old female for finalized adoption
- A 7-year-old male for finalized adoption
- A 5-year-old male reunified with non-removal parent
- Infant female twins reunified with parent
- A 7-year-old male for finalized adoption
- An 8-year-old female reunified with psychological parent
- A 6-year-old male reunified with parent
- A 10-year-old male reunified with psychological parent
- Infant female twins reunified with parent
- A 3-year-old male for adoption
- A 16-year-old male reunified with relative and case dismissed

Erin reported that the agency works to reunify the children in temporary custody with their parents. There is a 1-year timeframe to accomplish this, but they may request up to 2 six-month extensions if necessary to reunify.

Erin reported that **there will be a Foster Care Forum coming up to present information to potential foster families.** Erin will send a link with more information to Terry to share with Council members. ****NOTE:** Erin could not access the link, but if members search “Foster Dreams Foster Kids” on Facebook, it will pop up. The Forum is going to take place on **Wednesday, February 18th from 6:30pm-8:30pm at the Lisbon First United Methodist Church - 114 E. Lincoln Way, Lisbon, Ohio 44432.** There will be a panel of foster parents there to talk about their experiences and answer questions.

Birthday Gift Allowance Report

Birthday gifts have included “Build-a-Bears,” kitchen toys, “Little People” playsets, a rocking horse, a baby swing, Legos, clothes, and shoes.

Child-Specific Needs Update

There were no specific needs to report. There is still a dire need for more foster parents.

New Business

Erin reported that Children Services has lost 3 supervisors in the last couple of months, so she and one supervisor, Stacy Lenton, had been trying to cover everything. They recently hired 3 new supervisors from within the agency to fill the positions. Two of them, Justin Kleinknect and Tonia Duncan-Lydic, have started, and the 3rd person, Leah Batson, will begin her supervisor duties on February 6th. Tonia and Leah, who were Children Services caseworkers, still carry caseloads until new workers are hired to take their places. Justin formerly worked in the Child Support Enforcement Division. They have 2 open Ongoing Unit caseworker positions and 2 open Adoption Assessor positions. **If members know of anyone who may have the background and be interested, they will tell them to apply.**

John reported that **Ozer Ministries will be sponsoring the 5th Annual Artisans Against Domestic Violence Art Exhibit on June 26th, 2020 from 4:30-8:30 pm at Whispering Pines Castle. The theme will be “Domestic Violence: Behind the Mask.”** Submissions may be any art medium – painting, mixed media, conceptual art, sculpture, photography, make-up artistry, or any other art form. **Photographs of submissions may be sent to artisansagainstdv@yahoo.com. Submissions will be accepted now through June 1st, 2020. There will be cash prizes for 1st & 2nd places. For more information, call Ozer Ministries at 330-426-2147 or email artisansagainstdv@yahoo.com.**

Christy reported that **The Counseling Center has expanded its offices in Salem and Columbiana. They have been getting referrals to their Focus Program.**

Naomi reported that **if members are willing to take some levy signs, please let her (or Erin) know.**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 24, 2020, at 3 pm in the JFS Community Room.