

**Adoption Advisory Council
Approved Minutes
August 3, 2007, 10:00 am-3:00 pm
President Abraham Lincoln Hotel, 701 East Adams, Springfield, IL**

MEMBERS PRESENT		MEMBERS ABSENT	DCFS STAFF PRESENT
Kathy Casey	Lisa Myles	Donsetta Blakely	Ray Gates
Art Davis	Marilyn Panichi	Patricia Cooper	Vanessa James
Ronald Davis	Judy Pence	Mary Debose	Terry McGlothlin
Gwenn Eyer	Elizabeth Richmond	Diane Dominguez	Erwin McEwen, Dir.
Brian Hall	Carol Sheley	Susanne Loss	Roman Moore
Betty Johnson	Karen Wardlaw	Kate Monte	Christine Feldman
Jim Jones	Mark Werner	Gina Samuels	
Joyce Loy	Kim Wheelock	Michelle Seidl	GUESTS
Alan Marcus	Linda Wolter	Gretchen Schulert	Cindy Backstein
Julie Fritzer for Dave Matthews		Jackie Sharp Akins	Karen Buckwalter
Krista McCoy		Ron Tyler	Marlo Winstead
Dorothy McGhee		Susanne Loss	

The Co-Chairs welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce himself or herself. New members in attendance were Lisa Myles, Judy Pence, Carol Sheley, Karen Wardlaw and Linda Wolter.

NEW BUSINESS

Message from Director McEwen

Director McEwen introduced Roman Moore, Chief of Staff. Director said last time he came to an AAC meeting it was his first day as Acting Director, and he spoke about his having added more supports in post adoption services, clarifying that since that time a substantial investment has been made in the budget around post adopt services. He said the SOC service provider contracts were based on the number of children in the LANS. There are now fewer children in some LANS, so increases or decreases were made based on the numbers. The funds were then reinvested into post adopt services. They started to look at how DCFS could be proactive and make adoptive parents aware that they have support. Rather than waiting for families to call with struggles, they decided to contact families with offers to have staff go out and visit post adoption and subsidized guardianship families when adopted children turn 13 and 16 because those are developmental milestones for youth. The purpose of the visit is to identify needs or determine what we can do to support those homes. Research shows that 85% of those homes will have some minor problems and about 15% may need more help. For that 15%, an additional set of providers have been set up to provide those in home services. One of the SOC providers, Metropolitan, was already providing adoption preservation services, so that side of their contract was expanded. Internally at DCFS, head count is being shifted to increase the number of staff in post adopt units.

Director McEwen said he received a memo from Elizabeth about the SOC providers receiving formal adoption training. He said the providers are coming from foster care support areas, so some skills will cross over, but they will be provided with structured, adoption specific training.

Director McEwen said he has met with legislators to make them aware of DCFS issues, including the DCFS Legislative Oversight Committee. The swing in the DCFS budget, on the most extreme side, is \$4 million less than our FY08 appropriation request. All of the budget proposals that are out there have kept the DCFS budget whole, because we have done a good job of making legislators aware of significant cuts we had several years ago, and understanding that we are pressing the limits where we are. We have made it clear that we serve several populations, including 16,000 placement cases, 40,000 in post adoption and subsidized guardianship homes, and 27,000 under age 18 that have been reunified with their parents and/or are intact family cases.

Chaddock Attachment & Trauma Program - Karen Buckwalter and Margo Winstead

Karen and Margo gave a presentation on their residential treatment program, and they said they are also developing an intensive one-week outpatient program, particularly targeted at adoptive families facing disruption and/or considering residential. Karen said that sometimes residential is a more intense intervention than is needed, particularly if they have the right expertise in the individuals working with the family. They shared information about how they are developing their trauma program, and they gave a slide show presentation. A copy of the slide show is included in the meeting file.

Ray asked if they would be interested in presenting workshops in a conference setting for caregivers. They responded that they have done training for foster parents and would be interested.

Committee Reports:

Adoption Month Planning - Marilyn Panichi

Marilyn said there is a movie coming out called "The Martian Child", starring John & Joan Cusack from Evanston. Brian is chairing the Chicago based event and the committee has been discussing how we will work with this movie to make it an event to celebrate adoption in November. Brian has been in contact with New Line Cinema's local agent and they are interested but very busy. They want the committee to prepare a detailed proposal and bring it back to them. Brian has also requested that we preview the movie. The movie's release date is October 26th.

Brian said that the planning committee discussed the following:

- *Contacting the child (currently living in San Francisco) that the book is about, and invite him to participate.
- *Ask the Cusacks or their mother to host the event.
- *Give an award – ask New Line Cinema who would be an appropriate person to receive an award.
- *Have private premiers throughout Illinois, inviting adoptive families.

