

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE OF SARASOTA COUNTY

Children and Youth Services Strategic Planning Work Group

June 28, 2007

Present:

Ken Alexander	Sarasota Memorial Hospital/Bayside
Mike Bigner	Gulf Coast Community Foundation
PJ Brooks	First Step of Sarasota
Lee Byron	Human Services Advisory Council
Don Campbell	Big Brothers/Big Sisters
Rose Chapman	Jewish Family and Children's Services
Hal Hedley	Child Protection Center
Jennifer Highland	Healthy Start Coalition
Lee Johnson	YMCA
Lynne Johnston	DCF, Suncoast Region
Edwina Jones	CHAC
Kelly Lewin	Federation of Families
Janice Mee	Child Advocate
Sherri Reynolds	Sarasota County School Board
James Sawyer	Sarasota Partnership for Children's Mental Health
Nancy Shoemaker	Catholic Charities
Dennis Stover	Friendship Volunteer Center
Philip Tavill	Children First
Caroline Zucker	Sarasota County School Board

Staff:

Claire Alexander	Sarasota County Health and Human Services
Chip Taylor	Sarasota County Health and Human Services

Summary

PJ gave an overview of the purpose of the meeting. He noted the impact of potential tax cuts and how that may affect human services in the community. Chip provided the background behind why this particular committee was formed, the challenges to be faced, and what the product should look like.

A meeting of the chairs of the six groups is scheduled in the next two weeks in order to describe to each other what the scope of their committee includes. This will show where the redundancies are and will allow a decision to be made on whether or not the overlaps are useful.

The committee discussed the importance of estimating the growth rate in the number of children in the County five to ten years from now. The validity of the available data is in question.

Discussion ensued regarding whether the committee's scope includes 'children and youth,' 'children and families,' or 'children, youth and families.' Rose noted that this issue was left out of the minutes from the previous meeting. The committee members discussed how the community will look five to ten years from now and how data can be gathered. Chip proposed that the best source of data on children revolves around preparing for and entering school and beyond. Rose expressed the concern regarding who will gather this data for analysis and how they can meet the September deadline of the Community Alliance.

Philip suggested that we use the data that we know we can rely on for the past three to five years to assist in projecting where we will be in five to ten years. He noted, however, that should the growth rate in the number of children drastically increase, the *strategies* for addressing the human services issues will not change. What will change are the resources available to respond to the growing needs. Based on the committee's projection of population growth, the capacity of existing programs can be evaluated and the unmet needs will be evident. Also, the presence or absence of a nurturing environment is important. Rose reminded the committee of the short time to develop a response to the Alliance and the lack of resources to gather data.

Discussion ensued regarding the need to get input from families and children before a conclusion is reached regarding needs. Chip suggested that the committee invite those families who are not involved in the system to get a more global evaluation of unmet human services needs. PJ suggested that 'connectedness to the community' is a very important factor in the success and health of young people. It was suggested that focus groups would be beneficial to the process.

In selecting the three to five topics, the consensus was to consider the lack of collaboration in the community and how that affects each issue. Philip suggested that it be phrased as, 'To build upon and expand those collaborations that exist in order to better serve children and youth.' Chip clarified that the Alliance is looking for three to five *issues* affecting the community, not necessarily unmet service needs.

PJ suggested that each member take the list of issues mentioned at the last meeting and list three items for each that will build on existing collaborations to strengthen families. Include unmet needs and underserved populations from your perspective. Respond directly to Chip who will compile the list for the next meeting. A suggested question would be: In the last five to ten years, what aspects of the system have continued to improve?

The consensus of the committee was to do this in e-mail form. Chip asked that Rose and PJ send him questions to be added to the e-mail request for information. Sherri added emphasis on the need for a nurturing environment and

connectedness for children and families. This comes out in the Communities That Care surveys each year. Chip noted that the question about unmet needs and underserved populations is, 'What are the biggest issues right now?' The issue about how to make the system better and to improve collaboration is, "What can we do now so that five years from now the system is working better?" It is not an infusion of money; it's a change of culture to be able to change those parts of the system.

Suggested questions:

- If we did this now, we will be a nurturing community in five years.
- If we did this, five years from now it will be a healthier place to be.
- What are the unmet needs
- What are the system needs
- What are the most severely underserved populations

Next Steps

Chip will send out an e-mail to the committee members that includes the issues brought out in today's meeting. Members will need to respond before the next meeting in order to have their information included in the report.

Next Meetings

The next meeting of the Children and Youth Services Strategic Planning Work Group is **August 6, 1:30 p.m.** at Jewish Family and Children's Services on Fruitville Road.