

**Advancing Our Community
Steering Committee meeting
7 September 2006
SSD District office**

In attendance: Cheri Hample – SEARHC, Bob George – SCPS, Curt Ledford – Community Schools, Steve Bradshaw – SSD, Chris Bauman – SAFV, Jill Williams – new program manager at YAS; David Voluck – YAS, David Sliefert – SEARHC, Louise Brady – STA.

Agenda:

Flexible Funding – who, how much, re-educating providers, publicity, future
Reschedule AOC meetings
Update on activities

Homeless Grant

Bob announces that the ministerial association is putting together a homeless grant for next year, offered by the Housing Finance Corporation. He feels it would be ideal for AOC to support, to offer the support of all social service agencies. There is a grant in place right now administered between the Salvation Army and SCPS, but SCPS is trying to increase their focus on the scope of community mental health. AOC can show their support through a letter – Bob will draft that letter for the AOC Steering Committee to approve.

Someone asks if it's true that the Salvation Army is working toward building a homeless shelter, and Bob says that is a long-term goal, but that's not what this grant is for. They aren't able to do a capital project just yet, so for now they're working on this operations grant. Cheri mentions that they should approach Faith in Action about providing a letter of support.

Rescheduling AOC meetings

One thing that kept coming up last spring is that if we want to have youth involved in AOC meetings, we need to consider a different time to meet that can accommodate their schedules. Thursdays at 1:30 is not a good time for them. We currently have 3 SHS reps who are committed and excited, and we've also heard from a student at MEHS about being involved, but we haven't heard from her recently. Kayla and Matthew suggest having the meetings on the first Wednesday of the month, at 2:30, with the SC meeting prior to that at 1:30. SHS has "lab" time then, which is designed to provide students with extra time with teachers as needed, but in many cases is an earlier release day for students. It is unknown whether this will work for a MEHS student, but it is expected that any time during business hours will be difficult for them. The SC agrees to this new time, and the next meeting is scheduled for October 4 – Steering Committee at 1:30, general AOC at 2:30.

There is also a discussion about where to hold the meetings. In the spring, some people mentioned it might be fun to rotate the meeting locations and hold them at different agencies or venues. It doesn't appear as though many of the agencies have room to accommodate the AOC meetings, however, and many agree now that having a consistent location is easier for logistics. Potentially we could designate a couple of meetings per year to be somewhere else. The group agrees to keep the meetings at Centennial Hall for the most

part, except maybe 1-2 times per year for a special meeting – perhaps a reflection/evaluation meeting.

Flexible funding

There has been some confusion about the Flexible Funding account – how requests are granted, who are the official people to make the decisions, etc. Matthew and Kayla would like the Steering Committee’s assistance in clearing this up. Matthew passes out the current list of criteria and request form for the SC to review. The group asks Curt (who currently is the point person for the requests) if this is the format he receives the requests, and he says no, and he doesn’t want it in that form. It needs to arrive to him electronically so it’s easier to send out to the committee for a decision. **Matthew agrees to look into making it a web-based form.**

The Flexible Fund currently has \$7,362.83 in the account.

Matthew clarifies to the group about the distinction between the Steering Committee and the Flexible Funding committee. Last year, the group agreed to divide the duties of these two groups, which allows for the Steering Committee to be comprised of people who haven’t necessarily contributed funds to the account. The Flexible Funding committee is made up of representatives of those agencies which have contributed to the account.

One individual comments that this process used to run smoothly – it’s just a matter to making sure the requests go through Curt, and having a back-up person to do it if Curt’s not available. Curt and Matthew point out that when a request came through last month, they were unclear as to who to send it to. Matthew and Kayla have gone through the old AOY files and determined that the following agencies have contributed to the account in the past: SAFV, SSD, City of Sitka, SEARHC, DHSS (OCS and DJJ), Islands Counseling, STA, SPATS, and SPD.

The group notes that Islands Counseling and SPATS no longer exist, and that both have been incorporated into SCPS.

In the past, the City relinquished their right to vote on the requests, but the SPD does vote. Therefore, the Flexible Funding committee should be made up of representatives of the following agencies: SAFV, SSD, SEARHC, DHSS (OCS and DJJ), Islands Counseling, STA, SCPS, and SPD. Agency representatives present today verified that the following people would represent their agency on the committee:

SAFV – Chris Bauman

SSD – Curt Ledford and Dana Kelly, Jeanine Brooks, or other relevant counselor

SEARHC – David Sliefert and Ariyeh Levinson

STA – Louise Brady

SCPS – Bob George

DHSS and SPD do not have representatives at this meeting – Matthew and Kayla will check with them and verify who sits on the Flexible Funding committee for those agencies.

