

Great Start Collaborative of Jackson County

July 28, 2009

Noon – 1:30pm, Lincoln, Room 3

Members Present:

- Mike Kanser, Consumers Energy
- Sheri Butters, GSC Director
- Robert Allen, A New Horizon Child Care & Family Development
- Pam Smith, Child Care Network
- Bill Rayl, Jackson Area Manufacturers Association
- Paige Girard, Allegiance Health
- Michele Bowersox, Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse & Neglect
- Alice Walker, Parent
- Gloria Smith, Jackson County ISD
- Kathy Hoszkiw, ABC Academy
- Irene LeCrone, United Way of Jackson County
- Linda Tallman, Family Service & Children's Aid
- Ann Thompson, Parent
- Melissa Davis, Family Service & Children's Aid
- Mary Belknap, Jackson Community College
- Jeanette Lamphere, GSC Parent Liaison
- Stacia Phillips, Family Service & Children's Aid
- Liz Raduazo, Jackson County ISD
- Jan Seitz, MSU Extension
- Sara Benedetto, Center for Family Health
- Rachel Nelson, Great Start Administrative Assistant

Agenda Items:

Welcome/Introductions – Mike Kanser

Debrief: June ECIC Technical Assistance Conference

The annual ECIC Technical Assistance Conference was held in June at Boyne Mountain. This year's conference included GSC Directors, Chairpersons, Parent Liaisons, and parent members of the GSC's. The following attended from Jackson: Sheri Butters, Mary Cunningham-DeLuca, Mike Kanser, Jeanette Lamphere, and Alice Walker.

A brief summaries of sessions attended were given.

- Mike attended the Fund Development Session. There is quite a bit of interest in this area from other GSC's. The Great Start Collaborative of Jackson County is at the forefront of GSC's in Michigan.
- Alice attended the Parent Leadership Seminar. This dealt with the importance of involvement with the Coalition. She found it very interesting. Those who attended the seminar were given Parent Leadership Handbooks, written by parents who serve on the Great Start Collaborative. GSC members requested copies of the handbook for review.

Great Start Collaborative of Jackson County

July 28, 2009

Noon – 1:30pm, Lincoln, Room 3

- Jeanette shared that economic issues were the topic of the seminar she attended, specifically advocacy and making changes through relationships and creative thinking.
- Great Start Directors attended a seminar that addressed the budget crisis that Michigan finds itself in. Ideas were given on how to continue as a collaborative should the budget fall out. There was also a discussion on True Collaboration...what we think it is and what it really is.

Review and Discussion: Kids Count Right Start data for Jackson County

- Members reviewed a brief summary of the Kids Count Right Start data for Jackson County. Many concerns were shared including concerns about the lack of prenatal care, repeat births to teens. Paige Girard shared that it is hard to get younger pregnant girls to access prenatal services even though the doctors are pushing for it. Mary Belknap voiced concern that although statewide repeat birth numbers are down, there is no improvement in the Jackson County numbers. This may be partly due to Florence Crittenton having to close as they lost funding and support. There is one labor/delivery nurse at Allegiance Health that is active in trying to educate teens at JPS in this area. She is using a curriculum called *Puberty – The Wonder Years* which is abstinence based. Although most schools have some sort of program, most teens don't have access to birth control. Although teens know the risks of having sex, 80% of them are still sexually active. The Collaborative would like to see numbers for each specific school district. Sheri will look into finding this information, if available. On a higher note, teen pregnancy numbers are down from the 1990's.

Great Start Child Care and Early Learning Regional Resource Center (RRC) Update and next steps

Pam Smith provided an update on the status of the RRC, beginning with a short review. The ECIC has released a statewide competitive grant that was due in May. There were 3 separate RFP's.

1. Statewide Childcare Database for Referrals
2. Statewide Technical RFP
3. Regional Resource Center

Child Care Network applied for the Regional Resource Center grant and was awarded the Southeast Region which covers 6 counties, Jackson being one of them. Their first meeting was on 7-27-09. Many community members came together and talked about what was needed in their specific area. Pam noted that Child Care Network will still be doing a lot of what they did before as far as professional development for Child Care providers goes. One of the big changes will be a shift in referrals to an online resource. Jeanette broached the subject of how families who do not have internet access will be able to access information. There will be a small portion of the budget allowing the RRC to assist those with non-traditional needs. The Jackson office will remain the same until October 1st. After that, Jackson families would be referred to the online resource. It is unclear as yet when the online referral system will be up and running.

Great Start Collaborative of Jackson County

July 28, 2009

Noon – 1:30pm, Lincoln, Room 3

State Budget Update

- Legislators came back from the 4th of July break, met twice and are now back on break. Both sides are trying to come together and reach agreement on the dollar amounts to be cut from the budget. Right now there are \$412 million in proposed cuts to the School Aid Budget. Sheri mentioned the need to advocate and talk about the importance of early child education. According to a statewide poll on early childhood education, the majority of people believe that early childhood education is vitally important.
- A small group was able to meet with Senator Richardville regarding the budget. His response was as expected; they are doing what they can with what they have. The Jackson Childcare Center organized a protest comprised of 3 & 4 year olds. They stood outside the Jackson Coffee Company waving signs and shouting, "We love school!" The protest was featured in the Jackson Citizen Patriot and was picked up nationally by Pre-K Now.
- Another small group was able to meet with Representative Marty Griffin who had a very similar response as Senator Richardville. Cuts are to be expected as there is not sufficient revenue statewide to support the current budget.
- Mary Belknap suggested writing letters to legislators and she urged the group to be authentic and not to use form letters. One suggestion given was to include a picture when writing letters to legislators and also sending letters to the editor.
- The Budget deadline is September 30th. Great Start Readiness Programs (GSRP) begin classes right after Labor Day. Not knowing what the budget will be will affect the ability to enroll and place children. Sheri anticipates the budget discussions will go on up to the last minute similar to a few years ago.

