

**ADOPTION ADVISORY COUNCIL**  
**Friday, October 1, 2004, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**  
**160 N. LaSalle, Room N505, Chicago, IL**  
**MINUTES (Approved as Written 12/3/04)**

<b>Members Present</b>	<b>Members Absent</b>	<b>DCFS Staff</b>	<b>Guests</b>
Donsetta Blakely	Dr. Felicia Blasingame	Janise Alston	Dorleen Weatherspoon
Arthur Davis	Patricia Cooper	Michael Byrd	
Ronald Davis	Tammy Hay	June Dorn	
Mary DeBose	Vance Johnson	Ray Gates	
Diane Dominguez	Terry Solomon	Bridgette Glickman	
Gwenn Eyer	Carol Winn	Vanessa James	
Brian Hall	Melinda Woods-Lis	Terry McGlothlin	
Jeanne Howard		Judy Pence	
James C. Jones		Regina Perkins	
Susanne Loss		Christina Schneider	
David Matthews		Peggy Slater	
Krista McCoy			
Marilyn Panichi			
Elizabeth Richmond			
Gretchen Schulert			
Jackie Sharp for Barbara Jones-Green			
Cleo Terry			
Kim Wheelock			

Elizabeth Richmond & Jim Jones, co-chairs, opened the meeting at 10:15 a.m.  
 Introductions were made by all in attendance.

**Report from Chairs on Meeting with Director - Co-Chairs**

Elizabeth Richmond and Jim Jones reported on the outcome of their meeting with Director Samuels. Elizabeth, Jim, Mary Debose, Michael Byrd and Ray Gates were in the meeting. The Director recommended that the Council do the following:

1. Write a letter asking DCFS to look for grants and other resources to support post adopt services, such as NACAC demonstration grants.
  - Write a letter recommending a research project - but be very thoughtful about who we bring to the table.
  - Consider a legislative strategy to support child welfare needs and issues and maybe take a proactive step towards affecting legislative agendas. This advisory body should promote child welfare agendas to educate the legislature.
2. Get back to the Director with two or three issues to work on collaboratively with DCFS in FY05. (Co-Chairs asked that this be completed at today's meeting.)
3. Suggest policy areas DCFS should look at - recommend areas that need changes.

4. Forge a bipartisan group to discuss funding issues related to adoption and subsidized guardianship. We need a bipartisan group collectively working with ownership and investment into the issues, to move issues forward.
5. Work with Velma on enhancements to training as well as 4E claiming issues.
6. Work w/ Velma & Barb re looking to national resource centers and foundations for various types of assistance.
7. When requested, Director will send staff experts on training to IAAC meetings to discuss how to enhance training.

**Issues** to look at: Keeping kids in school who have behavioral problems, the Orphanage Act, Family Preservation.

### **Review Task Chart - Co-Chairs**

Each item of the newly developed council task chart was reviewed and updated. An updated chart will be reviewed at each meeting.

### **Reports on SWFCAC/SYAB/CWAC - Michael Byrd**

Michael reported the following in regards to the other councils:

The **SWFCAC** met in Peoria at the Holiday Inn City Centre on September 10th from 3:00-9:00 p.m., and then met jointly with the SYAB from 9:00-11:30 p.m. Gayle Hansen and Dick Winkler gave the council an update on the sexual abuse training that is being developed. They passed out the draft training curriculum for review. Pilot training might start as early as November but at the latest a pilot is set to begin in January for Northern and Cook South Regions. The updated standards and forms have been approved by CWAC and will now go to Policy and Procedure before going to the Director.

Valerie Davis and Larry Chasey attended to discuss the recent reductions to the Foster Parent Support Specialist program. Members expressed their concerns about the jobs that were lost and the effects the cuts would have on foster families.

The Foster Parent Law implementation review process continues. The reviews have been completed and reports are being written and finalized.

Agenda items for the joint meeting of the **SWFCAC & SYAB** were:

\*An overview of the Host Family Program and how that is working.

\*Drivers License Issues for youth in care in the homes of foster parents. A joint committee was formed to look at issues around youth that don't have cars to use to obtain their license, how youth can get the 25 hours driving time required to obtain their license, and youth transitioning out of care without their licenses. Foster parent concerns are the cost of insurance for a young driver and the fact that all licensed drivers in the household have to be included on their insurance policy.

