

**Meeting of the  
Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council  
Northfield Conference Center, Northfield Drive, Springfield, IL  
July 20, 2018  
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
APPROVED MINUTES**

<b>SWFCAC MEMBERS PRESENT</b>	<b>SWFCAC MEMBERS ABSENT</b>	<b>STAFF PRESENT</b>	<b>GUESTS</b>
Gladys Boyd	Katy Cotts	Gwenn Eyer	Bryan Curiel
Donna Gregory	Arrelda Hall-Johnson	Vanessa James	Kim Hansel
Rachel Hoyt	Gordon Hannon	Gail Mayer	Lesley Stuart
Ken Keefe	Maya Maclin	David Morris	Stephanie Tesreau
Harriet Kersh	Susan McConnell	Elizabeth Richmond	
Mary Savage	Kate Monte	Susan Wilkins	
Carol Sheley	Kellye Norris		
Denise Spires	Samella Taylor-Lewis		

**Welcome and Introductions - Carol Sheley**

Chairperson Carol Sheley welcomed everyone to the meeting at 9:10 a.m.

**Approve Minutes from 06/15/18 SWFCAC Meeting**

The vote for approval was postponed to the September meeting.

**Final Report to the Director**

**Carol Sheley**

There were no final reports submitted to the Director since the last meeting. The monthly Director's Report was submitted as required by law.

**Stakeholder Reports**

David Morris, DCFS Resource/Recruitment presented detailed information on resource development and the programs staff find themselves involved in. Their work was primarily focused on recruitment in the early days and they learned that going to events didn't pay off much, so now they are more focused on using social media as a recruitment tool. Phone numbers have been removed from brochures, and people are now directed to the DCFS web site.

Central Region averages about 100 initial contacts per month and 20 or 25 move forward to licensing workers. The licensing workers will end up licensing about 4-5 from the initial inquiries. David remarked that foster care is very much like a ministry. The ones who make it through the application process have often been pondering it for a couple of years. Prospective foster parents are connected with local field offices to identify potential supports for targeted recruiting.

David said that they also support Emergency Foster Homes in the Central Region. They have two homes now and go through the "Shelter" process to get into the homes. He stated that the Central

Region is doing a good job of keeping kids out of shelters, and these homes have not yet been utilized. They hold a weekly review for all youth in shelters, asking various questions, i.e., How did they get there? What are the barriers to getting them an appropriate placement? How can we partner with caseworkers? They work with the Paths to Achieve Permanency Specialists and with Central Matching. They've expanded the shelter in that they do case consultation. They receive critical alerts and if they can just handle it, they will; otherwise, they will do case consultation.

Discussion:

- If foster parents need training re: medical issues and/or mental health issues, specialized training should be provided.
- There may be long distances between foster parents who foster children or youth with similar complicated issues.
- They offer a network of organizations and associations, including faith-based organizations, that provide needed items for foster families and staff.

**Fostering Families Today**

**Bryan Curiel and Kim Hansell**

Vanessa introduced the presentation, stating that Fostering Families Today had reached out to DCFS Communications to see about ways to merge our Illinois Families Now & Forever contents into the national magazine. Michelle noted that she was the initial point of contact and connected them with Vanessa and Communications. Bryan and Kim are meeting with the council to get input regarding this collaboration.

Fostering Media Connections is a 501c3 nonprofit media publisher that provides news and resources for the child welfare community. They impact people across the spectrum of child welfare by publishing items that apply to various segments. In 2013 they started The Chronical of Social Change, a national online news site covering child welfare, juvenile justice and critical issues facing children, youth and their families.

Fostering Families Today is an award-winning bi-monthly magazine dedicated to foster, kinship and adoptive caregivers and their agencies around the country. It's been published since 2001, and currently is available in print and digitally. It contains vital information, new approaches to parenting, and features the latest available resources in the professional care community. Fostering Media Connections acquired Fostering Families Today in 2017.

Bryan stated that Fostering Families Today is read by tens of thousands of foster, kinship and adoptive caregivers as well as public and private child welfare agencies and service providers. Since the acquisition in 2017, subscriptions have increased by 400%.

Fostering Families Today is an educational tool that provides practical information to prospective and experienced resource parents about parenting situations unique to them, i.e. secondary trauma, attachment, and how to meet kids where they are when they come into the home. This prepares families for welcoming children into their home, helping them feel safe and protected, working toward reunification, providing resources, etc. They offer a wide variety of resources and each issue is actually a training tool. It is also a valuable tool for recruitment and retention. It may be used to reach out to prospective caregivers. It provides consistent contact with families and makes

them feel closer to their agencies. They provide testimonials from foster parents demonstrating the impact on families.

There are customizable options for bulk subscribers and that's what they hope will lead to a collaboration with DCFS. Illinois Families Now & Forever may be combined as an insert inside the magazine or distributed on top of the magazine.

#### Discussion

- What's the value of the magazine? Would caregivers subscribe? What would they pay for it? There's a lot of value, but cost would be a concern. The \$24.95/year for six issues would be an expense that is reasonable but would be a challenge for many foster parents.
- Would the Adoption and Kinship Care versions be bundled in, also? Adoption Today is no longer being published. Kinship Care is published once a year. There may be options to include it.
- Content in the foster care magazine would still apply in adoption and kin care.
- Editorial control is a concern. Vanessa assumed that they would probably be open to editorial feedback from the larger affiliates like DCFS.
- They might possibly have DCFS fund a single issue for everyone and offer subscription opportunities within that issue.
- The training component within the content is incredible.
- The combined issue would have to be clearly tailored/identified for Illinois families until people make the connection.
- Will magazine training credit be pre-approved? The magazine can be flexible about how this is managed.
- Topics are general, not state-specific. One value that DCFS Communications brings is that since it's a collaboration, Illinois-specific information will be in the insert.
- The articles are so solid that every foster family should have a copy in hand.
- DCFS should provide a structure for training hours for licensing renewal with a link for online submission of the quiz.
- We should announce in Illinois Families Now & Forever that there will be a transition.
- We should insert the magazine in the PRIDE packets.
- The web site give youth a voice, as well, helping the community build a bridge.
- Joining with the national publication would enable Illinois to tailor their pages to Illinois-specific challenges and issues.
- This would be a terrific resource for foster parents.
- It would be a great support for Foster Parent Support Specialists as they work with families.

