

CALIFORNIA CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS

October 1, 2010 – September 30, 2011

Background and Purpose:

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) was originally enacted in 1974 to provide annual grants to states. The purpose of the grant was to improve the state's child protective services system and was based on the population of children under 18. Since 1974, there have been additional amendments to CAPTA. In 1996, an amendment added a new eligibility requirement for states to establish Citizen Review Panels (CRPs) as oversight to the states' child protective services system. Under the legislation, each state is required to establish no less than three CRPs, with the exception of states that receive the minimum allotment under the statute. The panel members are to be volunteers broadly representative of the community at large including concerned citizens, experts in child protection and prevention, advocacy, foster care, education, mental health, the court system, law enforcement, and children services. The mandate of the CRPs is to "evaluate the extent to which the agencies (state and local) are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities." The panels are required to examine policies, procedures, and where appropriate, specific cases handled by the state and local agencies providing child protective services.

The federal statute broadly defines the function of CRPs. The panel must meet not less than once every three months and must produce an annual public report containing a summary of their activities. In June 2003, CAPTA was amended when the "Keeping Children and Families Safe Act" was signed by the President. This revised the CRP duties to include: 1) requiring panels to examine the practices (in addition to policies and procedures) of the state and local child welfare agencies, 2) providing for public outreach and comment in order to assess the impact of current procedures and practices upon children and families in the community, and 3) requiring panels to make recommendations to the state and public on improving the child protective services system. In addition, the appropriate state agency is required to respond in writing no later than six months after the panel recommendations are submitted. The state agency's response must include a description of whether or how the state will incorporate the recommendation of the panel (where appropriate) to make measurable progress in improving the state child protective services system.

Program Structure:

The California Department of Social Services' (CDSS) Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) administers California's CRPs. Currently there are panels in Calaveras, San Mateo, and Ventura counties. These panels are reflective of the demographic, economic, social, and political climate found in different areas

throughout the state depicting the varied conditions of child protective services in California. Technical assistance, guidance and coordination are available through OCAP.

Overview of Current Activities at the State Oversight Level:

The OCAP staff, in conjunction with the CRPs, is focusing on building strong panels that are reflective of their communities and are able to partner with local and statewide child protective service systems, as well as each other, to enhance the safety and well-being of children.

The following are OCAP's activities/goals:

- Hold a convening of representatives from each panel at one site to provide information sharing, technical assistance, and networking opportunities. The next convening will take place late summer or in early fall of 2011. The date has yet to be determined.
- Promote information sharing and networking within the three California panels as well as with panels in other states. Panels are encouraged to visit the national CRP website www.uky.edu/SocialWork/crp.
- Encourage panels to review the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) developed in response to California's Children and Family Services Review (CFSR). Promote involvement in implementation and monitoring components of the plan impacting their communities.
- Continue to provide support and technical assistance through the OCAP CRP consultant. The consultant attends (when possible) the CRP meetings and is a conduit for collaboration between the panels. In June of 2010 the CRPs met with the national expert and now have another resource for technical assistance, networking and educational opportunities.

The CAPTA requirements are broadly defined. The OCAP is reviewing current state established guidelines and considering their value to the structure of California CRPs.

- Some modifications and deletions to these guidelines have been made.
- OCAP has begun the process of developing regulations statutory to formalize the CRP processes.

The current funding cycle for the existing CRPs is July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2012.

- The selection process for the funding cycle began with the issuance of an All County Information Notice (ACIN) requesting applications from counties to operate a CRP. Existing participants were invited to continue with the possibility of having three to five panels in California. All three of the existing panels (Calaveras, San Mateo, and the statewide panel) submitted letters of intent to continue. All three were extended through the funding cycle ending June 30, 2012. However, in December of 2010, the statewide panel disbanded.

- The panels chosen have funding available to assist in covering the cost associated with conducting a panel. Ventura County was selected and became the fourth CRP in California.
- With the dissolution of the statewide panel, California currently maintains three local panels. OCAP plans to look at existing groups that may fulfill the requirements of a CRP.

PANEL INFORMATION

Calaveras County

County Profile:

Calaveras County is located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains – 133 miles east of San Francisco and 135 miles west of Lake Tahoe, midway along state Highway 49, which links the towns of the Gold Country.

The population for Calaveras County is approximately 46,731 residents of which 8,014 are children 18 years and younger. The breakdown of the county racially is as follows: 92.5 percent Caucasian, 10.4 percent Latino/Hispanic, 1.7 percent Native American Indian, 1.6 percent Asian, 1.3 percent Black, and 2.8 percent reporting two or more races. The county child protection agency received 913 child abuse referrals of which 120 were substantiated cases. There are 57 children in placement.¹

Activities:

- All members have signed a statement of confidentiality regarding the security and privacy of information obtained. Each member received a binder with the reference manual for California CRPs and CRP Guidelines and Protocols. Members understand that the scope of work defines the goals to be achieved for the year and reviewed it for clarification.
- Membership continues to be made up of the Prevent Child Abuse Council with additional members (representing probation and the community). Members represent child welfare, public health, behavioral health-substance abuse, early education, public schools and foster parents.
- The CRP developed a form for interested members so Prevent Child Abuse Council Members could recruit personally. Press releases were printed twice during the year in the local newspapers, on-line community news, and shared with county agencies, schools, faith-based centers and foster family agencies. Members changed the meeting time to evenings to accommodate more working citizens who may not be available for day meetings.

¹ Information provided by the Census Bureau and the Center for Social Research, University of California at Berkeley Needell, B., Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Glasser, T., Williams, D., Zimmerman, K., Simon, V., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Frerer, K., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Lou, C.

Recommendations:

CRP's recommendations made to the Calaveras County Human Services Agency, consisting of:

- Calaveras County Children's Services could define the goals of the Independent Living Program (ILP) and make those goals clear to Children's Services staff, youth, foster parents, Oakendell Group Home staff, and Rite of Passage Group Home staff.
- Children's Services can review the budget and time study of the ILP Coordinator to determine staffing needs so enough time is available to manage a caseload and coordinate a sustainable ILP. Consider hiring and training an ILP graduate to help with clerical duties.
- Recruit a collaborative of individuals interested in the development of a sustainable program to assist youth to prepare to live on their own. This group could develop a strategic plan and assist with coordination of hands-on training sessions. It should include representation from youth, the business community and agencies who serve current and former foster youth in out-of-home placement.
- Begin a conversation about partnership and coordination with the group homes and agencies, such as Calaveras County Office of Education, who serve youth, are involved at the high school education level, and operate an existing collaborative to educate teens.
- Children's Services (or a collaborative) can review the content of classes being offered to ensure they meet the needs of youth and provide experiential "hands-on" learning and connection to resources. Youth report they would like information about the following:
 - Goal setting and decision making
 - More resources for education and employment
 - Identifying career paths and interests
 - Networking skills to enhance college and job seeking opportunities
 - Social skills and practice interviews
 - Learn the triggers and long term effects of substance abuse. Learn how to choose friends and surroundings
 - Health related classes that include how to identify illnesses through symptoms, how to choose health insurance, and personal safety
- The CRP recommends each class be two hours to provide more time for learning/engagement with consistent times and locations, advertised in a timely manner to youth, caregivers, and group homes/schools.

- The CRP recommends youth eligible for ILP are given a voice and a role in the program. The process starts with the youth's perspective about opportunities, resources, relationships, skills and plans for their future. Class structure could include actions outside the classroom, pre and post assessments for each class, and an evaluation after each class to assess learning and gain feedback. Youth could be encouraged to participate in defining the program goals.
- Youth without at least one caring adult in their life face loneliness and isolation. Statistically, they have a higher risk of poor outcomes. Children's Services can consider implementing a program component that helps connect youth to supportive adults. It would aim to include, empower, and get the support of foster parents and group home/school staff to assist the youth. Possibilities include:
 - A Junior-Senior partnership through the Senior Center where seniors could serve as a mentor or provide specific information (life skills, career, vocation).
 - Match students with a person in the community who is experienced or working in a job or field of interest to the student. The student could "job shadow" or interview them.
 - Determine the possibility of a unique mentoring component.
 - Seek feedback from caregivers.
- The Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) should be youth led with a focus on education, employment, health, housing, and supportive adult connections. Start the process when youth enter ILP.
 - Assist in developing a team to attend the TILP meeting
 - The team includes supportive persons identified by the youth: caregiver, relatives, therapist, and the social worker or probation officer
 - All in attendance at the transition plan meeting agree to help the youth complete the plan.

Future Direction:

The Calaveras ILP will be contracted out in September. The CRP agreed to let this transition happen without immediate further assessment of the program. From the last review, the CRP discovered through foster parent members, that placement stability is affected by crisis and often a lack of information. There is room for improved communication or services to foster families to create better placements for children. The CRP decided to explore the needs of foster parents and determine if available services are working.

Submitted to Calaveras Works and Human Services Agency: 11/1/10
 Submitted to CDSS/OCAP: 11/1/10

**Calaveras Works and Human Services Agency
Response to the Citizen's Review Panel's
Annual & Recommendations Report
(2009/2010 Program Year)**

The Calaveras Works and Human Services Agency's (CWHSA) Children's Services staff sincerely appreciates the members of the Calaveras County Citizen's Review Panel (CRP) for their willingness to assist us in improving our Child Welfare Services. We were pleased that you chose to focus your efforts on strategizing ways to improve our Independent Living Program (ILP). While the tragic statistics that you listed regarding children aging out of the foster care system were reflective of California as a whole and not strictly Calaveras County youth, we still agree that this is an important population to devote attention to, and we welcomed your suggestions for improvement in this area.

We are providing the following responses to the findings and/or recommendations from the Annual & Recommendations Report (2009/2010 Program Year):

- *Calaveras County Children's Services could define the goals of the ILP program and make those goals clear to Children's Services staff, youth, foster parents, Oakendell staff, and Rite of Passage staff.*

The goals of the ILP program are heavily regulated by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). While these regulations have been shared with the Children's Services staff as well as with the group home staff (through their own licensing/employment processes), we agree that defining the goals into "plain" language is a solid suggestion. We will develop a pamphlet that can be provided to, and discussed with, at least minimally those listed above. The youth will receive the pamphlet when they reach the ILP-eligible age (15.5 years), when they enter out-of-home care (if they are already ILP-eligible) and during their first ILP class. The foster parents and group home staff will receive the pamphlet whenever they accept placement of an ILP-eligible youth. A draft of the pamphlet will be provided during an ILP class to solicit feedback, comments and suggestions for improvement directly from the ILP youth. Additionally, we will consider the feasibility of having current or graduate ILP youth compile a video that explains the ILP program. The target for completion of this project will be September 2011, prior to the first ILP class of the 2011/2012 year.

- *Children's Services can review the budget and time study of the ILP Coordinator to determine staffing needs so enough time is available to manage a caseload and coordinate a sustainable ILP. Consider hiring and training an ILP graduate to help with clerical duties.*

As noted in the CRP Annual & Recommendations Report, we have reviewed the budget and time study of the ILP Coordinator, who had previously been assigned to a reduced number of cases in an effort to help off-set some of the time that we know is needed to

coordinate the ILP. Simply stated, we do not receive sufficient funds to staff a full-time or even half-time ILP Coordinator position. The high staff to ILP-eligible youth ratio is primarily because of the two large group homes that are in Calaveras County and primarily house youth from other counties, yet we are funded based upon Calaveras County ILP-eligible youth only. This is because the sending counties' ILP Coordinators share the responsibility in ensuring that their ILP-eligible youth are either referred for services to be provided by the Calaveras County ILP, the group home staff, or by their own counties' ILP.

We appreciate that the CRP included our recommendation to the CDSS that *“consideration needs to be given for allocating funds for youth in need of the service rather than for youth under the county court jurisdiction or to allow the county to limit services to county only youth in need of ILP services”*. Our Director sent a letter to each California County Welfare Director to advise them that beginning in February 2011; we will invoice them for the ILP services that we provide to their ILP-eligible youth.

- *Recruit a collaborative of individuals interested in the development of a sustainable program to assist youth to prepare to live on their own. This group could develop a strategic plan and assist with coordination of hands-on training sessions. It should include representation from youth, the business community and agencies who serve current and former foster youth in out-of-home placement.*

We issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) soliciting an individual, agency or collaborative to provide ILP Coordination and services. In addition to a general Press Release regarding this funding opportunity, the RFP was also sent directly to several local entities, including the Calaveras County Office of Education (as suggested above). We expect to have a contract in place beginning in March 2011. The contract is expected to be in place through June 2012.

- *Begin a conversation about partnership and coordination with the group homes and agencies, such as Calaveras County Office of Education, who serve youth, are involved at the high school education level, and operate an existing collaborative to educate teens.*

In an effort to streamline the process, reduce our budget, as well as reduce duplication of services, the ILP Coordinator and the Children's Services Supervisor met with both group homes in Calaveras County to determine which ILP-related classes, trainings and support that they already offer. If a class or training is already being provided by the group home staff, we agreed that we will not be providing the same or similar class or training to their residents (and we will therefore not be invoicing the other counties for these services).

- *Children's Services (or a collaborative) can review the content of classes being offered to ensure they meet the needs of youth and provide experiential “hands-*

on” learning and connection to resources. Youth report they would like information about the following:

- o Goal setting and decision making*
- o More resources for education and employment*
- o Identifying career paths and interests*
- o Networking skills to enhance college and job seeking opportunities*
- o Social skills and practice interviews*
- o Learn the triggers and long term effects of substance abuse. Learn how to choose friends and surroundings*
- o Health related classes that include how to identify illnesses through symptoms, how to choose health insurance, and personal safety*

As noted above, the ILP regulations require certain topics, and funding is determined based upon these minimum requirements only. Most of the topics that are listed here can seemingly fall into the required categories of employment and health and will be relayed to the contracted ILP Coordinator entity as priorities of the current ILP youth. Our target for completion of these requested classes will be before June 2012.

- The CRP recommends each class be two hours to provide more time for learning/engagement with consistent times and locations, advertised in a timely manner to youth, caregivers, and group homes/schools.*

We will be holding a bidder’s conference on January 10, 2011, for all parties that are interested in providing ILP Coordination and Services. During this Bidder’s Conference, we will clarify our expectation of two hour classes, consistent times and locations, and timely advertisement/notice to youth, caregivers and group homes.

- The CRP recommends youth eligible for ILP are given a voice and a role in the program. The process starts with the youth’s perspective about opportunities, resources, relationships, skills and plans for their future. Class structure could include actions outside the classroom, pre and post assessments for each class, and an evaluation after each class to assess learning and gain feedback. Youth could be encouraged to participate in defining the program goals.*

We have historically presented some topics outside of the classroom setting, and we will let the awarded contractor know that the youth prefer this method when/if it is possible for them to provide it. The target implementation time for pre and post assessments for each class, as well as evaluations after each class, is September 2011. Recruiting some ILP youth to assist in the development of the assessment and evaluation may be done by Children’s Services, the awarded contractor, and/or the CRP (should you choose to focus attention on ILP again for the 2011/2012 year).

- Youth without at least one caring adult in their life face loneliness and isolation. Statistically, they have a higher risk of poor outcomes. Children’s Services can consider implementing a program component that helps connect youth to supportive adults. It would aim to include, empower, and get the support of*

foster parents and group home/school staff to assist the youth. Possibilities include:

- *A Junior-Senior partnership through the Senior Center where seniors could serve as a mentor or provide specific information (life skills, career, vocation).*
- *Match students with a person in the community who is experienced or working in a job or field they have an interest. They could “job shadow” or interview them.*
- *Determine the possibility of a unique mentoring component.*
- *Seek feedback from caregivers.*

Helping youth who are getting ready to exit out-of-home care due to emancipation identify at least one caring adult to whom they can turn to for help is required of the primary case-carrying social workers and probation officers. The ILP Coordinator’s role is to ensure that the efforts have been made and to provide additional assistance if needed. The suggested possibilities listed above are interesting and most will need considerable time to analyze and implement. We will relay the suggestions to the awarded ILP Coordinator for their consideration, especially when developing the employment requirements of the ILP. Because of the considerable amount of youth placed in Calaveras County by other counties, we would expect priority to be given to Calaveras County dependents and wards for such programs.

Additionally, we are in the initial stages of discussion with the Calaveras Youth Mentoring Program (through the Calaveras County Office of Education) to develop and implement a peer foster youth mentoring component. The vision is that older Calaveras County foster youth who have spent at least one year in out-of-home care will be trained to be peer mentors for school-aged Calaveras County foster children who are newly placed into an out-of-home care setting. It is unclear what, if any, role the ILP Coordinator will have in this process, but the Children’s Services will continue to pursue it as time and staffing allow.

- *The Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) should be youth led with a focus on education, employment, health, housing, and supportive adult connections. Start the process when youth enter ILP.*
 - *Assist in developing a team to attend the TILP meeting.*
 - *The team includes: supportive persons identified by the youth, caregiver, relatives, therapist, and the social worker or probation officer.*
 - *All in attendance at the transition plan meeting agree to help the youth complete the plan.*

Similar to the above, the primary case-carrying social workers and probation officers are required to develop ILPs with their own ILP eligible youth. The ILP Coordinator’s role is to ensure that the TILP is completed. Since assisting the youth in developing, implementing and monitoring the TILP is the responsibility of the case carrying social workers and probation officers, we do not anticipate allocating our ILP budget to this process. Instead, we will analyze the fiscal and workload impact of incorporating TILP

planning meetings into our Team Decision Making (TDM) component. Should TDMs be conducted for TILP planning, we will ensure that the list of suggested individuals are inviting to the meetings.

To summarize, here are the commitments we have made in this Response report:

1. Develop a pamphlet that explains the goals of the ILP, and solicit feedback from ILP youth regarding the pamphlet by September 2011.
2. Consider the feasibility of having current or former ILP youth develop a video that explains the goals of the ILP by September 2011.
3. Contract with an individual, agency or collaboration to provide ILP coordination and services, beginning in March 2011.
4. Invoice other counties for providing ILP coordination and services to their youth, beginning in February 2011.
5. Refrain from providing ILP classes to group home youth for whom the group home staff is already providing classes/training on duplicative topics.
6. Ensure the awarded ILP provider is aware that the classes must be two hours in length, with consistent locations and times, and that adequate notice of the classes is provided, by September 2011.
7. Assist with creating pre- and post-class assessments, and post class evaluations, to be implemented by September 2011.
8. Relay suggestions for connecting Calaveras County Dependents and Wards with caring adults to the ILP coordinator, for consideration to include them in the employment component.
9. Continue to explore the feasibility of creating a Calaveras County foster youth peer mentoring program with the Calaveras Youth Mentoring Program.
10. Analyze the impact of facilitating TDM-like TILP planning meetings for Calaveras County foster youth.

Again, thank you for your thoughtful review and recommendations. We appreciate your hard work and dedication in helping us improve the Independent Living Program in Calaveras County, and in improving Calaveras County's Children's Services in general.

Submitted to CRP: 1/14/11

Submitted to OCAP: 1/14/11

San Mateo County

County Profile:

San Mateo County is located in the western portion of the San Francisco Bay Area, directly below the city and county of San Francisco. It is one of California's most affluent counties and part of the "Silicon Valley," home of many high-tech firms.

The population for San Mateo County is approximately 718,989 residents of which 162,870 are children 18 years and younger. The breakdown of the county racially is as

follows: 66.5 percent Caucasian, 23.7 percent Latino/Hispanic, 24.9 percent Asian, 3.2 percent Black, 1.4 percent Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders, less than 1 percent Native American Indians, and 3.4 percent report two or more races. The county child protection agency received 3,781 child abuse referrals of which 394 were substantiated cases. There are 136 children in placement.²

Activities:

- The San Mateo Citizen Review Panel (SMCRP) will continue to meet monthly to monitor its recommendations and the delivery of child welfare services in San Mateo County. Time in each meeting will be allocated to (1) reports and presentations relevant to the panel's stated interests and (2) an opportunity for new issues/concerns to be identified and explored. SMCRP, recognizing the continuing fiscal constraints that child welfare organizations are experiencing, will continue to look for ways to promote and support productive collaboration that leverages resources to achieve shared goals.
- On an annual basis, SMCRP reviews membership and the criteria for CRP representation. The goal is for CRP members to represent a broad array of backgrounds and perspectives. As the need for a person with a particular background is identified, members brainstorm ways to reach out to those people. Parents, youth and mental health professionals continue to be priority areas.
- Potential members receive a copy of the Operational Guidelines of SMCRP and are referred to the CRP website (www.smcrp.org). Before submitting an application for membership, potential panel members are invited to attend a regular CRP meeting. They sign a confidentiality agreement at the beginning of that meeting. Following the visit, if there is continuing interest, the potential member completes an application form and submits it, along with a relevant resume. New members are elected by majority vote of the existing membership.
- Incoming members of the San Mateo Citizen Review Panel are provided with an orientation binder when they meet with the chair of the panel in an orientation session. New members are encouraged to ask for clarification or additional information if they do not understand a specific point. One key role of the facilitator is to ensure that all members of the panel are able to participate effectively.
- SMCRP members receive information and updates about the child welfare system from the Child Welfare Services Director at each regular meeting. Articles and

² Information provided by the Census Bureau and the Center for Social Research, University of California at Berkeley Needell, B., Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Glasser, T., Williams, D., Zimmerman, K., Simon, V., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Frerer, K., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Lou, C.

reports are provided to members as appropriate and discussed as part of the meeting agenda.

Recommendations:

1. Child Welfare Services (CWS) should make sure that the written information about the child welfare system made available to family members is updated regularly as to content and accessibility (language, format, reading level and terminology) and is widely disseminated.

Monitoring:

- CRP will talk with CWS staff member designated to receive updated information from the Administrative Office of the Courts, Department of Social Services and other sources to identify the process currently in place to keep materials current.
- CRP will examine current approaches to disseminating educational/informational materials to families.
- CRP will explore the possibility of using an intern to inventory existing materials and places where they are made available to families.
- CRP will talk with emergency response and intake social workers about how they provide information/educational material to families.

2. CWS should monitor how families are accessing and using support services and should analyze the impact of the programs on family reunification rates.

Monitoring

- CRP will request information from CWS about how support programs and services are being evaluated for utilization and effectiveness, through the AB 636 report or other processes.
- CRP will identify specific services and invite providers to present information to SMCRP about how those services are being assessed for impact.
- CRP will use a consistent approach to gathering this information so a final report can be compiled.

3. CWS should continue to support the Team Decision Making (TDM) Advisory Committee and ensure that it monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of team decision making in relation to the stated outcomes of the program.

Monitoring

- CRP will schedule regular updates from SMCRP members who serve on TDM Advisory Committee.
- CRP will request copies of any written reports provided by the TDM Advisory Committee to CWS.

Future Direction:

SMCRP will continue to meet monthly to monitor its recommendations and the delivery of child welfare services in San Mateo County. Time in each meeting will be allocated to (1) reports and presentations relevant to the Panel's stated interests and (2) an opportunity for new issues/concerns to be identified and explored. SMCRP, recognizing the continuing fiscal constraints that child welfare organizations are experiencing, will continue to look for ways to promote and support productive collaboration that leverages resources to achieve shared goals.