\*A joint committee was formed to look into Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Questioning (LGBTQ) youth issues. One youth expressed concerns about stereotypes in some of his foster placements and wanted to look into policy that could be put into place to affect a neutral focus or training for foster parents. Dr. Larry Small is working on this issue already and a committee comprised of members from SWFCAC, YAB and IAAC

was developed to address the LGBTQ issues. Jeanne Howard & Dave Matthews volunteered to be on the LGBTQ subcommittee.

**YAB** members met the following day (September 11).

\*Several youth from around the state have been identified to provide input on a set of guidelines for photo listing children and youth for adoption through a collaborative effort of Children's Rights and AdoptUSKids.

\*Kids Hope United (formerly Central Baptist Services) wants young adult/former youth in care to serve as youth advisors on an established committee "Program Services" for QA and planning. Bryan Austin will serve.

\*DCFS Statewide Quality Council wants a youth to discuss service quality issues and identify issues in child welfare and what can be done. Deputy Director Erwin McEwen is Chair.

\*A bilingual youth from Cook North regional board will participate in the DCFS Hispanic Family workshop day.

**CWAC** met September 16th. The Director spoke about the final budget, which is now 1.28 billion as a result of the \$77.8 million cut. This number is misleading because the budget includes \$20 million, which was set for PIP-related new spending.

Tom Berkshire made a presentation about the Department having a legislative agenda because this is this administration's first substantive year. We will move on that the first week of December so if anyone has any ideas on legislation to present, now is the time to present those ideas. Areas Tom had identified were:

\*Looking at the need for more services for the post adoption population.

\*Better monitoring of the school's use of Orphanage Act money for our youth.

\*Looking at Illinois providing services to youth until age 21, i.e. Medicaid benefits which would cost the state about \$7 million. Seven other states currently go to age 21.

#### **Update on New Adoption Subsidy Forms - June Dorn**

June reported that Director Samuels met with the representatives from the five interest groups on September 15th to go over final comments. June will get the final draft to representatives soon, and then begin working on getting the training in place. There is still discussion on how therapeutic day care will be implemented statewide.

#### **Report from Chief of Office of F.P. Support Services - Ray Gates**

Host Family - Care Package Component - Ray reported that we need more care package senders to match with students for the care package program. To date 124 students have been matched, but there are 88 students waiting to be matched that we do not have senders for. Ray passed out the sign up form and encouraged members to share them with friends and co-workers.

DCFS has a requirement to develop a Diligent Recruitment Plan as part of the five year CFSP plan that we submit to the feds every year. The Office of Foster Parent Support Services is in charge of pulling together a multi-disciplinary committee from the Department to work on this effort. We are waiting for the respective Deputies to appoint

committee members and then Diane DeLeonardo will take the lead on moving that work forward. At some point in the near future, possibly at the December meeting, we will be asking for one person from the AAC to work with this committee.

FY'05 Caregiver Training - Ray said that Velma asked Terry McGlothlin & Jean Maher to co-chair a committee to plan 2-4 one-day symposia in different parts of the state in March or April of 2005. They are currently working on pulling the committee together to begin the planning process. There is limited funding for this training so we will utilize resources within the Department and our partner agencies. We are tentatively planning a 6-7 hour day, with lunch provided, but no lodging or travel reimbursement, with the major area of focus on older youth transitioning to adult life. The holiday issue of Illinois Families Now and Forever will be used to distribute information on registration.

### **Chafee Pilot Project - June Dorn**

June reported that Illinois is one of eight states chosen by Casey to do an assessment of how well things are going with different Chafee projects. She requested that foster and adoptive parent members complete and return the review sheets that were previously sent to them.

### **Closing Report on Legacy Project - Peggy Slater**

Peggy said today is the official last day of the Legacy Project. She distributed a draft copy of her recommendations and asked for any input. She said there are several areas where the AAC has contributed in summaries of discussions, recommendations and through written surveys.

Peggy said that Cleo helped design the Legacy Project workshops. They offered 7 different full day workshops and were able to do a 15-month post training survey of the 103 workshop participants. The response rate was not real high, but it showed that 75% or more of the participants said their practice was improved because of participation in the workshops. The Department is now using the 4-day training. The Intensive Relative Search project they did last year with the youth is in its final stages. The young researchers are doing the interviews. Peggy said she would be working on other projects within the Department.

