

## COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF SARASOTA COUNTY

*“Partnering Assets Together for Human Services”*

*Sarasota School Board chambers, 1980 Landings Blvd.*

### MEETING SUMMARY

January 23, 2006

#### STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ken Alexander	Sarasota Memorial Hospital
John Beck	Manasota 2-1-1 (for Alberto Suarez)
Dave Beesley	First Step of Sarasota
Karen Bogues	Community Youth Development
P.J. Brooks	Manasota Safe Children Coalition Advisory Council
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
Eva Goodwin	STAR
Sarah Gorman	Healthy Start Coalition of Sarasota County
Nancy Hanshaw	Twelfth Judicial Circuit Court
Janet Kahn	Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County
Frank Kovach	School Board of Sarasota County
Kim Kutch	Department of Children and Families – SunCoast Region
Bill Little	Sarasota County Health Department
Renee McQueen	Vocational Interagency Council
Janice Mee	SCOPE
Elliott Metcalfe	Public Defender - Twelfth Judicial Circuit
Capt. Richard Montemagno	Sarasota County Sheriff's Office
Scott Moore	Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County
Steve Queior	Sarasota Chamber of Commerce
Sherri Reynolds	Juvenile Justice Council
Shannon Staub	Sarasota Board of County Commissioners
Stewart Stearns	Community Foundation of Sarasota County
Beverly Stockton	SunCoast Workforce Development Board
Jerry Thompson	Coastal Behavioral Healthcare
Alex Young	United Way of Sarasota County
Tammy Zappa	National Alliance for the Mentally Ill

**STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:**

Steve Brett	United Way of South Sarasota County
Vanessa Carusone	City of North Port
Maria Garcia-Casellas	Hispanic Latino Coalition
Lynore Dickinson	Loveland Center
Ginny Donovan	Department of Juvenile Justice
Peter Howard	Florida Center for Child and Family Development
Curtis Lavarello	Sarasota Coalition on Substance Abuse (SCOSA)
Tom Pfaff	Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity (SURE)
Daniel Schmelzinger	Office of Housing and Community Development
Mike Schneiderman	Suncoast Partnership to End Homelessness
Nancy Shoemaker	Diocese of Venice
Bert Tanner	Salvation Army--Sarasota Corps
Vicki Taylor	City of Venice
Bill Wallace	Mental Health Community Centers

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Judge Bob Bennett	Chief Judge – Twelfth Circuit Court
Samantha Berkey	STAR
Dave Bullock	Deputy County Administrator
Randy Crete	Citizens for Better Schools
Lee Johnson	Sarasota YMCA
Dennis Stover	Friendship Volunteer Center
Ann Voorhees	DCF/SAMH Adult Mental Health

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Kathleen Marie Hall	Sarasota County Health and Human Services
Chip Taylor	Sarasota County Health and Human Services
Michael Theall	Sarasota County Health and Human Services
Pauline Tracy	Sarasota County Health and Human Services

The Community Alliance of Sarasota County met on January 23, 2006 at the Sarasota School Board chambers, 1980 Landings Blvd. at 1:30 p.m.

Chair Stewart Stearns welcomed the members of the Steering Committee and guests and introductions were made.

**Criminal Justice Commission (CJC)**

Chief Judge Bob Bennett and Dave Bullock gave a presentation on the Sarasota County Criminal Justice Commission (CJC). Judge Bennett explained that the CJC was created by the Board of County Commissioners approximately 2 years ago. Prior to the creation of the commission, there was a Public Safety Coordinating Council that met

infrequently and focused only on managing the jail population. The Board wanted a commission that had a broader purpose and would be responsible for examining and evaluating the entire criminal justice system, creating the most effective and efficient use of community resources, and advising the Board on the allocation of county funds for the criminal justice system. The Commission is comprised of ten members, including the Chief Judge, the Sheriff, the State Attorney, the Public Defender, the Clerk of the Court, the Court Administrator, the district director of the Department of Corrections, a County Commissioner, the Executive Director of the County's Health and Human Services Business Center, and a Deputy County Administrator. The Commission has been successful in expanding county funding in the Pre-Trial Services program and—together with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Stakeholders' Consortium—securing funding for the Community Alternatives Residential Treatment (CART) initiative.

David Bullock pointed out that operating and supporting the criminal justice system is the largest single item in Sarasota County's budget. One thing that has become clear to the CJC is that there is no clear line between criminal justice and human services. David stated that this is the first time the County has seen independent elected constitutional officers work together in a very public and open way to make their respective elements of the criminal justice system mesh in a better way in order to accomplish shared community outcomes.

### **NeXt Generation Learning**

Randy Crete from the Citizens for Better Schools gave a presentation on the referendum of the continuation of the one mill property tax for the Sarasota County school system. He stated that on March 14, Sarasota voters will be asked to approve continued funding of the extra dollars for teachers' salaries and Dr. Norris's NeXt Generation Learning initiative which will prepare students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplaces. Randy asked the Community Alliance members for their support in securing passage of the referendum.

Randy acknowledged that Sarasota County has demanded a high degree of excellence in education. Over 57% of the teachers in Sarasota County have Masters degrees, compared to only 39% statewide. The challenge of recruiting first-rate teachers has never been more competitive and with the median cost of a home in Sarasota County now over \$300,000, it is even more difficult to recruit beginning teachers with a starting salary of approximately \$35,000. If Sarasota County is going to attract quality teachers, it must be able to offer competitive pay. Without the continuation of the one mill for school operations, Sarasota County will not be able to continue to compete for teachers. The Classified Teachers Association has estimated that salaries alone would fall 15.6% if the referendum does not pass.

