

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF SARASOTA COUNTY

“Partnering Assets Together for Human Services”

Sarasota School Board Chambers, 1980 Landings Blvd.

January 28, 2008

Meeting Summary

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Karen Bogues	Community Youth Development
P.J. Brooks	Manasota Safe Children Coalition Advisory Council and First Step of Sarasota (for Dave Beesley)
Rose Chapman	Jewish Federation of Sarasota and Manatee Counties
Carolyn Eagen	Mental Health Community Centers
Kay Glasser	Community Planning
Stanley Godleski	Seniors Advisory Council
Jennifer Highland	Healthy Start Coalition of Sarasota County
Peter Howard	Florida Center for Child and Family Development
Lynne Johnston	Department of Children and Families – SunCoast Region
Janet Kahn	Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County
Curtis Lavarello	Sarasota Coalition on Substance Abuse (SCOSA)
Chief Terry Lewis	City of North Port
Bill Little	Sarasota County Health Department
Renee McQueen	Vocational Interagency Council
Richard Martin	Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness
Elliott Metcalfe	Public Defender - Twelfth Judicial Circuit
Capt. Richard Montemagno	Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office
Anjali Natarajan	STAR
Tom Pfaff	Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity (SURE)
Bryan Pope	The Salvation Army
Mark Porter	Sarasota Family YMCA
Steve Queior	Sarasota Chamber of Commerce
Sherri Reynolds	School Health Advisory Council
Marion Sortore	Senior Friendship Centers (for Bob Carter) and Volunteer Friendship Center (for Dennis Stover)
Stewart Stearns	Community Foundation of Sarasota County
Beverly Stockton	SunCoast Workforce Board
Anita Tambay	Hispanic Latino Coalition
Marjorie Tick	NAACP
Benny Weaver	Loveland Center
Alex Young	United Way of Sarasota County
Caroline Zucker	School Board of Sarasota County

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Ken Alexander	Sarasota Memorial Hospital
Steve Brett	United Way of South Sarasota County
Ginny Donovan	Department of Juvenile Justice
Cathy Duquette	National Alliance for the Mentally Ill

Kirstin Fulkerson
Nancy Hanshaw
Patrick Kilbane
Janice Mee
Alberto Suarez
Capt. Paul Sutton
Jerry Thompson

Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice
Twelfth Judicial Circuit Court
Young Professionals Group (YPG)
SCOPE
Manasota 2-1-1
City of Sarasota
Coastal Behavioral Healthcare

OTHERS PRESENT:

Rick Barry	<i>Pelican Press</i>
Nick Cox	Department of Children and Families
Sarah Hickey	Sarasota School Board
Teresa Johnson	Parent Liaison
Doug Kerr	Private Consultant
Susan Magers	Parent Liaison
Sheryl Schrepf	Sarasota Partnership for Children's Mental Health
Janice Socha	Internal Revenue Service
Doug Sword	<i>Sarasota Herald-Tribune</i>
Ann E. Voorhees	Florida Health Partners, Inc.

STAFF PRESENT:

Nancy DeLoach	Sarasota County Health and Human Services
Kathleen Marie Hall	Sarasota County Health and Human Services
Pam Meunier	Sarasota County Health and Human Services
Chip Taylor	Sarasota County Health and Human Services
Pauline Tracy	Sarasota County Health and Human Services

Welcome and Introductions

The Community Alliance of Sarasota County met on January 28, 2008 at the Sarasota School Board Chambers, 1980 Landings Blvd. at 1:30 p.m. Elliott Metcalfe welcomed new members to the committee: Anita Tambay, Hispanic Latino Coalition; Chief Terry Lewis, City of North Port; and Sarah Hickey, Vocational Interagency Council. Introductions were made.

USF's Rehabilitation & Mental Health Counseling Master's Degree Program

Dr. Mike Richard and Hillary Bardwell of the University of South Florida's Department of Mental Health and Rehabilitation Counseling gave a presentation on their Rehabilitation and Mental Health Counseling Master's Degree Program. Hillary distributed packets of information to the members. Dr. Richard stated that the 60-hour/two year program would begin in the fall of 2008 at the Sarasota campus with evening and Saturday classes. Dr. Richard noted that in the spring of 2009 there will be 13 students graduating from the program who will be looking for internships in the community. He announced that on Thursday, January 31 there will be an information session at the Selby Auditorium on psychology career options and taking the next step.