### **Budget Update - June Dorn**

June distributed the following documents and gave a thorough explanation of each:

- \*Colored charts depicting comparisons of FY'03-FY'05 permanency rates
- \*AA & SGH Populations By County as of 9/24/04
- \*FY'04 AA/SG payments by region, statewide subsidy data, FY'05 budget info, and Adoption Preservation and FCS Program information.

June noted that two areas that were not funded were new post adoption initiatives such as support groups, advocacy and treatment; and the SSI add-on population, which includes kids adopted internationally and privately.

Jim emphasized that the Council needs to educate the legislature about the need for post adoption support services.

### **Illinois Celebrates Adoption Committee Activities - Bridgette Glickman**

Bridgette reported she and Dana Corman are co-chairing the event, and gave an overview of what they have planned. There have been a lot of changes over the past month, which has affected their planning. She said there was very low turnout at the last planning meeting and they could use help with several of the subcommittees. The next planning meeting will be held October 12th from 1:30-3:00 pm at the Chicago Bar Association, 321 S. Plymouth Court, Chicago. The last planning meeting is scheduled for November 9th from 1:30-3:00 pm. Brian Hall, Gwenn Eyer and Kim Wheelock volunteered and will plan to attend the October 12th meeting. Onsite volunteers for the day of the event will be: Peggy Slater, Dave Matthews, Gretchen Schulert, Mary Debose, Michael Byrd, Elizabeth Richmond, Jim Jones, Jackie Sharp, and Krista McCoy.

Bridgette passed out a flyer about a fundraiser to benefit the Adoption Day Celebration. A brunch will be held at American Girl on Saturday, November 13th, and if you shop and show the receipt to the Concierge on the way out, they will donate 10% of the proceeds to Illinois Celebrates Adoption.

The Director will speak at the Adoption Celebration this year. Entertainment will be provided by Uhlich Voices, and kids from Pathways will be dancing. There will be story telling on the 2nd floor. They hope that Merri Dee & Alison Rosati will attend. Bernie Mac may also attend. A family will be highlighted like Vanessa's family was last year. The entertainment will begin around 10:00 a.m., the press conference will be at 11:30 and then the final act will follow.

Ray will talk to Adrienne Welenc to see if she wants to move the SWFCAC meeting scheduled for November 19th in Champaign to Chicago. If she agrees, there will be a joint meeting of SWFCAC and IAAC in the morning, before the Adoption Celebration.

### **Working Lunch - Adoption Celebration**

During the working lunch Gwenn & Brian led a discussion about what the council could do in regards to the Adoption Celebration. Some suggestions were a letter to the editor, posting signs, having a table to raise the Council's visibility, and giveaways or handouts such as fact sheets on the council. Krista said she put together a fact sheet with the Council's Mission Statement and by-laws that she used to recruit new members, and she will send it to Elizabeth and Jim. Vanessa has the poster of the council members that could be used. Gwenn will report back to the Council and will contact the other volunteers after she attends the October 12th meeting.

### **Working Lunch - Update on Wednesday's Child - Bridgette Glickman**

Bridgette reported that the program is struggling. They are now re-featuring children that were featured 2-3 years ago but still do not have a placement.

### **Working Lunch - Post Adoption Directory for Cook County - Jeanne Howard**

Jeanne said the Center for Child Welfare developed a post adoption resource directory for Cook County. They sent surveys out to over 400 providers asking a series of questions about their services and received approximately 200 responses. Those providers are listed on the resource directory. Members viewed the website during the working lunch. The directory is available on the DCFS website at [http://www.state.il.us/dcfs/post\\_adoption/](http://www.state.il.us/dcfs/post_adoption/). The Center trained 250 mental health providers over the summer. She hopes that DCFS will be able to update and expand this list and that it will be expanded to a statewide resource. Elizabeth said the council may want to advocate that DCFS update and expand this list to become available statewide. Cleo suggested that we also ask the Department to let people know about this resource.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Criminal Bars Subcommittee Update - June Dorn, Cleo Terry**

Jim said that at the last meeting he had requested that the subcommittee reconvene and Camille Sleet was asked to participate. June said that Camille retired at the end of September. June said Randy Wells made it clear that we need very hard data on how many families are not licensed because of not having a waiver process. Rev. Davis suggested that we do something as a group to allow a waiver for certain crimes. After discussion about how to proceed, Jim Jones asked the committee to reconvene. June Dorn suggested that we ask Mary Sue Morsch to send Steve Mentor, who is now heading up foster care licensing to come to a meeting to listen to the council's concerns. Krista and June will schedule the meeting. If anyone wants to join the committee they should contact Krista McCoy, otherwise the existing committee list will be utilized to set up the conference call.

