



STATE OF TENNESSEE
TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Andrea Jackson Building, 9th Floor
502 Deaderick Street
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0800
(615) 741-2633 (FAX) 741-5956
1-800-264-0904

Youth Transitions Advisory Council

October 3, 2019

12:30 pm – 3:30 p.m. Central Time

Goodwill Industries

937 Herman Street, Nashville, TN 37211

MEETING SUMMARY

Participants:

John Berestecky

Robert Edwards

Crystal Hutchins

Catherine Kercher

Gina Lynette

Pam Madison

Courtney Matthews

Melissa McGee

Jasmine Tyler-McHaney

Kendra Mitchell

Brandi Osborne

Steve Petty

Scott Ridgway

Brent Robinson

Christina Scott

Russette Sloan

Garrett Spurlin

Ned Andrew Solomon

Jerresha Tinker

Eric Valinor

Joseph Valinor

Carla Ward

Jules Wilson

Welcome, Introductions, Announcements and Acceptance of August 8th Meeting Summary – Steve Petty, Youth Policy Advocate, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth (TCCY)

Petty welcomed the group at 12:38 p.m. He expressed his appreciation for those attending and asked for introductions and announcements.

McGee said the next Council on Children's Mental Health (CCMH) is Thursday, October 10th at the Honey Alexander Center, the new Family and Children's Service facility.

IT WAS MOVED (WILSON) AND SECONDED (SPURLIN) TO ACCEPT THE AUGUST 8TH MEETING SUMMARY. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Department of Children's Services, Office of Independent Living Update – Courtney Matthews, Director and Jerresha Tinker, Youth Engagement Coordinator, Office of Independent Living, Department of Children Services

Matthews provided an overview of the Office of Independent Living as well as an update of activities within the agency since the August meeting. The office prepares youth in foster care and young adults who age out

of foster care for a successful transition to adulthood to become confident and productive individuals in society.

Matthews said she is very happy to report there is now a second IL specialist in Davidson County. Shelby County, Davidson County, the Chattanooga area and the Mid-Cumberland all have two IL specialists.

Matthews reviewed the Jim Casey State Plan with attendees. Previously this was a yearly plan. Last year it transitioned to a three-year plan. Matthews said the new director over Jim Casey Youth Initiatives reviewed the Tennessee three-year plan. The previous plan included four indicators: stable housing, educational success, pregnant and parenting, and permanency. The review provided an opportunity to identify two indicators where the most impact could be made. The new plan now focuses on stable housing, and education success as well as economic security. Matthews said they would like to increase housing opportunities for young people and more collaboration with higher education. There is a large component of the Casey plan that talks about expanding eligibility criteria for extension of foster care services. Ned Andrew Soloman asked for clarification about going from four priorities to two. He said he felt like the two areas of focus seem to lead to permanency. He asked what happened to the indicator around pregnancy. Matthews said they believe progress is already being made in this area. She explained they developed a new independent living allowance for young people receiving extension of foster care services. They receive an increased rate if they are parenting. The intention of the revision in the plan was to focus on areas that needed the greatest work.

Matthews reviewed the grand regions and highlighted where the needs are for housing options. Currently there are supervised independent living programs in the following areas:

East Tennessee:

- Holston Homes – Greenville
- Chambliss – Chattanooga
- Freewill Baptist – Greenville
- Partnership – Chattanooga
- Smoky Mtn. Children’s Home – Sevierville

Middle Tennessee

- Monroe Harding - Nashville
- Omini Visions - Nashville
- Tennessee Children’s Home – Clarksville

West Tennessee

No options available in this region. However, Omni Visions will be opening in Jackson pending approval of their THDA grant.

Matthews reported there is a meeting scheduled for tomorrow regarding the Fostering Youth Transitions program connected to the Housing Authority that Toni Shaw spoke about in the August YTAC meeting.

Matthews next reported on Extension of Foster Care Services as of August 31, 2019. Compared to last year's numbers for the same time period, there has been a reduction in episodes. This could be because less young people actually aged out of foster care in this time period. Active cases are up by two total episodes. Matthews said Dave Aguzzi is working on the data portion of the year-end report and is waiting on the aged-out report for last fiscal year. Once that is received, they will be able to see the exact number of people who aged-out and how many would have been eligible for extension of foster care services. Total young adults served is 412. Total active in EFCS is 346. Matthews clarified that the number of episodes and the number of young adults served is not the same thing. She highlighted an example where the total young adults served is one less than number of episodes, meaning there was one young person who came in twice.