United Way Education Community Solutions Team Update

An update was given on the efforts of the Education Community Solutions Team.

Recently the group decided to adopt a United Way of America initiative that is focused on increasing graduation rates. CST members felt that this initiative was very comprehensive and addressed the entire education pipeline in Jackson from preschool to later job preparedness. It was stressed that United Way is not in the business of education but will be there to assist schools. The CST voted at their last meeting to look into the cost of conducting a county-wide survey to assess current programs and services related to educational success as well as what school feel their needs are to better address graduation rates. Irene shared that the cost is prohibitive and may not give us any new information. The following comments pertaining to education were shared by members: 70% of kids coming to college are not prepared. The #1 reason kids drop out of college is because of Math. Teachers are not prepared to integrate Math from preschool to high school. Parents understanding how their children learn will go a long way. Mary Belknap made mention of an upcoming Math Summit coordinated by JCC. While the summit is more focused on high school and higher education, members felt it would be beneficial to have early childhood representation. Sheri will locate registration information and get it out to members as soon as possible.

Subcommittee Reports/Discussion

Great Start Collaborative of Jackson County

July 28, 2009

Noon – 1:30pm, Lincoln, Room 3

- Parent Coalition
 - There were a few events and activities that took place this summer. Kids Fest was held at Parkside Middle School and the Learning Fair was at the Jackson Area Career Center. Advocacy information was handed out at both events. They also had postcards available for parents to send to legislators regarding the budget cuts. 150 signed responses were received.
 - There was also a baby shower held at Partnership Park. Information regarding Imagination Library and the Parent Coalition was shared with all moms-to-be in attendance. One parent is interested in serving on the Parent Coalition.
 - In the month of August, Jeanette will be getting out to school open houses regarding advocacy and the Imagination Library. Letters were sent to principals and GSRP parents on how to handle the budget cuts with little or no response—it is a hard time of year to engage school administration. There will also be an ad in the August Kids in Common encouraging parents to become involved in the Collaborative.
 - Jeanette would like to bring in a trainer from the ECIC for a training/dinner to talk about advocacy issues and how to put it into constructive action. She would also like to see 7 follow-up sessions on how to put the training into action.
- Executive Committee
 - Members reviewed the May/June budget report. A new format for the report was developed to simplify and ensure that it is easily understood. Sheri encouraged everyone to review and submit feedback at their earliest convenience.
 - September 22nd is the upcoming GSC Evaluation. Similar to last year the GSC will meet to discuss the past year's performance; this will be followed by a community presentation by Bill Millett. Sheri will be sending each member of the collaborative a survey to fill out on the Collaborative's performance. These results will be compiled by Bill Millett and shared during the GSC meeting. The evaluation meeting will be held at Lincoln in Room 3 and the presentation will be in the gym. A save the date will be sent out very soon.
- Ready To Learn
 - Kindergarten Assessments will be done in September.
 - A proposal for a parent education program utilizing Parenting Counts and the Ready to Learn curriculum is being put together for submission to Consumers Energy. Let Sheri know if you are interested in being involved in the development of the proposal.
 - A tentative schedule for professional development training for child care/preschool staff was shared. The dates are subject to change based on availability of space and trainer's schedules.
 - There was a favorable article in the Jackson Citizen Patriot regarding the school readiness assessment.
- Value
 - The GSC is beginning to discuss possible transfer of day to day management of the Imagination Library program to the Jackson District Library. Of main concern is the ability to sustain funding for the program. JDL is interested and is

Great Start Collaborative of Jackson County

July 28, 2009

Noon – 1:30pm, Lincoln, Room 3

currently having discussion with their board and administration to determine feasibility. There will be more to come as talks progress.

- Pam Smith provided an update on the child care scholarship program. The program is still going strong. The need for assistance is still high. As the need increases Child Care Network is focusing on how to use the money wisely while benefitting as many children as possible. Child Care Network also has from Weatherwax and United Way to support child care scholarships in Jackson County. Discussion will take place within the Ready to Learn committee to determine the feasibility of Child Care Network taking over all aspects of the program.
- Mike presented a draft of the GSC Communications Plan for review and approval. The communications plan is a requirement of our contract with ECIC. GSC members were supportive of the plan as drafted. Pam Smith made a motion to approve the plan with no revisions and submit to ECIC. Jan Seitz seconded, motion carried.

Upcoming Events

- The next meeting is September 22 @ Lincoln. The community presentation will be at 8:30am with our annual GSC Evaluation and Meeting to follow at 10:30am-2pm. Mark your calendars and plan to attend.

Meeting Adjourned