

## **Region 3 Regional Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**

March 2, 2017

### **In Attendance:**

Banton, Kym	Jacaruso, Jon	Parkinson, Kyle
Calvert, Rick	Kalisher, Allon	Rein, Wendy
DiMauro, Nancy	Kelley, Pam	Rose, Sean
DiPietro, Terri	Kershaw-Sczuroski, Susan	Russo, Robin
Gillette, Lindsay	Lacey, Chris	Struzinsky, Heather
Hall, Gabrielle	Maxfield, Kathleen	Taylor, Jillian
Hooker, Jinelle	Moller, Regina	
Lacey, Chris		

### **Welcome and Introductions**

### **Nominations for New Co-Chair**

Regina Moller was nominated for co-chair, a motion was made and accepted.

### **Minutes**

Motion made and seconded to accept the January 5, 2017 minutes with the correction of the date and addition of discussion on 2017 RAC goals.

### **SAC**

Regina announced that there is proposed legislation to have a different sort of committee than the SAC where there would be a separate state oversight council chaired by an appointed director and the child advocate would be a co-chair. At the last SAC meeting the SAC wrote a letter for the legislature to review at their next meeting asking that the same process of communication from the different organizations remain in place and not lose the voice and engagement of families and youth. Regina asked for as many people as possible to support this. Allon proposed that maybe the RAC's provide some support, Regina can draft a template letter that individual members of the RAC could personalize.

### **2017 RAC Agenda Proposals**

#### **Integrate RAC and Network of Care – Jillian Taylor**

Jillian created and discussed the Regional Advisory Council/Network of Care Foster Care Crosswalk and the Regional Advisory Council/Network of Care Meeting Proposal for Collaboration. The overview is creating one mission and vision for the Eastern Region to better support families and children in our region.

Allon shared that on behalf of the Family Advisory Board and information provided by Myke Halpin, the FAB has some concerns about the Department. Some of these concerns are that DCF

needs to take responsibility for educational needs as far as racial justice, services are lacking and information is not relayed properly to foster families.

### **Focus on the Foster Care System – Jon Jacaruso and Nancy DiMauro**

Jon reviewed some data on kids in care and shared that the Department needs to do a better job up front on foster home assessments and the current need for foster homes. Congregate care rates have gone up. A DCF MSW intern did a study on foster home disruptions, fictive homes were higher than core and kin.

The incline of children in care was discussed.

Kids that don't disrupt for three months on a new kin placement have a better chance at success in staying in that home.

Jon spoke about CFT which is support foster homes. They now try to get this support to start at placement. There are not enough slots however to support all. There has been positive feedback from families on this service.

Nancy shared that in the beginning of February 2017 there were only 7 beds for children 0-1, for teens there are 23 licensed beds in region 3 but only 2 were available. For the region there are 51 adoptive homes. Jon discussed the increased need for waivers for homes to go over capacity.

Pam discussed some challenges for foster parents taking groups of siblings, some of the issues are being able to transport multiple children in a vehicle, if car seats are needed that limits space as well.

Pam discussed the importance of training staff on the difference of kin foster homes and core.

Ages 0-1, sibling groups, teens and medically complex are the significant target populations that they are recruiting for. Focus locations for recruiting will be libraries, schools and churches. Pam asked for help from the RAC in helping to put out the message that foster homes are needed and any she would like any/all contacts and connections that the RAC can offer.

Allon mentioned that it would be a good idea to have meet and greets for children and families to tell their story on foster care for recruitment. Provide communities on exact numbers of kids in care in their towns and discuss how town budgets are affected when children are placed outside their communities.

Regna discussed the struggle with people being apprehensive about taking in teens that may give false allegations against them.

Jill spoke about utilizing services such as habitat for humanity in supporting foster families when their home needs repairs.

Wendy spoke about the need for respite for care givers and kids and preservation of prior foster care relationships when kids move.

Kym spoke about the need for when a kid disrupts from a foster home the family in the home needs support to process what happened as well.

Nancy shared that there is a trend on lack of foster homes, we are in crisis. 70% of kids in congregate care will need foster homes, some will stay in congregate care until they age out of the system and can transition to DDS. Nancy also said that there is a large number of kids that are placed into congregate care due to lack of other beds. Some kids are going night after night to different homes. There is an increase in children coming from families that are on the spectrum where the parents have said they just can't handle their kids. There is an increase in first time placements going into STARS due to lack of foster home beds. Kids on discharge delay are decompensating due to long stays.

Nancy spoke about talking up that we can provide support, USE plans wrap plans etc. to foster parents.

Sean offered modified trauma trainings and indicated JRI's services are being underutilized.

Prepare and inform foster parents of behaviors that may occur in the child they are taking and familiarize them with 24/7 crisis coverage.

Chris Lacey indicated that they have 864 homes and about the same amount of kids in care are in relative care. They provide 24/7 support system, peer support and an adoption program. There is the need for statewide recruitment broad marketing campaigns to funnel into the regions. Statewide efforts on tfc recruiters

Educate communities to not only foster but of hey do not want to foster to have the knowledge to share with others that might.

Rick offered help with showing a video to his various programs showing the DCF needs for foster homes as additional help for recruitment.

Jon asked all to share with him or Robin people or groups to target for recruitment. Terri offered space for recruitment at Middlesex Hospital.

Regina suggested faith based systems, school, teachers and the private practice pediatricians.

Lindsay Gillette spoke about a group of kids she is working with wanting to start a blog about their experience in foster care.

Pam offered tools that the department has, equipment to do videos etc.

It would be beneficial to loop the YAB into this discussion.

A motion was made and accepted to make the foster care piece a focus for the RAC.

Jillian asked that community members be invited to this table, she would invited those people and provide infrastructure to help operationalize, a motion was made and accepted.

It was discussed that there needs to be a sub-committee and a plan around this work.

### **Miscellaneous**

Lindsay announced that the LGBT youth group meets the third Sunday of each month at, Main Street House, 36 Main Street, Noank, they can assist with transportation as well.

Sean described JRI's therapeutic sports programs for girls which has different leagues that have seasons. They have a clinical curriculum attached. They are bringing this program to Connecticut, the only requirement would be transporting to events and practices, Sean will send Robin a flyer to share with all.