Submitted to CDSS/OCAP: 11/10/10

Submitted to Beverly Beasley Johnson, Director San Mateo County Human Services Agency and Deborah Torres, Director, Children Welfare Services: 11/10/10

Ventura County

County Profile:

The County of Ventura is located approximately 50 miles northwest of Los Angeles. Ventura has a diverse economic base from tourism to technology. Early Spanish settlers described the area as the "land of everlasting summers" and named the region "San Buenaventura", which means "good fortune".

The population for Ventura County is approximately 802,983 residents of which 214,841 are children 18 years and younger. The breakdown of the county racial demographics are as follows: 87.1 percent Caucasian, 38.5 percent Latino/Hispanic, 6.7 percent Asian, 2.2 percent Black, 0.3 percent Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders, 1.3 percent Native American Indians, and 2.4 percent report two or more races. The county child protection agency received 9,551 child abuse referrals of which 794 were substantiated cases. There are 363 children in placement.³

Activities:

- The Ventura County CRP has engaged and successfully completed the development of an infrastructure that will support ongoing recruitment and orientation activities as well as support the ongoing workings/ subcommittees of the CRP. Guiding principles were established and approved by the CRP. An orientation manual is currently in the last stages of revision.
- The Committee has recognized the need for membership expansion. Current recruitment activities have included inviting the local California Youth Connection (CYC) Youth representative to the CRP/Children's System of Care (CSOC) meetings. Discussing the inclusion of parent consumers and

³ Information provided by the Census Bureau and the Center for Social Research, University of California at Berkeley Needell, B., Webster, D., Armijo, M., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Glasser, T., Williams, D., Zimmerman, K., Simon, V., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Frerer, K., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Lou, C.

reaching out to parent advocate groups. Currently CYC Leadership is determining the feasibility of a youth member joining the CRP.

- As a means of on-going trainings, the CRP had numerous presentations from community based organizations providing services to youth placed out of home in Ventura County. These presentations allowed the committee to understand the various services provided, map potential overlaps in services and streamline a process for understanding private provider service provisions including referral criteria.
- The Panel Chair participated in the all CRP meeting held in Sacramento June of 2010. A presentation was made to the CRP after this meeting on the National CRP Initiative.
- Several members of the CRP participated in a California Youth Connection presentation, including the screening of the local CYC efforts to develop a video to present to group home providers, focusing on living in out of home care from the consumer perspective.
- The committee has developed a 3 year strategic plan which supports the local SIP. There are a total of 3 workgroups that are responsible for completing the review activities, reporting back to the general membership, and making recommendations back to the Department of Children and Family Services.

Recommendations:

Currently the focus of the strategic plan is to review components of the local Child Welfare Systems, within Children and Family Services, Probation Agency, Department of Behavioral Health and local providers, targeting re-entry, recurrence and length of time in care. The CRP workgroup activities are focusing on the length of stay aspect and the in county placement system for children who are at risk of, or have been victimized by abuse or neglect, or have other special needs that require out of home care in a residential or group home placement

The committee has developed a 3 year strategic plan which supports the local SIP. There are a total of 3 workgroups that are responsible for completing the review activities outlined in the current work plan, reporting back to the general membership and making recommendations back to the Department of Children and Family Services.

These activities directly correlate with the Ventura County SIP target to decrease the percent of children who emancipate or turn age 18 during a 12-month period who had been in care 3 years or more at emancipation or reaching age of majority (child welfare only).

Data illustrating Ventura County's functioning in this area reported in Safe Measures show that 62.5% of children who emancipate or turn age 18 had been in care 3 years or

longer in the 12-month period between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010. Ventura County's current performance remains above the national standard for this measure (37.5%) and above statewide performance (59.4%)."

Workgroup One:

Permanency for children encompasses all children that have reunified with maternal and/or paternal family members, taken into guardianship by maternal and/or paternal family, kin or foster parents or any other caretaker that has a relationship with the child and adoption by any of the above. Long term foster care is not considered permanency. This workgroup is interested in researching barriers to permanency that may exist due to a child being placed with their siblings.

Review activities included research in understanding how permanency is defined in the child welfare system as well as reviewing current C-CFSR data. In addition, the committee developed data mining questions. Consultant Erika Felix, University California Santa Barbara, is currently involved in facilitating a prospective study, at the early recommendation of this committee and will be reporting her findings to this committee as part of the second year work plan. Currently, no recommendation has been made from this workgroup.

Workgroup Two:

Focus of this workgroup was to determine/assess outcome measures currently in use by all programs that reflect permanency, safety and well being.

Across Ventura County there are a variety of entities providing services to foster youth. Some are government agencies, some are community based organizations, some are individuals (foster parents, kinship parents), and some are private business people (group home owners). Toward that goal, our committee realized that we need some basic baseline information (i.e., how are we doing so far for foster youth – how many who enter the system exit in to a permanent type arrangement?). We also realized that it would be helpful, ultimately, to ensure that all providers are collecting the same information (and possibly in the same manner.) Therefore, we launched our initial foray into ascertaining outcomes across the county.

The review activities included:

- Developing the survey outcome measure survey tool.
- Creating a list of constituents from whom to collect data.
- Contacting each group (created a list of contact people from each group.
- Co-facilitating a focus group process for group homes to collect information/surveys

Findings: Initial results suggest very little (if any) standardization across out of home care providers; including who is measuring, what is being measured, what Instruments are being used, and how things are being counted.

We need to provide more information to various groups about why we value data and what outcomes we are particularly interested in (safety, permanence, well being).

Formal Recommendations based on findings

Given that the local Department of Children and Family Services, Probation Agency and the Department of Behavioral Health provide oversight of the local out of home care providers, the CRP recommends the following to these agencies, with the goal of reducing the length of stay in out of home care and increasing the permanency of placement for Ventura County youth.

- 1) Develop a mechanism to continue to collect base line information from all providers in Ventura County on data measurement they are keeping.
- 2) Use Interagency Placement Expansion and Review Committee (IPERC) and other government structure components to get "buy in" from out of home care providers regarding the need to measure outcomes and collect data.
- 3) Reach out to people who do not know what they are collecting and help them to figure out what they are already doing.
- 4) Conduct focus groups to ascertain what is manageable for various types of providers (group homes, government agencies, private nonprofit CBOs, etc.).
- 5) Establish 2-4 shared outcomes that will be collected across all agencies in the county.
- 6) Use Agency 101 or Wrap Summit for year 2012 to launch standardization in data collection.

Work Group Three

The focus of this workgroup was to review local group homes in order to assess their role in a continuum of care that promotes community- based, family- involved and best-practice services addressing the specific needs of Ventura County youth. These review activities align with the goals of reducing the length of stay and maintaining "placement" youth within the county outline in the current SIP.

In April 2010, a focus group was facilitated with group homes/residential treatment center administrators. The report was reviewed by agency staff from the respective placing agencies.

Findings and Recommendations

Costs associated with Enrichment Activities for Youth

Findings: Hardship for provider in paying for activities.

Recommended Action:

1. Invite Children's Auxiliary Liaison to an IPERC provider meeting to review procedure for obtaining reimbursement for approved costs.

2. Send mail out to caregivers caring for youth age 16-18 to inform them of support resources for ILP.
3. Post information on ILP website for direct access to providers and others involved with youth
4. Encourage group home providers to contact local youth ministries & youth programs that are willing to pick up, supervise and drop off youth.
5. Survey providers already providing outside services. Discover how they are providing enrichment activities currently.

Dedicated Time for Networking with County Group Home Providers

Findings: Providers could benefit from time to share with each other program components or new community resources

Information: Quarterly meeting held for Group Home Providers is an existing forum to share information.

Recommended Action:

1. Dedicate time on IPERC provider agenda for information sharing.
2. Providers can gain support from IPERC administration for copying and other support as needed.

Barriers to Obtaining Employment for Youth

Findings: Obtaining employment for youth utilizing Work Force Investment (WIA) Act programs is difficult.

Information: A review of these provider contracts was completed to indicate (WIA) contracts are performance based programs with multiple outcome areas. Contracts are in the process of being awarded for FY 2010-2011.

Recommended Action:

1. Make contact with new providers for FY 2010-2011 to understand referral, eligibility process and required commitment in order to properly prepare providers and staff to refer and secure the enrollment/acceptance of youth in WIA employment and training programs.
2. Refer employment issues to California Youth Connection, adult supporters group and other board serving youth for networking purposes.
3. Ensure all youth have a foster youth identification card.
4. Explore youth organizations that might be willing to provide internships to youth to help build work ethic and experience.

Behavior Management in Group Home Placement

Findings: There appears to be some gaps between group home staff and respective placement staff regarding individual group home's points and level/behavioral system (note: not all facilities use points and level/behavioral systems).

Recommended Action:

1. Obtain official operating procedures from group home providers for information sharing.
2. Include points and level/behavioral system in placement assessment/information tool guide to be used when conducting group homes placement program planned reviews.
3. Remind providers that staff needs to model appropriate behaviors. Talking about sex and drugs in front of youth is not appropriate, nor is certain media (TV, movies, games). Youth often bond with staff, so their influence on behavior cannot be underestimated.

Mental Health Services in Group Home Placement (in Ventura County)

Findings: There appears to be frustration among providers in obtaining mental health services for Medi-cal eligible youth.

Information: Not all group home providers utilize the Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH) child welfare subsystem for mental health services. The providers who make efforts to access options clinics have expressed frustration with the process, specifically the assessment and assignment period (note: some facilities utilize contracted clinical staff to provide mental health services).

Recommended Action:

1. Obtain a process and referral map to providers to access mental health services for VCBH child welfare subsystem

Discharge Planning from Group Homes to Less Restrictive Placements

Findings: Criteria to “step down” a youth from a group home is not known or agreed upon. Group home providers have received various time frames and conditions. For example, “youth need to be out in 3 months” yet there is not a matching behavioral criterion to facilitate the discharge.

Recommended Action:

1. Develop behaviorally based discharge criteria
2. Identify the resources current and needed to discharge Group Homes
3. Develop training for staff and Group Home Providers to use criteria
4. Train staff and group home providers in discharge criteria.
5. Encourage family members to visit the group home regularly to participate, prepare, observe and develop positive family interactions. If a youth does not have family, include an adult the youth has connected with.

Future Direction:

The Committee has developed a 3 year strategic plan which supports the local SIP. There are a total of 3 workgroups that are responsible for completing the review activities outlined in the current work plan, reporting back to the general membership and making recommendations back to the Department of Children and Family Services.

Submitted to CDSS/OCAP: November 12, 2010
Submitted to Judy Webber, Deputy Director Children and Family Services, November 12, 2010

**Ventura County Human Services Agency
Department of Children and Family Services
Response to the Citizen's Review Panel's
Annual & Recommendations Report
(2009/2010 Program Year)**

The Ventura County Department of Children and Family Services staff sincerely appreciates the members of the Ventura County Citizen's Review Panel (CRP) for their willingness to assist us in improving our Child Welfare Services. We are pleased that you have chosen to focus your efforts on re-entry, recurrence and the length of time in care, with an emphasis on the length of stay aspect for the in county placement system for children who are at risk of, or have been victimized by abuse or neglect, or have other special needs that require out of home care in a residential or group home placement.

These activities directly correlate with the Ventura County Systems Improvement Plan Target Three stated below:

Decrease the percent of children who emancipate or turn age 18 during a 12-month period who had been in care 3 years or more at emancipation or reaching age of majority (Child Welfare Only).

Here are our responses to the findings and/or recommendations from the Annual & Recommendations Report (2009/2010 Program Year):

1. **Workgroup One**: No recommendations made. The group is currently working on the development of a prospective study focused on sibling placements.

Ventura County CFS Response:

We look forward to the outcomes and information from the prospective study this workgroup is currently engaged in regarding barriers to permanency that may exist due to a child being placed with their siblings.

Our Recruitment and Adoptions Workgroup focuses on the development of strategies regarding child specific targeted recruitment. To date, all Foster Parent recruitment materials have been revised to include Adoption topics and information. The workgroup will be utilizing adoption data to determine recruitment target areas. Once the prospective study has been accomplished and reviewed by the Citizen Review Panel, the information will be given to the Recruitment and Adoptions Workgroup to utilize in their on-going activities.

2. Workgroup Two: CRP recommendations

- Develop a mechanism to continue to collect base line information from all providers in Ventura County on data measurement they are keeping.
- Use IPERC and other government structure components to get "buy in" from out of home care providers regarding the need to measure outcomes and collect data.
- Reach out to people who do not know what they are collecting (i.e., group homes) and help them to figure out what they are already doing.
- Conduct focus groups to ascertain what is manageable for various types of providers (group homes, government agencies, private nonprofit CBOs, etc.)
- Establish 2-4 shared outcomes that will be collected across all agencies in the County
- Use Agency 101 (or Wrap Summit) for year 2012 to launch standardization in data collection

Ventura County CFS Response:

The local Ventura County Shelter, Casa Pacifica is engaging in the Building Bridges Initiative. Building Bridges is a national initiative working to identify and promote practice and policy that will create strong and closely coordinated partnerships and collaborations between families, youth, community - and residentially - based treatment and service providers, advocates and policy makers to ensure that comprehensive mental health services and supports are available to improve the lives of young people and their families. The first task of this workgroup focused on the mapping of outcome measures utilized in contracted services.

Currently, CFS has engaged in the coordination and mapping of all outcomes outlined in CFS contracted services. This mapping has been provided to the Building Bridges Initiative workgroup and will be utilized toward the goals of developing standardized outcome measures.

The Interagency Placement Expansion Review Committee of Ventura County is comprised of representatives from the Human Services Agency/Department of Children and Family Services, Behavioral Health, Probation Agency and Ventura County Schools. The IPERC team provides ongoing oversight of Ventura County's out of home group care programs that provide services to Ventura County youth by developing communication strategies between placing agencies and providers, and assuring quality of placement programs by providing ongoing assessment and feedback.

IPERC continues to work with local Group Home providers on program quality and will continue to discuss standardizing outcome measures taking into consideration licensing regulations, and rate setting regulations that govern Group Home operations. The utilization of a focus group to gather information regarding the ability to manage and collect standardized outcomes will be reviewed and considered as a strategy by IPERC as they continue to develop supports and resources that will assist in enhancing the

quality of local Group Home Programs as well as their ability to collect and process data that supports CFS SIP goals.

Information will continue to be shared with the Group Home providers through the IPERC quarterly meetings and Ventura County Human Services Agency website, as well as the annual individual provider meetings.

3. Workgroup Three: CRP Recommendations

I. Costs associated with Enrichment Activities for Youth

Findings: Hardship for provider in paying for activities

Recommended Action:

1. Invite Children's Auxiliary Liaison to an IPERC provider meeting to review procedure for obtaining reimbursement for approved costs.
2. Send mail out to caregivers caring for youth age 16-18 to inform them of support resources for ILP.
3. Post information on ILP website for direct access to providers and others involved with youth
4. Encourage group home providers to contact local youth ministries & youth programs that are willing to pick up, supervise and drop off youth.
5. Survey providers already providing outside services how they are providing enrichment activities currently.

Ventura County CFS Response:

The Interagency Placement Expansion Review Committee is comprised of representatives from the Human Services Agency/Department of Children and Family Services, Behavioral Health, Probation Agency and Ventura County Schools. The IPERC team provides ongoing oversight of Ventura County's out of home group care programs that provide services to Ventura County youth by developing communication strategies between placing agencies and providers, and assuring quality of placement programs by providing ongoing assessment and feedback.

The Interagency Placement Expansion Review Committee (IPERC) includes three subcommittees, which meet on a quarterly basis.

- **IPERC Business Committee**
- **Placement Agency Collaborative**
- **Group Home Collaborative**

This year, 2009/2010, the Interagency Planning and Expansion and Review Committee (IPERC) has undergone an extensive realignment of business practices within all three of its subcommittees. The focus on this realignment process was to develop stronger communication and feedback processes between the placing agencies and providers

and develop oversight systems that focus on consistency and accountability while supporting permanency of youth placed in out of home care. The IPERC Committee continues to be committed toward increasing collaboration and problem solving with the providers in Ventura County in order to strengthen programs and services to our youth in out of home care, with the goal of preparing youth for transition into the community or adulthood.

The Group Home Collaborative provides a forum for placing agencies and service providers to promote collaboration, communication, problem solving and education regarding the needs of clients, agencies and providers responsibilities, changes in regulatory or legislative standards, resource utilization and partnering opportunities.

The following goals have been outline in the Group Home Collaborative Charter:

- Improve communication between placing agencies and providers
- Support and develop programs that focuses on strength based components, meeting needs and trends of Ventura County youth placed out of home.
- Ensure utilization of a continuous quality improvement process utilizing feedback from clients, families, placing agency staff and service providers
- Identify and utilize additional resources for clients
- Provide education and information that supports treatment goals

The Department of Children and Family Services will utilize this meeting to address the issues and challenges brought forth from the CRP findings, ensuring there is continued problem solving and communication between the caregivers and the Youth Services Division Social Work Staff.

The Department of Children and Family Services Youth Services Division has completed the ILP website, and will continue to utilize this mechanism to inform and connect Group Home Providers with resources and information.

II. Dedicated Time for Networking with County Group Home Providers

Findings: Providers could benefit from time to share with each other program components or new community resources.

Recommended Action:

1. Dedicate time on IPERC provider agenda for information sharing.
2. Providers can gain support from IPERC administration for copying and other support as needed.

Ventura County CFS Response:

Currently, the Group Home Providers meet with representatives from the Ventura County Placing Agencies on a quarterly basis (Group Home Collaborative). This meeting's agenda focuses on presentations from programs providing support and

resource services, sharing of information from Placing Agencies and training/review and discussion of new legislative standards. It is clear and important that the Group Home Providers can learn from each other, sharing successful program components and resources. The agenda for this meeting will be reviewed and additions will be made to include a "peer presenter" and/or information section.

III. Barriers to Obtaining Employment for Youth

Findings: Obtaining employment for youth utilizing Work Force Investment (WIA) Act programs is difficult.

Recommended Action:

1. Make contact with new providers for FY 2010-2011 to understand referral, eligibility process and required commitment in order to properly prepare providers and staff to refer and secure the enrollment/acceptance of youth in WIA employment and training programs.
2. Refer employment issues to California Youth Connection, adult supporters group and other board serving youth for networking purposes
3. Ensure all youth have Foster Youth identification
4. Explore SSI Ticket to Work, ARC, or youth organizations that might be willing to provide "internships" to youth to help build work ethic and experience.

Ventura County CFS Response:

It is important to note that WIA contracts are performance based and include multiple outcome areas and multiple contracts. Ultimately there is greater need than capacity which will continue to affect the number of CFS and Probation youth able to be involved in the WIA programs.

Ventura County CFS will initiate contact with employment providers in year 2011/2012 to establish working relationship and understand referral process in order to prepare providers to refer. Once this has taken place, the Interagency Placement Expansion Review Committee (IPERC) will facilitate a presentation from WIA contractors regarding referral processes and services offered to the Group Home Collaborative.

Ventura County CFS supports the efforts of the local California Youth Connection (CYC) chapter and will bring this issue to the CYC President and Board members for continued discussion and problem solving. CYC and CFS continue to engage in activities that support community education on the needs of this transitioning population including community presentations, targeted conferences, etc. The local CYC Chapter President is a member of the Children's Services Oversight Committee and Citizen Review Panel, and has been involved in ongoing discussions regarding the needs of this population to effectively transition to adulthood.

IV. Behavior Management in Group Home Placement

Findings: There appears to be some gaps between Group Home Staff and respective placement staff regarding individual Group Home's points and level/behavioral system. Note: Not all facilities use points and level/behavioral systems.

Recommended Action:

1. Obtain official operating procedures from Group Home Providers for information sharing
2. Include points and level/behavioral system in placement assessment/information tool guide to be used when conducting Group Home placement program reviews.
3. Remind providers that staff needs to model appropriate behaviors. Talking about sex and drugs in front of youth is not appropriate, nor is certain media (TV, movies, games). Youth often bond with staff, so their influence on behavior cannot be underestimated.

Ventura County CFS Response:

IPECRC has recently developed an oversight monitoring system for all out of home care placements that emphasizes the importance of behavioral programs that focus on individual client needs as well as utilizing client and family strengths, in preparing youth for transition to the community or adulthood. CFS has authorized an in-house consultant to research and report on various program components included in specific drug and alcohol treatment programs, as this has been an identified area of need for those providers who are providing services to this specific population.

In addition, processes have been put into place to obtain operating procedures which can then be shared at quarterly IPECRC Provider Collaborative Meetings as well as be instrumental in guiding new annual provider program reviews.

In upcoming IPECRC Provider Collaborative Meetings, the topic of Staff influence on client behavior and outcomes will be presented and discussed.

We will encourage our local chapter of the California Youth Connection (CYC) to have representation on the Group Home Collaborative. Ventura CYC developed a video that is currently be utilized to engage Group Home Provider staff in discussions of staff influence, role modeling and supportive interactions. This video has been included in the "new staff orientation trainings" in several of Ventura County's larger Group Home placements.

V. Mental Health Services in Group Home Placement (in Ventura County)

Findings: There appears to be frustration among providers in obtaining mental health services for Medi-cal eligible youth.

Information: Not all Group Home providers utilize the VCBH Child Welfare subsystem for mental health services. The providers to make efforts to access Options Clinics have indicated frustration with the process for access specifically the assessment and assignment period. Note: Some facilities utilize contracted clinical staff to provide mental health services.

Recommended Action:

1. Obtain a process and referral map to providers to access mental health services for VCBH Child Welfare Subsystem

Ventura County CFS Response:

The Department of Children and Family Services will refer these findings to the Behavioral Health Department as well and the IPERC Business meeting for continued review.

VI. Discharge Planning from Group Homes to Less Restrictive Placements

Findings: Criteria to “step down” a youth from a Group Home is not known or agreed upon or known. Group Home providers have received various time frames and conditions. Example has been “youth need to be out in 3 months” yet there is not a matching behavioral criterion to facilitate the discharge.

Recommended Action:

1. Develop behaviorally based discharge criteria
2. Identify the resources current and needed to discharge Group Homes
3. Develop Training for staff and Group Home Providers to use criteria
4. Train staff and Group Home Providers in discharge criteria.
5. Encourage family members to visit the group home regularly to participate, prepare, observe and develop positive family interactions. (Develop family friendly criteria.) If a youth does not have family, include an adult the youth has connected with.

Ventura County CFS Response:

It is the responsibility of the Interagency Planning and Expansion and Review Committee (IPERC), working through all three of the sub-committees to pursue and investigate best practices in behavioral programs. While Ventura County does not contract with the local Group Home Providers, the IPERC forum is the vehicle where conversations, presentations and coordination of programming designs and focuses can take place and begin to formulate. Ventura County CFS will continue to take the lead in these endeavors, as they directly impact permanency and placement stability.

In closing, we once again thank you for your time and efforts making these recommendations. We look forward to another year of working together.

Judy Webber
Ventura County Human Services Agency
Department of Children and Family Services
Deputy Director

Submitted to OCAP: 5/26/11

Submitted to Ventura County CRP Membership: 5/26/11

California Citizen Review Panel Reporting Requirements

Citizen Review Panel Quarterly Reports:

All completed reports shall be submitted to OCAP prior to or on the assigned date **via** the CRP consultant. The CRP consultant will review the reports and submit to OCAP.