#### **Update on Recruitment Notebook for Longest Waiting Children - Gwenn Eyer**

Michael Byrd said they are having some difficulty getting this program off the ground. Council recruiters have been trying but they need to meet to discuss the barriers and refocus. Janise will also participate. Gwenn reported that they had a conference call. Vance showed the video at a CPR training. Brian said he has been working on a specific couple but nothing has happened with that. His church (Old St. Pat's) has just started an adoption support group and they are meeting on November 14th, and he hopes to approach them with the video.

#### **Sibling Visitation Subcommittee - Michael Byrd**

Michael reported that the next step in the process is for the Governor to appoint a Task Force. Names were drawn from the members that had been working on the subcommittee. The three members that the Director will recommend for appointment by the Governor are Vance Johnson, Elizabeth Richmond and Tammy Hay. After all legislative appointments are made, a meeting will be held to select a leader for the Task Force.

Four or five public hearings must be held throughout the state, including testimony, both "pro" and "con". Hearings will be recorded. All General Assembly hearing procedures will be followed. DCFS will have to do public relations and outreach to stakeholders for their involvement in these hearings statewide. Staff will gather information from other states that have taken similar action. There is a need to get professionals in the sibling rights field involved. Findings will be reported following the hearings.

The information that the Task Force gathers at the hearings will be developed into a report to either recommend proceeding towards a Sibling Bill or Rights or a recommendation that we will not proceed. The report is due by June of 2005.

### **Ethics Training - Michael Byrd**

The Ethics Training will now be only for members of councils, boards, commissions and committees who have been appointed by the Governor or the Director. Subcommittee members will not need to take the training. The training will also not be website based. The chairs of each council will be responsible for distributing the printed training to each member, assigning a number to each packet, and recording the number given to each member. Each training packet contains 3 lessons or sections. The member will be given a short time to read the material for comprehension and sign an affidavit acknowledging comprehension. The chair will then be responsible for collecting the training packets along with the signed affidavit. Once the signature page is returned, a copy of this page should be maintained in the council records and a copy must be faxed to the OIG, Denise Kane. The packets will then be accounted for and returned to the OIG's office. The training date requested on the signature form will be noted as the date the packet and signature was collected. If anyone is resigning from a council, board, etc., they do not have to take the training, but the chair must submit a letter to this effect. Michael said that Denise Kane would probably attend the council's next meeting to discuss this.

### **Minutes of August 6, 2004 Meeting**

*Marilyn Panichi made a motion to accept the minutes of the August 6 meeting. Dave Matthews seconded. The motion passed.*

### **Membership Issues**

Terry distributed a list of potential members to fill vacancies on the council. At the August 6th meeting members were asked to send name of potential candidates to Terry. An email was also sent to RA's in the regions requesting nominations. Following is a list of names that were submitted in their respective regions:

#### **Cook Central Region**

Marianne Kelm - Adoptee

#### **Northern Region**

Christine Young - Adoptee/Adoptive Parent

Sue Cianci - Adoptee/Adoptive Parent/Expert

#### **Central Region**

Joyce Loy - Foster/Adoptive Parent

Bernie Spitz - Adoptive Parent

#### **Experts**

Kathy Casey - Adoptive Parent/Expert

Gina Miranda - Adoptee/Expert

There are vacancies for joint appointments to AAC & CWAC. Michael said that the persons to fill those positions would first be appointed to AAC, and then he would present the appointment to CWAC for their approval.

*Art Davis made a motion to send a request to the Director nominating the members. Jeanne Howard seconded. The motion carried.*

These recommendations will be sent to the Director. If he approves, letters of appointment from the Director will be sent to each person.

### **Federal Review - Update on PIP**

Jim Jones reported that there is no new information to share on the Program Improvement Plan since the last meeting.

### **Operational Plan - Jim Jones**

Jim Jones led a discussion regarding the Council's Operational Plan. The Director had requested 2-3 items for the council to focus on. Following are the priorities that developed after discussion:

Overarching Approach: Broadening the General Assembly's understanding of the needs of families post adoption.

1. Educating & building capacity of local mental health providers
  - Educating parents
  - Educating DCFS & POS staff
2. Community based entry-level support services, i.e., educational advocacy, support groups, transitional homes, respite, etc.
3. Restructure adoption service delivery system.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.