Tinker reported on youth engagement statistics for FY19. There are currently four active members on the Independent Living Youth Leadership Board. Over the past year, 27 Youth 4 Youth board meetings were held across the state including Memphis, Nashville, Chattanooga and Knoxville. She reported the PREP (Personal Responsibility Education Program) served 1,900 youth.

Matthews asked to add something regarding Jim Casey. She said that Tennessee is part of a smaller group of states called the Southeast Affinity Group that also includes Mississippi and Georgia. Last month, the states met in Atlanta to talk about collaborative efforts. Each state brought a young person to the meeting. One of the things that came from the meeting for Tennessee, was to do work with the DCS training unit to review all the trainings related to older youth and EFCS youth. They will be looking at the trainings for both staff and foster care providers. The Young Adult Council will also be reviewing the trainings. The Southeast group discussed the importance of looking at foster youth as individuals and understanding and humanizing their behavior.

Tinker said next week the Department will be hosting MIT (Men in Training) boys camp. Currently there are 23 young men scheduled to attend.

Matthews said there is a new communications director at DCS. Independent Living was chosen for the first project for the communications team. They are working on a video showing both current and former foster care youth talking about the benefits of extension of foster care services. The hope is for eligible youth to hear the positive experiences of peers who accepted the services. They highlighted individuals from varied experiences from youth who are parents, to justice involved youth, to youth who went on to higher education.

Update from Resource Centers

Youth Connections - Pamela Madison

Madison said she is excited to report on the work going on at Youth Connections. Monroe Harding is taking on two new initiatives. Monroe Harding has been chosen as one of two sites that will host a hub in Nashville. The purpose of this hub is to reach out to opportunity youth aging-out, from 17 to 24, and help get them connected to either work or school. The hub will be housed at Youth Connections in downtown Nashville. Monroe Harding will be working with the Opportunity Youth Coalition (OYC) to guide the work and

develop a strategic plan. The goal is to be able to reach over 10,000 young people. Madison said they are now in the process of developing a recruitment plan and engaging youth to help with this. This is a Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grant. This funding allows Monroe Harding to continue to serve youth in care, but also allows a further reach. The award is for three years.

Madison reported on Monroe Harding's second new initiative, the Comprehensive Career Readiness Program. She said right now, the focus is often on immediate needs when trying to secure employment. However, Monroe Harding recognizes they also need assistance in identifying career paths. This is an evidence-based program that has had great results. They hope to have the program up and running by January. Foster Forward out of Rhode Island will be here in November to do a week-long training with staff. Monroe Harding will be seeking partnerships within the corporate community for job shadowing and other opportunities.

Berestecky asked how long the funding will allow the programs to run. Madison said the award for the hub is three years. The career program should be longer.

Partnership – Catherine Kercher

Kercher reported on the work of Partnership. The EPB, the local power board in Chattanooga, has invited youth to come in for job training and soft skills training culminating in an opportunity to be hired. The program will begin in October for 12 weeks of soft skill training at Chattanooga State. Once training is complete, participants will then go to the power board for job shadowing or internships. The pay for these youth during training is \$15 per hour and then will be bumped to \$17 per hour when hired full-time. Kercher said Partnership is very excited about this incredible opportunity for these youth.

Partnership has over 115 employees with over 20 programs available.

Kercher said Partnership has coordinated with local companies who offer free credit counseling for young people.

Kercher reported on a new initiative called Camp Hope. Partnership staff attended a family justice conference in San Diego and learned about the initiative. They connect with family justice centers and give children coming out of domestic violence the opportunity to go to camp. The program coordinator is looking for trauma informed camps to connect with to provide young campers the experience of a lifetime. Activities empower children to look for hope and provide the opportunity to grow and develop skills.

Kercher wanted to highlight the Hamilton Area Transitional Living Coalition, headed by John Berestecky. Many partner agencies in the area met yesterday to talk about how they can pull together resources to better serve young people in the area.

Solomon asked what jobs the young adults in the soft skills training provided by EBP will be doing. Kercher said they are training for customer service jobs as well as field tech programs. Berestecky asked if the applications were closed for the training. Kercher said the program is now closed. Eligibility requirements

were to be 18 with a high school diploma or GED, or to be working toward a GED. The program was also open to individuals with a juvenile justice background.