Quarter	Date of Submission to Consultant (optional)	Date of Submission to OCAP
January 1-March 31	April 20	April 30th
April 1-June 30	July 16	July 31st
July 1- September 30	October 15	October 31
October 1-December 31	January 15	January 31 st

Citizen Review Panel Annual Report

All completed reports shall be submitted to OCAP prior to or on the assigned date **via** the CRP consultant. The CRP consultant will review the reports and submit to OCAP.

Annual Report Time Periods covered	Date of Submission to Consultant	Date of Submission to OCAP
<u>July 1-Sept 30</u> Broken down into the following: <u>July 1-June 30</u> CRP Activity Report with Recommendations <u>July 1-Sept 30</u> Projected CRP activities	October 25-30	November 15th

Citizen Review Panel Recommendation Response timeframe:

❖ Once an annual report has been submitted to OCAP both the local counties and State CRP has 6 months within which to respond to any or all recommendations.

Budget Reporting:

Quarterly reports include a line item budget report that shows expenditures for the quarter reporting period.

Annual reports will include a line item budget report for the year's expenditures.

CRP Work plans: Will be updated yearly and due with the annual report. Any modifications made to the work plan during the course of the year will be submitted in writing to the CRP Consultant.

Citizen Review Panel
Annual & Recommendations Report
(2009/2010 Program Year)

County: Calaveras

Contact Person for this Report:

Name: Robin Davis

Phone: 209-754-6917

Email: rdavis@co.calaveras.ca.us

Date Submitted to OCAP: Nov. 1, 2010

Date & Person Submitted to at the local County Agency: Nov. 1, 2010, Mikey Habbestad

Please report on the Citizen Review Panel's activities per the items below and submit your response to CDSS, Office of Child Abuse Prevention via the Strategies Consultant no later than November 15, 2010.

1. County Profile (OCAP will provide current data from current annual report)

General Demographics

Ethnic make-up of county

Household income

2. Panel Activities

A. Panel structure and development

I. Membership (**Work plan Goal #1**)

Have there been any changes in membership or panel composition during the reporting period?

The CRP members consist of the Prevent Child Abuse Council Calaveras members and community volunteers. The CRP initially gained 13 new members from recruitment efforts. Nine of those members worked on committees during the year. They represent diverse interest and expertise in child protection, early intervention, law enforcement, education, psychotherapy, substance abuse prevention, and public health. We lost 3 of the committee members. Another recruitment effort engaged 8 new members to the September quarterly meeting including foster parents, community volunteers, and representatives from the Food Bank, WIC (Women Infant Children) program and Behavioral Health.

Please discuss any activities the panel has engaged in specific to the recruitment of panel members to reflect community demographics and support creating or maintaining a diverse panel.

The CRP developed a form for interested members so Prevent Child Abuse Council Members could recruit personally. Press releases were printed twice during the year in local newspapers, on-line community news, and shared with county agencies, schools,

faith-based centers and foster family agencies. The CRP Coordinator spoke to county agencies and community partners to recruit interested members. Panel meetings are posted for the public to see. Members decided to change the meeting time to evenings to accommodate more working citizens who may not be available during the day.

II. Panel Training (**Work plan goal #2**)

Please elaborate on the on-going orientation trainings of new CRP members. In addition, please describe any training activities the CRP has engaged in this past year as a means of on-going panel development.

All members signed a statement of confidentiality regarding the privacy of information obtained. Each member present at meetings reviewed and updated the Scope of Work, defining the goals for the year and the annual budget. Members were provided with information about the purpose of a Citizen Review Panel, local child abuse statistics and articles relevant to Independent Living Programs for foster youth. Guest speakers provided information on services for foster youth and their families including the local Victim's Witness Program and Workforce Investment Programs.

III. Panel self evaluation activities – (**Work plan Goal #6**)

Has the panel undertaken any activities to help it assess its own performance during the reporting period? If so briefly describe these activities and the findings. If not, please describe when and how the panel will assess its performance.

Three committees have continually assessed their performance in evaluating different aspects of the Independent Living Program. Members who participated in the Ropes training evaluated how effective the day was in building trust and rapport with the youth in preparation for focus groups. After each focus group, members assessed the usefulness of the questions and the process. Each committee debriefed after the activity in preparation for sharing with the larger group and compiling recommendations. Each activity was found to be very effective in achieving the desired purpose.

3. CRP objectives (**Work plan Goals #3 & 5**)

For **each objective identified** in your work plan please report on the following:

♦Any demographics related to the CRP objective(s)

Foster care studies in California have shown that within four years of leaving foster care, 25% of "aged-out" youth have been homeless; 42% have become parents; less than 20% are able to support themselves; and only 46% have graduated from high school. Most report a lack of a support system or caring adult and are at a higher risk for substance abuse, domestic violence and poverty.

Given the challenges youth face, the CRP chose to conduct an assessment of the Independent Living Program (ILP). There are up to 130 youth (age 15.5-21) in out-of-home placements in Calaveras County eligible for the Independent Living Program. Approximately 15% are in foster care from Calaveras County, while the rest are youth

on probation from various counties residing at Oakendell Community School and Rite of Passage Sierra Ridge Academy (ROP).

Calaveras County ILP classes are held once a month with 10-40 students in each class. They are held separately for three different populations: 1) Youth in foster care. 2) Youth on probation at ROP. 3) Youth on probation at Oakendell Community School.

There is one ILP coordinator who is also a case-carrying Social Worker.

♦Description of the review activities and any technical assistance provided (example = case review, focus group, data review, State (Strategies) RP consultant) to support your review work.

To assess and make recommendations of the Independent Living Program (ILP) in Calaveras County, the CRP members formed three committees who conducted the following activities.

- The panel agreed it was important to get feedback from the youth attending the courses. Youth in the ILP may have difficulties trusting adults. The panel asked for guidance from the State Consultant, Louanne Shahandeh, about funding an activity that supports gaining knowledge of the Child Welfare system and leads the recommendations of the CRP. She advised to move forward as the activity impacted the population in the Child Welfare System.

A CRP committee coordinated the participation of 13 youth and 6 adults in a Ropes Challenge/Team Building course which consisted of exercises to get acquainted, build trust, work as a team, and face mental challenges. It was an educational day for CRP members to understand youth in an environment that will gain youth's trust of the CRP and Child Welfare system representatives.

In the following weeks, CRP members who attended the course facilitated five focus groups with the youth participants, as well as youth in Oakendell Community School.

CRP interviewed 27 youth in the ILP:

- 6 reside in foster homes
- 9 reside at Rite of Passage Sierra Ridge Academy
- 12 reside at Oakendell Community School

- The "Best Practices" committee interviewed Teresa Dominguez, Social Worker, Calaveras County ILP Coordinator.
- CRP Coordinator interviewed staff members at Oakendell Community School.
- The "Best Practices" committee members sat in on three ILP training sessions to see the content and process of delivery to youth.
- CRP Coordinator attended the "California ILP Institute" in May 2010. It focused on best practices of California Independent Living Programs.

- CRP Coordinator and a CRP member participated in the webinar, “Prevention: A Key to Permanency for Youth in Foster Care” in July 2010. (www.ca-cpi.org).
- CRP Coordinator participated quarterly in the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Collaborative, Calaveras County.

♦ Findings based on review activities

Youth Focus Groups

- Youth would like a better understanding of the goals of the Independent Living Program (ILP).
- The most valuable classes for youth were:
 - *Financial Aid Information for College* because they could complete the Financial Aid Application.
 - *Check Writing & Budgeting* because they could practice writing checks for household purchases.
 - *Nutrition & Personal Well Being* was informative and useful.
- Youth report they lack information about decision making, goal setting, community resources, realistic expectations of how to live on their own, how to apply for college, information about vocational training, and knowing what to wear and how to present themselves in an interview. Overwhelmingly, they said they would like more “hands on” experiences in the training sessions and more information about resources for employment.
- As they approach leaving foster care or their group home, most of the youth reported having no reliable adults to advise them or provide emotional support. Helping youth acquire an adult connection or circle of support is not perceived as a key element of the ILP.
- Youth in foster care said their primary motivation to attend is to receive payment.
- Youth said it is sometimes hard to attend all the classes because of other outside activities.
- Youth recognize that the program has a tremendous lack of staff, with one staff member to manage a caseload, coordinate, organize and implement the program.
- Class start and end times can be inconsistent causing some youth to wait for a ride, which can also cause frustration for foster parents.
- Youth do not feel they have a voice in the program. They are not aware of a way to provide feedback or evaluate the success of the ILP.
- Large classes at ROP are not conducive to learning. Youth report there is no “one-on-one” interaction and they have trouble hearing.

Interview with ILP Coordinator

- There is currently one Social Worker assigned to ILP. She coordinates all the youth trainings and carries a child welfare caseload. The Social Worker to youth ratio is 1:130.
- The ILP coordinator indicates difficulty in retaining competent and willing volunteers to facilitate trainings.

- It is difficult to track progress and provide follow up assistance to teens once they emancipate. They rarely request or use services to age 21 after they leave the system.
- The connection to foster parents is not a key element of the ILP. Foster parents are not very involved and do not always support transporting youth to class.
- Reduced bus routes and far distances create challenging transportation issues in Calaveras County. Transportation is sometimes a reason youth miss an appointment or training session.
- The Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) is done every 6 months, but youth will often miss their appointment.

Interview with Administration Staff Members at Oakendell Community School

- Information about the classes does not always arrive in a timely manner. Times/locations are not consistent. They would prefer that all classes be at Oakendell but would not mind going to town for a specific hands-on experience.
- When classes have been combined in town with youth in foster care, the foster youth are dropped off by foster parents and wait to be picked up. They have displayed inappropriate behaviors if not supervised which negatively affects Oakendell students who have unique circumstances and emotional disturbances.
- Oakendell youth are not always engaged. Money is a large incentive to attend. Youth would like facilitators to do less talking and engage them with hands-on experiences in the community or a more entertaining presentation.
- There is currently no forum for Oakendell staff to provide feedback about the program through survey or discussion.
- Staff members are not familiar with the 90 Day Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP). This is a relatively new form for Children's Services.

♦ Formal Recommendations based on findings (for County and State)

SUSTAINABLE PROGRAM

- Calaveras County Children Services could define the goals of The Independent Living Program and make those goals clear to Children's Services staff, youth, foster parents, Oakendell staff, and Rite of Passage staff.
- Recruit a collaborative of individuals interested in the development of a sustainable program to assist youth to prepare to live on their own. This group could develop a strategic plan and assist with coordination of hands-on training sessions. It should include representation from youth, the business community and agencies who serve current and former youth in out-of-home placement.
- Children's Services (or a collaborative) can review the content of classes being offered to ensure they meet the needs of youth and provide experiential "hands-

on” learning and connection to resources. Youth report they would like information about the following:

- Goal setting and decision making
 - More resources for education and employment
 - Identifying career paths and interests
 - Networking skills to enhance college and job seeking opportunities
 - Social skills and practice interviews
 - Learn the triggers and long term effects of substance abuse. Learn how to choose friends and surroundings
 - Health related classes that include how to identify illnesses through symptoms, how to choose health insurance, and personal safety
- The CRP recommends each class be two hours to provide more time for learning/engagement with consistent times and locations, advertised in a timely manner to youth, caregivers, and group home/schools.

YOUTH SUPPORT, ROLE, and VOICE

The ILP best practices philosophy states that “the youth has a central voice while the family/caregiver’s role is to provide guidance and support”. The developmental task for the youth is “**inter**-dependence not **in**-dependence”.

- The CRP recommends youth eligible for ILP are given a voice and a role in the program. The process starts with the youth’s perspective about opportunities, resources, relationships, skills and plans for their future. Class structure could include actions outside the classroom, pre and post assessments for each class, and an evaluation after each class to assess learning and gain feedback. Youth could be encouraged to participate in defining the program goals.
- Youth without at least one caring adult in their life face loneliness and isolation. Statistically, they have a higher risk of poor outcomes. Children’s Services can consider implementing a program component that helps connect youth to supportive adults. It would aim to include, empower, and get the support of foster parents and group home/school staff to assist the youth. Possibilities include:
 - A Junior-Senior partnership through the Senior Center where seniors could serve as a mentor or provide specific information (life skills, career, vocation)
 - Match students with a person in the community who is experienced or working in a job or field they have an interest. They could “job shadow” or interview them
 - Determine the possibility of a unique mentoring component
 - Seek feedback from caregivers
- The Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) should be youth led with a focus on education, employment, health, housing, and supportive adult connections. Start the process when youth enter ILP.

- Assist in developing a team to attend the TILP meeting
- The team includes: supportive persons identified by the youth, caregiver, relatives, therapist, and the Social Worker or Probation Officer
- All in attendance at the transition plan meeting agree to help the youth complete the plan

STAFFING

- Children's Services can review the budget and time study of the ILP Coordinator to determine staffing needs so enough time is available to manage a caseload and coordinate a sustainable Independent Living Program. Consider hiring and training an ILP graduate to help with clerical duties.
- Begin a conversation about partnership and coordination with the group homes and agencies, such as Calaveras County Office of Education, who serve youth, are involved at the high school education level, and operate an existing collaborative to educate teens.
- Transitional age foster youth in California have been identified as a population with unique mental health needs. Begin a conversation with Calaveras County Behavioral Health Department to review the Proposition 63/Mental Health Services Act needs assessment and consider a partnership that addresses the needs of youth in out-of-home placements.

An interview with Cal Works & Human Services Agency staff gave this context to their funding and service realities:

The allocation for ILP services \$46,824 funds 28% of one fully loaded costs of a Social Worker III. The funding does not take into account any additional service costs for youth stipends, teachers, or travel costs. It does not take into account the ILP costs of two group homes within Calaveras County borders in which 30 counties presently have probation youth residing in the facilities. Additionally due to youth transition, the ratio of youth within Calaveras County at these facilities ranges from 130 to 150 in any given month, of which only 15 are Calaveras County residents. Consideration needs to be given for allocating funds for youth in need of the service rather than for youth under the county court jurisdiction or to allow the county to limit services to county only youth in need of ILP services.

- ♦ Follow-up on the prior years annual report recommendations, including any County and State responses to the recommendations
This was the first year of the 3 year grant. The panel chose to evaluate the Independent Living Program.
- ♦ Discuss how the CRP recommendations will be disseminated to county, state officials as well as the public and how the CRP will handle any comments made.

The annual report will be shared via web page and formal presentation with community partners and the Board of Supervisors.

♦Future Directions –Briefly discuss the activities that the panel expects to undertake during the 2010/2011 program year- with an emphasis on July-Sept 2010 activities. (Please attach an updated work plan for next year)

Panel members have discussed possible activities for the next year, including:

- Assess the inclusion and collaboration of youth and foster parents in the youth's transitional plan and ILP activities.
- Examine processes to connect youth to mentors and permanent adult connections.

The CRP will review the response of Children's Services at a meeting on January 27, 2011 and decide which activities to pursue.

4. Public in-put (Work plan Goal # 4)

Briefly describe any public input that the panel obtained during the reporting period and how this input was taken into consideration when making your final recommendations for this annual report.

If you will be obtaining public input after this annual reports recommendations are developed and published briefly describe your public input process and outline the time frames for this process.

The annual report will be provided by the CRP Coordinator at a regular meeting of the PCACC (Prevent Child Abuse Council Calaveras), which is advertised to the public. It will be given to Children's Services before it is more widely distributed to the Board of Supervisors and community agencies.

5. Attachments

Please attach the following documents to this report:

- ❖ Updated roster of Citizen Review Panel Members, including their affiliations
- ❖ Minutes of the panel's meetings for the July 1, 2010 to September 30, 2010 quarter. If the panel utilizes committees, please attach the minutes, if any, of these committees
- ❖ Updated Scope of Work for the coming years panel activities 2010/2011
- ❖ Please submit a statement of the panel's expenditures for the 2009/2010 program year.

All of the above documents are attached.

Please email this report to **OCAP by November 15, 2010**, including the name, email address and phone number of the person who can be contacted should there be questions regarding this report.

**Calaveras Works and Human Services Agency
Response to the Citizen's Review Panel's
Annual & Recommendations Report
(2009/2010 Program Year)**

The Calaveras Works and Human Services Agency's (CWHSA) Children's Services staff sincerely appreciates the members of the Calaveras County Citizen's Review Panel (CRP) for their willingness to assist us in improving our Child Welfare Services. We were pleased that you chose to focus your efforts on strategizing ways to improve our Independent Living Program (ILP). While the tragic statistics that you listed regarding children aging out of the foster care system were reflective of California as a whole and not strictly Calaveras County youth, we still agree that this is an important population to devote attention to, and we welcomed your suggestions for improvement in this area.

We are providing the following responses to the findings and/or recommendations from the Annual & Recommendations Report (2009/2010 Program Year):

- *Calaveras County Children's Services could define the goals of the ILP program and make those goals clear to Children's Services staff, youth, foster parents, Oakendell staff, and Rite of Passage staff.*

The goals of the ILP program are heavily regulated by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). While these regulations have been shared with the Children's Services staff as well as with the group home staff (through their own licensing/employment processes), we agree that defining the goals into "plain" language is a solid suggestion. We will develop a pamphlet that can be provided to, and discussed with, at least minimally those listed above. The youth will receive the pamphlet when they reach the ILP-eligible age (15.5 years), when they enter out-of-home care (if they are already ILP-eligible) and during their first ILP class. The foster parents and group home staff will receive the pamphlet whenever they accept placement of an ILP-eligible youth. A draft of the pamphlet will be provided during an ILP class to solicit feedback, comments and suggestions for improvement directly from the ILP youth. Additionally, we will consider the feasibility of having current or graduate ILP youth compile a video that explains the ILP program. The target for completion of this project will be September 2011, prior to the first ILP class of the 2011/2012 year.

- *Children's Services can review the budget and time study of the ILP Coordinator to determine staffing needs so enough time is available to manage a caseload and coordinate a sustainable ILP. Consider hiring and training an ILP graduate to help with clerical duties.*

As noted in the CRP Annual & Recommendations Report, we have reviewed the budget and time study of the ILP Coordinator, who had previously been assigned to a reduced number of cases in an effort to help off-set some of the time that we know is needed to coordinate the ILP. Simply stated, we do not receive sufficient funds to staff a full-time

or even half-time ILP Coordinator position. The high staff to ILP-eligible youth ratio is primarily because of the two large group homes that are in Calaveras County and primarily house youth from other counties, yet we are funded based upon Calaveras County ILP-eligible youth only. This is because the sending counties' ILP Coordinators share the responsibility in ensuring that their ILP-eligible youth are either referred for services to be provided by the Calaveras County ILP, the group home staff, or by their own counties' ILP.

We appreciate that the CRP included our recommendation to the CDSS that *“consideration needs to be given for allocating funds for youth in need of the service rather than for youth under the county court jurisdiction or to allow the county to limit services to county only youth in need of ILP services”*. Our Director sent a letter to each California County Welfare Director to advise them that beginning in February 2011; we will invoice them for the ILP services that we provide to their ILP-eligible youth.

- *Recruit a collaborative of individuals interested in the development of a sustainable program to assist youth to prepare to live on their own. This group could develop a strategic plan and assist with coordination of hands-on training sessions. It should include representation from youth, the business community and agencies who serve current and former foster youth in out-of-home placement.*

We issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) soliciting an individual, agency or collaborative to provide ILP Coordination and services. In addition to a general Press Release regarding this funding opportunity, the RFP was also sent directly to several local entities, including the Calaveras County Office of Education (as suggested above). We expect to have a contract in place beginning in March 2011. The contract is expected to be in place through June 2012.

- *Begin a conversation about partnership and coordination with the group homes and agencies, such as Calaveras County Office of Education, who serve youth, are involved at the high school education level, and operate an existing collaborative to educate teens.*

In an effort to streamline the process, reduce our budget, as well as reduce duplication of services, the ILP Coordinator and the Children's Services Supervisor met with both group homes in Calaveras County to determine which ILP-related classes, trainings and support that they already offer. If a class or training is already being provided by the group home staff, we agreed that we will not be providing the same or similar class or training to their residents (and we will therefore not be invoicing the other counties for these services).

- *Children's Services (or a collaborative) can review the content of classes being offered to ensure they meet the needs of youth and provide experiential “hands-on” learning and connection to resources. Youth report they would like information about the following:*

- *Goal setting and decision making*
- *More resources for education and employment*
- *Identifying career paths and interests*
- *Networking skills to enhance college and job seeking opportunities*
- *Social skills and practice interviews*
- *Learn the triggers and long term effects of substance abuse. Learn how to choose friends and surroundings*
- *Health related classes that include how to identify illnesses through symptoms, how to choose health insurance, and personal safety*

As noted above, the ILP regulations require certain topics, and funding is determined based upon these minimum requirements only. Most of the topics that are listed here can seemingly fall into the required categories of employment and health and will be relayed to the contracted ILP Coordinator entity as priorities of the current ILP youth. Our target for completion of these requested classes will be before June 2012.

- *The CRP recommends each class be two hours to provide more time for learning/engagement with consistent times and locations, advertised in a timely manner to youth, caregivers, and group homes/schools.*

We will be holding a Bidder's Conference on January 10, 2011 for all parties that are interested in providing ILP Coordination and Services. During this Bidder's Conference, we will clarify our expectation of two hour classes, consistent times and locations, and timely advertisement/notice to youth, caregivers and group homes.

- *The CRP recommends youth eligible for ILP are given a voice and a role in the program. The process starts with the youth's perspective about opportunities, resources, relationships, skills and plans for their future. Class structure could include actions outside the classroom, pre and post assessments for each class, and an evaluation after each class to assess learning and gain feedback. Youth could be encouraged to participate in defining the program goals.*

We have historically presented some topics outside of the classroom setting, and we will let the awarded contractor know that the youth prefer this method when/if it is possible for them to provide it. The target implementation time for pre- and post-assessments for each class, as well as evaluations after each class, is September 2011. Recruiting some ILP youth to assist in the development of the assessment and evaluation may be done by Children's Services, the awarded contractor, and/or the CRP (should you choose to focus attention on ILP again for the 2011/2012 year).

- *Youth without at least one caring adult in their life face loneliness and isolation. Statistically, they have a higher risk of poor outcomes. Children's Services can consider implementing a program component that helps connect youth to supportive adults. It would aim to include, empower and get the support of foster parents and group home/school staff to assist the youth. Possibilities include:*

- *A Junior-Senior partnership through the Senior Center where seniors could serve as a mentor or provide specific information (life skills, career, vocation)*
- *Match students with a person in the community who is experienced or working in a job or field they have an interest. They could “job shadow” or interview them*
- *Determine the possibility of a unique mentoring component*
- *Seek feedback from caregivers*

Helping youth who are getting ready to exit out-of-home care due to emancipation identify at least one caring adult to whom they can turn to for help is required of the primary case-carrying Social Workers and Probation Officers. The ILP Coordinator’s role is to ensure that the efforts have been made and to provide additional assistance if needed. The suggested possibilities listed above are interesting and most will need considerable time to analyze and implement. We will relay the suggestions to the awarded ILP Coordinator for their consideration, especially when developing the employment requirements of the ILP. Because of the considerable amount of youth placed in Calaveras County by other counties, we would expect priority to be given to Calaveras County Dependents and Wards for such programs.