Fostering Media Connections offers youth programs. Youth Voice shows a commitment to including the stories of those who have lived the experience of foster care through contributions to regular columns, writing and photo contests, internships and writing workshops. Foster Youth Questival is an annual event in which a group of climbers consisting of former foster youth, foster youth advocates and professionals climb Mt. Shasta, one of the highest peaks in California. There are Special Editions including Fostering Faith, a foster/adoptive resource for the faith-based community; Healing Matters, a national resource on developmental trauma; Kids on the Hill explores key issues on child welfare policy and KinCare Today, a national resource for families raising kin.

The Hospitality /Marketing Committee will provide a statement of the Council’s support for collaboration between Illinois Families Now & Forever and Fostering Families Today.

Vanessa reported that she will transition away of the Department within the next couple of months. She has accepted a position with Feeding America, a national organization, where she will be managing communications. She expressed that it’s been an honor to work with Illinois caregivers throughout her time at DCFS.

**Central Region Report**

**Elizabeth Richmond for Maria Miller**

Maria Miller is filling in temporarily for Cathy Smith, RA, who is out of the office on a family medical leave. Elizabeth welcomed the council to the Central Region and commended Carol and Ken for their leadership on SWFCAC. Central Region is working on their Foster Parent Law implementation plan and have a strong commitment from staff that are somewhat new to this project. They’re asking questions and sending feedback out to foster parents. The Department is hiring, so they hope to fill vacancies within the region. Their regional council leads will meet by conference call August 21<sup>st</sup> at 10:30 a.m.

**Public Comment** – None

**Committee Reports**

Policy/Legislation – No report.

\*FPSS – No report.

\*Training – The Training committee chairperson will work with Michelle on July 30<sup>th</sup> to identify goals for this committee.

Health Care Committee – this committee will meet at 8:30 p.m. Thursday prior to the next council meeting.

Hospitality/Marketing – Donna reported that we need to be able to have a better vehicle for the marketing part. She stated that we need to fill vacancies on the council. The updated membership list was distributed in the binders. She stated that we should possibly distribute membership application packets to council members to be shared with interested parties.

Carol reminded everyone that there’s time for two committee meetings prior to the next meeting.

**Reports from Other Councils/ Committees/ Workgroups**

\*CWAC

Rachel, Mary, Gordon

Mary reported that she participated in the recent meeting in person via videoconference. One of the big things they discussed was the challenges faced by the immersion sites. In the Southern Region they launched in St. Clair County, and there were concerns that people lived in another county, so they decided to restructure. Caritas was chosen to be the immersion agency because they’re located completely in Southern Region. They are looking at the Core Practice Model, bringing in mentors

and trying to simplify things, and looking at things in a more practical way, i.e. Administrative Case Reviews and Child & Family Team meetings. They want to bring in actual social work and make it less about bureaucracy, engaging the clients and asking them, “What do you need? Their agency was chosen as the immersion site agency, but DCFS Southern Region in its entirety may be involved. Mary just completed the MOSP training of supervision and it identifies ways to provide better support. The hope is that we will obtain permanency in a quicker manner. They also talked about contracts, budget, and funeral costs for children. They are trying to come up with more reasonable ways to obtain psychiatric consents.

\*IFAPA

Gladys Boyd

No report. Their board plans to meet in September.

### **Regional Reports**

Northern – Donna Gregory stated that they have officers but don’t currently have support from the RA. They’ve been sending Emails to ask administration if they’ll start taking over the process. They currently hold conference calls the first Thursday of the month. They hold in-person meetings twice a year.

Central – Their next meeting will be August 21<sup>st</sup> at 10:30 a.m. and meetings are coming up in Carol’s area.

Cook North – No report

Cook South – Kellye Norris submitted her report in writing since she was unable to attend the meeting. Cook South held a meeting at 6201 South Emerald on June 19<sup>th</sup>. Carol Watson, a DCFS Recruitment Resource Specialist shared information about the Emerald Office Resource Fair Collaboration to be held on June 27<sup>th</sup> which will offer many resources for youth in care. Suzanne Logan from Streamwood Behavioral Healthcare Systems spoke about their service areas and transportation opportunities for children and youth with IEP’s. Tasha Gibson from the Ray and Joan Kroc Center shared information about Camp Kroc 2018, including scholarship opportunities for our youth. Their next meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. July 23 at 1911 South Indiana.

Cook Central – Denise Spires reported they held a meeting June 26<sup>th</sup> in the Maywood office. Their regional meetings are open to all foster parents. The licensing supervisor asked to speak to the foster parents and Denise stated that he is very good to share information and work with. They do not meet during the summer. Their next meeting will be Tuesday Sept 26<sup>th</sup> at 1701 South 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue in Maywood from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. She said they always offer some sort of pre-approved training for two credit hours.

**Next Meeting Date:** September 14, Northern Region

**Meeting Adjourned:** 2:30 p.m.