

Child Welfare Network
Meeting Minutes
September 20, 2012

The following individuals attended the Child Welfare Network (CWN) meeting at the Las Vegas Country Club:

Shannon Brett, The Solutions Foundation
Marlyn Buckley, Professionals in Philanthropy, LLC
Dorithia Coleman, Nevada PEP
LaRae Daly, Women's Resource Medical Centers of Southern Nevada
Daniele Dreitzer
Amanda Haboush, UNLV NICRP
Toby Hyman, NV DHHS/GMV
Gard Jameson, Children's Advocacy Alliance
Sandal Kelly, Consultation and Counseling Associates, Inc.
Kim Kindig, The Solutions Foundation
Angela Lok, Sojourn Foundation
Sonia Lucero, Nevada Child Seekers
Melodie Nelson, Clark County Cluster
Ashley Nichols, Mojave Adult, Child and Family Services
Howard Olshansky, Boys Town Nevada
Jennifer Oulette, Strategic Progress
Cyndy Ortiz Gustafson, Strategic Progress
Aga Pinkerton, Senator Harry Reid's Office
James Raffel, SAFY
Erica Raley, DWTC-DFS
Mike Samuel, 8th Judicial District Court-CASA Program
Jennifer Silverman, Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada - Children's Attorneys Project
Denise Tanata Ashby, Children's Advocacy Alliance
Amy Turner, LDS Family Services
Christina Vela, St. Jude's Ranch for Children
Liz Vohwinkel, Nevada Community Foundation
Stephanie Vrsnik, Nevada P.E.P.
Stacey Wedding, Professionals in Philanthropy, LLC
Hilary Westrom, Ritter Charitable Trust

Welcome & Introductions

The meeting started at 8:05 a.m. Denise Tanata Ashby thanked everyone for coming. She apologized for missing the last meeting due to illness and thanked Stacey Wedding for stepping in for her. Rounds of table introductions proceeded.

432B Update/Legislative Priorities

Denise briefly reviewed CWN's three primary recommendations at the last legislative session, which included:

- 1) Review of the current funding structures

2) Creation and adoption of a Foster Youth Bill of Rights

3) Establishing a working group to rewrite 432B

The first recommendation didn't go anywhere last session, but they're still looking for new avenues to explore. The second bill got passed, and the Foster Youth Bill of Rights was developed. The third bill was passed, and starting last November 2011, groups were convened to make recommendations around child abuse and neglect statutes, which were presented to the Legislative Committee on Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice during the interim. During the May work session, the committee decided to move forward with Bill Draft Requests (BDRs) on everything this working group put forward. A copy of that document can be found on the legislative website.

The document distributed today came from the 432B work group. This legislative session CAA is working in collaboration with the Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy (NICRP) to create a bill tracking list. Today's handout is one section of that and covers child welfare, juvenile justice, education, etc. If a BDR has anything to do with children or the organizations that work with them, then CAA and NICRP will categorize it, tracking those bills now and throughout the session. The handout provided shows the bills they've currently identified that may have an impact in the child welfare arena. To view the full list, see links at the bottom of the document. The list is updated weekly or every other week. Once the legislative session starts and BDRs become bills, bills will be added on to the page, and there will be status updates and links to bills on the list.

Denise noted that CAA or CWN may call on certain individuals to testify on bills to provide clarification or justification as we move forward with the legislative session.

Gard Jameson asked what the major accomplishment with 432B is. Denise said there were many small victories. The significant systemic win is starting to talk about these issues. During work group meetings, more people were brought into the discussion, and there are groups in the northern part of the state working on this, too. More people recognized that we need a more cohesive statute around child welfare. Work is being done to ensure state statutes are in line with federal statutes. Beginning to have these discussions at the legislature will open the door for more momentum to rewrite statutes.

BDR 457 - Denise shared that an Assemblyman put in a request because he had heard different nonprofits serving kids in foster care were being established, and questions about quality assurance and accountability came into play. This BDR was put into place for quality assurance regarding nonprofits serving youth in the foster care system. Denise told him we'd be willing to help him.

Denise noted that CWN did not put forth a legislative agenda for the upcoming session because everyone was growing tired of meeting. Now that she's the Executive Director of the Children's Advocacy Alliance, they're putting together a legislative agenda around child welfare, school readiness and children's health. Denise will work with CWN on ideas around that, so we can combine forces.

Gard noted that he met with the Attorney General (AG) on child trafficking. On November 15, the Community Interfaith Council will hold a meeting, led by AG Catherine Cortez Masto, on child trafficking from 1:30-3 p.m. in the City Council Chambers.

CWN Survey Results & Update

Denise shared that there were seven responses to the survey sent after the last meeting, which was focused on what topics/speakers/presentations CWN attendees would be interested in having at each meeting. Toby Hyman asked that we re-send the survey. Denise noted that of the responses received, there was interest in the following: funding for child welfare services, human trafficking and child welfare, and family preservation. Other areas identified were differential response, foster care services, mental health services, psychotropic medicine use among foster youth, services for youth aging out, and family engagement.

Denise noted that we want CWN to be a networking hub for everyone, an opportunity for attendees to share their own expertise and experience in different areas as well as a forum for presentations or panel discussions that will be helpful (the majority of attendees requested panel discussions/presentations in the last survey conducted spring of 2012). Gard emphasized that groups such as Nevadans for the Common Good and the Community Interfaith Council are interested in gathering information from groups like CWN on family preservation and how to strengthen the family. Many of these other groups don't have data/best practices and would welcome information and panel discussions as we all make family preservation a priority. Erica Raley noted that many children in the system are unable to connect with extended family due to numerous barriers that prevent it, and she suggested CWN focus on this in the future.