Presentation on Developmental Disabilities Strategic Planning Work Group Priorities

Peter Howard and Benny Weaver gave a [presentation](#) on the Developmental Disabilities Strategic Planning Work Group priorities. Peter provided a history of the work group and the

process the participants took to identify their priorities. Peter noted that the group created the following definition for Developmental Disabilities:

There are an estimated 4200 individuals (children and adults) in Sarasota County who are considered "Developmentally Disabled". That is an individual who developed a condition prior to age 18 years old that limits one or more life functions and affects each individual person uniquely with diverse needs at different stages of their life span.

Peter explained that USF staff facilitated a meeting where the group prioritized three areas for children and adults: School/Employment (training was identified as the top need), Living (respite was identified as the top need) and Recreation (scholarships were listed as the top need). From there, the group began gathering data. Peter reviewed some of the developmental disability statistics provided by Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ADP) and the Sarasota County School Board:

- In 2006 there were 41,884 students enrolled in Sarasota County public schools (K-12) - 16% of that total were students with disabilities.
- Over the past three years, there has been a drop in the number of exceptional students from 6880 in 2005-06 to 6590 in 2007-08.
- Students with disabilities had a lower graduation rate (43%) than the overall graduation rate (73%) during the 2003-04 school year.
- Med-Waiver enrollment as of November 2007 was 467.
- The Med-Waiver waiting list as of November 2007 was 268.
- The last individual (not in crisis) to be removed from the Med-Waiver waiting list was in February 2003 (average waiting period is five years unless an individual is in a crisis situation).
- The actual waiting list is believed to be considerably larger but many families see little advantage to signing up for services that are not currently available to them.
- There appears to be a lack of information available on services to families.

Peter noted that the group came up with five priority areas to address for the developmentally disabled:

- Housing – Cost of housing, low funding reimbursement by the State, and this is the first generation to age outside the institutional settings and are outliving their parents
- Transportation – Costs, hours, access, unavailable services in Sarasota County for pediatric care, and Medicaid transportation is limited for medical appointments for all
- Family Support Services – Respite, summer camp, before/after school care, and resource center
- Supported Employment – Quality of employment outcomes, resources, long-term training/support, and the need for a transition case worker
- Early Intervention – Funding increase for Early Learning Coalition, child care subsidies and therapy services

Benny thanked the Community Alliance for initiating the developmental disabilities group as it brought two groups together who were addressing the same issues and stopped the duplication of efforts. Benny pointed out that these five areas are issues that the community can address in some fashion and will assist in the process for requesting funding for the developmentally disabled in the future. Peter noted that the group recommended the continuation of the group under the aegis of either the Community Alliance or the Sarasota

County School Board in order to continue the data gathering and discussions on children and adults with developmental disabilities.

A discussion ensued on the Developmental Disabilities priorities. Members felt that it was a very thorough report, linking the children with the adults while showing that it is a lifetime cycle issue with the new challenge of the adults continuing to age and outliving their parents. It was also pointed out that the waiver wait list issues definitely need to be addressed as statistics show that with waiver services an individual with developmental disabilities can be very successful. Susan Magers pointed out that the Medicaid Waiver only serves persons with the following diagnoses: Mental Retardation, Cerebral Palsy, Autism, Spina Bifida, or Prader-Willi Syndrome. These groups represent only a small sub-set of people with Developmental Disabilities.

Committee and Work Group Updates

Planning and Outcomes Work Group

Karen Bogues reported that the Planning and Outcomes Work Group recently had a presentation on outcome measures that are being developed for the elderly population. Karen stated that the work group plans to make a presentation on the approved outcome measures and targets at the February 25 Community Alliance Steering Committee meeting.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Stakeholders' Consortium

Bill Little reported that there was a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Stakeholders' Consortium [summary](#) in the members' packets for review. Bill noted that the Reinvestment Planning Grant (\$100,000) to assist in completing the Tapestry project framework was denied due to a technical issue. Chip Taylor explained that the application was denied because it did not include letters of support; however, during a Webinar the grant writer had asked the question regarding the need for letters of support and was told that letters were not needed. Due to the misunderstanding, Chip contacted the SAMHCorp staff to appeal the decision, but the application was still denied. Chip noted that there may be another opportunity to reapply for the grant as there were not as many applicants as anticipated and the Department of Children and Families may put out another RFA for the remaining funds or go back and reconsider previous applications.

