



TO: Malheur County Foster Care Team

FROM: Wendy Willis, Oregon Solutions

RE: Meeting Notes

DATE: January 9, 2009

Introduction

On Monday, January 5, a team met in Salem to begin the discussion of how Malheur County might work with the Casey Partnership to reduce foster care in Oregon. The meeting was attended by: Wendy Hill, Christine Phillips, Elvira Ramirez, Kelly Poe (CCF), Dan Joyce, Peter Lawson, Roberta Donovan, and Gary Kiyuna. The meeting was facilitated by Wendy Willis from Oregon Solutions. The convener for the project is John Breidenbach, who will follow up with the team before the next meeting.

Below, there is a set of relatively detailed notes, concluding with a one-page summary that pulls out some of the potential action items that the team expressed interested in pursuing.

Gems

*After the first plenary session, the team was asked to brainstorm about one thing they wanted to achieve in Malheur County in furtherance of the Casey Partnership's statewide foster care reduction goal. Below are the team members' initial ideas:

- ◆ Add an additional caseworker "on the ground" working with families
- ◆ Build on existing community collaborations
- ◆ Support ongoing efforts
 - Relief nursery
 - Boys & Girls Club

- Seasons (homeless & transitional youth)
- Lifelong Connections (relative placements)
- Connect with Disproportionate Minority Contact project (juvenile justice)
- ◆ Qualified representation in the legal process
 - Workload
 - Training

Data Discussion

Questions About Data/Requests for Additional Data

*After reviewing the data provided to the group, team members had the following additional data questions:

- What percentage of kids who start foster care end up in termination or permanent guardianship proceedings?
- How do we analyze the number of days kids spend in care?
 - What are the average numbers of days for kids in care?
 - How are those days calculated?
- We need comparative data regarding relative placement across ethnic groups.
- How does the data from the probate system & private adoptions compare to the DHS data?
- What are the reabuse and neglect numbers for Malheur County?

Observations About Data

- Compared to the rest of the state, high proportion of Hispanic children both in the county and in foster care
- Possible disproportionately low number of Hispanic kids exiting foster care
- Generally high rate of abuse and neglect and foster care placement

Discussion of Case Partnership Goals

GOAL 1: Reduce Kids in Foster Care by 20%

▪Recent drops in Malheur County are attributable to Implementation of Oregon Safety Model

- Return to social work values—working directly with families
- Working with families in first 60 days to increase protective capacity

▪Needs

- Bicultural professionals to serve Latino families
- Increased cultural competency in staff
- More bicultural and bilingual mental health professionals
- More available professionals to serve all families
- Ongoing training/certification for attorneys handling dependency cases
- Need interstate compact specialist to deal with medical cards, etc.

▪Barriers & Challenges

- 30% of the adults in the county do not have a diploma
- Difficult down economy
- Gang issue in schools & system

▪Ideas

- Could use more volunteers as safety service providers
- Expand parent mentor program
 - Compensation is important
- Support: Relief Nursery, Boys & Girls Club, Seasons

GOAL 2: Increase Relative Placements by 50%

▪Needs

- Develop protocol & family engagement tools
- Data & training for staff, treatment providers & courts about the benefits of family placement

▪Barriers & Challenges

- Requires increased staffing & increased staff training
- Criminal history of family members
- Placement of sibling groups

▪Ideas

- Expand/support Lifelong Connections program (began 1/5/09)
- Engage faith community
 - Take advantage of the 2/19/09 summit

▪*Question*

- Are there things volunteers can do to help?

GOAL 3: Reduce Children Entering Care (See Discussion for Goal 1)

GOAL 4: Increase Exits from Foster Care

▪*Needs*

- Technical & legal assistance for immigration issues
- Adequate housing for families
- Bicultural resources for mental health & family therapy

▪*Barriers & Challenges*

- Waiting for transfer of custody to complete dependency proceeding
 - lawyers not compensated for civil custody action (outside dependency proceeding)
- Availability of safe, adequate housing
 - strict rules barring some families from housing
- Citizenship & residency issues for families

▪*Ideas*

- Engage affordable housing community to reduce barriers

GOAL 4: Decrease Disproportionality/Inequity in the System

▪*Needs*

- Bicultural professionals

▪*Barriers & Challenges*

- Difficult to identify leadership in Latino community

▪*Ideas*

- Training in “cultural humility”
- Learn more about disproportionality in exiting foster care
- Connect with the DMC (disproportionate minority contact) initiative
 - Focus on kids that are in both systems

GOAL 4: Decrease Percentage of Kids Reabused

- *Needs*

- Data on reabuse in the county

- *Barriers & Challenges*

- *Ideas*

- Fold into CAF's auditing activities
- Examine the return home/exit policies

Additional Potential Partners

EOCIL
Housing authority
CDCs
Faith community
Judge Pratt
Judge Sullivan
Judge Thompson
Chris Crysler (drug court)
District Attorney's Office
Juvenile Court rep
LPSCC (law enforcement)
SRCI
School resource officers
School reps
Home visitors
Head Start representative
Seasons representative (Renee Cummings)
Faith Community
Mental Health Representation
Crater Valley Pediatrics
City Government
Cliff Bentz
Ted Ferrioli
Catholic Health Initiative
Service Organizations
Sunny Haynes – Boys & Girls Club
Relief Nursery
Health clinics
MCOA (housing)
John Faw
Housing Authority
Early Intervention (Lisa Grotting)
Suzanne Mills
OHDC
Hines
Jerry Kemp
Foster parents
ESD

CASA
Oregon Youth Authority
Ramon Ramirez
John Briscoe
Angelica Carona (Catholic Education)
Former foster child
Bernardo Sanchez
Blas Guerra
Castellanos

TO DO

Notes (Wendy)

Progress Notes for Next Meeting

Relief Nursery

Boys & Girls Club

Seasons

Family Connect

Juvenile Justice

Reabuse

Legal

Invitation List

Updated Data

Best Practices

Potential Action Items to Support Casey Partnership Goals

- Build Community Support and Strengthen
 - Relief Nursery
 - Boys & Girls Club
 - Seasons
 - Lifelong Connections efforts for relative placement

- Join Efforts with
 - Disproportionate Minority Contact project

- Address issues of inadequate legal representation in dependency cases

- Obtain technical assistance to deal with immigration issues

- Increase bicultural competency amongst professionals serving kids

- Engage affordable housing community in improving options for families

- Learn more about potential disproportionality in Latino kids exiting foster care

- Learn more about reabuse rates in Malheur County