**RAC Meeting Minutes**

**October 29, 2015**

**Waterbury Youth Service System Inc.**

**Regional Advisory Council Members and Representatives**

**Cassie Manger**- FAVOR/Parent, **Precious Price**- Annie C Intern, **Isaiah** - Lisa Inc., **Mackenzie** - Lisa Inc, **Jameson** - Lisa Inc, **Yaisha** - Lisa Inc, **Diane Capaldo**- Lisa Inc., **Julie Calabro**- Value Options, **Chavon Cruz**- Lisa Inc, **Jill Schoenfuss**- Staywell, **Sandy Porteus**- FSGW; **Laura Cummings**- WYSS Inc.; **Pamela Dirzius-Wright**- Parent; **Sergio Alvarez**- DCF; **Kathi Crowe** – WYSS; **Mark Hygysician**- VO/ CTBHP; **John Doucette**- Parent; **Josephine Bennett**- Parent; **Jessica Sachse – VO/CTBHP**

1. Meeting was called to order by Cassie, filling in for Deb.
   1. Agendas and sign-in sheets went around to everyone present
   2. Cassie informed the group that both Precious and Julie would be taking meeting minutes, and if anyone wanted their name attached to any statements or comments to please give their name before making the comment.
2. Acceptance of Minutes from September
   1. Kathi made a motion to approve the minutes, Sandy seconded the motion. Motion approved.
3. Presentation by Sergio Alvarez, DCF data dashboard
   1. To follow up from last meeting’s discussion on data Sergio presented the group with Data Dashboard information regarding Children-in-Placement Distribution in Region 5. Handouts were given and Sergio explained its meaning.
      1. Question: Was the data collected according to where the person seeking services lives or where they received services. Sergio: Data comes out of region where the family received services
   2. Presentation re: Integrated Service System (ISS) by Sergio Alvarez as Colleen was not able to make the meeting:
      1. Goals: to establish gaps in service (showed map of DCF services), make services more family centered and youth guided, make more progress with children coming into care
      2. Discussed how the RAC can be the place to hear feedback, discover barriers to services, and work together with the ISS to fix issues and report to SAC
         1. Main hub to advise and support communities
         2. Inviting Community Collaboratives (CC) to come to the RAC and talk about client family struggles and services
      3. Sandy: Providers are starting to see more children with trauma. Sergio: Using more trauma informed practices is being looked into (increase in training at DCF for Trauma informed care, increase in education with families and staff and education for foster families. Cassie: Should be used to educate all families, esp. biological families
      4. Diane: Congregate care is closing- contract for human trafficking in Bristol & New Britain- need similar services for Waterbury. Sergio: Understands that congregate care is closing but that there is still a role for congregate care. Discussed goal of congregate care should be: short and family involved, but that the main goal of DCF is to keep children with their families. SFIT is an intervention, not a placement. Also, day respite programs, SWEPT programing (18-24 years old). Sergio: suggested a training at the RAC in regards to SFIT (possibly Beverly Green and Nicole Walsh, or Lisa Hershey)
   3. Sandy: 1 in 14 children have a parent in jail (1 in 9 for black children: Precious) suggested that RAC may want to look into this issue
      * 1. Sergio: discussed case that 75% of kids in detention centers went home, but 25% of kids still went elsewhere. This is something that DCF is also hoping to get more involved with.
   4. Kathi: Asked Sergio to offer some info on Foster Connections
      1. Sergio: Siblings are a hot topic right now. Recently a law was passed that siblings within a certain distance to each other have to have weekly visitation. There is a 96% requirement by law
   5. The stress on a child’s education when moving between different foster homes was discussed
   6. Homeless youth were discussed: reaching out to potentially homeless youth in schools to let them know that there are services available for them
   7. Educating youth about their rights was discussed
4. Membership – tabled for next month
5. Focus of RAC for the coming year
   1. Youth in detention centers: lowering recidivism rates of youth
   2. Engaging more of the youth involvement
      1. Youth’s ideas
         1. Faster process for leaving care
         2. Speeding up the process of guardianship
   3. Youth aging out of care
   4. Getting school reps to come to the meetings
6. Do we want/need a Leadership team?
   1. Suggestion: This is a leadership team
   2. Could use a co-chair
      1. Precious nominated and elected
7. Moving the meeting to FSGW or rotating between communities - thoughts?
   1. Rotating Communities
      1. Would have to consider youth and family participant stability
      2. Confidential conference calls instead of moving
      3. Moving to FSGW is a possibility, parking is accessible, table set up, conference call ability
      4. Group decided to stay at WYS
8. Community Updates
   1. Essay/ Poetry Competition
      1. Ask Deb if she could send out flyers to foster families and agencies
   2. Youth Services Girl’s Day
   3. Homeless/Runaway Youth Shelter
9. Comments/suggestions
   1. Portion of agenda for youth to speak
   2. Putting names and organizations on the agenda
   3. Check out TurningPointCT.org
   4. Next meeting Dec. 30 (Wednesday) WYSS 3-4:30PM
10. Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned by Cassie at 4:30 pm