Additionally, we are in the initial stages of discussion with the Calaveras Youth Mentoring Program (through the Calaveras County Office of Education) to develop and implement a peer foster youth mentoring component. The vision is that older Calaveras County foster youth who have spent at least one year in out-of-home care will be trained to be peer mentors for school-aged Calaveras County foster children who are newly placed into an out-of-home care setting. It is unclear what, if any, role the ILP Coordinator will have in this process, but the Children’s Services will continue to pursue it as time and staffing allow.

- *The Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) should be youth led with a focus on education, employment, health, housing, and supportive adult connections. Start the process when youth enter ILP.*
 - *Assist in developing a team to attend the TILP meeting*
 - *The team includes: supportive persons identified by the youth, caregiver, relatives, therapist, and the Social Worker or Probation Officer*
 - *All in attendance at the transition plan meeting agree to help the youth complete the plan.*

Similar to the above, the primary case-carrying Social Workers and Probation Officers are required to develop ILPs with their own ILP-eligible youth. The ILP Coordinator’s role is to ensure that the TILP is completed. Since assisting the youth in developing, implementing and monitoring the TILP is the responsibility of the case carrying Social Workers and Probation Officers, we do not anticipate allocating our ILP budget to this process. Instead, we will analyze the fiscal and workload impact of incorporating TILP planning meetings into our Team Decision Making (TDM) component. Should TDMs be

conducted for TILP planning, we will ensure that the list of suggested individuals are inviting to the meetings.

To summarize, here are the commitments we have made in this Response report:

11. Develop a pamphlet that explains the goals of the ILP, and solicit feedback from ILP youth regarding the pamphlet by September 2011;
12. Consider the feasibility of having current or former ILP youth develop a video that explains the goals of the ILP by September 2011;
13. Contract with an individual, agency or collaboration to provide ILP coordination and services, beginning in March 2011;
14. Invoice other counties for providing ILP coordination and services to their youth, beginning in February 2011;
15. Refrain from providing ILP classes to group home youth for whom the group home staff is already providing classes/training on duplicative topics;
16. Ensure the awarded ILP provider is aware that the classes must be two hours in length, with consistent locations and times, and that adequate notice of the classes is provided, by September 2011;
17. Assist with creating pre- and post-class assessments, and post class evaluations, to be implemented by September 2011;
18. Relay suggestions for connecting Calaveras County Dependents and Wards with caring adults to the ILP coordinator, for consideration to include them in the employment component;
19. Continue to explore the feasibility of creating a Calaveras County foster youth peer mentoring program with the Calaveras Youth Mentoring Program;
20. Analyze the impact of facilitating TDM-like TILP planning meetings for Calaveras County foster youth.

Again, thank you for your thoughtful review and recommendations. We appreciate your hard work and dedication in helping us improve the Independent Living Program in Calaveras County, and in improving Calaveras County's Children's Service



PCACC and CRP MEETING

Thursday, September 17, 2009 11:00am-1:00pm

Calaveras Works, Black Oak Room, 509 E. Charles St, San Andreas, CA

MINUTES																									
Item 1	<p>Call to Order & Introductions. Robin Bunch called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m.</p> <p>Roll Call: (✓) Indicates Present</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td>Robin Bunch, PHN, Council Chairperson, Calaveras County Public Health</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td>Tina Marler, Council Vice Chairperson, Bikers Against Child Abuse</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td>Kathryn Eustis, Council Member, Calaveras Youth Mentoring</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td>Jennifer Goerlitz, Council Member, Calaveras 4H Program</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td>Mikey Habbestad, Council Member, Calaveras Works & Human Services</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td>Lisa Steffes, Council Member, Parent</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td>Tracy Young, Council Member, Parent, The Resource Connection</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Vacant, Alternate</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Vacant , Alternate</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Karen Pekarcik, Executive Director, First 5 Calaveras</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td>Robin Davis, Children's Services Coord. First 5 Calaveras/PCACC</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Others Present</td> <td>Nancy Tiffany, Karen Karam- CWHSA</td> </tr> </table>	✓	Robin Bunch, PHN, Council Chairperson, Calaveras County Public Health	✓	Tina Marler, Council Vice Chairperson, Bikers Against Child Abuse	✓	Kathryn Eustis, Council Member, Calaveras Youth Mentoring	✓	Jennifer Goerlitz, Council Member, Calaveras 4H Program	✓	Mikey Habbestad, Council Member, Calaveras Works & Human Services	✓	Lisa Steffes, Council Member, Parent	✓	Tracy Young, Council Member, Parent, The Resource Connection		Vacant, Alternate		Vacant , Alternate		Karen Pekarcik, Executive Director, First 5 Calaveras	✓	Robin Davis, Children's Services Coord. First 5 Calaveras/PCACC	Others Present	Nancy Tiffany, Karen Karam- CWHSA
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Others Present	Nancy Tiffany, Karen Karam- CWHSA																								
Item 2	<p>Public Comments/Announcements</p> <p>R. Davis shared information about the Chairs for Charity fundraiser and asked if PCAC would like to decorate a chair. The chair must be done 1/15/10 with a garden theme.</p> <p>J. Goerlitz shared information about a fundraiser for 4H- Concourse de Elegance at Ironstone Sept. 26.</p>																								

	R. Bunch informed the group that seasonal flu clinics will be starting soon.
Item 3	<p>Motion to Approve PCAC/CRP Agenda T. Young, second:K. Eustis Ayes: 7; Noes: 0; Abstain: 0; Recused : 0; Absent: 0</p>
Item 4	<p>Approval of PCACC Minutes: August 20, 2009 M. Habbestad, second: T. Young Ayes 7; Noes: 0; Abstain: 0; Recused : 0; Absent: 0</p>
Item 5	<p>Citizen Review Panel Planning M. Habbestad reviewed statistics showing Calaveras County, state, and federal government targets related to the recurrence of maltreatment in foster care, reunification, adoption, and placement stability. In April, Children’s Services will conduct a Peer Quality Case Review. They will examine exits to permanency after a child is placed in foster care, an area noted for needing the most improvement and proposed as a possible focus of CRP. A few possibilities were discussed. Assessing the ILP (Independent Living Program) which serves adolescent foster youth nearing transition age received the most interest. R. Davis will schedule a meeting with Teresa Dominguez, the ILP Coordinator to discuss. Council members will be invited and a review will be shared at the next meeting.</p>
Item 6	<p>Coordinator Report R. Davis provided a copy and briefed members on completed and upcoming activities. She asked members to share relevant links for the redesign of the web site. The Annual Report will be presented to the BOS on October 20.</p>
Item 7	<p>First 5 Advisory Committee - Home Visiting Program R. Davis provided copies of the proposed modifications to the existing Home Visiting Grant with the Resource Connection to expand services from six families to a minimum of fifty five. A motion was made to designate Child Abuse Prevention funds previously put out to the community in an RFP for this purpose. L. Steffes, second: M. Habbestad Ayes: 7; Noes: 0; Abstain: 0; Recused : 0; Absent: 0 - 2009-10 Calaveras County Final Budget Attestation R. Davis shared the budget that was approved in the 7/16/09 meeting. Reviewed and passed motion to submit the attestation to the County’s budget. T. Young, second: Lisa Steffes</p>

	Ayes: 7; Noes: 0; Abstain: 0; Recused: 0; Absent: 0
Item 8	ADJOURNMENT Motion to adjourn - R. Bunch, second: T. Marler The meeting was adjourned at 12:55pm
The next meeting will be October 15, 2009 at 11:00am – 1:00 pm. Black Oak Room at Cal Works, 509 E. St. Charles St, San Andreas, CA.	



Prevent Child Abuse Council Calaveras and Citizen Review Panel Meeting

Thursday, February 18, 2010 3:00am-5:00pm
San Andreas Library, San Andreas, CA

MINUTES

Item 1	Call to Order & Introductions. Tina Marler called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.	
	Roll Call: (✓) Indicates Present	
	✓	Tina Marler, Council Chairperson, Calaveras County Behavioral Health
	✓	Mikey Habbestad, Council Vice Chair, Calaveras Works & Human Services
	✓	Robin Bunch, PHN, Council Chairperson, Calaveras County Public Health
	✓	Jennifer Goerlitz, Council Member, Calaveras 4H Program
		Tracy Young, Council Member, Parent Rep/The Resource Connection
	✓	Teri Hall, Council Member, Calaveras County Probation Department
		Nancy Tiffany, Council Member, Community/Civic Organizations
	✓	Pat Ross, Alternate, Calaveras County Sheriff's Department
		Vacant, Alternate, Representative of Public & Private

	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>Schools</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Karen Pekarcik, Executive Director, First 5 Calaveras</td> </tr> <tr> <td>✓</td> <td>Robin Davis, Children’s Services Coordinator. First 5 Calaveras/PCACC</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Others Present</td> <td>Marcie Caywood, Tracy Urban, Susan Sheehan, Barbara Elben, Linda Jackson, Paulette Stelte, Teresa Dominguez, Phyllis Egan, Amy Hasselwander, Daniel McGee, Kate Storm</td> </tr> </table>		Schools		Karen Pekarcik, Executive Director, First 5 Calaveras	✓	Robin Davis, Children’s Services Coordinator. First 5 Calaveras/PCACC	Others Present	Marcie Caywood, Tracy Urban, Susan Sheehan, Barbara Elben, Linda Jackson, Paulette Stelte, Teresa Dominguez, Phyllis Egan, Amy Hasselwander, Daniel McGee, Kate Storm
	Schools								
	Karen Pekarcik, Executive Director, First 5 Calaveras								
✓	Robin Davis, Children’s Services Coordinator. First 5 Calaveras/PCACC								
Others Present	Marcie Caywood, Tracy Urban, Susan Sheehan, Barbara Elben, Linda Jackson, Paulette Stelte, Teresa Dominguez, Phyllis Egan, Amy Hasselwander, Daniel McGee, Kate Storm								
Item 2	<p>Public Comments/Announcements</p> <p>M. Habbestad shared information of a Parent Ed Night at the high schools focused on dangers of prescription medications. CHS 3/3/10, 6-7pm and BHHS 3/11/10, 6:30-7:30 pm.</p>								
Item 3	<p>Motion to Approve PCAC/CRP Agenda M. Habbestad, second: R. Bunch</p> <p>Ayes: 6; Noes: 0; Abstain: 0; Recused : 0; Absent: 2</p>								
Item 4	<p>Approval of PCACC Minutes: Jan. 21, 2010 J. Goerlitz, second: M. Habbestad</p> <p>Ayes 6; Noes: 0; Abstain: 0; Recused : 0; Absent: 2</p>								
Item 5	<p>Advisory Committee Updates</p> <p>a. Events – R. Davis provided an update of the children’s activities booth being prepared for Sierra Green Days at Ironstone March 20th from 10:00-2:00. Activities include nature collage, sensory tables, veggie starts and worm compost with partners- First 5, Master Gardeners, UC Extension, and The Resource Connection. T. Hall provided an update of the Children’s Fair booth plans – April 24th 10:00 – 2:00pm. Sierra Pacific Industries will donate 200 Douglas Fir tree starts. T. Marler shared that she will be getting a worm composting bin. Both events have a focus of connecting children to nature and offer a chance to talk to parents about resources including flyers for Parent Education workshops.</p> <p>b. R. Davis provided a handout of the ideas generated by the committee to plan Child Abuse Prevention Month which includes distributing blue</p>								

	<p>ribbon pins and bookmarks via grocery stores, agencies, and businesses. Small blue ribbon trees will be placed in agencies & businesses with an explanation of CAP month. Promotion of parent workshops, partners, and purpose will be on the PCACC website, ad in Lodestar, and press release. M. Habbestad will join R. Davis, R. Bunch and T, Marler on this committee. The council agreed to request to be on the BOS consent agenda for April 6th with a resolution to declare April as Child Abuse Prevention Month.</p>
Item 6	<p>Barbara Elben – Calaveras County Victim’s Witness Program</p> <p>B. Elben from the District Attorney’s office provided handouts and shared information regarding services to victims and witnesses of violent crime (including any type of crime). They can also help victims apply for victim’s compensation, give guidance and resources, and stay with parents during a child’s forensic interview.</p>
Item 7	<p>Adjourn PCACC Meeting</p> <p>Meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm. M. Habbestad, second: R. Bunch</p>
	<p>CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL MEETING</p>
Item 8	<p>Introductions</p>
Item 9	<p>Overview of Project/Confidentiality/Member Roster</p> <p>M. Habbestad provided an overview of the focus of the panel – to assess and make recommendations for services available for youth ages 15.5-21 that will age out of foster care in the county. R. Davis provided a member roster for everyone. Confidentiality forms were signed by new members.</p>
Item 10	<p>Teresa Dominguez – Calaveras Works and Humans Services Agency Independent Living Program (ILP)</p> <p>T. Dominguez, ILP Coordinator, provided handouts and an overview of the program services, curriculum, statistics, and Child Welfare Services regulations for ILP. The course enhances camaraderie for the teens while providing services and activities to prepare them to live independently. Topics include employment, STD prevention, budgeting, financial aid for college, nutrition, housing, car maintenance, and etiquette. T. Dominguez answered questions about the THP Plus program that provides 3 apartments in the county for foster teens, rent free. Due to State regulations, those who have graduated from high school but are not yet 18 are ineligible for the THP Plus. The panel discussed that recommendations can also be made to the state in the final report.</p>
Item 11	<p>Committees for Activities</p> <p>R. Bunch asked if there were any volunteers for the chair of the CRP. No one responded and she volunteered. M. Habbestad made a motion to</p>

	<p>nominate R. Bunch as chair and the group agreed.</p> <p>R. Davis provided a proposal of an assessment activity previously discussed with the PCACC and T. Dominguez. It would involve a day trip for approximately 15 teens and 5 adults for a Trust Building/Ropes course (www.oncourse.com) in Grass Valley. The goal of the activity is to build a trusting rapport amongst ILP foster teens, CRP members and Social Workers in preparation for intensive assessment activities such as group and/or individual interviews, surveys, etc. The group discussed the benefits and how the teens would be selected. Several felt giving seniors priority could be the best option (as opposed to behavior based only). Many were concerned about serving those who may need intervention the most. A suggestion was made to have a closer to home activity for those who can't go. A committee was formed to conduct further planning (A. Hasselwander (chair), D. McGee, L. Jackson, T. Dominguez, and R. Davis). R. Davis will coordinate the first meeting.</p> <p>The group felt another committee should visit the ILP classroom and develop questions for group and/or individual interviews or surveys. Volunteers for this committee were M. Caywood (chair), P. Ross, L. Jackson, and R. Davis. M. Caywood will schedule the first meeting.</p> <p>Other suggestions for activities included talking to teens that are not in foster care (as a control group).</p>
Item 12	<p>The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm</p> <p>The next PCACC meeting will be April 15, 2010 at 3:00-5:00 pm. Black Oak Room at Cal Works, 509 E. St. Charles St, San Andreas, CA.</p> <p>The next PCACC and CRP meeting will be June 17, 2010 at 3:30 – 5:00 pm. Sequoia Rm, Cal Works, 509 E. St. Charles St, San Andreas, CA.</p>

Calaveras County Citizen Review Panel
Ropes Activity Committee Meeting Minutes
March 11, 2010

Attendance: Robin Davis, Teresa Dominguez, Amy Hasselwander, Linda Jackson

1. Reviewed On Course, Inc. - group rules, 9:00am- 3:00pm, workshop description, releases, prices for teens and adults. Discussed potential dates in June after graduation.

Teresa will check with the facilities regarding participation and dates. Robin will then confirm available dates.

(Update: Date Confirmed: Tues June 15)

2. The group discussed how to select youth for the activity. The larger CRP group felt seniors should be selected and the adults attending would interview the teens attending,

<p>the future</p> <p>Observe ILP classes</p> <p>Observe ILP classes con't</p> <p>Next meeting</p>	<p>Classes, also would want the perspective of SW's, others??</p> <p>Good discussion regarding CRP and long-term goals; including developing plan for involving community, collaboration, resource familiarity, marketing-ensuring the community knows what CRP is and the importance of its role and outcomes. Also possible means of evaluating actions in the future and the ILP program itself. Research other community programs.</p> <p>Discussion regarding ways in which to evaluate ILP services and interventions. There is no process in place to really follow-up and evaluate the program once youth age out at 18. Pat suggested withholding youth's final payment in order to evaluate whether or not the 90-Day Transition Plan was effective, where gaps exist, etc.</p> <p>Who is going where on Monday, the 29th of March and is it possible to attend others.</p> <p>Attendance at future classes.</p> <p>Group agreed on April 7, 3-5 at the Frog Hollow room or Public Health conference room</p>	<p>Robin stated this grant cycle was three years so there is no pressure to get through our review within a few months, we have time to formulate a good plan in order to deliver accurate information and develop practical and important outcomes and suggestions.</p> <p>Marcie will try to find information on other counties' best ILP practices.</p> <p>Will continue to discuss the issue of evaluating the program process and principles further into the CRP process.</p> <p>So far: Confirmed for Robin and Pat attending Oakendell the 29th at 3:30 tentative Marcie attends.</p> <p>Confirmed Marcie and Carol at ROP the 29th at 9:00 am.</p> <p>Confirmed Linda will attend CWS class at 6:00 pm on the 29th.</p> <p>Marcie e-mailed Teresa requesting group attendance at other classes.</p>
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		<p>Pat will check that the meeting room at the county admin building is available, if not will let Marcie know and will schedule Public Health conference room.</p> <p>Meeting adjourned at 4:00</p>
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Meeting date: 4/7/2010

Time: 3-5

Carole Campbell,
Linda Jackson,
Marcie Caywood-Chair,
Pat Ross,
Robin Davis,
Teresa Dominguez

Topic	Discussion	Outcome
<p>Define Objectives and Purpose of our Focus Group</p>	<p>Group: Discussion regarding purpose, what questions are we attempting to answer relative to ILP trainings, etc. Discussed the importance of the distinction between mandated services and non-mandated services (extras). Is there a need to review day-to-day activities or focus on a broader picture of the program.</p> <p>Need to know the day-to-day efforts to identify areas of concern, such as staffing concerns, budgeting concerns, and clerical support.</p> <p>Pat Ross: Need to focus on Resources, funding.</p> <p>Carole: Transportation needs</p> <p>Linda: Suggested need to know state expectations.</p> <p>Robin D: Recommendations that are somewhat realistic</p> <p>Group discussed reviewing state expectations vs. County resources</p> <p>Round Table support group for ILP youth, discussion ensued regarding</p>	<p>CRP Purpose: Evaluate the system in Calaveras County through which foster youth, former foster youth, probation youth, and former probation youth between the ages of 15 ½ - 21 years transition to independent living.</p> <p>Objective for our focus group: Evaluate the ILP program processes related to delivery of services, youth needs, mandates, available resources, and staff to youth ratios.</p> <p>BY: 1. Observing ILP trainings</p>

<p>Group interviewed Teresa (SW, ILP coordinator)</p>	<p>process, mandates, place etc. Group was able to identify Goals and Objectives.</p>	<p>2. Targeted Interviewing: ILP Coordinator, A sample of ILP youth, DSS Director (Mary Sawicki), Other CPS social workers</p>
<p>Next Steps</p>	<p>Teresa: Resources are scarce, funding is limited, and staff to caseload ratio is 1:130</p>	<p>3. Compare Calaveras ILP staff to youth caseloads with other county programs. 4. Research funding processes.</p>
<p>Next meeting:</p>	<p>Does the state only pay stipend for Calaveras County youth? What about all the out of county youth being served?</p> <p>Will decide who is going to each of the trainings on the 26th. Teresa may need assistance for the morning session. If no one else can attend Marcie will go.</p> <p>Group needs to submit interview questions they want asked of Mary Sawicki.</p>	<p>Need for clerical support in the program. Teresa's and the group will review her time study to see where staff support could assist (ie: data entry, filing, assist at trainings)</p> <p>Outcome pending further discussion, possible action: Include in questions to Mary Sawicki (DSS Director)</p> <p>Group Plans to attend next ILP training held on April 26th, Monday.</p> <p>Marcie will interview Mary Sawicki group must submit their questions by</p>

		<p>Thursday April 29.</p> <p>Next meeting: May 10, 2010 3-5</p>
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Respectfully submitted by Marcie Jo Caywood,
Contributor: Robin Davis
Citizen's Review Panel
Focus Group Planning Committee

Meeting Minutes
April 9, 2010

1. Attendees: Linda Jackson, Susan Sheehan, Tracy Young, Daniel McGee, Robin Bunch
2. Defining a Focus Group: handouts provided on what makes up a focus group
3. Facilitators: group discussed needing the adult participants from Ropes Course activity as well as members of this group to help facilitate the groups. Also discussed having each facilitator participate on at least two groups. **Linda** to discuss with Ropes Committee about participating on interviews. **Robin B.** to meet with Robin D. to discuss a combined meeting to coordinate facilitators.
4. Participants
 - a. How many groups: 4
 - b. Population of each group: 6-8 participants in each group: one group from ROP, one group from Oaken dell, one group of other ILP participants, one group non-foster high school seniors for a total of 24-32 youth.
 - c. Recruitment: will need to work with Teresa to set up interviews with the ILP youth. **Daniel** to follow up with Zach at BHHS for non-foster youth.
5. Locations for group interviews: discussed doing them at the two group homes, at the S. A. library (**Susan to reserve conference room**) for the other ILP participants, and at the high school for the non-foster youth
6. Possible dates and times: the ILP groups would be after the Ropes Course activity on June 15th. The non-foster youth would need to be interviewed before the end of the school year – around the 3rd or 4th week in May.
7. Refreshments: **Robin** to find out budget amount and send to Tracy. **Tracy** to bring ideas to next meeting.
8. Thank you gift: **Robin** to find out budget and sent to Tracy. **Tracy** to bring ideas to next meeting.
9. Next meeting: April 26th at 3:30pm at the Public Health Annex.

Calaveras County Citizen Review Panel
Ropes Activity Committee Meeting Minutes
April 14, 2010

Attendance: Robin Davis, Linda Jackson, Amy Hassel wander, Teresa Dominguez

1. A date for the On Course Ropes was confirmed- Tues June 15. Teresa has confirmed that we will have 17 youth from the ILP and possibly 9 adults. Linda will attend the ILP Etiquette dinner on 6/27.

2. Interviews following the trip (surveys, group, individual)

The group decided it would be best to conduct the focus groups with the ILP youth outside of the BBQ, where they will want to relax. They should be done just after the Ropes course.

Teresa will discuss potential dates with ROP and Oaken dell. It was agreed to do these groups first and focus on the control youth group after June.

3. Logistics

R. Davis can drive CRP members. ROP will probably have 2 vans. Cal Works will have 1 or 2 vans. Robin will check on lunches at Subway or Togos.

4. Budget

\$3116 total available this fiscal year (to June 30, 10)

- Course Fees
- Food for the course day
- Food for focus groups (not BBQ)
- Food June Meeting (\$75)
- Mileage

6. Robin will email the group with dates for the next meeting.

San Mateo County



Citizen Review Panel

CRP's mission is to assess the child welfare system in the county and make data-driven recommendations for continuous improvement that will help to ensure the safety and well-being of San Mateo County children and their families.

