

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF SARASOTA COUNTY

“Partnering Assets Together for Human Services”

Health and Human Services, 2200 Ringling Blvd., Suite 226

June 15, 2009

Meeting Summary

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

P. J. Brooks	Juvenile Justice Council and First Step of Sarasota (for Dave Beesley)
Dorothy Carlin	Young Professionals Group
Bob Carter	Senior Friendship Centers
Rose Chapman	Jewish Federation of Sarasota and Manatee Counties
Kirstin Fulkerson	Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice
Kay Glasser	Community Planning
Stanley Godleski	Seniors Advisory Council
Sarah Hickey	Vocational Interagency Council
Janet Kahn	Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County
Curtis Lavarello	Sarasota Coalition on Substance Abuse (SCOSA)
Laura McIntyre	Family Safety Alliance
Janice Mee	SCOPE
Pam Meunier	Sarasota County Health Department (for Bill Little)
Alana Monge	Twelfth Judicial Circuit
Capt. Richard Montemagno	Sarasota County Sheriff's Office
Sarah Pappas	Selby Foundation
Steve Queior	Sarasota Chamber of Commerce
Sherri Reynolds	School Health Advisory Council
Kathryn Shea	Florida Center for Child and Family Development
Brena Slater	Department of Children and Families – SunCoast Region
Stewart Stearns	Community Foundation of Sarasota County
Dennis Stover	Friendship Volunteer Center
Ryan Stoyles	Parent Liaison (for Susan Magers)
Capt. Paul Sutton	City of Sarasota
Jerry Thompson	Coastal Behavioral Healthcare
Benny Weaver	Loveland Center
Caroline Zucker	School Board of Sarasota County

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:

Ken Alexander	Sarasota Memorial Hospital
Diane Andrews	Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County
Humberto Alvia	St. Jude's Hispanic Center
Karen Bogues	Community Youth Development
Steve Brett	United Way of South Sarasota County
Ginny Donovan	Department of Juvenile Justice
Carolyn Eagen	Mental Health Community Centers
Larry Eger	Public Defender - Twelfth Judicial Circuit

Jennifer Highland	Healthy Start Coalition of Sarasota County
Ben Kunkel	Manasota 2-1-1
Chief Terry Lewis	City of North Port
Leslie Loveless	SunCoast Workforce Board
Dale Lux	National Alliance for the Mentally Ill
Richard Martin	Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness
Tom Pfaff	Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity (SURE)
Bryan Pope	The Salvation Army
Chief John Reed	City of Venice
Bill Russell	Sarasota Housing Authority
Dr. Tam Sicard	Catholic Charities
Karen Wilkinson	CHIP
Alex Young	United Way of Sarasota County

OTHERS PRESENT:

Sarah Cloud	Sarasota Partnership for Children's Mental Health
Valerie Dorr	Pajama Program
Anne Moorefield	Young Professionals Group

STAFF PRESENT:

Kathleen Marie Hall	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 June 15, 2009 at the Sarasota Health and Human Services building, 2200 Ringling Blvd., Suite 226 at 1:30 p.m.

Pajama Program

Valerie Dorr gave a brief overview of the Pajama Program and distributed their [pamphlet](#) and application to the members for review. The Pajama Program is a 501(c)(3) organization that began in New York in 2001. Currently, there are 72 volunteer-driven chapters around the country. Their mission is to provide "new" pajamas and books to the homeless, foster care, and very low-income children. Sarasota, Manatee, and Desoto counties are under the Suncoast Chapter. This chapter is seeking to collaborate with area organizations who serve very low income or homeless children. The chapter will also participate in pajama drives and can accept monetary donations. Both Community Haven and the Sarasota YMCA's Foster Care Program are participants in the program and the Health and Human Services Leadership Development Council is reviewing this program as one of their possible yearly projects. Valerie asked members who are interested in the program to complete the application in order to be considered as a receiving partner. For further information go to http://www.pajamaprogram.org/Chapters/FL_Suncoast.html.

Approval of Amendments to Bylaws

Pauline Tracy reported that there was a [handout](#) in the members' packets on the amendments to the Community Alliance Bylaws.

Steve Queior moved, Stewart Stearns seconded to approve the adoption of the recommended revisions to the Community Alliance Bylaws. The motion passed unanimously.

Plan for “Hope for Homeowners” Community Workshop

Pauline Tracy gave a brief overview on the upcoming August 1 “Hope for Homeowners” Community Workshop that will be sponsored partially by Sarasota County Government. The workshop will be from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Venice Community Center. Sarasota County is requesting that the Community Alliance consider co-sponsoring this foreclosure event that will include resources to assist families and a panel discussion on foreclosures, credit counseling, and bankruptcy. Specific topics will be presented later in the day on short sales, bankruptcy, credit repair/credit management, and tenant rights. Currently, 44 exhibitors have confirmed to participate and display their information. There is no charge for agencies to have an exhibit and agencies around the table were invited to participate. Sarasota County will publicize the event and the participating agencies will be listed in the marketing materials.

Sarah Pappas moved, Janice Mee seconded to approve the Community Alliance’s co-sponsorship of the “Hope for Homeowners” Community Workshop on August 1. The motion passed unanimously.

It was suggested that an email be sent to all the Community Alliance members on this workshop and that transportation be provided for North Port clients to attend the event. Members were asked to assist in getting the word out to the community.

Committee and Work Group Updates

Community Organizations Active in Disasters (COAD)

Stewart Stearns reported that the June 2 hurricane exercise was well-organized and went extremely well. There were approximately 40 people in attendance, who worked through the strike teams to respond to various imaginary scenarios. The teams interacted well with excellent communications back and forth. The group received positive feedback from the attendees with some lessons learned in the process with long-term recovery plans and what to do when the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is not activated .

