

Child Welfare Team Meeting

June 30, 2010

Attending the meeting were: Judge Cynthia Raccuglia, Vicki Denny, Leila Siena, Ed Kuleck, Elizabeth Rice, Christina Nanouski, George Casford, Greg Hixon, Mark Jenkins, Stephanie DeMoss, Janet Ahern, Jenny Malnar, Heather Dorsey, Vickie Crow, Mary Bullock and William Pfalzgraf.

1. On a motion by Judge Raccuglia and second by Vicki Denny, the minutes of the May 5, 2010 meeting were approved.

2. Reviewed the committee meeting held to discuss a grant for a child welfare training workshop. The committee discussed bringing in Dr. Diane Zosky. In addition, we talked about having a community conversation with social workers, daycare providers, teachers, churches and agencies to let them know who’s who in LaSalle County, what the issues are and how the system functions. Areas to talk about could be the differences between parole and child welfare when sex offenders are returning to homes with children and community involvement when the child welfare system isn’t able to get involved and minimum parental standards. The goal would be to increase community awareness.

There was a group discussion of these ideas. Heather Dorsey will check whether the workshop could be held at a church. It was also recommended that CEU’s and MCLE’s be offered. Another committee meeting will be held (later scheduled for July 26 at 1:30 p.m. in the Sheriff’s Training Room).

3. Diane Farrell from North Central Behavioral Health Systems was not available today. She will try to attend the next meeting.

4. Jenny Malnar of Options Counseling in Streator gave an overview of her agency. Counseling services offered include addictions (but not DUI), anger management, domestic violence and services to children and families. Options is located in Streator. They are not State funded and they do take insurance. In addition, their building houses the Streator Community Center which offers after school programs, tutoring, assisting juveniles complete public service hours, recreational services, softball leagues plus exercise programs.

5. Greg Hixon from DCFS talked about the initiative they have to increase the number of foster homes in the area, specifically Ottawa and Streator. Greg also invited people to attend the LAN meetings, held the 3rd Friday of every month at North Central Behavioral Health Services in LaSalle. LAN works closely with truant officers and other agencies to address problems before they become so severe that they enter the child welfare system.

6. Bill Pfalzgraf reported that due to State funding issues, Nancy Churchill was entering her last few days as Coordinator for the 13th Circuit Family Violence Prevention Council. Christie Barnes (who is funded through a different grant) will assume some of her duties in the coming months. The Council is funded through December 2010, but when that money will be received is in question. In 2011, it is currently expected that the number of Councils will be reduced to 4 or 5 with large geographic areas.

7. The next meeting will be at 12:00 noon on August 11, 2010 in Judge Raccuglia’s jury room. The program will include Hope House and North Central Behavioral Health Systems, depending on their availability that day and more discussion of the workshop.