**Annual Report & Recommendations
(2009/2010 Program Year)**

County: San Mateo County

Contact Person for this Report:

Name: Patricia Brown
Phone: 650-367-0963
Email: brownpcrc@gmail.com

Date Submitted to OCAP: November 10, 2010

Date & Person Submitted to at the local County Agency:
Beverly Beasley Johnson, Director, Human Services Agency
Deborah Torres, Director, Children Welfare Services

Please report on the Citizen Review Panel's activities per the items below and submit your response to CDSS, Office of Child Abuse Prevention via the Strategies Consultant no later than November 15, 2010.

- 1. County Profile** (OCAP will provide current data from current annual report)
 - General Demographics
 - Ethnic make-up of county
 - Household income

2. Panel Activities

A. Panel structure and development

I. Membership (Work plan Goal #1)

Have there been any changes in membership or panel composition during the reporting period?

Please see table below which reflects membership changes during 2009-10.

Membership as of 7/09	Affiliation	Membership as of 10/10	Affiliation
Jan Baumel	Licensed Education	Jan Baumel	Licensed Education

	Psychologist, Retired educator		Psychologist, Retired Educator
		Paul Chang	Program Manager, Daly City Partnership
David Cherniss	SM County Superior Court Juvenile Mediation Program	David Cherniss	SM County Court – Juvenile Mediation Program
Eddie Estrada	Manager, Differential Response, Youth and Family Enrichment Services	Eddie Estrada	Manager, Differential Response, Youth and Family Enrichment Services
		Ruth Laya	Probation Services Manager, San Mateo County Probation
Ben Loewy	Administrator, SM County Office of Education	Ben Loewy	Administrator, SM County Office of Education
Bonnie Miller	Private Defender's Panel	Bonnie Miller	Private Defender's Panel
Bernie Plotnikoff	Retired Child Abuse Prevention Professional	Bernie Plotnikoff	Retired Child Abuse Prevention Professional
Caitie O'Shea	Retired Special Education Administrator		
Jamila Pounds	Edgewood Kinship Center	Jamila Pounds	Edgewood Kinship Center
John Ragosta	Manager, Court Appointed Special Advocates	John Ragosta	Manager, Court Appointed Special Advocates
Ginny Stewart	Licensed Clinical Social Worker	Ginny Stewart	Licensed Clinical Social Worker
Linda Symons	San Mateo County Juvenile Probation		
Gary Beasley	CWS Liaison, Interim Director, Child Welfare Services	Deborah Torres	Director, Child Welfare Services, CWS Liaison
Total Members: 11		Total Members: 11	

Please discuss any activities the panel has engaged in specific to the recruitment of panel members to reflect community demographics and support creating or maintaining a diverse panel.

On an annual basis, SMCRP reviews membership and the criteria for CRP representation. The goal is for CRP members to represent a broad array of backgrounds and perspectives. As a need for particular background is identified, members brainstorm ways to reach out to those areas. Parents, youth and mental health professionals continue to be priority areas.

Potential members receive a copy of the Operational Guidelines of SMCRP and are referred to the CRP website (www.smcrp.org). Before submitting an application for membership, potential Panel members are invited to attend a regular CRP meeting. They sign a Confidentiality Agreement at the beginning of that meeting. Following the visit, if there is continuing interest, the potential member completes an application form and submits it, along with a relevant resume. New members are elected by majority vote of the existing membership.

II. Panel Training (Work plan goal #2)

Please elaborate on the on-going orientation trainings of new CRP members.

Incoming members of the San Mateo Citizen Review Panel are provided with an orientation binder when they meet with the Chair of the Panel in an orientation session. New members are encouraged to ask for clarification or additional information if they do not understand a specific point. One key role of the facilitator is to ensure that all members of the Panel are able to participate effectively.

In addition, please describe any training activities the CRP has engaged in this past year as a means of on-going panel development.

SMCRP members receive information and updates about the child welfare system from the Child Welfare Services Director at each regular meeting. Articles and reports are provided to members as appropriate and discussed as part of the meeting agenda. SMCRP typically requests technical assistance from Louanne Shahandeh each year.

In December 2009, Panel member Eddie Estrada, who is the Manager of the Differential Response Contract for all parts of the county served by the Youth and Family Enrichment contract with CWS, provided the Panel with information about the program. (The Daly City Collaborative serves parts of north San Mateo County.)

- SM County is one of 11 pilot counties for Differential Response as a component of its System Improvement Plan.
- It is implemented through a partnership between Human Services Agency, Youth and Family Enrichment Services, Edgewood Center for Children and Families and the Daly City Collaborative.
- These agencies partner with community based agencies to provide services and referrals for “lower risk” hotline calls.
- Implementation started in 2005 with pilot projects – other refinements have led to regional contracts for service, focus on children 0-5 and substantiated cases

for Path II and service for all ages for Path I referrals. Path III is a traditional child welfare response.

- Referrals to DR come only from CWS.
- YFES and Daly City Collaborative, through their contracts with Child Welfare Services, are required to use evidence-based practices in working with families.
- Families served by DR are assessed using the FAST tool that assesses 8 domains.

Currently, 97% of hotline referrals are referred to DR, either Path I or Path II. In December, there were 220 open DR cases.

CRP members talked with Louanne Shahandeh about TA needs for 2010 at the November 2009 CRP meeting. Louanne and CRP members talked about possible technical assistance needs and agreed on the following requests:

1. CRP asked for information about how TDM Advisory Committees may have been used to oversee implementation, evaluation and quality control (instead of focusing on the design and implementation of new programs.)
2. Louanne was also asked to provide CRP with information about the Ventura program, "Parents with Purpose", with particular interest relating to the impetus for the formation of this program and how it has been set up.

SMCRP also receives and discusses quarterly AB 636 Reports on the implementation of the System Improvement Program.

III. Panel self-evaluation activities (Work plan Goal #6)

Has the panel undertaken any activities to help it assess its own performance during the reporting period? If so briefly describe these activities and the findings. If not, please describe when and how the panel will assess its performance.

For a number of years, SMCRP has conducted an annual self-review, using a locally developed evaluation form. This process takes place in August and September as the annual report is being developed. The results of this year's self assessment follow:

San Mateo County Citizen Review Panel

Annual Panel Self-Evaluation – Compiled Responses

(9 of 11 members responded)

September 2010

Scale = 1 (disagree) - 5 (agree)

1. CRP members take their role seriously and conscientiously prepare for each meeting.

Averaged responses: **4.56**
2009 average: 4.2

- | | |
|--|--|
| 2. CRP members place a high priority on regular meeting attendance. | Averaged responses: 4.44
2009 average: 4.1 |
| 3. CRP is working hard to address priority issues relating to the safety and welfare of children involved with the child welfare system in San Mateo County. | Averaged responses: 4.67
2009 average: 4.7 |
| 4. CRP members feel informed enough to participate in discussion of agenda items. | Averaged responses: 4.11
2009 average: 4.8 |
| 5. CRP receives the technical assistance support it needs to do its job well. | Averaged responses: 4.33
2009 average: 3.9 |
| 6. CRP receives the information it needs from the Human Services Agency in an understandable format. | Averaged responses: 4.00
2009 average: 3.4 |
| 7. CRP receives the facilitation support it needs to do its work in an efficient and inclusive manner. | Averaged responses: 4.89
2009 average: 4.8 |
| 8. New CRP members feel their orientation prepares them to participate in the work of CRP. | Averaged responses: 4.00
(4 responses – not asked in 2009) |
| 9. CRP members are satisfied with the contribution they are making to improving the safety and well-being of children in this community. | Averaged responses: 3.89
2009 average: 3.0 |

Comments

I am unable to tell if we actually made an impact on direct service. Paper work is only paper work.

#5 and #7 – Pat Brown’s support is tops. CWS has improved (about 3.5 on scale of 5). Liaison is a 4. CWS participation has improved considerably and is now engaged in requesting CRP support with advocacy.

It seems with every year there is an improvement on the timeliness of responses from CWS, clearer understanding of the impact of CRP’s recommendations, and clarity of our role as advisors and partners with CWS. This year has been no different. In addition, having only two recommendations to monitor throughout the year seemed to help CRP focus and get more in depth with the work that it was doing. As always, Pat’s work as the facilitator, both during the meetings and in between, is crucial to our functioning.

Pat, thank you for all your energy and support of the panel and for facilitating the work. I learned a great deal by being on the panel and thank you for your gentle guidance. I

appreciated getting to know some of the members and have a greater understanding of the work they do.

When appropriate, the Panel takes steps to address areas of performance identified as needing improvement.

3. CRP objectives (Work plan Goals #3 & 5)

For **each objective identified** in your work plan please report on the following:
Any demographics related to the CRP objective(s).

Description of the review activities and any technical assistance provided (example = case review, focus group, data review, State (Strategies) CRP consultant) to support your review work.

SMCRP Recommendations for 2009-10

1. Children and Family Services should develop a Team Decision Making (TDM) Advisory Committee to assess whether the current model is working as intended, to review and analyze evaluation data for both the "process" and the "outcomes" of TDM meetings and to make recommendations for improvements based on that data.

Monitoring process: CRP received 2 reports from the TDM Advisory Committee as it was being established and held its first meeting. Three members of CRP sit on the TDM Advisory Committee.

Demographics: During the period between October 2009-September 2010, 343 TDMs were held and 56 Transitional Conferences were convened. (Transitional Conferences are facilitated meetings to prepare transition plans for youth who will be aging out of the child welfare or probation system.) An average of 5 transitional conferences were held every month during this period. Note: At the beginning and the end of the school, the number of transitional conferences increases significantly as CWS conducts initial and final conferences for high school seniors.

In regard to participants, the numbers average between 5 and 10 at any given TDM; with the larger number related to the number of issues facing the family.

The majority of TDMs:

- were for imminent risk of removal
- resulted in voluntary family maintenance services to families
- were requested from Emergency Response Units, with the greatest percentage from the Northern region of the County, followed by the Southern region

- resulted in children returning or remaining with the parent(s), with significantly smaller numbers placed with either relatives or non-relatives/friends or in foster homes or group homes
- were held in Agency offices

2. Children and Family Services should support families in the child welfare system by providing the following:

- (a) information and education about how the system works,**
- (b) peer support from other parents who have experience with the system**
- (c) relevant resources to enable families to be full and successful participants in the reunification process.**

Monitoring process: CRP Reviewed information and educational materials and processes, asked for and received updates on the development of a "parent as partner" program, reviewed written resources available to families and input from families re. understanding of and ability to participate in the child welfare system

Demographics: Six parenting sessions were provided in the reporting period: Two sessions from September 1, 2009 to December 1, 2009; two sessions from January 19, 2010 to April 27, 2010; and two sessions that started August 17, 2010 and end November 23, 2010.

Three sessions were offered in Spanish and three in English.

Participation and completion rates:

September 1, 2009 to December 1, 2009: 18 adult participants and 16 children completed the session.

January 19, 2010 to April 27, 2010: 51 adult participants registered, 38 completed the session; 52 children registered and 38 completed the session.

August 17, 2010 to November 23, 2010: 52 adult participants registered, 29 due to complete session; 47 children registered with 26 due to complete session.

San Mateo County Human Services Agency
CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES (CWS)

July 2010

Response to

Citizens Review Panel (CRP)

Recommendations for 2009-2010

Recommendation #1 *CWS should develop a Team Decision Making (TDM) Advisory Committee to assess whether the current model is working as intended, to review and analyze evaluation data for both the 'process' and 'outcomes' of TDM meetings and to make recommendations for improvement based on that data.*

In response to the recommendation of the Citizens Review Panel to develop a TDM advisory committee, CWS (Children & Family Services) invited individuals from community based organizations, the legal and faith-based communities, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs), and Probation as well as service providers, social workers, social work supervisors, foster parents and former foster children to attend an initial planning meeting to create the TDM Advisory Board. In attendance were nineteen individuals representing the Puente Resource Center, Fair Oaks and Daly City Community Centers, Coastside Hope, Edgewood Center for Children and Families, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS), CASAs, Private Defenders Program, Juvenile Mediation and Court Investigations, Children and Family Services and Probation.

The purpose of the TDM Advisory Board is to acknowledge successes, identify and examine challenges, and generate ideas to address challenges. At the planning meeting, the history of TDMs was reviewed, as were current TDM activities. Approximately 20 people will participate in quarterly meetings, with subsequent meetings scheduled on July 29, 2010 and October 28, 2010, to continue to formalize the Board's structure and to begin its work.

CWS will continue to recruit for the currently unrepresented groups of: foster parents, parents, former foster youth, and additional community based organizations.

TDM Data Collection Efforts

CWS has also responded to CRP's recommendation to develop data reports in order to analyze TDM processes and outcomes, with the goal of ensuring data driven decision making regarding the Agency's TDM program.

CWS has made progress in the area of data collection. At one point *Efforts to Outcome* (ETO) was the official State of California data collection tool before the decision was made to update CWS/CMS with TDM information as well. Maintaining two databases posed a challenge, especially when the data between the two did not match, which often occurred. Currently, TDM staff keeps CWS/CMS up-to-date and it is now considered the main data source. CWS currently uses two reports developed by the Agency's Business Systems Group (BSG) to monitor how many TDMS were conducted and when. The first report shows when TDMS occur, and the second report shows the list of placement moves and if a TDM was held or not. CWS and BSG staff continue to refine the two reports to ensure accuracy and provide the information needed to monitor the TDM process and outcomes.

A TDM log, in the form of an Excel spreadsheet, has also been developed and is being used with some success to measure outcomes. The log is maintained by a program staff person, who enters information on TDM referrals received, the reason for the TDM, the end result of the referral (TDM occurs, TDM is scheduled but is subsequently canceled, etc.), the placement recommendation, and the referring social worker and social work supervisor. The log is a record of all TDM referrals and documents the efforts made when a TDM referral does not result in a TDM occurrence. The drawback of the log is that, although it contains data related to all TDM referrals, it does not give information on referrals that should have been, but were not, made. The log also includes information on TDMS for Probation youth and emancipation conferences. If a Family Group Decision Making model is implemented, the log can be expanded to track those meetings as well.

The number of TDMS conducted appears on a monthly CWS dashboard report which is reviewed by the Management Team. Currently, two of the TDM facilitators have been temporarily reassigned to assist with a recent upsurge in hot line referral, which has resulted in fewer resources and less time to collect and analyze data.

Recommendation #2A *CWS should support families in the child welfare system by providing information and education about how the system works.*

Parent Orientation: Program Overview

San Mateo County's newly developed parent orientation, Engaging Birth Families as Authentic Partners, will provide birth families with information and access to resources that they need to help them become successful parents and strong self advocates. The parent orientation, based on a Santa Clara County model, facilitates conversations between birth families, youth, resource families, tribal members, community members, service providers, and staff and partners from other agencies and organizations that serve children, youth and families. The program orients parents to the Dependency Court process, familiarizes participants with the Dependency Court's terminology and procedures, and fosters open dialogue between parents and CWS social workers in a safe environment. In so doing, the program empowers parents to be more participative and aware during their dependency proceedings, and has the additional benefit of mitigating the often unrecognized impact of disproportionality at a key decision point in a family's case.

The parent orientation is scheduled to be piloted in the late summer or early fall of 2010. Parents will be referred by an emergency response worker who will encourage them to attend. In addition, an invitation letter will be sent in multiple languages to the family by the program coordinator, who will track families through detention hearing requests. Formal documentation of participation in this program will be included as a recommendation on the detention report and in the jurisdiction/disposition report as a 'service in process' or 'service completed'. To provide further support to the families, a handbook will be supplied which includes a guide to the juvenile court system and information about who to contact for county and community resources.

Program Structure

Parent Orientation consists of two sessions, offered during both morning and evening hours to accommodate parent schedules. Program components are:

- ***Overview of the Child Welfare Program (1 hour, 30 minutes)***
In this session, parents will be provided with an overview of CWS, contact information, and descriptions of the agency structure and the dependency process, with time set aside for parents to debrief about their child welfare-related experiences.

- ***Working with Your Social Worker and the Court (1hour, 30 minutes)***
This session is facilitated by both a social work supervisor and a parent attorney. The supervisor will review the role of the social worker, dispel myths, identify common mistakes, and talk about visitation issues, what success/progress looks like, and the realities of involvement with the child welfare system. The attorney will discuss appropriate courtroom demeanor, how to work with an attorney, types of hearings, and will explain child/parent rights, ICWA, and other placement issues.

- ***Resources Available to Help Your Family (1 hour)***
Resource providers will be invited to this session to explain their roles and how they can work with and support families. Referrals for services may be provided at this time. Resources will include foster parents, visitation center staff, child support staff, and parent advocates who are former child welfare clients. Half of the session will be conducted as a panel discussion, with the second portion being a meet-and-greet with the resource providers so that parents will be able to familiarize themselves with the resources that are available to them.

Program Outcomes

- Parents will be familiar with and understand the expectations of the Court and the child welfare system.
- Parents' levels of engagement in the process will be increased.
- Disproportionality and disparity in the child welfare system will be reduced.

Recommendation #2B *CWS should support families in the child welfare system by providing peer support from other parents who have had experience with the system.*

Because funding has increasingly become an issue, CWS was required to identify creative ways to provide peer support to families as they navigate through the child welfare and Dependency Court systems. As a result, CWS has requested peer positions, to be funded with economic stimulus dollars through the SMCWORKS (San Mateo County WORKs) program.

Peer Parent Partner Project (3 positions)

This project will provide peer mentors to help birth parents feel more comfortable when navigating multiple complex systems. Under Agency supervision, Peer Parent Partners will accompany birth parents to Court hearings, parent/teacher conferences, medical appointments, and Team Decision Making meetings, assist them in completing paperwork, remind them about appointments, teach them to use public transportation, and perform other basic, non-complex tasks as required.

Parent Advocate (1 position)

The Parent Advocate will assist facilitators in coordination of the Strengthening Families Parent Education Program and act as an advocate for birth parents participating in the program. The Parent Advocate will schedule appointments, assist facilitators in setting up facilities and preparing for training sessions, track attendance, assist in conducting program evaluation, and perform other related duties as assigned.

Applicants will continue to be interviewed until these positions are filled. Because the stimulus funding is only available until September 30, 2010, unless extended, this is not a permanent solution. CWS continues to explore ways to provide this valuable service to our families, including the possibility of using volunteer peer parents.

Recommendation #2c *CWS should support families in the child welfare system by providing relevant resources to enable families to be full and successful participants in the reunification process.*

Even in the current climate of economic uncertainty, CWS is fully committed to providing the widest possible array of services to families to help them achieve successful reunification. The services a family receives are determined by the family's issues and barriers, and whenever possible families are carefully matched with community based, accessible, and culturally appropriate services. Multiple contracts exist to fill the gap between service needs and service availability.

Examples of Services

- *Parenting classes* – CWS' traditional model of parenting classes has been replaced with an evidence-based curriculum.
- *Counseling services* – Individual and family counseling, and mental health assessment and treatment are provided for family members experiencing mental health issues.
- *Transportation* – A Central Support unit provides transportation to appointments, parenting classes, court hearings, etc.
- *Treatment services* – In addition to mental health treatment services, substance abuse testing and treatment and Domestic Violence treatment programs are provided.
- *Translation* – Translation services are provided in multiple languages.
- *Child Watch* – Child watch is provided to enable parents to attend meetings and appointments, and provides respite for birth and foster parents.
- *Family Finding* – Efforts will soon be underway to intensify the notification process to relatives in order to garner their support for reunifying families, as well as to provide kin placement arrangements if needed.
- *Parent Partners* – These positions were created to provide parents with emotional support and the supportive services of former CWS birth parents who have experienced successful reunification.
- *Social Security assistance* – This service is intended to help children apply for and receive income to which they are entitled.
- *Educational assistance* – Educational Liaisons perform a myriad of education-related tasks to assist children and families.

- *Supervised visitation* – Because of funding cuts, a supervised visitation contract will be replaced by Family Care Workers who are being newly trained to provide these services, using evidence-based, best practice models.
- *Structured Decision Making* – CWS has moved to this evidence-based assessment tool to assist social workers in making good decisions for families, and to provide direction in service planning and provision.
- *Fatherhood Collaborative* – This collaborative came under the HSA umbrella in December 2009. The Collaborative’s supportive services help strengthen the bond between fathers and their children.
- *Housing Vouchers* – HSA and San Mateo County Children & Family Services has housing vouchers that were awarded to the agency from HUD to assist homeless and un-housed families with Section 8 certificates who are in the process of family reunification.

The following table contains the “Findings” of San Mateo CRP in relation to the status of the 09-10 recommendations to Child Welfare Services.

Recommendation	CRP Findings
<p>1. Children and Family Services should develop a Team Decision Making (TDM) Advisory Committee to assess whether the current model is working as intended, to review and analyze evaluation data for both the "process" and the "outcomes" of TDM meetings and to make recommendations for improvements based on that data.</p>	<p>Approach to monitoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reports from the TDM Advisory Committee • reports from TDM Supervisor • reports from CRP members serving on the TDM Advisory Committee <p><u>Findings:</u> <i>The TDM Advisory Committee has been appointed and has begun to address its work of assessing the current TDM model. Three CRP members serve on the Advisory Committee and provide a direct link between the two groups. The membership of the TDM Advisory Committee is the result of broad outreach and recruiting by CWS. The process of assessing TDM implementation will be ongoing.</i></p>
<p>2. Children and Family Services should support families in the child welfare</p>	<p>Approach to monitoring: Review of information and education materials and processes, updates on development of a "parent as</p>

<p>system by providing the following:</p> <p>(a) information and education about how the system works,</p> <p>(b) peer support from other parents who have experience with the system</p> <p>(c) relevant resources to enable families to be full and successful participants in the reunification process.</p>	<p>partner" program, review of resources available to families, input from families re. their understanding of and ability to participate in the child welfare system</p> <p><u>Findings:</u></p> <p>(a) <i>CWS has made efforts to update and improve informational materials. However, outdated information and educational materials are still being used with families, even though newer material is available from other sources and websites, such as the Administrative Office of the Courts website. On the same website, old material is still posted - www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/family/juv/depcourt/htm</i></p> <p>(b) <i>CWS implemented a small Parent Peer Support Program using federal stimulus funds – however, the program did not have enough time to have much impact and it ends September 30, 2010. CWS is supportive of the family peer support concept and may explore the development of a volunteer-staffed program using parents who have completed the Strengthening Families Parent Education series.</i></p> <p>(c) <i>CWS currently provides an array of family support services listed in the written response to CRP's recommendations. CRP has not reviewed information relating to the use and effectiveness of these services.</i></p>
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• **Formal Recommendations for 2010-11, based on findings (for County and State)**

1. CWS should make sure that the written information about the child welfare system made available to family members is updated regularly as to content and accessibility (language, format, reading level and terminology) and is widely disseminated.

Monitoring:

- CRP will talk with CWS staff member designated to receive updated information from the Administrative Office of the Courts, Department of Social Services and other sources to identify the process currently in place to keep materials current.
- CRP will examine current approaches to disseminating educational/informational materials to families.

- CRP will explore the possibility of using an intern to inventory existing materials and places where they are made available to families.
- CRP will talk with Emergency Response and Intake Social Workers about how they provide information/educational material to families.

