

Spalding County Collaborative Authority for Families and Children, Inc.
Meeting Minutes November 9, 2011 9:00 AM - Spalding County Health Department

Present: Shelley Ball, Ed Youmans, Ruth Daniel, Michele Mason, Eula Redding, Shirley Moore, Sharon Harvey, Heather Kingsley, Jo Ellis, Molli Pruitt, Will Doss, Kelly Leger, Cynthia Tidwell, Carmen Caldwell, Melinda Mack, Dianne Brittan, Pat Bell, Clyde Forbes, Theo Harris, Carleene Brown, Grady Caldwell, Cherry Hovatter, Pam McCollum, Vanora O'Dell **New Members:** Nicole King, Teresa Johnson, Geraldine Jackson, Lisa Fambro, Patricia Artz, Lou Negron, Afiya King, Eddie Mayfield **Guests:** Sharon Grant, Mike Dennard, Antone Davis, Pat Jordan (36)

Call to Order: Pam McCollum, Chairperson

Prayer/Pledge: Carmen Caldwell/Patricia Artz

Minutes: October 12, 2011 - Motion to approve by Jo Ellis, second by Kelly Leger, all approved.

No Executive Director Report

No Coordinator Report

Presentation by Sharon Harvey, Executive Director, Strengthening Georgia Families, Inc. (SGF) - SGF is a child access and visitation program geared towards providing information and services to non-custodial parents from intake and assessment to parent education, counseling, mediation access and visitation. There is large number of non-custodial parents who are not able to visit with their children through divorce, moving on with girlfriend, etc. When we are contacted by a non-custodial parent who wishes visitation rights with their child(ren), we obtain initial information, determine barriers and set up a plan of action to achieve access and visitation rights if achievable. Education is provided to give legal information, guidance on how to interact with the other parent properly, and understanding child behavior at different age levels. SGF also writes parenting plans, can act as mediator and can supervise visits and monitor visits. We accommodate parental visits so that, if it is a problem, contact is not made between parents at the drop off and pick up sites. Although legal services are not included, information is provided the non-custodial parent, especially on how important it is to "legitimate" the child (so child has full legal right to both father and mother, can inherit property, can qualify for Social Security benefits if father should die, etc.) through the court system. When the father is married to the mother, he has the right to visits if he becomes separated from the mother. If the father and mother are not married to each other, the father must legitimate the child to establish his right to visitation. The non-custodial parent would have to file with the court stating that he is the biological father, etc. If the mother consents, an unwed father can sign to legitimate his child on the paternity affidavit at the hospital, or it can be done within the first year of the child's birth, at Vital Records at the Health Department (\$25 fee). If done after one year, a person must go through the court system (\$200 filing fee). In the state of Georgia only, if you have a child out of wedlock and the child is not legitimized through the court, the state of Georgia will not acknowledge that parent's connection to the child, regardless of child support, birth certificate or even if child has that parent's last name. The mother does not have to agree to child being legitimized. And, if the mother and father decide to marry after that child is over one year old, the child would still have to be legitimized by the father because of the one year rule. Georgia has an extremely large number of children that are not legitimized. Court documents must be filed in the state where the child lives. If non-custodial parent is more inclined to visit and see their child and legitimate their child, they are more likely to pay their child support. This is of great concern to Child Support Enforcement and why they created this program. Just because a person's name is listed on the birth certificate, does not give them rights to their children. Visitation is a separate issue from custody or child support. The court looks at what is in the best interest for the child(ren). Websites: www.icandocs.org and select Georgia (will show how to complete legitimation forms (developed by Child Support Enforcement); www.legalaid-ga.org (complete most any legal forms, to include legitimation of child and pay \$200 filing fee and \$50 sheriff serving fee). Sharon stressed the fact that this program cannot give legal advice, can only educate as to legal rights. SGF's telephone number is 770-584-6840.

Committee Reports:

- **Senior Issues:** Everette Clark reported SI released new mission statement yesterday: "To create an environment for community collaboration on issues that concern senior citizens." Community Resource Conference will be March 27, 2012.
- **Prevent Child Abuse Spalding:** Vanora O'Dell reported that next meeting is tomorrow at 12:00 noon at small administration conference room. Committee continues to work on creating library of information and also to make presentations to any agency, company, etc.
- **Healthy Youth:** Kelly Leger thanked those who helped distribute Swifteens website (www.swifteens.org) cards, the Swift Resource Guide has been distributed, and the next meeting is today right after the Collaborative meeting and committee will be working on financials for 2012.
- **Drug Awareness Prevention Coalition:** Molli Pruitt noted the committee will be looking at needs assessments and action plans to increase drug awareness prevention, and meets today at 1:30 p.m.
- **Parent Advisory Committee:** Eula Redding reporting PAC met November 1 and are working on end of year items, and are looking for a few good members. No meeting in December, and next meeting will be January 3 at the Fairmont Community Center at 9:00 a.m. Also, a phone parenting line has been created, and Shirley Milner should be contacted for assistance.
- **Spalding Co Long Term Recovery:** Will Doss indicated the Reallocation Committee (RAC) of the SCLTRC has decided to meet regularly, and the goal of SCLTRC is to meet unmet needs of victims of the April tornado disaster. Patricia Artz, Case Manager, is working diligently with families. Next RAC meeting is November 28 at 1:00 p.m. at St. John Lutheran Church. In desperate need of a Volunteer Coordinator.
- **Spalding Co Re-entry Task Force:** Michele Mason reported last meeting was held yesterday and roundtable discussion held. RTF recently met with DOC representative responsible for re-entry, to discuss initiative for re-entry and RTF in Spalding has their support. RTF now forming sub-committees.

Partner Introductions

Meeting adjourned. Next meeting is set for December 14, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. at the Spalding Co. Health Department, with a presentation from New Mercy Community Services, Carmen Caldwell, Executive Director.

Approved, Pam McCollum – Chair

Respectfully Submitted, Vanora O'Dell – Admin Asst