Youth Villages LifeSet Program Update – Christina Scott, Youth Villages LifeSet

Scott provided a brief update on the work of Youth Villages. They are currently serving 802 youth in Tennessee, with 642 in LifeSet and 338 in EFCS. In Memphis, the Better Business Bureau did a workshop on how to avoid work or career related scams. In East Tennessee, Helen Ross McNabb did an HIV/AIDS training. The young people were very engaged asking lots of questions. Scott said there is a FAFSA workshop coming up. In Middle Tennessee, a program kicked off with Gap/Old Navy, providing guaranteed interviews. This program is called This Way Forward. This Saturday, all the Gap, Banana Republics, and Old Navy stores are hosting a hiring event from 10-2, and will prioritize transition-age youth.

Scott said both of the offices in Nashville and Memphis are under construction. They are looking for outside venues for the next few months. Scott provided an update on Quincy Harris, who was present at the August YTAC meeting. He got a job at Urban Juicer, and he loves it. He is also doing some modeling work. Someone with the Council connected him to the Youth Action Board. He had the opportunity to go to Atlanta. He would like to go to school in January.

Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Update – Jules Wilson, Office of Children, Young Adults, and Families, Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

Wilson reported the first Healthy Transitions Initiative just closed. However, the Department was awarded a new round of funding. Wilson said Centerstone Research Institute was granted a no-cost extension from SAMSHA to analyze data accumulated this summer. The statewide Young Adult Leadership Council did a two-hour focus group with them. Wilson said she is excited to see the feedback and to see how the Department can better serve with the new grant.

Wilson gave an update on the Young Adult Leadership Councils (YALC). The Hamilton County Council will continue as a part of the local CAB. The statewide council will continue also for the next five years through Healthy Transitions funding. The meetings will be transitioning to a facilitation style meeting so the young adults will have the opportunity to learn to facilitate discussion. This Saturday the YALC will meet at TAADAS. Meetings usually average 10 – 15 participants. Over the year, the numbers have tripled. The next three meetings are October 5th, November 2nd, and December 7th. Supportive adults are welcome to attend. Please email Wilson if you are interested in attending.

Wilson said regarding the new Healthy Transitions round of funding, the Department is in the process of hiring a half-time position with the Department of Education. Contracts have been executed with partners. The sites are at Frontier and Mental Health Cooperative.

Wilson reported on Clinical High Risk for Psychosis (CHRP) and the First Episode Psychosis Initiative. Staff have attended trainings recently on evaluation methods and cognitive behavioral therapy for young people

with psychosis. CHRP has recently executed a contract with their evaluation partners, Centerstone Research Institute.

Wilson updated attendees on the Round Table Talk, the post SOCAT Conference event. There were two tracts, one for young adults and one for providers. Young adults focused on how to increase advocacy and leadership skills. Providers received training on disability awareness. There was also a facilitated networking hour in which the young adults and providers had the opportunity to network.

Wilson said five YALC members attended the SOCAT conference. There were there for the experience and to learn. At the conference, Wilson hosted a panel to discuss building a system of care for youth engagement. There was also a panel with the First Episode Psychosis Initiative staff.

Wilson said the YALC members did a panel last week at NAMI and were able to highlight their expertise as young adult peers. She said they did a fantastic job.

Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network – Scott Ridgway, Executive Director

Petty introduced Scott Ridgway, Executive Director for TSPN. Petty told attendees that TSPN received \$650,000 in new funding to hire regional positions and make services more available throughout the state.

Ridgway has been with TSPN for twenty years. He said he is very thankful to the administration for the additional funding. While suicide is a preventable cause of death, it is only preventable if we are aware and have education about the warning signs. We also have to intervene. Ridgway asked that people leave today knowing that no one wants to die by suicide. He said there is a need to focus on not sensationalizing or glamorizing anyone's death. Highlights of Ridgway's presentation are below:

Ridgway gave an overview of the TSPN Model:

Prevention

- Suicide Prevention Trainings
- Advocacy and public policy – Tennessee has more legislation on suicide than any other state in the nation.
- Zero Suicide Initiative works with agencies in healthcare, behavioral health. This initiative attempts to guide changes at the policy level.
- Suicide Awareness Outreach. TSPN was present at the Banana Pudding festival and the Apple Festival. Ridgway said you can be anywhere distributing information. Education about the warning signs is important because they are specific to different populations. There are brochures available for various populations such as veterans, farmers, and many others.