2. CWS should monitor how families are accessing and using support services and should analyze the impact of the programs on family reunification rates.

Monitoring

- CRP will request information from CWS about how support programs and services are being evaluated for utilization and effectiveness, through the AB 636 report or other processes.
- CRP will identify specific services and invite providers to present information to SMCRP about how those services are being assessed for impact.
- CRP will use a consistent approach to gathering this information so a final report can be compiled.

3. CWS should continue to support the Team Decision Making (TDM) Advisory Committee and ensure that it monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of team decision making in relation to the stated outcomes of the program.

Monitoring

- CRP will schedule regular updates from SMCRP members who serve on TDM Advisory Committee.
 - CRP will request copies of any written reports provided by the TDM Advisory Committee to CWS.
- **Follow-up on the prior years annual report recommendations, including any County and State responses to the recommendations**

Summary of status of past SMCRP recommendations:

1. Institute **Team Decision Making**: accepted and implemented
 2. Address factors that contribute to **re-entry** rates: accepted and in process of implementation
 3. Implement effective **parent education** program: accepted and in process of implementation
 4. Improve efforts to **help families understand the child welfare system**: in progress
- ♦ **Discuss how the CRP recommendations will be disseminated to county, state officials as well as the public and how the CRP will handle any comments made.**

SMCRP will provide the Director of the San Mateo County Human Services Agency (HSA) and the Director of Child Welfare Services (CWS), a division within HSA, with a complete copy of the Annual Report and Recommendations at the time the report is submitted to the State Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP). The report will also be posted on the SMCRP website and presented to the local Child Abuse Prevention Committee that is known as the Children's Collaborative Action Team (CCAT). In addition, excerpts from the report will be used in outreach presentation to CWS staff, the Foster Parents Association and other groups in San Mateo County.

- ♦ **Future Directions –Briefly discuss the activities that the panel expects to undertake during the 2010/2011 program year- with an emphasis on July-Sept 2010 activities. (Please attach an updated work plan for next year)**

SMCRP will continue to meet monthly to monitor its recommendations and the delivery of child welfare services in San Mateo County. Time in each meeting will be allocated to (1) reports and presentations relevant to the Panel's stated interests and (2) an opportunity for new issues/concerns to be identified and explored. SMCRP, recognizing the continuing fiscal constraints that child welfare organizations are experiencing, will continue to look for ways to promote and support productive collaboration that leverages resources to achieve shared goals.

4. Public in-put (Work plan Goal # 4)

Briefly describe any public input that the panel obtained during the reporting period and how this input was taken into consideration when making your final recommendations for this annual report.

SMCRP did not receive direct public input during this reporting period.

The panel plans to take the following approach to seeking public input after this annual report's recommendations are developed and published:

- Presentation to Children's Collaborative Action Team – Jamila Pounds, SMCRP Chair, will present the Annual Report and Recommendations early in 2011.
- SMCRP members will conduct outreach presentations during 2011 to familiarize San Mateo County Social Workers with the work of the panel and its current recommendations. A PowerPoint presentation has been developed.

5. Attachments

Please attach the following documents to this report:

- ❖ Updated roster of Citizen Review Panel Members, including their affiliations
- ❖ Minutes of the panel's meetings for the July 1, 2010 to September 30, 2010 quarter. If the panel utilizes committees, please attach the minutes, if any, of these committees
- ❖ Updated Scope of Work for the coming year's panel activities 2010/2011

❖ Please submit a statement of the panel's expenditures for the 2009/2010 program year.

Please email this report to **OCAP by November 15, 2010**, including the name, email address and phone number of the person who can be contacted should there be questions regarding this report.

SMCRP Roster and Terms as of October 2010

In September 2006, SMCRP adopted new guidelines that specified a two-term (3 years each term) limit on membership. At the end of the first term, members are eligible for re-election to a second term before they must rotate off of the panel.

The following table reflects the status of current CRP members.

Name	Affiliation	Term
Baumel, Jan	Licensed Educational Psychologist and Retired Special Educator	First term – 9/06-9/09 Second – 9/09-9/12
Chang, Paul	Program Manager, Daly City Partnership	First term – 8/10-9/13
Cherniss, David	Juvenile Mediation Program	First term – 9/08-9/11
Estrada, Eddie	Manager, Differential Response	First term – 2/09-9/12
Laya, Ruth	Probation Services Manager	First term – 8/10-9/13
Loewy, Ben	Administrator, SM County Office of Education	First term – 9/06-9/09 Second – 9/09-9/12
Miller, Bonnie	Private Defenders Office	First term – 9/07-9/10
Plotnikoff, Bernie	Community member	First term – 9/06-9/09 Second – 9/09-9/12
Pounds, Jamila	Edgewood Center	First term – 9/06-9/09 Second – 9/09-9/12
Ragosta, John	Administrator, Advocates for Children	First term – 8/09-9/12
Stewart, Ginny	Licensed Clinical Social Worker	First Term – 9/08-9/11

San Mateo County



CRP's mission is to assess the child welfare system in the county and make data-driven recommendations for continuous improvement that will help to ensure the safety and well-being of San Mateo County children and their families.

Notes from Meeting

July 19, 2010

400 Harbor Boulevard, Bldg. B, Belmont CA 94002

11:30 -1:30 PM

Present: Baumel, Cherninss, Estrada, Loewy, O'Shea, Plotnikoff, Pounds, Ragosta, Stewart, Symons

Potential members: Paul Chang, Daly City Partnership; Melissa Viscarra, emancipated Foster Child; Ruth Laya, Probation

Others: Pat Brown (facilitator) Deborah Torres, Amabell Baxley (Children and Family Services)

The meeting started at 11:35 with introductions and welcome to visiting community members. The following items were added to the agenda:

- Outreach announcement – Jamila
- Call to Action – Debbie
- Schedule for internal case review July 30 - Debbie

Follow-up from last meeting

- a) Review notes from last meeting – changes/corrections – three Panel members had spelling and grammar corrections to the minutes
- b) Jamila has contacted Shauna Mullins of the Foster Parents Association to arrange an Outreach presentation in September or October. Jamila will confirm the date with CRP. One additional slide has been added to the presentation. A panel member suggested the PowerPoint might be uploaded to the SMCRP website. Pat thanked David for working through a problem with website access. The problem has been resolved.

Update Confidentiality agreements

Pat explained that it was time for members to renew their Confidentiality Agreements. She briefly described the purpose of the agreements and noted there had been no change since the agreement was revised in February 2008. Guests also submitted their signed copies of the agreements.

Update from Children and Family Services – Deborah Torres, Director of Child Welfare

- Response to current CRP Recommendations
A complete copy of the Responses is attached. Debbie went over the responses with the Panel and answered a number of questions:
 - The TDM Advisory Committee is being assembled and has two meetings scheduled: July 29 and October 28. She will provide CRP with an update on the Advisory Committee membership as spaces are filled.
 - The question of evaluation of the impact of TDM is still to be addressed and is of interest.
 - CWS may be looking at family conferencing, as suggested by CRP, as an extension of collaborative planning not necessarily associated with placement.
 - Probation noted that TDMs have been used in situations where there is a risk of loss of placement for probation and dual issue youth (dependency and delinquency) courtesy of CWS. TDMs have also been helpful assisting senior youth to plan for independence.
 - After hearing about the stimulus funded positions for Parents as Partners, CRP members asked about the possibility of using community based organizations (such as Parents Anonymous) to provide ongoing parent support. This option has been explored in the past, but there is no local chapter of PA. Debbie offered to check with other child welfare directors about this resource.
 - There was a lot of interest in the 40 additional Section 8 housing vouchers that have been made available to child welfare families, 20 for emancipated youth and 20 for families. The question of whether one emancipated youth with a voucher could share quarters with other youth was asked. Debbie will look into the response.

Debbie noted that the CWS Dashboard may provide regular, specific information to CRP and is prepared monthly by CWS.

Panel members thanked Debbie for the thorough response and listing of support services available to families.

A copy of the complete County Response is attached to these notes.

- CWS Org Chart
Debbie distributed a current “org chart” for CWS with the disclaimer that the structure may be modified further if needed.
- Call to Action
The Child Welfare Directors Association is sponsoring a postcard writing campaign directed at the governor and asking that child welfare and foster care services be fully funded in the budget. Debbie will forward an electronic version

of the postcard and she asked that CRP members complete the cards and send them to CWS by July 26 and urge family and friends to participate in the campaign. Key points to be cited are the need for maintaining Cal Works benefits, especially help with child care costs and funding for kinship, child welfare staffing and support programs for families.

- Internal Case Review – July 30
Debbie asked for clarification about the CRP representative to participate in the Internal Case Review Process. Ginny Stewart is currently identified as an interested CRP member and she will attend the July 30th session. In the future, Jamila and John expressed interest in participating. Debbie will check with her staff to see if more than one representative can be accommodated at each session.

Recommendation monitoring: Update on parent education program and materials
Annabelle Baxley presented an update on the Strengthening Families Parent Education program offered by CWS to Child Welfare Families and other interested families. Court ordered participation is given top priority. Annabelle has managed one full 15 week session of classes, one set in English and one in Spanish. The average size of these classes is 25-30, with 10-12 children/youth in attendance at each class. Efforts have been made to link more closely with workers and support staff involved with these families, so what they learn in the classes can be supported and reinforced. There is an arrangement for adult family members who complete the course to receive college credit from Cañada College as an incentive for continuing educational efforts. Annabelle provided a summary of the content of each of the classes. CRP members had the following comments:

- Panel members were pleased with the information provided and they also expressed interest in the materials used by CWS to educate families about the child welfare system
- It would be good to have classes held in North County – Paul is willing to help find a location
- Transportation is always a concern – even though help is offered to families that are ordered to participate by the Court, more help may be needed.
- More coordination of all of the parent education programs available in the County would be beneficial. Even though CWS program serves many families, they might be able to refer families to specialized or event advanced parenting and parent support groups.
- There is a need to evaluate the impact of these classes – Annabelle has started to check on internal data, but an outcome evaluation design has not yet been developed. CWS has gotten feedback from families that the current program evaluation materials are difficult to complete because of their length.

Discussion of CRP Membership – looking at 2010-11

Bonnie Miller is up for re-election to a second term and would like to continue.
Caitie O'Shea declines to stand for re-election because of scheduling challenges.

Linda Symons has had a change in assignment in Probation and feels she will not be able to continue to serve on CRP.

Three potential candidates attended the meeting as guests:

- Paul Chang – Daly City Partnership
- Melissa Viscarra – Emancipated foster youth
- Ruth Laya – Probation

In addition, Jan has spoken with a retired special educator who also expressed interest in serving on the Panel. All guests provided a brief explanation of their interest. If they would like to be considered for election to the Panel, they will be asked to submit their application and a bio for consideration at the August meeting. If elected, their three year terms would commence in September.

Schedule for preparation of Annual Report and Recommendations

Pat presented the following proposal for preparation of the annual report for 2009-10:

- August: review of monitoring information and development of findings for inclusion in the Annual report
- September: confirm findings and develop draft recommendations for 2010-11
- October: review the draft annual report, recommendations and scope of work prior to Submission

Closed Session for CRP – issues of interest/concern

The Panel held a brief closed session for discussion of issues of interest and concern.

The following items are scheduled for the August Agenda

- Social Worker presentation re. Structured Decision Making and how it is being implemented, with focus on Intake and Emergency Response
- Update on TDM Advisory Committee
- Findings re. 2009-10 Recommendations
- Distribute CRP Self Evaluation
- Dashboard for CWS

The meeting adjourned at 1:40 PM.

Attachment to SMCRP Notes for July 2010

**San Mateo County Human Services Agency
CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES (CWS)**

Response to
**Citizens Review Panel (CRP)
2008-2009 Annual Report and
Recommendations for 2009-2010**

Recommendation #1 *CWS should develop a Team Decision Making (TDM) Advisory Committee to assess whether the current model is working as intended, to review and analyze evaluation data for both the 'process' and 'outcomes' of TDM meetings and to make recommendations for improvement based on that data.*

TDM Advisory Committee **In response to the recommendation of the Citizens Review Panel to develop a TDM advisory committee, CWS (Children & Family Services) invited individuals from community based organizations, the legal and faith-based communities, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs), and Probation as well as service providers, social workers, social work supervisors, foster parents and former foster children to attend an initial planning meeting to create the TDM Advisory Board. In attendance were nineteen individuals representing the Puente Resource Center, Fair Oaks and Daly City Community Centers, Coastside Hope, Edgewood Center for Children and Families, Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS), CASAs, Private Defenders Program, Juvenile Mediation and Court Investigations, Children and Family Services and Probation.**

The purpose of the TDM Advisory Board is to acknowledge successes, identify and examine challenges, and generate ideas to address challenges. At the planning meeting, the history of TDMs was reviewed, as were current TDM activities. Approximately 20 people will participate in quarterly meetings, with subsequent meetings scheduled on July 29, 2010 and October 28, 2010, to continue to formalize the Board's structure and to begin its work.

CWS will continue to recruit for the currently unrepresented groups of: foster parents, parents, former foster youth, and additional community based organizations.

TDM Data Collection Efforts

CWS has also responded to CRP's recommendation to develop data reports in order to analyze TDM processes and outcomes, with the goal of ensuring data driven decision-making regarding the Agency's TDM program.

CWS has made progress in the area of data collection. At one point *Efforts to Outcome* (ETO) was the official State of California data collection tool before the decision was made to update CWS/CMS with TDM information as well. Maintaining two databases posed a challenge, especially when the data between the two did not match, which often occurred. Currently, TDM staff keeps CWS/CMS up-to-date and it is now considered the main data source. CWS currently uses two reports developed by the Agency's Business Systems Group (BSG) to monitor how many TDMS were conducted and when. The first report shows when TDMs occur, and the second report shows the list of placement moves and if a TDM was held or not. CWS and BSG staff continue to refine the two reports to ensure accuracy and provide the information needed to monitor the TDM process and outcomes.

A TDM log, in the form of an Excel spreadsheet, has also been developed and is being used with some success to measure outcomes. The log is maintained by a program staff person, who enters information on TDM referrals received, the reason for the TDM, the end result of the referral (TDM occurs, TDM is scheduled but is subsequently canceled, etc.), the placement recommendation, and the referring social worker and social work supervisor. The log is a record of all TDM referrals and documents the efforts made when a TDM referral does not result in a TDM occurrence. The drawback of the log is that, although it contains data related to all TDM referrals, it does not give information on referrals that should have been, but were not, made. The log also includes information on TDMs for Probation youth and emancipation conferences. If a Family Group Decision Making model is implemented, the log can be expanded to track those meetings as well.

The number of TDMs conducted appears on a monthly CWS dashboard report which is reviewed by the Management Team. Currently, two of the TDM facilitators have been temporarily reassigned to assist with a recent upsurge in hot line referral, which has resulted in fewer resources and less time to collect and analyze data.

Recommendation #2A *CWS should support families in the child welfare system by providing information and education about how the system works.*

Parent Orientation: Program Overview

San Mateo County's newly developed parent orientation, Engaging Birth Families as Authentic Partners, will provide birth families with information and access to resources that they need to help them become successful parents and strong self advocates. The parent orientation, based on a Santa Clara County model, facilitates conversations between birth families, youth, resource families, tribal members, community members, service providers, and staff and partners from other agencies and organizations that serve children, youth and families. The program orients parents to the Dependency Court process, familiarizes participants with the Dependency Court's terminology and procedures, and fosters open dialogue between parents and CWS social workers in a safe environment. In so doing, the program empowers parents to be more participative and aware during their dependency proceedings, and has the additional benefit of mitigating the often unrecognized impact of disproportionality at a key decision point in a family's case.

The parent orientation is scheduled to be piloted in the late summer or early fall of 2010. Parents will be referred by an emergency response worker who will encourage them to attend. In addition, an invitation letter will be sent in multiple languages to the family by the program coordinator, who will track families through detention hearing requests. Formal documentation of participation in this program will be included as a recommendation on the detention report and in the jurisdiction/disposition report as a 'service in process' or 'service completed'. To provide further support to the families, a handbook will be supplied which includes a guide to the juvenile court system and information about who to contact for county and community resources.

Program Structure

Parent Orientation will consist of two sessions, offered during both morning and evening hours to accommodate parent schedules. Program components are:

- ***Overview of the Child Welfare Program (1 hour, 30 minutes)***
In this session, parents will be provided with an overview of CWS, contact information, and descriptions of the agency structure and the dependency process, with time set aside for parents to debrief about their child welfare-related experiences.

- ***Working with Your Social Worker and the Court (1hour, 30 minutes)***
This session will be facilitated by both a social work supervisor and a parent attorney. The supervisor will review the role of the social worker, dispel myths, identify common mistakes, and talk about visitation issues, what success/progress looks like, and the realities of involvement with the child welfare system. The attorney will discuss appropriate courtroom demeanor, how to work with an attorney, types of hearings, and will explain child/parent rights, ICWA, and other placement issues.

- ***Resources Available to Help Your Family (1 hour)***
Resource providers will be invited to this session to explain their roles and how they can work with and support families. Referrals for services may be provided at this time. Resources will include foster parents, visitation center staff, child support staff, and parent advocates who are former child welfare clients. Half of the session will be conducted as a panel discussion, with the second portion being a meet-and-greet with the resource providers so that parents will be able to familiarize themselves with the resources that are available to them.

Program Outcomes

- Parents will be familiar with and understand the expectations of the Court and the child welfare system.
- Parents' levels of engagement in the process will be increased.
- Disproportionality and disparity in the child welfare system will be reduced.

Recommendation #2B *CWS should support families in the child welfare system by providing peer support from other parents who have had experience with the system.*

Because funding has increasingly become an issue, CWS was required to identify creative ways to provide peer support to families as they navigate through the child welfare and Dependency Court systems. As a result, CWS has requested the following peer positions, to be funded with economic stimulus dollars through the SMCWORKS (San Mateo County WORKs) program:

Peer Parent Partner Project (3 positions)

This project will provide peer mentors to help birth parents feel more comfortable when navigating multiple complex systems. Under Agency supervision, Peer Parent Partners will accompany birth parents to Court hearings, parent/teacher conferences, medical appointments, and Team Decision Making meetings, assist them in completing paperwork, remind them about appointments, teach them to use public transportation, and perform other basic, non-complex tasks as required.

Parent Advocate (1 position)

The Parent Advocate will assist facilitators in coordination of the Strengthening Families Parent Education Program and act as an advocate for birth parents participating in the program. The Parent Advocate will schedule appointments, assist facilitators in setting up facilities and preparing for training sessions, track attendance, assist in conducting program evaluation, and perform other related duties as assigned.

Applicants will continue to be interviewed until these positions are filled. Because the stimulus funding is only available until September 30, 2010, unless extended, this is not a permanent solution. CWS continues to explore ways to provide this valuable service to our families, including the possibility of using volunteer peer parents.

Recommendation #2c CWS should support families in the child welfare system by providing relevant resources to enable families to be full and successful participants in the reunification process.

Even in the current climate of economic uncertainty, CWS is fully committed to providing the widest possible array of services to families to help them achieve successful reunification. The services a family receives are determined by the family's issues and barriers, and whenever possible families are carefully matched with community based, accessible, and culturally appropriate services. Multiple contracts exist to fill the gap between service needs and service availability.

Examples Services

- *Parenting classes* – CWS' traditional model of parenting classes has been replaced with an evidence based curriculum.
- *Counseling services* – Individual and family counseling, and mental health assessment and treatment are provided for family members experiencing mental health issues.
- *Transportation* – A Central Support unit provides transportation to appointments, parenting classes, court hearings, etc.
- *Treatment services* – In addition to mental health treatment services, substance abuse testing and treatment and Domestic Violence treatment programs are provided.
- *Translation* – Translation services are provided in multiple languages.
- *Child Watch* – Child watch is provided to enable parents to attend meetings and appointments, and provides respite for birth and foster parents.
- *Family Finding* – Efforts will soon be underway to intensify the notification process to relatives in order to garner their support for reunifying families, as well as to provide kin placement arrangements if needed.
- *Parent Partners* – These positions were created to provide parents with emotional support and the supportive services of former CWS birth parents who have experienced successful reunification.
- *Social Security assistance* – This service is intended to help children apply for and receive income to which they are entitled.
- *Educational assistance* – Educational Liaisons perform a myriad of education-related tasks to assist children and families.
- *Supervised visitation* – Because of funding cuts, a supervised visitation contract will be replaced by Family Care Workers who are being newly trained to provide these services, using evidence-based, best practice models.
- *Structured Decision Making* – CWS has moved to this evidence-based assessment tool to assist social workers in making good decisions for families, and to provide direction in service planning and provision.
- *Fatherhood Collaborative* – This collaborative came under the HSA umbrella in December 2009. The Collaborative's supportive

services help strengthen the bond between fathers and their children.

- *Housing Vouchers* – HSA and San Mateo County Children & Family Services has housing vouchers that were awarded to the agency from HUD to assist homeless and un-housed families with Section 8 certificates who are in the process of family reunification.

San Mateo County



CRP's mission is to assess the child welfare system in the county and make data-driven recommendations for continuous improvement that will help to ensure the safety and well-being of San Mateo County children and their families.

Notes from Meeting August 16, 2010

400 Harbor Boulevard, Bldg. B, Belmont CA 94002

11:30 -1:30 PM

Panel members Present: Baumel, Cherniss, Loewy, O'Shea, Plotnikoff, Pounds, Ragosta, Stewart, Symons
Others: Deborah Torres, Ruth Laya, Paul Chang, Diana Hall

The meeting opened with self-introductions and a welcome to Diana Hall, prospective member.

Follow-up from last meeting

- a) Review notes from last meeting – changes/corrections
 - Correct spelling for Amabel Baxley
 - Correct lettering for Follow-up items
 - Under Director's report, correct "look a family conferencing" to "look at"
 - Make sure that CWS response to CRP recommendations is attached.
- b) Bonnie Miller was unanimously elected to her second 3-year term on CRP on a motion by Jan Baumel and second by Bernie Plotnikoff.
- c) Caitie O'Shea is completing her term on CRP and members thanked her for her contributions.
- d) The Panel accepted the resignation of Linda Symons, Probation Manager, because of her assignment to a different unit.

- e) Paul Chang, Program Manager for the Daly City Partnership and Ruth Laya, Probation Services Manager, were unanimously elected to three year terms on a motion by David Cherniss and a second by Linda Symons.

Recommendation monitoring:

- Social worker presentation re. implementation of Structured Decision Making – focus on Intake and Emergency Response

Sarah Gregg, Social Work Supervisor of the Screening Unit and Casey Calivo, hotline social worker, were present to provide information on the implementation of Structured Decision Making as a call is being handled. Panel members were given a copy of a publication entitled: The Structured Decision Making Model: An Evidence-based Approach to Human Services, published by the Children's Research Center. A copy of the Hotline Screening Form was also distributed.

Sarah told the Panel that SDM was implemented in SM Co. in 2009 with the goal of promoting consistency in practice using common definitions of child abuse and neglect and associated risk factors. She told the group that this presentation would focus on Intake and Emergency Response and the use of the Hotline Screening Tool. She describes three possible responses to a hotline call:

- a finding of *possible neglect*
- a finding of *possible emotional, physical or sexual abuse*
- the call does not meet criteria for neglect or abuse and is *evaluated out*

Following ER, if the finding is that the allegation is unfounded, that means that the risk to safety does not meet the criteria for action by child welfare.