Sherri Reynolds mentioned some of the positive outcomes from the previous referendum funding, including a collaborative agreement between Sarasota County Government, Sarasota Memorial Hospital, Venice Regional Hospital and the School Board to provide nurses in all the county high schools, and an increase in guidance counselors in the schools within the district.

Randy mentioned that Riverview High School, with approximately 2,500 students, is one of the first schools in the district to begin the “smaller learning communities” initiative that is part of the NeXt Generation Learning concept. Riverview now has six different academies with approximately 400 students in each academy. Through these academies, there is a greater involvement between the children, their parents and the school. It is expected that having smaller learning communities, better teachers, and changes in educating students will have a positive outcome in higher FCAT and SAT scores and graduation rates.

***Shannon Staub motioned, Janice Mee seconded, motion passed unanimously that the Community Alliance Steering Committee supports the continuation of the School Millage Referendum.***

## **COMMITTEE AND WORK GROUP UPDATES**

### **Health Coverage for Uninsured Children Subcommittee (HCUC)**

Sarah Gorman asked everyone to review the handout in their packet.

### **Community Disaster Preparedness Committee**

Alex Young reported that the Community Disaster Preparedness Committee met on January 9, with the discussion focusing on recommendations to improve the process, a summary of the Fall 2005 survey results, and how to proceed forward.

### **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Stakeholders' Consortium**

Bill Little reported that the Planning Committee of the Consortium has been holding community forums leading to the development of the community substance abuse and mental health plan. Forums have been held with Jewish Family and Children Services, North Port Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Englewood CHIP, Laurel·Osprey·Venice·Nokomis Community Health Action Team (LOVN CHAT), Family Resource Network, Sarasota Schools and the Hispanic Latino Coalition as the sponsors. They have scheduled forums with Sarasota United for Responsibility and Equity, Inc (SURE), the Venice Interagency Council, The Florida Bar Association, and various law enforcement personnel. The goal is to have the community plan developed by the end of March.

The Acute Care Task Force met on January 17, with a focus on developing transfer guidelines for persons engaged in the acute care system.

### **SAMHSA Grant**

Chip Taylor reported that the County is moving forward to implement the Early Childhood Mental Health Partnership. Contracts are being developed between the County and the Health Department (for the administration of the grant), the County and the Florida Center for Child and Family Development (for the lead service component of the project), and the County and the USF Florida Mental Health Institute (for the

evaluation of the project). Ann Kelley, presently with Directions for Mental Health in Pinellas County, has been selected as the Project Director and will begin on February 10. Hiring is underway for the other members of the Administrative Team and it is expected that most of the staff will be on board by the end of February.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Forensic Beds**

Dr. Jerry Thompson of Coastal Behavioral Healthcare reported to the Steering Committee members on a community issue that has arisen in the mental health arena. When a person is found to be incompetent to stand trial, they remain in the county jail until a bed becomes available at a state mental health hospital. When transferred to the state hospital forensic unit, they receive treatment to enable them to regain competency and then will stand trial. If they do not become competent or it is determined that they will never be competent, they are discharged to a residential program in the community and eventually will have their criminal charges dropped due to their incompetence. At present, there is a backlog of individuals who are ready to be discharged from the hospital to the community but there is no where for them to go. At the same time, there is a backlog in our county jails of people waiting to be admitted into the state forensic hospital beds.

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) has recently initiated a movement to re-designate some of the residential beds in this community as forensic beds to accommodate persons who have been found incompetent coming out of the state hospital. Coastal Behavioral Healthcare currently operates 29 Level II residential beds in Sarasota County; under the DCF plan, 12 of those beds would be designated for forensic patients.

Jerry stated that he has been assured by DCF's Suncoast Region office that Coastal would not be forced to accept anyone whose charges involved violent crimes. Coastal does not have an issue with patient safety, community safety or staff safety, but they are concerned about the shifting of scarce resources from one part of an inadequate system to another part. Coastal already has a waiting list for these beds and under this new policy the waiting list will stretch longer. It will also affect those coming out of VIP program, the new Marchman Act addictions receiving facility, and the CSU.

Elliott Metcalfe commented that this has been an ongoing problem for several years and many of these persons have a history of violence and do represent a danger to the community. The only thing that the state hospital teaches these patients is how to become competent and they are usually no better then when they went in. What the state really needs is additional and larger state hospitals for these persons.

***Karen Bagues motioned, seconded by Steve Quieror, passed unanimously that the Community Alliance Legislative Priorities Committee address this issue.***

## **STAR Representative**

Eva Goodwin announced that she would be resigning at the end of this meeting due to her upcoming graduation on May 19. Eva thanked the members for giving her this opportunity and for all their support. She stated that the Community Alliance has been a major educational force in her life, opened her eyes and her entire view of the world, and she now understands what it takes to make Sarasota County what it is today.

## **Annual Conference for Mental Health Professionals**

On Friday, April 21, Jewish Families and Children Services will sponsor its annual conference for mental health professionals. This year's topic is Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome. The conference will be held at the Sarasota Cay Club, 7150 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For additional information, please call 941-366-2224 or email [pgorelick@jfccs-cares.org](mailto:pgorelick@jfccs-cares.org).

## **National Mentoring Month**

Dennis Stover of Volunteer Friendship Center mentioned that January is National Mentoring Month. City, county, and state officials have endorsed this initiative. Dennis invited members of the Community Alliance to volunteer one hour a week as a mentor and become a catalyst for change in a young person's life.

## **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

## ***NEXT MEETING:***

***February 20, 2006, 1:30 p.m. The meeting will be at the Sarasota County Health Department, 2200 Ringling Blvd., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Auditorium.***