

Norwich Children First Initiative / Norwich School Readiness Council

Meeting Minutes for December 21, 2005

Attendees: Peter Schultheis, Carolyn Bueno, Debbie Kievits, Sherry Filiatreault, Keith Ripley, Debbie Poirier, Teresa Messervy, Gaylen Ware, Heather Bonitz, Laura Olenick, Kathleen Smith, Veronica Granger, Patricia Kornacki, Linda Massey, Deborah Suxton-Morris, Lynn DePina, Anne Krodel, Duncan Profitt, Maureen Hogan-Scheuermann

Restructuring the way we do business: Duncan Profitt will serve as co-chair for the Norwich Children First Initiative. Duncan will take this new position over in January. We are still looking for a second co-chair for the meetings. Please contact Sherry if interested.

Child Care Subcommittee: The Committee met on December 16th at Stanton School to review goals and School Readiness requirements. Groups were formed to address three goals for the next six months: 1) Hold a community forum on early care and education at the community center on February 1, 2006 from 6:30-8:30, 2) Update the information on the Norwich Report Card, and 3) Develop a training program for new childcare providers. The next meeting for this group is January 20, 2006 at 9:00 AM at Stanton School. The time frame of 9:00-10:15 is designated as the School Readiness portion of the meeting and the childcare committee will meet from 10:30-11:30. An additional meeting will be held on January 5th from 1:30-3:00 at Stanton School to plan for the community forum in February.

School Readiness Information: A new RFP has been issued to School Readiness sites for minor capital improvements and for technology wiring. The application deadline is January 13th for School Readiness programs wishing to pursue this opportunity.

Advocacy Meeting: The local committee is waiting on the regional committee to collect information and to determine its goals. Regionally, it has been decided to advocate for childcare, health and school readiness issues. The committee will follow closely the work that is being done for the Governor's taskforce on early care and education. The next meeting date for this group is January 10, 2006 at 2:00 PM at Norwich Human Services.

In addition, Peter also mentioned that six speakers are needed to promote early care and education within the community. If interested, please talk to Peter (823-3782) about this opportunity.

Born Learning Materials: Peter mentioned that the United Way has authorized the printing of the *Born Learning* materials. The three communities will pursue the use of the posters with an attached bookmark piece as a way to locally brand the material.

Eat Smart/Grow Healthy: This initiative between Groton, New London and Norwich is developing a toolkit for programs to increase awareness of the nutritional needs of children for schools and childcare centers.

Recruitment: This committee is working on buying seats at the Sue Cycle Show, to be offered in Norwich in February or March. It costs approximately \$4000.00 to buy-out a show. Anyone interested in writing letters for sponsorship for this event is urged to do so. The event will enable children to watch a show while parents discuss issues of importance to children.

Internet: It was recommended that the committee consider the development of an Internet blog to discuss Norwich children's issues. A blog would allow us to journal information and to keep the discussion open to the community regarding children's issues.

Leadership: Leadership is recruiting for Voices for Families and PEP. The Parent Graduates are also busy. They recently hosted a "Resource Night" at Greeneville School and will hold another one in the Spring at Wequonnoc School. The next event will offer information to parents on Summer programs for children, as well as potential scholarship opportunities.

Teen Leadership: is up and running at NFA. For their project, the kids will be doing a show on domestic violence, date to be announced.

Mentoring: The mentoring program is still growing. Currently there are 60 mentors and they are accepting applications for new mentors to visit with students in schools. Some of the mentors will attend the next meeting of the CFI/School Readiness Council to promote their work of volunteering with youth.

Anti-Bullying Coalition: This group is working with a very small budget but is appreciative of the support they receive. Recently, they had a ceremony at City Hall thanking funders for their support.

Youth Groups: Youth Groups are currently active at Teacher's, Kelly and NFA Schools working on the anti-bullying coalition.

CT Parent Power: Norwich CFI helps CT Parent Power with this initiative. The group recently distributed a survey that is being collected and results recorded.

Wal-Mart: A representative from Wal-Mart discussed grant opportunities from their store. She stressed the importance to Wal-Mart of keeping associates on the giving end as well as the receiving end of support to and from programs. On February 11, 2006, Wal-Mart will host a Baby Days event. Various community and youth organizations will be able to set up informational resource tables to market information to the community. The Wal-mart representative also discussed literacy grants as well as other grants that open up to the community throughout the year.

Health and Wellness Fair: Stanton School will offer a Health and Wellness Fair on May 20, 2006 for the entire community. More information will be provided as this date approaches.

Work Plan: The new CFI work plan is due in January 2006. The CFI committee will have to fit its goals into a new plan. Committee members are urged to think about what they want for next year and to be prepared to discuss this at the next meeting.

Mini-Retreat: A mini-retreat was held on December 1, 2005 from 12:00-3:00 at Miranda Marketing to review the goals of the Norwich CFI. Currently, Sherry is awaiting minutes from that meeting that will help Miranda determine how her firm can best assist us.

Family Resource Center: Representative Rob Simmons visited with the children at the Wequonnoc Family Resource Center. Representative Simmons indicated his support for early childhood initiatives. He will try to set up a meeting with the commissioner of education to address issues of concern to the Family Resource Centers.

Meeting: The next meeting of the NCFI/School Readiness Council will be held on Wednesday, January 18th at 9:00 at the Dime Bank in Norwich.