There are two levels of response to a and b: Immediate (emergency) or 10-day
Since September 2009, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of emergency responses (from 10% of calls to 50% of calls). This increase has been observed in other counties just implementing SDM. CWS is being conservative (err on the side of safety) in handling cases and feels the increase relates to more specific definition of needs that are research based.

SDM has influenced the approach to emotional abuse situations – requires that child's response must be directly tied to a parent's behavior.

When there is an emergency response, an assessment is completed. There was a question about whether the increased # of calls to the hotline and higher number of emergency responses is correlated with increased removals. Here and around the state, even though the number of ERs is up, the number of children coming into and staying in the system is down. About 75% of calls to the hotline come from mandated reporters. The Panel asked if mandated reporters have received training in the SDM approach and was told that to this date there has been no special training provided.

There were questions about how calls were tracked. This led to defining terms:

- Call = telephone call to the hotline – tracked by a log in system
- Referral = call is entered into the computer system

When a call about an “open” case comes in, it is handled by the screening unit and counted as a new referral.

Panel members expressed some concern about calls regarding youth in the Probation setting. There is some possibility that a young person will recant allegations of neglect or abuse to get out of the incarcerated setting. In addition, if the child is not currently in the home, is the degree of concern downgraded because his/her safety is not an immediate issue? There was agreement that a **system of communication between the Hotline and ER with Probation** would be helpful.

The Panel was very interested in the presentation and there was agreement that the next step will be to invite a SDM presentation from the Emergency Response and Intake levels.

Related questions:

- What is the current % of overrides to the SDM system – in Hotline and ER there is a high override rate – because of a conscientious response.
- How many hotline referrals go to Differential Response?
- How might we ensure that referrers understand the SDM system?

Update from TDM Advisory Committee Meeting

John Ragosta and David Cherniss (along with Bonnie Miller) sit on the TDM Advisory Committee and reported that the committee met at the end of July. The group spent discussion time on clarifying the meaning of confidentiality in a setting like the TDM. This issue needs clarity so confidentiality can be better explained to families. Oct. 28th (9-10:30 AM) is the next scheduled meeting. It is likely that a number of subcommittees will be formed to look at protocols associated with TDMs.

Report from Peer Quality Case Review session

Ginny Stewart participated in the last Peer Quality Case Review (PQR) session for CWS social workers. This process is part of the System Improvement Plan. Ginny provided Panel members with copies of a number of documents related to the PQR process including: Hotline tool; Copy of the Case Checklist; Qualitative Review; Quantitative Review; Safety Assessment; Know Your Rights. She said that about 20 social workers were involved in reviewing case files in order to ensure complete and quality documentation practices. The idea is to reinforce best practices in case management in CWS. This process is managed by the Quality Assurance Committee which notifies social workers of issues related to files and copies supervisors on the notices.

San Mateo County also participates in a case review process in which social workers from other counties review case files and provide feedback re. quality and completeness.

Develop findings for current recommendations

The Panel then reviewed the Recommendations Findings Worksheet developed to assist with making findings related to the 09-10 recommendations.

Panel members agreed on the following findings:

- 1. Children and Family Services should develop a Team Decision Making (TDM) Advisory Committee to assess whether the current model is working as intended, to review and analyze evaluation data for both the "process" and the "outcomes" of TDM meetings and to make recommendations for improvements based on that data.**

The TDM Advisory Committee has been appointed and has begun to address its work of assessing the current TDM model. Three CRP members serve on the Advisory Committee and provide a direct link between the two groups. The membership of the TDM Advisory Committee is the result of broad outreach and recruiting by CWS. The process of assessing TDM implementation will be ongoing.

- 2. Children and Family Services should support families in the child welfare system by providing the following:**
 - (a) information and education about how the system works,**
 - (b) peer support from other parents who have experience with the system**
 - (c) relevant resources to enable families to be full and successful participants in the reunification process.**

(a) CWS has made some efforts to update and improve informational materials. However, outdated information/ educational materials are still being used with families, though newer material is available on the Administrative Office of the Courts website. On the same website, old material is still posted (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/family/juv/depcourt/htm).

(b) CWS implemented a small Parent Peer Support Program using Stimulus funds – however, the program did not have enough time to have impact and it ends September 17, 2010. CWS is supportive the parent peer support concept and may explore the development of a volunteer-staffed program using parents who have completed the Strengthening Families Parent Education series.

(c) CWS currently provides an array of parent support services, but it is unclear whether families are accessing and using them effectively:

- *Parenting classes – CWS' traditional model of parenting classes has been replaced with an evidence based curriculum.*
- *Counseling services – Individual and family counseling, and mental health assessment and treatment are provided for family members experiencing mental health issues.*

- *Transportation – A Central Support unit provides transportation to appointments, parenting classes, court hearings, etc.*
- *Treatment services – In addition to mental health treatment services, substance abuse testing and treatment and Domestic Violence treatment programs are provided.*
- *Translation – Translation services are provided in multiple languages.*
- *Child Watch – Child watch is provided to enable parents to attend meetings and appointments, and provides respite for birth and foster parents.*
- *Family Finding – Efforts will soon be underway to intensify the notification process to relatives in order to garner their support for reunifying families, as well as to provide kin placement arrangements if needed.*
- *Parent Partners – These positions were created to provide parents with emotional support and the supportive services of former CWS birth parents who have experienced successful reunification.*
- *Social Security assistance – This service is intended to help children apply for and receive income to which they are entitled.*
- *Educational assistance – Educational Liaisons perform a myriad of education-related tasks to assist children and families.*
- *Supervised visitation – Because of funding cuts, a supervised visitation contract will be replaced by Family Care Workers who are being newly trained to provide these services, using evidence-based, best practice models.*
- *Structured Decision Making – CWS has moved to this evidence-based assessment tool to assist social workers in making good decisions for families, and to provide direction in service planning and provision.*
- *Fatherhood Collaborative – This collaborative came under the HSA umbrella in December 2009. The Collaborative’s supportive services help strengthen the bond between fathers and their children.*
- *Housing Vouchers – HSA and San Mateo County Children & Family Services has housing vouchers that were awarded to the agency from HUD to assist homeless and un-housed families with Section 8 certificates who are in the process of family reunification.*

Next steps in preparation of Annual Report and Recommendations

- Complete CRP Self Evaluation
- Confirm findings
- Review status of former Recommendations
- Develop Recommendations for 2010-11
- Finalize Annual Report by October 18, 2010

Items for next agenda:

- Review CWS Dashboard for June 2010
- Presentation of SDM use in Intake
- Discuss CRP self evaluation – please return completed survey to Pat by 9/10/10
- Confirm Findings
- Discuss status of past recommendations and possible recommendations for 10-11

Closed Session for CRP – issues of interest/concern

The meeting was adjourned at 1:40 PM.

San Mateo County



CRP's mission is to assess the child welfare system in the county and make data-driven recommendations for continuous improvement that will help to ensure the safety and well-being of San Mateo County children and their families.

Notes from Meeting September 20, 2010

400 Harbor Boulevard, Bldg. B, Belmont CA 94002

11:30 -1:30 PM

Panelists present: Baumel, Chang, Cherniss, Estrada, Loewy, Pounds, Stewart
Others: Pat Brown, Gina Jett, Pravin Patel, Cynthia Noragaran, Nicole Hayes

The meeting opened with self introductions. Gina (Regina) Jett was welcomed as a guest and potential member of CRP.

Follow-up from last meeting

- a) Review notes from last meeting – there were a number of changes/corrections to the notes from the last meeting
- b) Discussion of CWS Dashboard- Pravin Patel, representing Deborah Torres, presented the Children and Family Services Dashboard for August 2010.

Highlights included:

- 237 referrals during from Aug. 1 – Aug. 31.
- 17 TDMs were held during the month.
- 477 active cases (including foster care)
- 289 children were in out of home care (27% in relative care and 16% in the care of a guardian)
- Though there is still a disproportionate number of African American children in out of home placements (24% out of 2.9% AA population), the percentage has come down from a high of 36%.

Panel members expressed interest in receiving the link to the monthly dashboards posted on the Human Services Agency website.

Recommendation monitoring: Social worker presentation re. implementation of Structured Decision Making – focus on Emergency Response – Nicole Hayes Supervisor, RWC and Cynthia Noragaran, ER worker

Nicole and Cynthia distributed and explained two Structured Decision Making forms: the CA Safety Assessment and the CA Family Risk Assessment.

These assessments are completed by social workers following the Hotline screening and subsequent visit (immediate, 2 hour, 3-day or 10-day). The Safety Assessment is used with both inconclusive and substantiated referrals. It is a guide for the social worker, helping to make the decision about whether it is safe to leave the child in the custody of the family or to remove the child. As the result of SDM, more families are getting a visit within 2 hours, but there does not seem to be an increase in removals. If there is a positive response to one or more of the 10 threat criteria, a safety plan must be completed. All safety plans are monitored. Nicole explained that risk may still be present, though a worker can define a child as “safe”. Safety assessments cannot be overridden, but risk assessment can be overridden if at the worker’s discretion.

One key issue emerged. Emergency response workers find it useful to follow up with a child in the school setting, but districts differ in their interpretation of the rights of workers to access children on the school site. Ben offered to follow up with this issue, as a representative of the County Office of Education, to see if a more consistent approach can be implemented.

Confirm findings for current recommendations

CRP members discussed the draft "findings" developed at the August CRP meeting and made a few changes.

Recommendations and revised findings:

1. Children and Family Services should develop a Team Decision Making (TDM) Advisory Committee to assess whether the current model is working as intended, to review and analyze evaluation data for both the "process" and the "outcomes" of TDM meetings and to make recommendations for improvements based on that data.

The TDM Advisory Committee has been appointed and has begun to address its work of assessing the current TDM model. Three CRP members serve on the Advisory Committee and provide a direct link between the two groups. The membership of the TDM Advisory Committee is the result of broad outreach and recruiting by CWS. The process of assessing TDM implementation will be ongoing.

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 - (a) information and education about how the system works,
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 - (c) relevant resources to enable families to be full and successful participants in the reunification process.

- (a) CWS has made efforts to update and improve informational materials. However, outdated information and educational materials are still being used with families, even though newer material is available on the Administrative Office of the Courts website. (On the same website, old material is still posted - www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp/family/juv/depcourt/htm).
- (b) CWS implemented a small Parent Peer Support Program using federal stimulus funds – however, the program did not have enough time to have much impact and it ends September 30, 2010. CWS is supportive of the family peer support concept and may explore the development of a volunteer-staffed program using parents who have completed the Strengthening Families Parent Education series.
- (c) CWS currently provides an array of family support services listed below. CRP has not reviewed information relating to the use and effectiveness of these services.
- *Parenting classes – CWS’ traditional model of parenting classes has been replaced with an evidence-based curriculum.*
 - *Counseling services – Individual and family counseling, and mental health assessment and treatment are provided for family members experiencing mental health issues.*
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assessment tool to assist social workers in making good decisions for families, and to provide direction in service planning and provision.

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- *Housing Vouchers – HSA and San Mateo County Children & Family Services has housing vouchers that were awarded to the agency from HUD to assist homeless and un-housed families with Section 8 certificates who are in the process of family reunification.*

Status of Past Recommendations

Next, the Panel discussed the review of the status of past recommendations. There was agreement that SMCRP has made a practice of building on past year’s recommendations to ensure follow through and desired improvements. The Panel agreed that it should look at the current status of recommendations from the past two years. Pat will prepare a summary for the Panel’s review between now and the next meeting.

Discuss results of CRP self-evaluation

Nine CRP members (of 11) returned completed evaluations. The compiled/averaged scores were presented and discussed.

Scale = 1 (disagree) - 5 (agree)

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. CRP members take their role seriously and conscientiously prepare for each meeting. | Averaged responses: 4.56 |
| 2. CRP members place a high priority on regular meeting attendance. | Averaged responses: 4.44 |
| 3. CRP is working hard to address priority issues relating to the safety and welfare of children involved with the child welfare system in San Mateo County. | Averaged responses: 4.67 |
| 4. CRP members feel informed enough to participate in discussion of agenda items. | Averaged responses: 4.11 |
| 5. CRP receives the technical assistance support it needs to do its job well. | Averaged responses: 4.33 |
| 6. CRP receives the information it needs from the | Averaged responses: 4.00 |
| 7. Human Services Agency in an understandable format. | |
| 8. CRP receives the facilitation support it needs to do its work in an efficient and inclusive manner. | Averaged responses: 4.89 |

9. New CRP members feel their orientation prepares them to participate in the work of CRP. Averaged responses: **4.0**
(4 responses)

10. CRP members are satisfied with the contribution they are making to improving the safety and well-being of children in this community. Averaged responses: **3.89**

Written Comments

I am unable to tell if we actually made an impact on direct service. Paper work is only paper work.

#5 and #7 – Pat Brown’s support is tops. CPS has improved (about 3.5 on scale of 5). Liaison is a 4. CPA participation has improved considerably and is now engaged in requesting CRP support with advocacy.

It seems with every year there is an improvement on the timeliness of responses from CWS, clearer understanding of the impact of CRP’s recommendations, and clarity of our role as advisors and partners with CWS. This year has been no different. In addition, having only two recommendations to monitor throughout the year seemed to help CRP focus and get more in depth with the work that it was doing. As always, Pat’s work as the facilitator, both during the meetings and in between, is crucial to our functioning.

Pat, thank you for all your energy and support of the panel and for facilitating the work. I learned a great deal by being on the panel and thank you for your gentle guidance. I appreciated getting to know some of the members and have a greater understanding of the work they do.

Panel members felt the compiled results were reflective of their experience this year. They feel that communication and support from Children and Family Services has improved greatly and there is a growing sense of trust. CRP asked Pat to include a comparison of current year and past year evaluation results in the annual report.

First draft of recommendations for 2009 -10 annual report

CRP members developed the following list of draft recommendations. Pat will send them out within the next couple of days for feedback and modification.

1. CWS should make sure that the information about the child welfare system that is available to family members is regularly updated as to content, accessible (language, format, reading level and terminology) and readily available.

2. CWS should monitor how families are accessing and using support services and should analyze the impact of the programs on family reunification rates.

3. CWS should continue to support the TDM Advisory Committee and ensure that it monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of team decision making in relation to

the stated outcomes of the program.

Report on Parent orientation at parenting workshop series

Jamila reported that her colleagues have told her that the recent orientation for the Strengthening Families workshops was very well-received by participants.

There was no Closed Session.

Agenda for October

- AB 636 report
- Confirm Recommendations for 2010-11
- Finalize Annual Report and Work plan for submission by end of October

Citizen Review Panel
Annual & Recommendations Report
(2009/2010 Program Year)

County: Ventura County

Contact Person for this Report:

Name: Judy Webber- Deputy Director Children & Family Services
Phone: 805 477-5311
Email: Judy.Webber@ventura.org

Date Submitted to OCAP: _____

Date & Person Submitted to at the local County Agency:

Please report on the Citizen Review Panel's activities per the items below and submit your response to CDSS, Office of Child Abuse Prevention via the Strategies Consultant no later than November 15, 2010.

1. County Profile (OCAP will provide current data from current annual report)

General Demographics
Ethnic make-up of county
Household income

2. Panel Activities

A. Panel structure and development

I. Membership (**Work plan Goal #1**)

Have there been any changes in membership or panel composition during the reporting period?

Please discuss any activities the panel has engaged in specific to the recruitment of panel members to reflect community demographics and support creating or maintaining a diverse panel.

During this start up year as a CRP, the Committee recognized the need for membership expansion to include: expansion

Faith Based Membership

Caregiver Community including Foster and Relative Care

Parent Partners

Current recruitment activities have included inviting the local CYC Youth representative to the CRP/CSOC meetings. Discussing the inclusion of parent consumers and reaching out to parent advocate groups. Currently CYC Leadership is determining the feasibility of a youth member joining the CRP.

The current panel is comprised of both public and private partners who bring a variety of expertise in the child welfare system, either in service provision, monitoring or design. Members currently include former client/ Parent Advocate, Ventura County School District, Behavioral Health, Public Health, Juvenile Court Judge, Probation Agency, local service providers, Human Services Agency, representative from the Child Abuse Prevention Council.

II. Panel Training (**Work plan goal #2**)

Please elaborate on the on-going orientation trainings of new CRP members. In addition, please describe any training activities the CRP has engaged in this past year as a means of on-going panel development.

The Ventura County CRP has engaged and successfully completed the development of an infrastructure that will support ongoing recruitment and orientation activities as well as support the ongoing workings/ subcommittees of the CRP. Guiding Principles were established and approved by the CRP. An orientation manual is currently in the last stages of revision and is expected to be approved and utilized July 2010.

As a means of on-going trainings, the CRP had numerous presentations from Community Based Organizations providing services to youth placed out of home in Ventura County. These presentations allowed the committee to understand the various services provided, map potential overlaps in services and streamline a process for understanding private provider service provisions including referral criteria.

The Panel Chair participated in the All CRP meeting held in Sacramento June of 2010. A presentation was made to the CRP after this meeting on the National CRP initiative.

Several members of the CRP participated in a California Youth Connection presentation, including the screening of the local CYC efforts to develop a video to present to Group Home providers that focuses on living in out of home care from the consumer perspective.

III. Panel self evaluation activities – **(Work plan Goal #6)**

Has the panel undertaken any activities to help it assess its own performance during the reporting period? If so briefly describe these activities and the findings. If not, please describe when and how the panel will assess its performance.

To date, the Panel has not engaged in a self evaluation process, due in part to the newness of the panel. Plans to use the Panel Evaluation instrument have been discussed and tentatively set for December 2010.

3. CRP objectives (Work plan Goals #3 & 5)

For **each objective identified** in your work plan please report on the following:

- ♦Any demographics related to the CRP objective(s).
- ♦Description of the review activities and any technical assistance provided (example = case review, focus group, data review, State (Strategies) CRP consultant) to support your review work.
- ♦Findings based on review activities.
- ♦Formal Recommendations based on findings (for County and State).
- ♦Follow-up on the prior years annual report recommendations including any County and State responses to the recommendations.
- ♦Discuss how the CRP recommendations will be disseminated to county, state officials as well as the public and how the CRP will handle any comments made.
- ♦Future Directions –Briefly discuss the activities that the panel expects to undertake during the 2010/2011 program year- with an emphasis on July-Sept 2010 activities. (Please attach an updated work plan for next year)

The Committee has developed a 3 year strategic plan which supports the local SIP. There are a total of 3 workgroups that are responsible for completing the review activities outlined in their current work plan, reporting back to the general membership and make recommendations back to the Department of Children and Family Services.

Currently the focus of the strategic plan is to review components of the local Child Welfare Systems, within Children and Family Services, Probation Agency, Department of Behavioral Health and local providers, targeting re-entry, recurrence and length of time in care. The focus of the CRP workgroup activities has been targeted toward the length of stay aspect and the in county placement system for children who are at risk of, or have been victimized by abuse or neglect, or have other special needs that require out of home care in a residential or group home placement

These activities directly correlate with the Ventura County Systems Improvement Plan Target Three stated below:

Decrease the percent of children who emancipate or turn age 18 during a 12-month period who had been in care 3 years or more at emancipation or reaching age of majority (Child Welfare Only).

Data illustrating Ventura County's functioning in this area reported in Safe Measures show that 62.5% of children who emancipate or turn age 18 had been in care 3 years or longer in the 12-month period between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010. Ventura County's current performance remains above the National Standard for this measure (37.5%) and above statewide performance (59.4%)."

Workgroup One:

Permanency for children encompasses all children that have reunified with maternal and/or paternal family members, taken into guardianship by maternal and/or paternal family, kin or foster parents or any other caretaker that has a relationship with the child and adoption by any of the above. Long term foster care is not considered permanency. This workgroup is interested in researching barriers to permanency that may exist due to a child being placed with their siblings.

Review activities included research in understanding how permanency is defined in the child welfare system as well as reviewing current C-CFSR data. In addition, the committee developed the following data mining questions. Consultant Erika Felix, UCSB, is currently involved in facilitating a prospective study, at the early recommendation of this committee and will be reporting her findings to this committee as part of the second year work plan. No recommendation made at this time from this workgroup.

- A. Of the children identified in item C1.3 how many had a concurrent plan from the beginning of their case?
- B. Of the children identified in item C2.4:
 - 1. who were not yet legally free, what percent were placed as a sibling set?
 - 2. who were not yet legally free, what percent had siblings who were legally freed during the same time period?

3. who were not yet legally free, for what percent was guardianship/adoption being considered?
 4. what percent would have had a plan for guardianship/adoption had they not been part of a sibling set?
- C. Of the children identified in item C.3:
1. not discharged to a permanent home, what percent were placed as a sibling set?
 2. not discharged, what percent had siblings who were discharged to a permanent home?
 3. not discharged, for what percent was guardianship/adoption still being considered?
- D. Of all children in foster care since Jan 1, 2008, during the selected 12 month period who were in care for at least eight days but less than 12 months, what percent had more than 2 placements due to being placed with sibling sets?
- E. Of all children in foster care since Jan 1, 2008 during a selected 12 month period who were in care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months:
1. and having more than 2 placements, what percent had a concurrent plan leading to permanency?
 2. and having more than 2 placements, what percent remained in long term foster care?
- F. Of the children identified in item C4.3:
1. what percent had a permanency plan?
 2. what percent went into long term foster care instead of a permanent home?
 3. due to the stability of the current placement?

Workgroup Two-

Focus of this workgroup was to determine/assess outcome measures currently in use by all programs that reflect permanency, safety and well being.

Across Ventura County there are a variety of entities providing services to foster youth. Some are government agencies, some are community based organizations, some are individuals (foster parents, kinship parents), and some are private business people (group home owners). Toward that goal, our committee realized that we need some basic baseline information (i.e., how are we doing so far for foster youth – how many who enter the system exit in to a permanent type arrangement?). We also realized that it would be helpful, ultimately, to ensure that all providers are collecting the same information (and possibly in the same manner.) Therefore, we launched our initial foray in to ascertaining outcomes across the county.

The review activities included:

- Developed the survey outcome measure survey tool
- Created a list of constituents from whom to collect data
- Contacted each group (created a list of contact people from each group)

- Co-facilitated a Focus Group process for Group Homes to collect information/surveys

Findings: Initial results suggest very little (if any) standardization across out of home care providers.- including who is measuring what AND regarding what Instruments are being used or how things are being counted.

We need to provide more information to various groups (such as Group Homes) about why we value data and regarding what outcomes we are particularly interested in (i.e., safety, permanence, well being).

Formal Recommendations based on findings

Given that the local Department of Children and Family Services, Probation Agency and the Department of Behavioral Health provide oversight of the local out of home care providers, the CRP recommends the following to these agencies, with the goal of reducing the length of stay in out of home care and increasing the permanency of placement for Ventura County youth.