Chicago event – Suggestions from Council members:

- *Get adopted youth to screen the movie too.
- *Ray said we have to make sure Kendall Marlowe is on board with this, and that Velma Williams approves.
- *Host a Sneak preview
- *Invite adoptive families and press
- *UIUC organized the Antwan Fisher preview and it went very well.
- *Concern that the child the movie is about might not appreciate the difference between the movie and the book.
- *Giving the award is a great way to get speakers and is great publicity for the recipient.
- *Simultaneously show the movie in other areas of the state.

Marilyn said the date can be left open until the proposal is put together and accepted to determine what date is mutually acceptable. The November meeting with the SWFCAC could be a working meeting, and the adoption celebration could be a separate event. Kathy asked that it not interfere with the Midwest Adoption Conference, being held the first Sunday in November.

June said that Kendall used to work at the Goodman Theater. June said she would inquire with Kendall by Monday about his support and any help he can provide. Brian will follow up by email with Bridgette and Kendall. Gwenn Eyer will contact Mark Testa to find out how they handled the showing of Antwan Fisher a few years ago, and to see if UIUC could be a sponsor for the event. Brian Hall will draft a proposal and send it out to all council members for comments before submitting it to New Line Cinema's local agent.

Ray cautioned that at this late date it may difficult to impossible to find a site for the Chicago celebration, especially if we need a theatre, and he reminded all that there is no budget for this.

Illinois Respite Coalition - Gwenn Eyer

Gwenn said the IRC has been meeting on a monthly basis, and has a summit once a year. The purpose is to promote lifespan respite throughout the State of Illinois. It ranges from private nursery types of situations through elder care, Alzheimer's, etc. Gwenn announced that the IRC is planning the "Illinois Respite Coalition Night at the Sky," a WNBA fundraiser to be held Tuesday, August 7th at the UIC Pavilion in Chicago. She also stated that many pieces of legislation which appear to support lifespan respite are pending throughout the nation.

Membership Committee - Mark Werner

Mark said the committee met and has made several recommendations for new members, including those in attendance; however, there are still vacancies, especially for adoptees. Because there has been a struggle to get adoptees on the council, the committee is recommending that the bylaws be revised to allow adoptees to be identified at large or broken down as "Cook" or "Other than Cook", rather than by specific regions. Currently the slots are region-specific and candidates may have been adopted in one region and moved to another region. ***Mark made a motion that the bylaws be revised so that 3 adoptees are appointed in Cook County and 3 adoptees are appointed in regions other than Cook County. Joyce Loy seconded the motion.***

Joyce withdrew her second. Mark withdrew his motion and put it in the form of a committee recommendation.

Krista added that the membership committee would continue to work on targeted recruitment as much as possible. The committee is keeping a file of interested candidates for future vacancies.

Post Adoption Workgroup - Mark Werner

Elizabeth said that Mark drafted the memo to the Director recommending that DCFS provide training for the SOC providers who will provide post adopt services, and she sent it via email. Ray said the training office is already working on the training. The committee will meet again in September to determine next steps. Mark asked that any suggestions to be emailed to him. They will work on collecting data and stories to prove that adoption preservation works. The Director will want to see facts and figures about where the money is going. Elizabeth asked Linda Wolter to serve on this committee.

Report from Division of Service Intervention - June Dorn

June introduced Christine Feldman, who has joined their division to work with the respite and adoption preservation programs. She has a law degree and education degree and was recently an education advisor in the southern region.

June distributed a flow chart on how the new post adopt programs would work. She said they haven't been able to move forward with contracts due to the budget not being finalized, but program plans have been drafted and everything prepared so that they can move forward when the budget is final. June said this pilot is only in Cook County and the collar counties. An evaluation will be done to determine if it will continue and be expanded. SOC agents (Kaleidoscope and Kids Hope in Cook County, and Center for Family Services in LAN 47 and LAN 49) will provide outreach, assessment and linkage. They are tying this into the annual recertification date for adoptive families with a 13 year old or 16 year old in their home. They are also focusing on families that have not completed their annual recertification for a few years. June said the initial outreach would be a phone call to schedule a home visit and assessment. UIUC will be doing some of the evaluations for these families. Families that cannot be contacted will be referred to the Post Adoption Unit for follow up. Providers can refer cases to community services, post adoption staff, respite programs, adoption preservation programs, specialty programs, or to a stabilization and support service agency. Service outcomes will be reported back to Post Adopt. June said they have done some training of these new providers, and Judy Zaleski has been asked to pull together other adoption specific training for these providers as well.

Judy Pence expressed concern that confidential identifying information would be given to these agencies. June said that the Legal Office has determined that it can be done.

Suggestions from council members:

*Julie suggested a letter be sent out first to let adoptive families know that this is going to be part of the new recertification process.