Data Group

Richard Martin reported that there was a [handout](#) in the members' packets on the last meeting of the Data Group for review. Richard explained that the mission of the group is to launch a short-term and long-term financial crisis plan to establish a community emergency fund. The group has begun mapping out the structure of the framework along with identifying the type of clientele, the criteria and the resources. Richard stated that once the plan is in place, the next step would be to create a community campaign (\$5 million) by preparing the plan, implementing the strategy, identifying current available funding in the community and then leveraging additional funding from the private sector. Key community leaders will be asked to step forward to lead the campaign. Richard pointed out that Hillsborough County produced a media campaign, *Unexpected Faces, Unexpected Places*, which has been very effective and stated that Sarasota County could use their model.

Sarasota Prosperity Campaign

Steve Queior reported that the Sarasota Prosperity Campaign is a long-term campaign to raise financial stability by increasing income, building savings and developing assets. Steve explained that the group will produce a proposal for the community by developing a written case statement, identifying champions within the community to shape the campaign platform, create a Planning Committee and initializing activities that would benefit the drive. Steve noted that the group anticipates receiving assistance from many sectors and invited members to join the work group. Steve noted that the hope is to put together a plan within the next three months and bring it back to the committee.

Earned Income Tax Credit

Janice Socha from the Internal Revenue Service gave a presentation on the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program and stated that there was a [flyer](#) in the members' packets for review and distribution. Janice explained that the EITC program is a tax credit for low to moderate income working families with the amount of credit varying on the number of children and income (maximum credit is \$4,700). Janice noted that EITC is a refundable credit even if a person does not have a tax liability/taxes withheld and has a three-year reachback mechanism.

Janice pointed out that AARP has partnered with the Internal Revenue Service to provide a free tax preparation service in the community to all ages with [sites](#) throughout the county. In Sarasota County, the number of persons claiming EITC in [2005](#) was 20%, vs. 32% for the State of Florida. Steve Queior pointed out that there was a copy of the [EITC Proclamation](#) in the members' packets that was given to the EITC Task Force at a recent Board of County Commissioners meeting. Steve stated that this proclamation along with recent news releases and distributed materials to various groups are some of the ways the group is getting the word out to the community. Steve noted that many people who normally would not be eligible are now eligible due to the current economic situation and asked Steering Committee members to share the flyer.

A discussion ensued on the EITC program. Members suggested other ways to get the word out: by placing flyers in shopping bags at the supermarkets, in the children's backpacks through the school system, and forwarding the flyer by email from distribution lists. Members asked Janice to forward an electronic version of the flyer to staff to forward to all members. Members questioned what other counties were doing to be more successful in educating the community. Janice stated that Jacksonville and West Palm Beach have Prosperity Campaigns with significant funding available, an outreach program all year round, and numerous volunteer programs. Steve asked that members email staff with any additional EITC information that could be forwarded through the email distribution lists.

Community Information Exchange

Bill Little gave an update on the Tapestry Software Project and noted that the project name has been changed to *Community Information Exchange*. Bill stated that the project is in the process of pulling together the funding for the first year (\$170,000), which will include a \$50,000 grant from the Department of Health. Bill mentioned that the group has met with a number of agencies who are interested in the project, such as Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness, The Salvation Army, Senior Friendship Center, and American Red Cross and that the Board of Directors of Manasota 2-1-1 has endorsed the project. Bill stated that the disaster preparedness piece of the system should be up and running by June 1.

New Business

Peter noted that he had copies of a federally funded State of Florida developmental disabilities report by The Center of Human Policy, Law, and Disabilities Studies at Syracuse University if anyone would like a copy.

Richard Martin announced that the Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness will conduct its annual 24-hour homeless census beginning on January 29 in Manatee and Sarasota counties. The Partnership will interview over 1,000 homeless persons to determine the causes of homelessness, identify the met/unmet needs, and the gaps. Richard explained that this census assists the Partnership in receiving grant funding from local funders/policy makers, as well as from HUD. Richard thanked the various agencies for their involvement and assistance with the census.

Dr. Kay Glasser pointed out that in good and bad times there is never enough money for services and community agencies needed to start planning how to maximize their dollars. Dr. Glasser offered agencies the opportunity to place their names on the center's waiting list where space is available at a much lower rate and would assist in cutting agency's commercial rent expense and a chance to offer more services to their clients.

Curtis Lavarello announced that the third annual *Shining Stars Program* (with lunch) will be on March 6 with speaker Lou Palumbo. Curtis stated that this year's honorees will be Judge Andy Owens (the Citizen of the Year Award) and Elliott Metcalfe (the Lifetime Achievement Award). Curtis asked members to assist in spreading the word about this event.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Next meeting: February 25, 2008, at 1:30 p.m., Sarasota County Health and Human Services, 2200 Ringling Blvd., Room 226.