Christina Vela suggested that CWN start delving into topics rather than distribute another survey, especially since in 6-8 months needs could change. Denise said she'll work with Hilary Westrom and Stacey Wedding to determine another topic. Denise said we may send out the survey again in a couple of months and periodically.

Strategic Financing Report & Discussion

Cyndy Ortiz Gustafson from Accelerate Nevada shared the evolution of different community efforts that formerly focused on problems and are now focusing on solutions and what an effective child welfare system should encompass. While there are solid ideas about child welfare, the system won't improve without funding. Southern Nevada's poor social indicators can be attributed, in part, to our inability to receive federal funding when compared to other states. Cyndy noted that we'll need to position ourselves for investment if we want to change anything in child welfare. Years ago people felt federal dollars were too hard to manage, and there were too many disincentives to apply for federal funding. We decided we need to get better at this, and part of the report shows the comparison of Nevada to high performing states that did a better job in securing federal dollars. Next year Accelerate Nevada will drill down further on next steps. For now, the purpose of this report is to know our own market. The report was funded by the Ritter Charitable Trust (RCT) and is also supported by the Nevada Community Foundation (NCF). For the first time there is investment from local funders in our own ability to generate knowledge about Southern Nevada, so we can grow our ability to compete in the market

Jennifer Ouelette shared a small list of federal grant opportunities our state didn't apply for or receive. Discussion ensued about why organizations aren't applying, and some of the issues raised include:

amount of time and expertise needed, need for a lead organizer to coordinate collaborations and initiatives, the A131 audit requirement is a deterrent because people don't have the funding to administer the audit, lack of vision and leadership, lack of conveners, lack of a sustainability plan (who steps in/fills in after the grant), lack of state agency with grant writers (when often these grants require state agency as the lead), etc.

Cyndy Ortiz Gustafson said two key findings in the report were the lack of state or county staffing to support these efforts and the fact that we don't have many private foundations locally who are willing to leverage their relationships to invest. Christina Vela shared that the biggest struggle is around conversations re: return on investment (ROI). We could throw millions of dollars in our community and still not get positive outcomes because we don't have direction, alignment and commitment from multiple levels. Infusing money isn't the end all solution. Gard Jameson noted that family foundations are gathering tomorrow at the LV Country Club for an ongoing discussion about investment philanthropy, not reactionary philanthropy. This group is a think tank that meets every other month and is contemplating how to be more responsive in a thoughtful and systematic way. Gard emphasized that funders want to see groups collaborating and initiative.

Other pages in the report that were touched on were page 10, 13, and 15.

Cyndy noted that the report isn't directed at nonprofits but rather the message/research is aimed at funders, leaders and decision makers. The report will be available on the NCF website and the RCT website. It's open-sourced, and anyone in the community can use any data out of it.

Strategic Planning Task Force

Howard Olshansky and Christina Vela have been leading a small group regarding systems level change. Items they've been discussing include the need for providers in the foster care system to have a more standard, evidence-based program producing outcome; trauma-informed care; how to pull information together and begin looking at systemic issues. Christina noted that some recognize there are real gaps in our system and parts of our system are broken, including funding models, mixed messages from state agencies, and lack of capacity building. In order to take steps to do something about this, they've created a small group to move forward, so we have a community improving families and making a difference. This small group is now a task force of CWN and consists of Howard, Christina and Denise. They will discuss objectives in the child welfare systems and the types of money providers (or a larger group) should be pursuing. Christina shared her opinion that our self-advocacy is that we need regulation. The task force will provide regular updates at future CWN meetings.

CWN Membership/Participation Forms

Everyone was encouraged to update and/or complete the form to ensure they are on the CWN mailing/email list. Completed forms can be submitted to Stacey Wedding or Marlyn Buckley.

News, Announcements & Updates

- ❖ NevadaGIVES will hold its kick-off of Nevada's Big Give on October 31 at 10 a.m. at LV City Hall. In addition to learning more about how everyone can participate in the Big Give and raise awareness and dollars for their respective nonprofits, there will also be networking and an educational workshop on online campaigns. For those unfamiliar with Nevada's Big Give, it is a statewide online giving day where individuals and companies throughout the state are encouraged to support their favorite local causes/charities as well as to find new charities to support on one central website within 24 hours. To RSVP to this free event, visit www.nevadagives.org.
- ❖ Children's Day is partnering with the Step Up for Kids Event taking place at Lied Children's Discovery Museum on September 24. There will be free admission from 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
- ❖ October is National Bullying Awareness Month. Nevada PEP is taking steps to stop bullying, and they are holding their statewide bullying walk (5K Run and Fun Walk) on October 21 at Tivoli Village. Stephanie Vrsnik has flyers if anyone is interested.
- ❖ Nevada Child Seekers is holding their run on November 10 at Green Valley Ranch. She'll send additional information about it.
- ❖ The Making Strides for Breast Cancer Walk at the Marriott will be held in October.

Next Meeting

The next CWN meeting will be held in early or mid-January in conjunction with the Children's Advocacy Alliance as they release their report card. More details to follow.