*Alan said due process requires that a notice come before the phone call.

*Cindy suggested they offer to bring supper to the visit.

*Cindy said currently the adoption preservation agencies could not send any information to adoptive families because of confidentiality. Judy said she has sent many mailings out to adoptive families for adoption preservation agencies for this reason.

*Mark said if they go into a home and offer services they need to make sure the services are available in their community before getting their hopes up.

June said she spoke to Vanessa and they will plan to put the information in the newsletter regarding the recertification visits.

June said the Enhanced Subsidized Guardianship committee met last Monday, and Gwenn, Mark and Elizabeth participated as AAC members. The web-based program should get to June for review early next week.

Report from Office of Foster Parent Support Services - Ray Gates

Conflict of Interest Statements for FY'08

Ray distributed Conflict of Interest Statements to council members that have a contract with DCFS, and asked them to complete the form and return it to Terry. He also told them they could not bill their contract for hours or expenses while they are at Council meetings on volunteer status for any type of Council business.

Caregivers Training

Ray said that four Caregiver Training Institutes are planned for FY08, and are tentatively planned for 6201 S. Emerald in Chicago, Aurora, Fairview Heights and Peoria. He said his office is also planning two 2-day conferences, one in Cook County and one downstate. The times and locations have not yet been identified. He said that going back to the overnight conference format would give caregivers the opportunity to network with other caregivers. Lodging will be provided for caregivers traveling out of their area. The planning committee consists of members of this council, the SWFCAC council, POS staff, and DCFS staff. A youth will also be invited to be on the planning committee. This all depends, of course, on the outcome of the state budget process.

Partnering With Parents Initiative

Ray said that the Partnering With Parents Initiative is growing. Councils are now meeting in East St. Louis, Peoria and Rockford, with the next council to be formed in Champaign in the near future. Top administration from Operations attends these meetings along with the placement managers. They require the caseworker team supervisors to address this initiative with the workers. The parents involved with the councils are informing our child welfare system, and have the opportunity to tell us how we can do the work better. They are also linked to services in the areas where they live. Management staff meets with parents regarding individual problems after the meetings.

Ray said DCFS has also hosted four 4-hour parent information fairs. There are exhibitors from community agencies, POS and other services, and also speakers in another room on educational topics, including a parent panel. The parent panel typically consists of three parents that are new to reunification or have achieved reunification, who talk to the group and answer questions.

Policy Issues

Ray summarized the following rules:

Rule 301 - Section 301.90 talks about spec care for foster and adoptive placements. Section 301.120 deals with sharing information with caregivers, specifically dealing with pre-adoptive parents. It states again that certain information must be given to caregivers at the time of placement, etc. Gretchen sent her comments to everyone in an email. The Policy Office is considering her comments.

Rule 401 – Deals with same issue – giving information to caregivers at the pre-adoptive placement. It is still being worked on and will go out again for review. Again Gretchen's comments will be considered.

Policy Guide 207.409 gives a synopsis of what information must be given and when it must be given.

Membership

Ray asked new members to give brief introductions and background. He thanked members leaving the council. He also announced that Dr. Robert Bloom has volunteered to serve as a CWAC professional and will attend the next meeting.

WORKING LUNCH - The Adoption Month Committee met during lunch to draft an event proposal.

Adoption Month Planning Committee Update

Kathy Casey reported on the committee's lunch discussion, stating that after Kendall is contacted and if he supports continuing the planning, Gwenn would contact Mark Testa. Brian will work on putting a proposal together, with input from other committee members. He will ask for a World Premier in Chicago with red carpet treatment for adoptive parents and invitations to whomever New Line wants to invite. An alternative

option would be a sneak preview doing the same thing. For either proposal the committee will try to get a movie night in each of the other five regions and videoconference key speakers into each site. There is no budget for this event so they will also seek sponsors.

Report from Other Councils/Committees

Elizabeth distributed Bridgette Glickman's written Advisory Board report.

OLD BUSINESS

Approval of Minutes of June 1, 2007 Meeting

The following changes need to be made to the June 1, 2007 minutes:

Page 5 - Alan said the letter referred to was drafted by Alan Marcus to Adam Pertman

Page 5 - Gwenn's name is spelled incorrectly.

Gwenn made a motion to accept the minutes with changes. Ronald Davis seconded. Motion carried.

Misc. Issues

Alan Marcus volunteered to serve as parliamentarian and to bring Robert's Rules with him.

Elizabeth told new members to join any committees that are mentioned and that they are interested in.

Plan Agenda/Speakers for Next Meeting - October 5 at Eastland Suites, Bloomington

Rule 401

Adoption Month Celebrations

Babyfold camp

New providers (June)

Adjourn

Gwenn made a motion to adjourn. Alan seconded. Motion carried.