

CFN/SR Meeting
Wednesday, February 21, 2007

Attendance: Linda Massey, Veronica, Robin Williams, Anne J., Pat Kornacki, Sheila Skahan - TRCC, Elaine Fitzgerald - Building Blocks, Jessica Kelsey, Ida Parker, Duncan Profitt - Chair, Kay Eyberse, Sherry F., Celeste Warner, Hugh Campbell - NFA, Cheryl Eagan, Anne K., Mary Broderick, Debbie Buxton-Morris, and Kathleen Smith.

School Readiness

We have received the local grant applications for the next SR funding cycle. There will be a TA session on Wednesday, February 28, 2007 from 6:00PM to 8:00PM here at the Dime Bank. All of the current sub-grantees have received a copy of the application and should read it carefully, as it differs from past applications. Anne will need people to read and evaluate the applications. We have not gotten the community part of the application yet, and are currently awaiting the Quality Enhancement grant application. We need to focus on finishing policy revisions for the spending of the Quality Enhancement funds.

The Provider Forum invitations have been sent out and plans are coming to completion. The Forum is Wednesday, March 7th at the Rose City Senior Center.

Legislative updates: All School Readiness children will need to have SASID and PSIS numbers by October of 2007. Computer capability surveys have been mailed to sites and will be returned to Janet Foster.

There will be an ALERT coming with regard to NAEYC Accreditation. Programs that have not achieved accreditation within three years of their funding date will be de-funded. However, IF a program is in progress and has not yet been notified regarding accreditation status through no fault of their own, funding can continue.

The SDE would like communities to participate in a "birthday party" celebrating 10 years of School Readiness. A celebration is being planned for the end of April - more information to follow.

GMF Grant

Sherry reported that Norwich was the first community to turn in the grant application to the WCGMF. The application is complete, and we will hear from Graustein at the end of March. YEAH!!! Thanks to everyone for all the hard work!

Truck Day

Sherry reported that things are trucking along well. We've received some responses from potential truck providers. The Ad Hoc committee has met regularly and is working out the details of the day. Council members are needed to help staff tables and assist with logistical tasks.

Legislative Breakfast

This was very successful and well attended! Thanks to Anne K., Anne J., and Sherry for their hard work. Melissa Olsen will co-sponsor a bill with Beth Bye to address the degree of redundancy in accountability procedures from the State.

FAST Program

Sherry reported that this was still in the grant-writing phase.

Newsletter Articles

Duncan is now accepting articles for the next newsletter. Please submit them by the end of March. He is looking specifically for items from childcare providers, Anne J., and Building Blocks.

Other News

Kay reported that Norwich Youth and Family Services, Rose City Senior Center, Senior Resources Agency on Aging, and Children First Norwich is holding a public forum on March 29, 2007 from 8:00AM to 10:00AM at the Rose City Senior Center. The topic is "Kin Caregivers," and speakers from CT Legal Services, Groton Grandparent Support Group will attend.

Debbie Buxton-Morris raised some questions about the flu. Pooh Corner reported "horrible" cases with high fevers, vomiting, etc. It lasts for 3 to 5 days and has affected most of the children and adults. Deb reported that the flu season usually doesn't peak until the end of March and into April. Pooh Corner reported that next year they will offer a flu vaccine clinic to their staff (and possibly for others). Hand washing is still the best preventive measure to limit the spread of the flu, though some children have been washing their hands so frequently that they are getting eczema. Centers are looking into soaps and lotions to alleviate this problem. The frequent hand washing is necessary to meet NAEYC standards.

Sheila Skahan reported that that TRCC is offering online courses in Early Childhood Education and Child Development. This should help teachers earn the necessary credits for accreditation standards.

On March 2, 2007 TRCC is holding a "Read Across America" event. It will take place at 6:30PM. Sheila suggested that next year the CFN/SR Council be involved in this.

There are issues around certification at the State level. Birth to Three is trying to get a credential for people working with children from birth to five. These are contentious issues that are not resolved. Sheila feels that there should be something separate in place for people who work with young children since the skills and knowledge to do this successfully are not the same as teaching elementary school aged and/or older children.

Sheila also reported that she is having difficulty getting 300 hours of student teaching for people in the education program. It is an economic issue, because these students aren't financially able to take time off to teach. This is a challenging issue, and Sheila welcomes the Council's input to devise a plan to help.

Lastly, Sheila reported that she has had several of her students report that they have heard young children in childcare centers expressing VERY racially hateful words. Kay, Anne K., and Lynn agreed, and said it is cultural as well as racial. Norwich is growing in cultural diversity, and some people feel uncomfortable or fearful about this. They may be having a difficult time adjusting and assimilating new customs, languages and value systems. Cheryl reported there have been issues at Adult Ed as well. The primary problem is between and within groups (within the Black population, between Asians, and between different Latino groups). The Council created a committee to look into this issue and determine the necessary steps to address it. Robin, Kay, Celeste, Sheila, Elaine, Duncan and Kathy will meet to begin this work. There is support available from WCGMF, training from NPS, and other Diversity training opportunities. The Council would like to set aside time to address the

issues of racism as a whole group. This is a serious, community-wide problem and CFN/SR would like to be a leader in approaching it.

Voices For Families training begins this Saturday (2/24) and continues each Monday for fifteen weeks. Teen Leadership at NFA is also beginning. PEP is completed at Thames River Family Place. Sherry, Angelo Callis and Delisia Dollinger are headed to Arizona to make a presentation at the National Fatherhood Conference on our leadership programs. Sherry will report on this next month.

Eat Smart, Grow Healthy is working on sustainability, as this is the last year of the implementation grant. The program is connecting with Building Blocks and the Bingham Project to help continue its work. There are 12 *Eat Smart* sites. Pooh Corner reported that the program has resulted in positive systemic and policy changes regarding children's health. It has also helped with meeting the NAEYC standards and the SR Quality Components.

The next CFN Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 21, 2007 at 9:00AM at the Dime Bank in Norwich.