

Great Start Collaborative of Jackson County

May 26, 2009

Noon – 1:30pm, Lincoln School, Room 8

Members Present:

- Mary Cunningham-Deluca, Community Action Agency
- Gino Balcita, Parent
- Charisse Green, Center for Family Health
- Alice Walker, Parent
- Sara Tackett, Jackson District Library
- Brenda Davis, Jackson Intermediate School District
- Diana Rickman, Child Care Network
- Hon. Susan Beebe, Jackson County Circuit Court, Family Division
- Kathy Miller, Jackson County ISD
- Jeanette Lamphere, Parent Liaison
- Mike Kanser, Consumers Energy
- Renee Marks, Jackson County Health Department/Early On
- Melissa Davis, Family Service and Children's Aid
- Jeannie Nichols, Michigan State University Extension
- Bill Rayl, Jackson Area Manufacturers Association
- Irene LeCrone, United Way of Jackson
- Michele Bowersox, Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect
- Ann Thompson, Parent
- Sheri Butters, GSC Director
- Rachel Nelson, Community Action Agency

Agenda Items:

Welcome/Lunch

Smart Start Conference Debrief:

Mary and Sheri attended in North Carolina. Mary shared that Sheri co-presented with Bill Millett and did a wonderful job.

- **Child Care Federal Agenda – Mary Cunningham-Deluca**
 - The Child Care Act has not been reauthorized since 1994. 70% of childcare funding in Michigan goes to relative/friend care in the home. This makes it hard to encourage high quality care. Due to the lobbying nature of the organization leading the effort, a decision was made not to support the Child Care Reauthorization Act as a whole. Mary did encourage people to sign on as individuals if they feel it is appropriate. It is likely not to be reauthorized until 2010.
- **Whole Child Connection Summary – Sheri Butters**
 - Whole Child's purpose is to hook families up to resources in the community. It takes the family through a 30-40 question survey. It will then bring up providers that could benefit them according to their results. The reporting aspect is good but concerns were made that it is a possible duplicate of 211. This brought up a discussion regarding the holes in 211. Irene made a suggestion to document any problems found and contact Jenny Pollack at 211 so corrections can be made. A decision was made by the Executive Committee that Whole Child is not a funding priority at this time. A small group may be formed to further explore Whole Child and its possible benefits.

Budget

- **GSC Budget Report**
 - The budget is on track with surplus money in community outreach. Bill Millett, a strategist from North Carolina, is to do a community presentation on the links between the corporate world and child care. We are looking to split the traveling costs with another community.
- **Community Foundation Statements**
 - The April statement is now available. \$1,166.00 put into endowment for April. \$101,410.91 in spendable funds. \$90,000.00 of those funds was from the Consumers Energy Award, the rest was raised during the month of April. \$5,000.00 in Interfund Gifts from the Jackson Citizen Patriot

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Literacy Fund at the Foundation. Consumers will be matching the funds. \$15,000.00 in funds left to be matched.

- **Impact of budget cuts on local early childhood work**
 - Special Ed dollars are being used for Early Childhood.
 - Judge Beebe said that child abuse and neglected cases numbers are down but it could be census related.
 - **Potential loss of Great Parents Great Start funds will impact professional development available for GSRP teachers and parents.**
 - Mary met with the ISD to discuss the possibility of opening up Head Start training to the early childhood community so they can receive quality training at no cost.

- **Establishment of Great Start Strategic Fund**
 - The ECIC proposed the creation of this fund to better align early childhood funding statewide. Right now, there are 82 funding streams for Early Childhood in Michigan. This fund would create a single place in the budget for early childhood funding. The fund has been established with a \$100 placeholder. The Great Start Strategic Fund (GSSF) will not be controlled by Great Start. It is likely to be controlled by the Michigan Department of Education, ECIC or other state entity.

- **Star Power**
 - Star Power took place on Thursday, May 21, at the Capitol. Mary, Sheri, Ann Thompson, and Sara Tackett attended. Ann Thompson's daughter was able to be the flag bearer for Jackson. Mike Simpson and Martin Griffin seemed somewhat complacent about the issue. They reported a 5 million dollar deficit in the school budget and expect it to get worse before it gets better. With all safety nets gone, DHS will likely take a hit. As of now, there are 780 families to 1 worker. They mentioned that they only control 9 million dollars of a 40 million dollar budget. Mary and Sheri found the conversation somewhat discouraging. On a brighter note, the artwork from the children was well received.

Subcommittee Reports

Value/Awareness

- Communications/Fund Development
 - The Communications Committee and the Value Committee have been combined into 1 committee because of redundancy. Mike, Bill and Sheri made recommendation to the Executive Committee that a master business plan is needed. This plan needs to have milestones for fund development. That recommendation was approved. Bill Millett is to be the sounding board for this business plan.
- Legislative Breakfast
 - 75 people were in attendance as opposed to the 83 from last year. Even so, there was great representation with several powerful people in attendance. The meeting was very informative and productive. There was positive feedback with the breakfast being held at Lincoln.
- Imagination Library Update
 - This program started 1 year ago and there are now 2,668 children enrolled. Because of increased awareness, newborns are now being enrolled, which will give them full benefit of the program. Strides are being made to reach all of Jackson County, not just Jackson itself, through outreach to libraries, preschool story hours, health fairs, etc.

Ready to Learn

- Joint Recruitment: GSRP requires joint recruitment for HS/GSRP/Special Ed. Most at risk children are referred by 211 to Head Start. Kids who do not meet eligibility for Head Start will be referred back to 211. We want to make sure all preschool aged children are enrolled in preschool.
- School Readiness Assessment: All set to do kindergarten assessments in the fall.

Parent Coalition

- March was a reorganizing month. Parents were contacted to see if they were active or inactive. There are currently 10 parents in active status. The 1st newsletter was sent out in April. There will be a target issue in each edition which can be turned into written communication to legislators. The newsletter will be emailed to the collaborative and will be on the website as well. Alice presented Coordinated School Health (CSH) to Jackson Christian and they were very open. They are asking for more information. The

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Parent Coalition is present at many events such as family expos, community baby showers, and health fairs promoting whole health with families. Parents will also be working with their schools to have a presence at open houses.

- Jeanette shared that a Parent Coalition parent would like to work with the GSC to identify and raise awareness about Community Resources available to families. Great Start has a Community Resource Directory on the website. It was recommended that a workgroup be assembled to look at community resources.

Annual GSC Evaluation planning discussion

- Evaluation will take place at the September 22nd regularly scheduled meeting.

Open Discussion

- CFH has extended the mobile dental program to service all of JPS, Vandercook Lake and Northwest. They were able to give out 52 applications at the end-of-the year picnic.
- The MSU-Expansion is hosting a “Go Clean-Go Green” workshop. It will be held on July 23rd from 5:30 – 7:30 @ the MSU Extension office.
- Something to think about: Kids in Common support. Due to budget cuts, support may need to be cut down.
- The Executive Committee approved letters of support for HS and EHS expansion. The Collaborative made a decision to allow the Executive Committee to approve letters of support. The Executive Committee would like formal requests when letters of support are needed.
- Mary mentioned that over the next few months we will be discussing the idea of spinning off the Imagination Library and Child Care Scholarship program. More discussion will be happening through the committee process.

Meeting Adjourned