- 7) Develop a mechanism to continue to collect base line information from all providers in Ventura County on data measurement they are keeping.
- 8) Use IPERC and other government structure components to get "buy in" from out of home care providers regarding the need to measure outcomes and collect data.
- 9) Reach out to people who do not know what they are collecting (i.e., group homes) and help them to figure out what they are already doing.
- 10) Conduct focus groups to ascertain what is manageable for various types of providers (group homes, government agencies, private nonprofit CBOs, etc.)
- 11) Establish 2-4 shared outcomes that will be collected across all agencies in the County
- 12) Use Agency 101 (or Wrap Summit) for year 2012 to launch standardization in data collection

Work Group Three

The focus of this workgroup was to review, local group homes in order to assess their role in a 'continuum of care' that promotes community- based, family- involved , best-practice services that address the specific needs of Ventura County youth. These review activities align with the goal s of reducing the length of stays **and** maintaining "placement" youth within county outline in the current SIP.

In April 2010, a focus group was facilitated with Group Homes/Residential Treatment Centers administrators the report was reviewed by agency staff from the respective placing agencies. (**Report is attached.**)

Findings and Recommendations

I. Costs associated with Enrichment Activities for Youth

Findings: Hardship for provider in paying for activities

Recommended Action:

1. Invite Children's Auxiliary Liaison to an IPERC provider meeting to review procedure for obtaining reimbursement for approved costs.
2. Send mail out to caregivers caring for youth age 16-18 to inform them of support resources for ILP.
3. Post information on ILP website for direct access to providers and others involved with youth
4. Encourage group home providers to contact local youth ministries & youth programs that are willing to pick up, supervise and drop off youth.
5. Survey providers already providing outside services how they are providing enrichment activities currently.

II. Dedicated Time for Networking with County Group Home Providers

Findings: Providers could benefit from time to share with each other program components or new community resources

Information: Quarterly meeting held for Group Home Providers is an existing forum to share information.

Recommended Action:

1. Dedicate time on IPERC provider agenda for information sharing.
2. Providers can gain support from IPERC administration for copying and other support as needed.

III. Barriers to Obtaining Employment for Youth

Findings: Obtaining employment for youth utilizing Work Force Investment (WIA) Act programs is difficult.

Information: A review of these provider contracts was completed to indicate (WIA) contracts are performance based programs with multiple outcome areas. Contracts are in the process of being awarded for FY 2010-2011.

Recommended Action:

1. Make contact with new providers for FY 2010-2011 to understand referral, eligibility process and required commitment in order to properly prepare providers and staff to refer and secure the enrollment/acceptance of youth in WIA employment and training programs.
2. Refer employment issues to California Youth Connection, adult supporters group and other board serving youth for networking purposes
3. Ensure all youth have a Foster Youth identification Card.
4. Explore SSI Ticket to Work, ARC, or youth organizations that might be willing to provide "internships" to youth to help build work ethic and experience.

IV. Behavior Management in Group Home Placement

Findings: There appears to be some gaps between Group Home Staff and respective placement staff regarding individual Group Home's points and level/behavioral system.

Note: Not all facilities use points and level/behavioral systems.

Recommended Action:

1. Obtain official operating procedures from Group Home Providers for information sharing
2. Include points and level/behavioral system in placement assessment/information tool guide to be used when conducting group homes placement program reviews. (Planned)
3. Remind providers that staff needs to model appropriate behaviors. Talking about sex and drugs in front of youth is not appropriate, nor is certain media (TV, movies, games). Youth often bond with staff, so their influence on behavior cannot be underestimated.

V. Mental Health Services in Group Home Placement (in Ventura County)

Findings: There appears to be frustration among providers in obtaining mental health services for Medi-cal eligible youth.

Information: Not all Group Home providers utilize the VCBH Child Welfare subsystem for mental health services. The providers to make efforts to access Options Clinics have indicated frustration with the process for access specifically the assessment and assignment period. Note: Some facilities utilize contracted clinical staff to provide mental health services.

Recommended Action:

1. Obtain a process and referral map to providers to access mental health services for VCBH Child Welfare Subsystem

VI. Discharge Planning from Group Homes to Less Restrictive Placements

Findings: Criteria to "step down" a youth from a Group Home is not known or agreed upon or known. Group Home providers have received various time frames and conditions. Example has been "youth need to be out in 3 months" yet there is not a matching behavioral criterion to facilitate the discharge.

Recommended Action:

1. Develop behaviorally based discharge criteria
2. Identify the resources current and needed to discharge Group Homes
3. Develop Training for staff and Group Home Providers to use criteria
4. Train staff and Group Home Providers in discharge criteria.
5. Encourage family members to visit the group home regularly to participate, prepare, observe and develop positive family interactions. (Develop family friendly criteria.) If a youth does not have family, include an adult the youth has connected with.

4. Public in-put (Work plan Goal # 4)

Briefly describe any public input that the panel obtained during the reporting period and how this input was taken into consideration when making your final recommendations for this annual report.

If you will be obtaining public input after this annual reports recommendations are developed and published briefly describe your public input process and outline the time frames for this process.

The Ventura County CRP-CSOC Annual report will be disseminated to Parent Consumers including both Biological and Foster Parents, coordinated by Parents United. The local chapter of the California Youth Connection will be provided the report for review and comment. In addition, the report will be posted on the Ventura County Partnership for Safe Families and Communities, which also serves as the regional CAPC website. An email address has been set up to collect all comments issued regarding the report. All comments will be reviewed by the CRP and will be taken into consideration when determining future activities and recommendations.

5. Attachments

Please attach the following documents to this report:

- ❖ Updated roster of Citizen Review Panel Members, including their affiliation
- ❖ Quarterly Budget update for July 1, 2010 to September 30, 2010
- ❖ Minutes of the panel's meetings for the July 1, 2010 to September 30, 2010 quarter. If the panel utilizes committees, please attach the minutes, if any, of these committees
- ❖ Updated Scope of Work for the coming years panel activities 2010/2011
- ❖ Please submit a statement of the panel's expenditures for the 2009/2010 program year.

Please email this report to **OCAP by November 15, 2010**, including the name, email address and phone number of the person who can be contacted should there be questions regarding this report.

	MEMBER NAME & AGENCY	AGENCY ADDRESS	E-MAIL ADDRESS
	AGUAYO-SALDANA, DIANA HSA	855 Partridge Drive Ventura, CA 93003	Diana.Aguayo- Saldana@ventura.org

	MEMBER NAME & AGENCY	AGENCY ADDRESS	E-MAIL ADDRESS
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	COLLINS, MARYELLEN United Parents	391 South Dawson Drive, Suite 1A, Camarillo CA 93012	mecollins@www.unitedparents.org
	DAVIS, LEAH United Parents	391 South Dawson Drive, Suite 1A, Camarillo CA 93012	leahdavis@verizon.net
	DOBROSKY, SELETA Public Health	2125 Knoll Drive #200 Ventura, CA 93003	Seleta.Dobrosky@ventura.org
	FRIEDLANDER, DAVID Kids & Families Together	856 E. Thompson Blvd. Ventura, CA 93001	TheDavid@aol.com
	GRILL, DIANA VC Public Health	2125 Knoll Drive #200 Ventura, CA 93003	Diana.Grill@ventura.org
	GONZALEZ-SEITZ, NICHOLLE Interface Children Family Services	1305 Del Norte Road #130 Camarillo, CA 93010	ngonzalez@icfs.org
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	MEMBER NAME & AGENCY	AGENCY ADDRESS	E-MAIL ADDRESS
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**VENTURA COUNTY CITIZEN'S REVIEW PANEL / CHILDREN'S SERVICES
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING
July 20, 2010 – Minutes**

Members Present:

**Diana Aguayo-Saldana, Human Services Agency
Jody Kussin, Casa Pacifica
Pete Pringle, Ventura County Behavioral Health
Maryellen Collins, United Parents
Gina Johnson, Probation Agency
David Friedlander, Kids and Families Together
Nicholle Gonzalez-Seitz, Interface
Elaine Martinez, Children and Family Services
Diana Grill, Ventura County Public Health
Steven Sherry, Ventura County Behavioral Health
Laura Welbourn, Ventura County Schools
Judy Webber, Children and Family Services**

**Guests: Donna Kuonen, Children and Family Services
Leticia Lachberg, Human Services Agency
Leslie Singer, Casa Pacifica**

Meeting Facilitator: Pete Pringle

1. Meeting Called to Order at 8:05 a.m. Introductions took place around the table.
2. Approval of the Minutes from previous meeting. The minutes from May 18, 2010 were unanimously approved.
3. CFS Staffing Update – Judy

Judy announced that she would be assuming the role of co-chair of CSOC due to the recent resignation of RayNelle Williams. Everyone wished RayNelle well on her new professional endeavors.

Leticia Lachberg added that she would be attending the CSOC meetings in place of Cheryl Binkley during Cheryl's six week leave of absence.

Gina Johnson also added that Terri Hart would be coming back as Probation's representative as she will be switching to a different role.

4. Governance Structure – Judy

Wraparound Subcommittee – MaryEllen expressed her concern regarding WIT not having any type of oversight and that it was important that the community be able to partake and have a voice at this forum. As a result of this discussion it was determined that WIT would be re-established as a workgroup that reported out to CSOC/CRP.

WIT Membership was identified as follows:

Probation
SELPA
CFS
BHD
Providers – Wraparound, CMFRT
HSA – Contracts & Program
Parent/Family Voice
CYC

MaryEllen will contact Fran Arner Costello from SELPA to ask if she would like to be responsible for taking the necessary steps to reactivate the WIT Committee. Mary Ellen will provide a progress update at the next CSOC meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding the identification of additional workgroups or committees that were or needed to be included as subcommittees to CSOC. They were identified as follows:

1. IPERC

2. WIT – Operational Issues

WRC – Program Implementation
- Identify Operational Issues

} Wraparound

3. Agency Program Report Outs – Agency 101 = Yearly Product

a. Casa Collaborative – Pete explained that the Casa Collaborative meets to discuss new services, challenges, barriers, etc regarding Casa Pacifica Operations. BHD and Casa Pacifica managers are in attendance.

After a brief discussion, it was unanimously decided that the Casa Collaborative group did not have to report to CSOC.

A rolling calendar will be created that will identify when each subcommittee is scheduled to report to CSOC and will be provided to each CSOC member and workgroup chair for their information.

5. IPERC Report – Elaine

Elaine reported that minutes to IPERC, PAC and Group Home Provider subcommittee meetings are available to anyone who may want to see them and they are to let her know if they would like them forwarded to them.

She briefly reported that IPERC is currently working on their charter. Discussions also took place regarding not all group home providers submitting their quarterly reports so they decided to create a standardized report template that could easily be filled out by the providers.

6. CWDA Postcard Campaign – Judy

Judy handed out postcards from Protect Our Children Our Future Coalition and asked that they participate by filing them out as every one of them will be delivered to the Governor's office by July 31, 2010. The postcards will be used to advocate funding to child welfare and foster care services in the budget.

7. National Mental Health Awareness Day Resource Materials - Louanne

Louanne informed everyone that CFS had received resource materials to support the National Mental Health Awareness Day. Everyone was asked to take as many as the materials back with them to their offices to encourage their staff to use art to help children to communicate their feelings. Items included activity booklets, pamphlets, brochures and crayons.

8. Workgroup Report Outs - All

Item tabled to the August meeting.

9. OCAP CRP June Meeting Report – Louanne

Louanne reported that RayNelle attended the OCAP meeting in June where a Citizen Review Panel 101 presentation was provided. Louanne stated that all counties in California are ahead of the game. Louanne asked CRP/CSOC members if they wanted their contact information to be sent to the National Citizen Review group based out of Kentucky. Due to the amount of emails sent out by this group, the CRP members decided that Louanne should screen the materials received and forward those identified by her as necessary information.

10. Workgroup Breakouts – All

Members went into their workgroups to continue to work on their assigned goals, strategies and milestones.

11. Miscellaneous – All

Donna Kuonen announced that there are currently (8) Wraparound openings.

Next Meeting – August 17, 2010, 8 a.m. at Casa Pacifica Community Based Services, 975 Flynn Road, Camarillo, CA 93012, Training Room 3

**VENTURA COUNTY CITIZEN'S REVIEW PANEL / CHILDREN'S SERVICES
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING
August 17, 2010 – Minutes**

Members Present:

**Diana Aguayo-Saldana, Human Services Agency
Kris Bennett, AspiraNet
Jody Kussin, Casa Pacifica
Pete Pringle, Ventura County Behavioral Health
Maryellen Collins, United Parents
Gina Johnson, Probation Agency
David Friedlander, Kids and Families Together
Nicholle Gonzalez-Seitz, Interface
Elaine Martinez, Children and Family Services
Diana Grill, Ventura County Public Health
Steven Sherry, Ventura County Behavioral Health
Laura Welbourn, Ventura County Schools
Judy Webber, Children and Family Services
Elaine Martinez-Curry, The Partnership**

**Guests: Donna Kuonen, Children and Family Services
Leticia Lachberg, Human Services Agency
Joelle Vessels, Interface Children Family Services
Louanne Shahandeh, CFS Consultant
Cristina Miranda, CYC**

Meeting Facilitator: Pete Pringle

Meeting Called to Order at 8:05 a.m. Introductions took place around the table.

Approval of the Minutes from previous meeting. The minutes from July 20, 2010 were unanimously approved.

Subcommittee Updates - All

Louanne stated that this item should have been taken off the agenda but none the less she handed out a copy of SIP Target 3 – CRP Objectives (Work plan goals 3 & 5) and explained that this information was taken from the annual report. She asked members to please provide any demographics related to the CRP objective(s), description of the review activities, findings based on review activities, formal recommendations based on findings (for County and State), follow-up on prior years annual report recommendations, discuss how the CRP recommendations will be disseminated to county, state officials as well as the public, and future directions.

Louanne informed everyone that the annual report to OCAP is due to the state on October 15, 2010 and therefore will be reaching out to subcommittees for their recommendations by early September. Any questions regarding subcommittee work plans should be forwarded to Louanne.

CYC Update - Judy

Judy introduced Cristina Miranda, President of Ventura County Chapter of California Youth Connection (CYC), and expressed her enthusiasm about Cristina participating as a member of CSOC. Cristina will be attending CSOC meetings on a regular basis and will work on gathering the knowledge of CSOC's work and how CYC can benefit from this collaboration.

Currently, a nationwide movement exists on increasing the voice of youth and families at various types of state, county and public forums. Judy explained that she saw Cristina's attendance at CSOC as a perfect opportunity for CYC to promote the participation of foster youth in policy development and legislative change to improve the foster care system, and strive to improve social work practice and child welfare policy.

Judy informed everyone that CYC recently had a viewing of a video that they produced regarding sensitivity and trust with the target audience being group home providers. Cristina was asked to bring the video to next month's meeting so that the group could have the opportunity to view it as well.

CWDA Update/Info - Judy

Judy reported that at the recent CWDA meeting she attended in Sacramento, a memo was passed out regarding an Overview of the CMHDA and CWDA Proposed Action Plan, Rev. July 26, 2010. The memo was issued by the County Mental Health Directors Association in collaboration with the County Welfare Directors Association of California. The Action Plan focuses on this primary goal: *Every child*

in the foster care system, and children formerly in care, will receive timely specialty mental health services when needed, regardless of their county of placement.

Judy also handed out an SB 785 flow chart that was given out a previous CSOC meeting which illustrated the authorization for Out-of-Plan Services for Children in Foster Care, Kin Gap, and Adoption Services process. The group was asked to review the document against the proposed action plan. After reviewing the document, it was agreed that the process flow chart needs to include additional information regarding proper notification for placing and receiving agencies when making referrals. The document will be considered a work in progress until the missing pieces are filled.

A discussion ensued regarding which county agency needs to report to the receiving county of those clients requiring specialty mental health services. Everyone agreed that specific protocols need to be established regarding who needs to be contacted and by whom. Pete added that Candace Jacobsen also known as the Authorization Unit is currently the contact person at the Behavioral Health Department for mental health referrals.

Judy suggested that a small workgroup be formed in order to begin the work on establishing proper protocol and/or policies /if and when the proposed action plan by CMHDA and CWDA is implemented. Pam Fisher volunteered to chair the workgroup; however, she stated that it would behoove them to first be able to understand the issue(s). Next step would be to determine who would partake in the workgroup and establish a meeting schedule.

Group Home Patches was another item of discussion at the CWDA meeting. Apparently there have been some concerns with certain group homes requesting supplemental funding in addition to regular board and care funds. Judy asked that Probation, BHD, and CFS adopt an agreement of saying no to "Patches". The three agencies were in agreement.

There is also a proposed budget trailer bill containing language on reworking RCL rates and a proposed moratorium on New Group Home Licenses. More information to come as it is received.

Pete stated that 26.5 mental health services need to be monitored more closely to ensure appropriateness of serve, improve outcomes and prevent excessive length of service. Therefore, it is extremely important for agencies to work closely with the school districts on the IEP process. He informed everyone that VCBH and SELPA will be providing training to staff in the fall regarding this issue. Also, the status of VCBH's responsibility in the IEP process remains uncertain at this time as there is a chance that the responsibility can be handed back to the schools next year.

-Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC) Update – Gina Johnson

Gina provided information that more than likely youth committed to Department of Juvenile Justice will be paroled to Sentencing County. Parolees will include more serious offenders committed for 707(b) WIC (murder, assault with a deadly weapon, etc).

SAAG Report Update - Leticia

Leticia provided a copy of the Children's Services Oversight Committee Summary Report for June 2010. She went through and explained the various data graphs stating that the data was for CFS only. Data included: Total Youth in Group Home Placement, Total Youth in Wraparound, and Group Home Location by Type, Group Home Admit and Discharges, Group Home Length of Stay, Exits to Permanency, In Care 3 Years or Longer – Emancipated or Turned 18, and Placed Together with all Siblings in Care.

Judy added the importance of focusing on trends rather than on point in time data.

Leticia will continue to work with Kris Bennett offline to modify the last three graphs illustrating permanency, long term placement, and number of siblings placed. Pete also asked Leticia to work with him on graph changes pertaining to his workgroup.

SB 785 Process Check - Louanne

See CWDA Update/Info Above.

Annual Report Recommendations - Louanne

See Subcommittee Updates Above.

Governance Structure - Judy

Judy passed around copies of the governance structure that represents the various county committees and who partakes in them. She reached out to Cristina Miranda and asked her to think about where her organization would best fit into the structure and then asked her to bring back the information to a future meeting.

Included in the structure are: Community Commission for Ventura County, IPC, ICMC, Blue Ribbon Commission, and CSOC. The Operations Review System consists of IPERC, WRC, WIT Review Committee and Agency Partner Reports.

Louanne will work with Jody Kussin on a new governance structure schematic that would capture the continuous working connectivity of all the groups involved.

WIT Reinstatement - Judy

MaryEllen informed Judy that Fran Arner-Costello from SELPA would like a personal invitation from Judy to take the lead on reinstating the WIT committee. Judy, Pam Fisher, and Louanne will work on the WIT Committee Charter once the committee is reinstated.

Miscellaneous- Pete

It was unanimously decided that the time of the CSOC meeting would be changed to 9:00 a.m. commencing in September 2010.

Workgroup Breakouts - All

Members went into their workgroups to continue to work on their assigned goals, strategies and milestones.

Next Meeting – September 21, 2010, 9 a.m. at Casa Pacifica Community Based Services, 975 Flynn Road, Camarillo, CA 93012, Training Room 2

**VENTURA COUNTY CITIZEN'S REVIEW PANEL / CHILDREN'S SERVICES
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING
September 21, 2010 – Minutes**

Members Present:

**Diana Aguayo-Saldana, Human Services Agency
Kris Bennett, AspiraNet
Jody Kussin, Casa Pacifica
Pete Pringle, Ventura County Behavioral Health
Maryellen Collins, United Parents
Gina Johnson, Probation Agency
David Friedlander, Kids and Families Together
Elaine Martinez, Children and Family Services
Diana Grill, Ventura County Public Health
Steven Sherry, Ventura County Behavioral Health
Laura Welbourn, Ventura County Schools
Elaine Martinez-Curry, The Partnership
Lynne West, Big Brothers Big Sisters
Steve Elson, Casa Pacifica
Pam Fisher, Ventura County Behavioral Health**

**Guests: Donna Kuonen, Children and Family Services
Louanne Shahandeh, CFS Consultant
Cristina Miranda, California Youth Connection (CYC)
Anitta Talley, Parents with Purpose
Ramila Sloane, Parents with Purpose**

Meeting Facilitator: Pete Pringle

Meeting Called to Order at 9:05 a.m. Introductions took place around the table.

Approval of the Minutes from previous meeting. The minutes from August 17, 2010 were unanimously approved.

CRP State Annual Report - Louanne

Louanne passed out the draft Citizen Review Panel Annual & Recommendations Report (2009-2010). She stated that the report is not complete as of yet as she still needs a report from Workgroup 1 and also needs recommendations from Pete Workgroup Three.

The Annual Report is due to the state by November 15, 2010 and therefore the draft needs to be completed by October 15, 2010. The draft will be brought to the next CSOC meeting on October 19, 2010 for final review.

OCAP will be using portions Ventura County's report to incorporate into the state report.

Family Finding – Jody Kussin

Jody expressed her enthusiasm for their Family Finding Program at Casa Pacifica which is coordinated by Jill Borgeson. She stated that the program began on July 1, 2010 and that they have had several success stories.

Jody shared with the group the story of a child who has been able to be re-connected with the biological father. The father is currently interacting with his child via Skype and is very much interested in having the child be a permanent part of his life. Currently, they are working on placing the child in Missouri so he can be closer to his father.

Jody explained the importance of the three placing agencies continuing to referrals to Family Finding as they have been very successful with connecting children with relatives. She stated that Jill and her team work very diligently on searching for biological parents, relatives, etc. in order to begin to build relationships between the child and relatives.

Jody expressed her enthusiasm for the Family Finding Program and is very hopeful that they can reunite many other children with relatives that are willing to partake in their lives, and encouraged the three placing agencies to continue to make referrals. To date, during the first quarter 18 children have been in the program.

Family Finding brochures are available in English and Spanish and are available to anyone who might want them.

Miscellaneous – All

The next WIT Meeting will take place on Monday, October 18, 2010 at 11:00 a.m. at Behavioral Health.

MaryEllen provided a brief update on Parents with Purpose. She began by introducing Anitta Talley and Ramila Sloane who are parent partners who will be attending future CSOC meetings.

MaryEllen shared several resource workbooks that are made available to families that cover several areas such as anger management, resolving family conflict, etc.

Pete reported that the AB 3632 training that BHD had was very successful and well attended. SELPA members, teachers, etc. were in attendance and there will be one more training session next week.

Louanne reported that the September PAC meeting focused on realigning their business structure and a follow up meeting is scheduled for October 14, 2010.

Elaine Martinez-Curry distributed flyers that contained information on the Community Summit for Violence Prevention taking place on Saturday, November 13, 2010 at the Oxnard Performing Arts Center. The summit will cover violence prevention efforts in Ventura County and will feature Dr. Roberto Vargas, author of Family Activism. She encouraged everyone to participate and to cascade information to any other person that may be interested.

Workgroup Breakouts - All

Members went into their workgroups to continue to work on their assigned goals, strategies and milestones.

Next Meeting – October 19, 2010, 9 a.m. at Casa Pacifica Community Based Services, 975 Flynn Road, Camarillo, CA 93012, Training Room 2