



**Butler County Child & Family Development
Task Force
July 15, 2009**

VISION STATEMENT

The Butler County Child and Family Development Task Force, with community support, ensure quality, available, and affordable childcare, early childhood education, children's health services and family support for all children in Butler County.

Meeting Minutes

Attendees (25 total):

Angie Baur, Community Foundation of Greater Butler County; Audra Kenneson, Smart Start; Barb Roths, Butler County Extension; Darla Carter, Family Life Center Safehouse; Debbie Mai, Rainbows United; Jackie Tanner, Child Start; Jamie Downs, Butler County Health Department; Jill Morrow, Bright Beginnings; Kathy Gann, Children's Mercyp; Ken Grochowsky, SRS; Kris Nicholson, KACCRRRA; Leslie Sissel, Parents-As-Teachers; Luann McFadden, Bright Beginnings; Mark Wirth, First Church of the Nazarene; Marla Canfield, ECAAP; Sandra Chavez, UniCare; Sue Givens, USD 490; Susan Harsh, Bright Beginnings; Teresa Thompson, BCC Early Childhood; Lynn Shannon, Butler Homeless Initiative; Brandi Smith, SCMHCC Preschool; Ashlee Reed, SCMHCC Preschool; Kristalle Dougherty, DCCCA Family Preservation; Paula Fritschen, Area to Recognize and End Abuse; Marv Loucks, Vision 2020 (guest).

Introductions & Announcements:

Audra welcomed the group and everyone introduced themselves.

- Darla – The Safehouse had a donation that allowed them to put new carpeting in the upstairs bedrooms and replace the counter and sink in the kitchen.
- Brandi – SCMHCC hopes to open their therapeutic preschool on September 14. They will have part time programs in the morning (8:30 to 11:30) and the afternoons (12:30 to 3:30). They hope to have 24 children and will cover all of Butler County. Their facility is located at 340 Oil Hill Rd. in El Dorado. Transportation is an option. They are still hiring.
- Jackie – Child Start has printed new publications. They were handed out.
- Teresa – Enrollment is up at BCC and in the Early Childhood program. They have many students who need community service opportunities. Please contact Teresa if you would like her to share your contact information with students looking to do community service.
tthompson@butlercc.edu

- Audra – Bethlehem House is having a free training about adoption – “Adoption is an Option: Understanding Infant Adoption” on August 27. For more information contact Susan at Bethlehem House 316.322.7233 or email Catholic Social Service pmegurk@catholicsocialservice.org. Audra also shared that Bark For Life to benefit the American Cancer Society will be Saturday, August 29 from 9 am to Noon at Central Park in Andover. For more information contact ella.reusser@cancer.org.
- Kathy – Vision Card is accepted at the farmer’s Markets. Kansas Learning Center for Health is partnering with Children’s Mercy again; CM will cover the admission if you can get the kids there. They also have a traveling exhibit. Lice Ice is a new product; Kathy passed it around. You can also buy it in gallon containers with a pump. Child Care Centers may want to consider it as an option. CM is sponsoring a free week at the YMCA (Butler County included) for their members – August 23 – 29. She handed out a membership newsletter and noted that they will be at the State Fair and will participate wit Sprint in a drawing for a free Bike.

Guest Presenters:

- Marv Loucks – Vision 2020; Imagination Library: Two years ago a group of residents came together to work on intervening with children who are early childhood age in order to impact their future. Vision 2020 was created – as 2020 will be the year the children will graduate high school. One component of their program is the Imagination Library. In 67042 zip, children ages Birth through 5th birthday receive one book a month. Leadership Butler serves at the 501(c)3. Frontier has committed to funding the first five years of the program. There is no charge to the children/families participating. The second component of the program is mentoring. Teams of four adopt a class and visit the class one time per week throughout the school year. They will stay with that class through graduation. They currently are seeking more volunteers to begin working with this year’s kindergarteners. For more information, please contact Shirley Patton at the El Dorado Chamber of Commerce.
- Lynn Shannon – VISTA Volunteer, Butler Homeless Initiative: The initiative started in 2007 and serves Butler County. Their goal is to have a homeless shelter, which may also include transitional housing (longer than 30 days). Of a concern in rural areas is the issue of “Hidden homelessness.” Lynn shared statistics about homelessness and children who are homeless. They need us to (1) be aware that there is a need, (2) consider financial donations, and (3) volunteer time. They have identified a location that they like, but they have not gone through the process of talking with the neighbors, the city, etc. Area churches are doing meals for more than just this population – the working poor and those on fixed incomes also attend. Free meals can be found on Monday nights from 6 to 7 and on Tuesday and Friday at Noon. For more information contact Lynn at lshannonbhi@yahoo.com
- Sandra Chavez – UniCare: UniCare is one of the options for providers of Health Wave. Sandra passed out packets of information, pens, pencils, bandaid holders, and free ice cream coupons. Packets of information included information about obtaining a ride to medical appointments, including WIC.

Updates – Debbie Mai:

RUI Filed for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy in July. Thank you for the tremendous outpouring of support. RUI talked to funders and Part C Funds are secure. Smart Start grant funds are secure. Some providers have not been paid as quickly as we would like, but they will be paid. Cox Communication has loaned a CPA, SG CO has loaned a financial manager. Cessna and Spirit have loaned workers. Hale Ritchie has come in as Chief Restructuring Officer. Two of RUI's four child care centers were closed in Wichita. Last Friday was the last day for those centers. Smart Start has been moved from Augusta into the Bright Beginnings office in El Dorado. The Early Childhood Block Grant will continue in Butler County. RUI will give up being the fiscal agent for that grant, which was discussed on Monday at the Visioneering meeting. Further discussion will take place on Monday, August 24, when they will be looking for agencies to volunteer to be the new fiscal agent. The Children's Cabinet will make the final decision regarding the new fiscal agent. In the past the grant was written by Jim Garrett at RUI. The Early Head Start Grant was written and turned in; RUI has contacted them to let them know of recent events. The grants are currently in the reading process and RUI will let us know when we hear about that grant. The floor was opened for any questions to be asked of Debbie. Angie stated that she was impressed with the leadership and the actions that have been taken – she was contacted at the foundation by RUI leadership prior to the announcement. Teresa asked how many children and staff were let go. With the closing of the two centers and child care not being provided for children birth – 3, 94 children are no longer receiving child care at RUI. Approximately 80 people were let go, and those cuts were across all program areas. There may be more layoffs. In general, there were no salary cuts; however, there was some reassignment of staff which may have caused staff to receive lower pay than before. Kris asked who has been named as acting director; Deb Voth, the COO. Kris also asked about WonderPoint; it is on hold for now.

Next Meeting: Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, September 16 from 11 am – 1 pm Bradford Memorial Library in El Dorado. Please bring your own lunch. Guest presenters will be Darla Carter, Family Life Center Safehouse, and Brooke Thomas-Fekken and Kathy Van Zelfden, Smart Start Mental Health Specialists.

Note: If you or someone you know would like to be added to the mailing list for the Butler County Child & Family Development Task Force, please email Audra Kenneson at akenneson@rui.org

Minutes written by Audra Kenneson, LMSW
August 20, 2009