

**Island County Children's Commission
October 2, 2008 Meeting**

Minutes

Members Present: Dave White, Kristina Saunsaucie, Cynthia Shelton, Bess Windecker-Nelson, Paty Williams, Kristin Lasher, Sandy Ziemer, Janice O'Mahony, Carol Stillian, Mark Brown, Rod Merrell, Margie Forbes, Kate Grossman, Peggy Dyer

Members Absent: Patty Page, Fran McCarthy, Hillary Mellish

Guests: Anne Murphy, John Dyer, Beth Derrig, Gail Cleveland

Staff Present: Dan N. Bond, Keith Higman

This meeting was called together at approximately 4:35 PM by Chair, Carol Stillian.

Introductions proceeded and it was noted that Anne Murphy, John Dyer, Beth Derrig and Gail Cleveland are prospective Children's Commissioners who have applied and have been interviewed. Their names will soon be forwarded to the Board of Health with a recommendation for their appointment as Commission members. The BOH meets next on October 20th. All four applicants were in attendance to experience a meeting in action as they await appointment.

Dave White offered this month's opening thought. Dave's story/comments were a reminder that we can touch lives in seemingly small, but special, ways that will have lasting impact.

Chair Report

As there was no September meeting, minutes of the August meeting were offered for approval. August minutes were approved as written.

Carol reviewed Commission activities over the past 2 months:

- The August 18th update/presentation to the BOH went well. Several Children's Commissioners took part and others were in attendance in support.
- The 0-5 Early Childhood Study/Action Group has merged with Partners in Island County for Early Learning (PICEL), and will be one committee under the Children's Commission.
- Four interviews have taken place of new applicants to the Children's Commission. Those applicants were in attendance at this meeting. Carol introduced the applicants once again.
- Planning is underway for the Healthy Youth and Community Fair II, to be held at the Oak Harbor Library on November 15th. Workshops and booths are being put together. The primary concern now is getting the word out about the event so that youth will attend.
- Children's Day and the Sno-Isle Libraries Early Learning Events have taken place. The Children's Commission was there with booths and information.
- We are planning a Children's Commission Retreat in January of 2009. It will be our second, and will help us transition to our next phase of work. The

Commissioners present voted to have the Retreat on Thursday, January 8th, from approximately 3 PM until 7:30 PM. More to come as this develops.
Commissioners are asked to recommend anyone that they know of who would be a good facilitator for our work that day. Inform Dan.

Guest Speaker:

Gail LaVassar, Executive Director of Readiness To Learn (RTL) presented information on the homeless youth issue in Island County, from the RTL perspective. RTL works with/through the schools in all four geographic areas of Island County, including Camano Island. Their lens into homelessness is through the schools. Using that lens, for '07-'08 there are 383 youth identified as homeless in the county. These are youth who lack a fixed, regular, adequate nighttime residence, often sleeping in public or private accommodations not designed for humans to live. Some are homeless with their families, and some are homeless and alone. Among the obvious things that these youth lack for basic subsistence, they also lack ready access to education. Gail spoke of how homeless youth are identified, what services there are/are not to help them, the barriers to helping these youth, etc. There was animated discussion of this issue following Gail's presentation. Gail is providing her power point slides for further review by the Children's Commission. Staff will make sure that Commissioners receive that information electronically.

Standing Committee Reports:

Nominations/Development – Carol stated that, in addition to the four applicants to the Commission who are in attendance, the Nominations Committee is seeking to interview an Oak Harbor youth. Then, the plan is to continue to recruit at least two members from Camano Island.

Public Relations - Paty spoke about the various activities/events at which the ICCC has had a presence. Children's Day was a success and well attended, w/terrific weather. Mammoth Day is coming up on the 4th (Saturday) and Sandy and Paty will be there representing the Children's Commission.

Data Analysis – Carol reminded members that Tomi Whalen has had to resign from the ICCC because she has relocated off-Island. That, among other things, leaves the position of Chair of the Data Committee vacant. Kate Grossman has agreed to assume the duties of Chair of the Data Committee and to serve on the Executive Committee in Tomi's place as well. Looking at available data and mining that information for important indicators is a key function, and another function of the Data Committee will be to help our Issue-Specific Sub-Committees to work on outcome measures re: their work.

Legislative Analysis/Advocacy – Sandy spoke of this being the time that the Legislature is “ramping up” their activity. In order for this Children's Commission to move into our legislative advocacy role, it might be beneficial to bring in someone to provide some training in advocacy vs. lobbying, and what a Board such as ours can do to take part in the process on behalf of children and youth. Kristin stated that it may be important for this Commission to “stick our necks out” when necessary on behalf of kids. Training on how best to do this would be helpful. Dan will research who might be available to provide us this type of training.

Study Group Updates:

Early Childhood (0-5) - Bess reported that the first joint meeting of the PICEL/ICCC Early Childhood Study Group occurred just prior to this full Commission meeting. This

new group will need to coin their new name. More to come on that. The planting of the Born Learning signs on various park trails will occur soon. There was discussion of planning an event around the planting of those signs.

Primary Study Group (6-11) - Kristina stated that this group is looking at issues of media violence and child care. She also suggested that there is adequate reason to consider merging of the age group distinctions between Early Childhood and Primary. Perhaps the best approach would be a birth – 8 years of age type of approach. The reason for the age groupings in the first place was so that we could do assessment of kids needs at various ages. That assessment may very well lead us to approaching specific areas of need across the age groupings. This is a good discussion and we can do what we need to do in this regard. We will take whatever steps our sub-committees believe are the most efficient/effective ways to go. More to come on this topic.

Secondary Study Group (12-18) – Rod reported that this group also met just previous to the full Commission. Their efforts to gather data through youth focus groups continue. Information about youth connection is to be gathered from both youth in schools, and from adults through community service organizations. Rod also mentioned that the South Whidbey Substance Abuse Coalition has resumed meeting. Mark Brown attended the most recent meeting. At this point, the ICCC is represented there. Dan asked to be notified of the next meeting, so that he can attend as well.

Strategy Discussion:

Carol and Dan led a discussion about moving the work of the Children’s Commission along the continuum from recognition and attendance at events, to impacting the services infra-structure and creating programs. Dan spoke about the model in Snohomish County, listing a number of programs that are part of the service infra-structure there, which began with the Snohomish County Children’s Commission. The model is there to demonstrate that this can happen. It was suggested that we need to start small, and to gauge our work to the nature of our own county, which is smaller and has much less of a service delivery system than Snohomish County has. It was suggested that we use our January Retreat (facilitated) to move us along the continuum. Each Study Group is asked to conclude their assessment of issues and to choose which primary issue(s) they want to focus upon – before the January Retreat. That Retreat will help us move from study into action.

The Retreat is scheduled for January 8, 2009, from 3:00 to 7:00 PM. Dan will find a meeting space. Members are asked to recommend someone that they may know about who has good facilitation skills. We do need to find the right person to work with us, and we are unsure about available \$ to pay a facilitator. We will know more after the County budget is set.

Meeting Adjourned at 6:30 PM.