Intervention

- Eight Crisis Centers
- 911 – Police/EMS

- Hospitalization/crisis stabilization/detox. It is key to have understanding about what is going on in an individual's life.

Postvention

- Support groups
- Work with media
- Work with schools and businesses

TSPN will be in Coffee County to help with the aftermath of their recent student's death by suicide.

The number one risk factor for suicide is undiagnosed depression.

A response team is in every region now. Crisis teams are present in school districts. Losing a loved one to suicide puts one at greater risk to die by suicide.

Ridgway said 129 Americans die by suicide every day. These are the reported suicides.

In Tennessee:

- Every day we lose three people to suicide
- Number one cause of death in Tennessee youth aged 10-17
- Number two cause of death in Tennessee youth aged 12-24
- State Crisis Continuum FY 19 preliminary data
- 125 K crisis calls, 17 percent from youth

Suicide prevention is a public health issue. We need a public health approach in helping people understand the risk factors and warning signs for suicide.

Founder of TSPN was a medical director at Lakeside Hospital who had lived experience. He had attempted suicide seven times.

Risk factors include prior suicide attempt, mood disorders, substance abuse, and access to lethal means. Warning signs include threatening to hurt or kill oneself, seeking means to hurt or kill oneself, hopelessness, increasing alcohol or drug use, and dramatic mood changes. Protective factors include connectedness, availability of physical and mental health care, and coping ability.

The Jason Flatt Act of 2007 mandates two hours of in-service suicide prevention training for public school staff. This has been replicated in 15 states. All school staff now required to have training via Jared's Law. Now a prevention, intervention, and postvention plan has to be in place. Please see Tenn. Code Ann. 49-6-1902.

Kenn and Madge Tullis, MD, Suicide Prevention Act of 2017 mandates suicide prevention training as part of professional licensure requirements.

Promotion of Tennessee statewide crisis line (855-274-7471).

Congress passed legislation for the FCC to do a feasibility study for a three digit number for people to call if they are suicidal or are in crisis.

Ridgway talked about the Natchez Trace Bridge where 32 Tennesseans have jumped to their deaths. Ridgway said \$1.5 million has been appropriated for a feasibility study to see what can be done about the bridge. Call boxes have now been installed.

Ridgway told the story of Kevin Hines.

Ridgway encouraged the Council to visit the TSPN website.

TCCY Update – Steve Petty

Petty talked with the Council about kidcentral and the new podcast “Roots and Wings”. Petty encouraged people to visit kidcentral.com for information and resources.

Petty reviewed the TCCY 2021 Budget Recommendations with attendees. He explained this was a new format for the document. Our goal this year was to produce a concise, focused document highlighting areas staff identified as priorities. There are six different categories with items in each category. The first recommendation was around appointing a Complete Count Committee for the 2020 Census. The census will determine how much federal money is given to states over the next ten years. Children are the most undercounted population. The recommendations also include requests around transition-age youth and expanding eligibility.

Solomon asked if the TCCY Budget Recommendations correlate to the YTAC Annual Report. Petty said it does not. TCCY has a requirement in the statute to make these recommendations to the Administration and legislature.

Annual Report Discussion – Steve Petty, TCCY

Petty said there are only two sections that are outstanding. All the resource center reports are in. He has met with the TCCY publications staff to set up pages on the website to house meeting summaries. Instead of doing a separate executive summary, we are going to begin the report with a letter from TCCY’s executive director. If anyone would like to make last minute suggestions about accomplishments, please do so. Out of the ten recommendations, it was determined that two of the recommendations need a task force: legal issues for transition-age youth and transportation. Petty asked if anyone would like to lead the efforts or volunteer to participate, please let him know. Solomon suggested sending an email to the Council about the two recommendations giving people who are not present the opportunity to volunteer.

Proposed 2020 Meeting Dates

- April 30, 2020
- June 18, 2020 jointly with CCMH
- August 6, 2020
- October 1, 2020

Future Meeting Topics

Petty asked people to let him know if anyone has ideas for meeting topics.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:19 p.m.