

**DIVISION OF YOUTH REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD**

MINUTES

January 7, 2008

Attendance:

Janet Leban	Delaware Center for Justice
Benton Garrison	Assistant Superintendent, NCCDC
Lisa DiStefano	Chief, Community Services, YRS
Barbara Riley	Dept of Labor, Div of Vocational Rehabilitative
Allison Cassidy	Delaware Girls Initiative
Marion E. Plotts	Resident, Woodland Park
Wayne Ashbee	Resident, Woodland Heights
Aimee McFarlan	Rockford Center
Ken Arnold	Assistant Superintendent, Ferris
Cari DeSantis	Cabinet Secretary, DSCYF
Fay Whittle	Prison Ministries of Delaware
Barbara Crowell	Judge, Family Court
Jim Mosley	Director of Public Safety, Wilmington Police Dept
Dory Zatuchni	Jewish Family Services
Rick Shaw	Deputy Director, Division of YRS

Absent:

Larry Haag	Child, Inc.
Stephanie Guiswite	DYRS
Leslie Newman	Executive Director, Children & Families First
Annette Miller	Superintendent, Ferris
Steven Wesley	Superintendent, NCCDC
Jim Lafferty	Executive Director, Mental Health Association of DE
Richard Pulling	Captain, Delaware State Police, Troop 6
Kim Pepper	DYRS, Administrative Assistant
Kathryn Herel	Parent Information Center of DE
Kaiyra Greel	Methodist Action Program
Phyllis Berggrun	President, Willow Run Civic Association
Nnamdi Chukwuocha	Kingswood Community Center
Rita Paige	De State Housing Authority
Vicki Wetherall	Deputy Attorney General
Col. Rick Gregory	NCCPD
Alison McGonigal	JDAI Coordinator
Andrew McKnight	Challenge Program

Opening Remarks

At 5:30 p.m. Janet Leban opened the meeting, reminding members that effective 2008, the CAB will have a revolving Chair –

- Janet Leban will take January and March
- Alison Cassidy will take May and July
- Leslie Newman will take September and December

Members around the table introduced themselves

Secretary DeSantis has joined us and would like to say a few words.

Cabinet Secretary Cari DeSantis

Secretary DeSantis opened by stating she has been following the DYRS Community Advisory Board and is delighted by the interest in community members. Although it is underfunded, the work in juvenile justice is important. The nation is changing by a great body of knowledge and developments. It is exciting to see the present ways we are providing services to prevention and early intervention. This is a great community advisory board and we hope to draw on your expertise for issues such as gender specific, job training, education, etc. It is a great opportunity for experts throughout the state to pull your resources together in the interest of Delaware's youth.

Perry Phelps accepted an opportunity to return to Department of Correction as Warden of Delaware Correctional Center in Smyrna. We all wish him well in his new endeavor. Rick Shaw will be Acting Director until a new director is named. Please do not let this halt our efforts to come together as a group. As players change, the issues do not. At the end of the day, it is all about the kids. We see the evidence in child welfare at the Child Protective Accountability Group, and we would all love to see the same happen in the juvenile justice system. I hope and encourage you to tell us what is not and what is working so we can focus on putting our resources in the best places. We promise to do the best job we can to be responsive to the needs of the community.

Are there any questions?

Janet Leban – the Community Advisory Board is a fairly new endeavor, with two sub committees at the moment.

- girls issues
- re-entry

We use the meeting time to provide updates and also to look for new directions. Many of our members know Rick Shaw and have worked with him in the past. We are sure we will continue to meet as a group and support the work of YRS.

JFC Hearings

We are aware the JFC hearings are coming up; in the past, we have tried to support the Division by attending the hearings to try to enhance funding. Let us know in what role you would like us to support you this year.

Secretary DeSantis agreed this is an excellent idea and we will share the DYRS JFC request when it is finished. We will be asking for funding for:

- vocational training
- transitional living
- social service specialist for victims notification

Set your calendars for February 12th.

Judge Crowell discussed the future, as the baby boomers in the early '90s are now teenagers. It is very difficult work, as there are larger numbers of youth in the population. We have to work smarter and more creatively to keep on top of juvenile justice, because these baby boomers will soon be young adults and they will be having babies. We have to stop the cycle.

Wayne Ashbee asked if funds could be allotted to educate all children? Secretary DeSantis replied there are not enough dollars in the Department to portion some to education. The Department of Education does allot some dollars in schools. You have to remember, on any day, there are 2,800 juveniles in our system, with 2,200 in the community. There is a presentation available; if the group would like, Secretary DeSantis will schedule time to return and share the presentation.

Rick Shaw updated the group on 2 initiatives in progress:

- C-Tech – staff are scheduled to go through training in Tennessee at the end of the month. They are working on a community staff person to become a trainer
- Future-Net – we hope to have the contract in place by February; once it is through, we can move on.

We have \$150,000 left in this years dollars to continue

Barbara Crowell asked about the money remaining in the Governor's recommended budget; Rick Shaw discussed House of Joseph, an independent living program. We did not have enough appropriate youth to keep it full, and it closed. The \$350,000 that originally funded this program was returned to us.

We are now looking at community based initiatives that offer job skills to use the money on. Some examples are C-Tech which is a vocational training program, primarily for kids leaving Ferris. Future-Net, and Media Matters will be funded next year through this also. The Re-Entry sub committee may come up with other venues. Taking the budget into account, we have to look at the cost to determine whether we can justify proceeding with these programs. This is a good reason to testify on behalf of DYRS.

Sex Offenders

Is there any possibility of facilities in Delaware housing sex offenders instead of out of state? This is a huge issue – we send dozens out of state. We need to develop community based resources. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation works with the kids when they come back, but it is hard; the family situation is difficult. Those kids need more services but it is a tough sell in Delaware. There is a newspaper article today about a youth home opening downstate in Bridgeville. The neighbors are upset that it will 'be in their back yard'.

Re-Entry Sub Committee

The Re-Entry Sub Committee did meet and the focus was on the \$150,000 available for youth. After they receive feedback from Rick, they will move forward with the initiatives.

Girls Initiative Sub Committee

The Girls Initiative Sub Committee met on January 4th. The discussion included:

- Journaling – Stephanie will contact a person to adopt the girls
 - They do have this at NCCDC (Martin Chase)
 - Journaling is when the youth write their thoughts, etc.
 - They have been doing this in conjunction with the CBT program and doing it at Stevenson House
- Painting a mural at Grace
 - They are proceeding with the girls to do this

Advisory Board

- The girls at Grace want information regarding sexuality
 - Leslie Newman will get back to Alison regarding informational resources
 - They need someone to work with the girls regarding bisexuality
- Recreation issues at Grace
 - They are still working on different venues
 - Incorporating outside music
 - Judge Crowell took a group to a rehearsal of the symphony – the girls were agreeable to it
 - The bassoonist talked with the girls and played a few numbers for them

The next meeting will be at 5:30 on March 3rd. Janet Leban will be Chair.

To get on the list to speak at JFC, call Legislative Council.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.