Once the request form has been put into a web-based format, this program needs to be advertised to the public that it is available – there has been a lot of turnover in direct service workers since this was created, and many of them probably don't know that it exists. **Next steps will include an advertising/educational campaign.**

Then there is the issue of keeping better records on how the funds have been spent. Kayla and Matthew have mined the old files to piece the history together, but still have some holes in the accounting. Curt says he has more information and can trace that back. Someone comments that what's made this program attractive is the few number of hoops an applicant has to jump through to get help – he doesn't want to see the program get tied up with strict guidelines or reporting requirements. The group agrees that just having an anecdotal record of what was requested and how much was granted would be enough. **Kayla, Matthew and Curt will work together to make a complete history; David says he may have some old files too.**

A final issue on this topic is what to do when the funds start getting spent and eventually the account is depleted – do the agencies contribute again, or do we resolve it in some other way? The suggestion is made that agency contributions are welcome at any time if that agency would like to participate. It's also suggested that we set a minimum limit, perhaps \$3000, and when we reach that point, we ask agencies to re-up their contribution. Or perhaps there is an “open enrollment” time in September, where new agencies can jump in, and then “raise a flag” to all participating agencies when the funds get low that it's time to make a new contribution to the account. Someone asks about building the fund through fundraising instead of agency donations – another responded that previous discussions about fundraising were always reluctant, because AOY didn't want to be seen in competition with other agencies for funds. The group does not thoroughly solve this issue.

Update on activities

Change of Heart training (sponsored by school district's QS2 funds) – Trainer Paul Sulley is coming to town to deliver 2 one-day retreats on Sept 13 and 14 at SJ Rasmussen Center. The trainings are focused on creating a more caring school community climate, examining prejudices, choices, etc. The 1st day will be for PHS and a few students from SHS, the 2nd for 50 BMS students. Some school staff and community folks will be present at both. On the 15th, Paul will train 8 BMS staff, a few teens, and a couple of community members in how to lead the Change of Heart training. BMS is interested in making this a continuing retreat to be delivered to all their students.

Town Meeting (sponsored by Community Schools) There will be a town meeting sometime this fall. Curt and Alison Dunlap both have grant requirements for hosting a meeting to open a community dialogue about youth use of alcohol and drugs. A committee met yesterday and had a preliminary brainstorm – basically, it will likely be in early Nov, and the vision is to have a panel of youth who have done some prep work with counselors. The panel will participate in a facilitated dialogue that will provide some realities about use that's happening in the community. The meeting will also tie a little into YRBS and other local stats and discuss the physical effects on the brain, and then help the audience look at action steps to take. Matthew and Kayla plan to seek assistance from AOC to provide an outlet for parent energy/engagement afterward. The committee is also hoping to use this as a chance

to look at community norms/standards around use - what does this community permit its young people to do?

Cheri also mentions that Dr. Aaron White, a guru in brain research, is going to be in Haines the week of Oct 23, and she's going to try to get him to Sitka also, or try to get people to Haines to hear him. Steve tells Cheri if it's possible to get him to Sitka, to let Steve, because the school would have some funds to support it.

Other announcements

Steve offers kudos to Louise for the opening of the Family Justice Center. He points out that this is a successful collaborative effort, and the impetus originally came from AOY to get this idea off the ground. Matthew adds that he's heard lots of people say how it is a model for collaboration.

Steve adds that we also need to pay attention to wellness programs going on around the community. There will be a well workplace training on Sept 28, 29, put together by Doug Osbourne at SEARHC. This training is for businesses and helps them provide incentives and supports for their employees to stay healthy.

Oct 4 is National Walk to School Day – the schools could use support to promote that, and spread the message about getting exercise.

Sept 9 is Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Awareness Day; it's on 9/9 to reflect the 9 months of pregnancy. Even one drink can harm – the alcohol circulates 270 times in the placenta, so it has a magnified affect on the fetus.

After-school activities start next week – Community Schools has done a study that analyzed kids involved in activities and their school performance – those involved in 30 hours/year of activities or more also improved more at school, even compared to a control group.

STA finally has a MOA for the Boys and Girls Club. STA and SSD also got a \$1.8 million education grant from DOE to fund home-school liaisons, tutors, and cultural counselors in schools – this grant will also allow them to hire an education manager for the B&G Club soon.

The group discusses Head Start, and the fact that they are moving into a room upstairs from the SJ gym, which is not ideal, but the best they could afford. They're still looking for something better, but it's been hard to affordably meet the square footage requirements. Matthew mentions that he's been talking with the City's new Affordable Housing Coordinator about various community needs. While affordable housing issues are what put him in this position, he has a long view for all of the community's space needs. Matthew says he'd like to invite him to an AOC meeting, and suggests the group makes a mental list of the space needs in our community. There will be a point when the housing coordinator may be ready to hear that and think about big capital projects.