Dennis Stover reported that the Friendship Volunteer Center provides disaster management training classes. A faith-based training and training on setting up and operating Volunteer Reception Centers were recently held and the next training opportunity will be a “Disaster Preparedness Workshop” on June 19 at the Nonprofit Resource Center.

Developmental Disabilities Committee

Ryan Stoyles reported that the Developmental Disabilities Committee is focusing on the current and future priorities and accomplishments. It was agreed that their biggest accomplishment over the last year was collaborating with SCAT to address the proposed transportation fee increase to the agencies (\$2.50 per client, per trip). Ryan noted that the current reductions which will be minor for the coming fiscal year include the elimination of the para-transit Saturday service and a \$1.00 round-trip fee increase in the para-transit service instead of the originally proposed roundtrip fee of \$5.00. SCAT will provide transportation training for persons with developmental disabilities who could ride the public transit route instead of relying on the door-to-door service. SCAT will also assist with the agencies’ transportation grant applications by providing letters of

support. The Committee's priorities will be Transportation, Advocacy/Education, and Legislative Issues.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Stakeholders' Consortium

Pam Meunier reported that there was a [summary report](#) in the members' packets for review. Pam noted that at the last meeting, Dale Lux of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) spoke on a concern that the community does not have a full awareness of mental health issues and the stigma associated with mental illness. Dale pointed out that the month of May is identified as mental health awareness month and suggested that a date be set in May 2010 for all agencies in Sarasota County to collaborate in a Mental Health and Substance Abuse Awareness day. A committee will be formed to work on this event and Dale will provide an update at upcoming Consortium and Community Alliance Steering Committee meetings.

P. J. Brooks reported that the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Strategic Planning Work Group is in the process of developing a plan for the Department of Children and Families' prevention efforts and to ensure that Sarasota County is eligible for future funding. The group is also discussing the hiring of a part-time coordinator to assist with process issues and moving the plan forward. The next meeting of the work group will be on July 6.

Richard Montemagno reported that the Sarasota County Jail has established an Addiction and Recovery Program for 36 inmates. Volunteers from The Salvation Army assist with the program and classes run from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. daily. The program includes AA meetings and classes to address addictions and improve life skills.

New Business

VISTA

Dennis Stover explained that Sarasota County's Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) Program currently has 22 volunteers; some of which were added due to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding. Members are located at various entities within the county, including Girl Scouts of America, Laurel Civic Center, Suncoast Living for Independent Living, Sarasota and North Port Mentoring Initiative, Newtown Community Center, Senior Friendship Centers, and the Friendship Volunteer Center. In August there will be ten more volunteers going through the VISTA training. The Community Foundation has provided additional funding for staff support to oversee the volunteers. Dennis noted that VISTA volunteers can assist with the growing and strengthening of the infrastructure such as raising funds for an agency, recruiting volunteers, and developing new programs but cannot participate in the day-to-day duties of an office. These volunteers receive a living allowance of \$865 per month during their one-year assignment and can continue for two more years (except for the ARRA VISTA volunteers). Those interested in serving must be at least 18 years old to volunteer. At the end of their service, a volunteer will receive either a \$1,200 stipend or an educational award worth approximately \$5,700. Many seniors are volunteering and turning their educational awards over to their grandchildren's education fund. Sarasota County has the largest number of VISTA volunteers in the state.

Sarasota Coalition on Substance Abuse (SCoSA)

Curt Lavarello announced that the Coalition's current *Substance Abuse Response Guide* (SARG) report focused on underage alcohol consumption and has been sent to the state for review and approval. Curt explained that the twotargeted areas with the highest level of teen alcohol

consumption were North Port and Newtown. The other area of focus was on the law enforcement sting operation with underage sale of alcohol by businesses and the accessory reports from the Sarasota County School District on suspensions and expulsions that were related to substance and alcohol abuse offenses. One other area that was identified in the report was the existing gaps within community services that allowed the abuse to occur among teens. Curt stated that he will report back to the Community Alliance on the results of the state report at their August 17 meeting.

Impact Survey Articles

Pauline Tracy stated that there were two newspaper articles in the members' packets on the recent impact survey results: [Lessons for Nonprofits in Hard Times](#) and [Charities Struggling](#). Dr. Glasser suggested that the Community Alliance write a letter to the *Sarasota HeraldTribune* editor and to reporter Zac Anderson in appreciation of their efforts. Dr. Glasser noted that these articles are worth more money than one can ever imagine because they awaken the community to the plight of nonprofit agencies in meeting critical service needs in spite of recent budget reductions. A discussion ensued on the articles, including the many agency representatives who were interviewed and quoted, and that both articles were very positive except for one paragraph that stated that there was "infighting and finger pointing" going on amongst the agencies. Members were grateful for the articles and agreed that a letter to the editor should be sent from the Chair of the Community Alliance. Members also agreed that there should be a statement in the letter explaining that there is not any "infighting and finger pointing" going on and rather a great deal of collaboration amongst the agencies. It was also suggested that there should be reference to all of the agencies that are part of and support the Community Alliance or refer them to the Community Alliance website to see the number of agencies that are involved. Sherri Reynolds noted that Judi Bell from the Nonprofit Resource Center is currently working on the Impact Survey summary report. This report will be available for review at the August meeting.

Next Meeting

Pauline Tracy asked members to discuss the summer months' meetings. Members agreed to cancel the July 20 meeting and to reconvene on Monday, August 17 at the Landings location.

Public Comment

None

The next Community Alliance Steering Committee meeting will be held on Monday, August 17 at 1:30 pm, Sarasota County School Board Chambers, 1980 Landings Blvd.