

**Marion County Children's Alliance**  
**Board of Directors**  
**May 6, 2009**  
**11:30 a.m.**

**Board Members present:** Jim Bullock, John Cooper, Bill D' Aiuto, Ed Dean, Scott Hackmyer, Kurt Kelly, Jim Payton, Maureen Quinlan, Mary Sue Rich, Sue Robbins, Jeff Shealy, Sam Williams, Jim Yancey and Judi Zanetti

The meeting was called to order by Sheriff Ed Dean. The invocation was done by Rev. Jim Bullock. Sheriff Dean asked for Board introductions and welcomed DCF Secretary, George Sheldon.

**Approval of January Minutes:** Motion to approve the minutes of the January 2009 Board of Directors meeting was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

**Alliance Monthly Meeting Chairman:** Scott Hackmyer stated that the monthly Steering Committee meetings were reflected in the crowd seen today and he was grateful for that kind of participation. Mr. Hackmyer thanked the Sheriff for the meeting space for all these meetings.

**Cyndi Schuler, CEO, Kids Central, Inc.** was the first speaker and spoke on "Kids Central and Child Welfare Today." She presented a chart that showed the data for children served in the Foster Care System from 2005-2009. The average removal rate was 12.11 per 1,000 children and went down to 4.84, but is still above the state average. How we got there:

- Working in Partnership with DCF Circuit 5 – Facilitated Better Communication (collaboration/innovation)
- Diversion Staffing Process – Promoted Joint Decision Making
- COA Accreditation – Required systematic review of policies and procedures
- Balanced Scorecard – Focused attention on all quadrants necessary for business success
- An Incredible Community Based Board

Ms. Schuler followed with a review of Program Highlights and Coming Attractions.

**George Sheldon, DCF Secretary** was the second speaker. He stated a 20 million dollar cut in child welfare was originally being faced, however, the Legislature stepped up to the plate and there was a slight increase. In maintenance adoption there was an expansion and a pick up in growth. The Legislature recognized that the people served are the most vulnerable. 14 billion came into the state with the Stimulus package. Calls are down but there is an increase in the severity of child abuse. The goal is to reduce children in foster care by 50% by 2012. Requests for food stamps are up 62.6% since 4/2007. DCF is no longer a regulator but a collaborator and has integrated services to do cross training with Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Domestic Violence.

Secretary Sheldon recommended the book "Hopes Boy" by Andrew Bridge. In his memoir, Andrew Bridge reflects on his devastating young life at 7 years old and being forced into foster care after authorities declared his mother, Hope, unfit to raise him.

Three initiatives being worked towards are: reducing foster care, electronic transfer of records and shortening the waiting period for adopting. He ended with the comment that DCF has stopped fighting and started listening and has rethought the problems ~ seeing them not as the government's but belonging to the community.

**Coordinators Report:** Dr. Jordan presented the 2009 proposed budget which had been postponed from the January meeting. After review a motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously. A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to accept the Income Statement for the four months ending April 30, 2009.

Mike Jordan announced that a Mentoring electronic billboard is up on Pine Avenue and says, "**Pay it Forward, Be a Mentor.**"

A proposed Amendment to the Alliance Bylaws-*Distribution of Assets* was presented for review. It will be voted on for acceptance at the September Board meeting.

**Workgroups:**

Monica Bryant, Family Violence Prevention Workgroup, reported that a Teen Dating Violence Prevention & Awareness Campaign was held Feb. 4-10 with 5 middle schools. 1,662 surveys were completed and 2,139 pledges were signed. The 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Hands Are Not For Hurting Expo was held March 29<sup>th</sup> with 28 vendors participating. Upcoming events are: August 15, Back-to-School Bash and Domestic Violence activities in October.

Joanna Bennett reported for the Childhood Nutrition Workgroup. The Department of Education just finished a successful survey on the PEP grant received of which we are in our second of three years participation. Health focused planners will be subsidized by this grant at 7 schools next year.

The World of Wellness curriculum (lesson plans) was linked directly to the 5-2-1-0 Campaign and used with the Alliance's summer programs.

Mrs. Bennett showed the Dunnellon Middle School PSA to the group and stated it was shown on MCPS Classroom Connection.

Sylvia Miller, Autism & Other Disabilities Workgroup stated that community awareness was held in April and October with the library system and businesses to bring positive attention to those living with disabilities and their capabilities.

The Pilot Program first done last summer is now being duplicated in Hernando County this year. A 10 week program serving 50 children is being worked on for this summer in Marion County. Future plans include employer education with the hopes of encouraging them to hire young adults with disabilities, identifying services that are considered necessary for the disability community and assisting MCPS with their efforts towards establishing a more inclusive educational environment.

Donna McCroan reported for the Safe Kids Workgroup. SIDS, crib deaths, rollover deaths and co-sleeping are all ongoing topics. The slogan is Alone/On their Backs/Own Crib. In the 1-4 year old group drowning is the main education area. The past statistic of 8 deaths per year is down to 3 this past year. In the 5-14 year old age group car seats and pedestrian and bicycle safety are topics.

Jim Bullock reported for the Mentoring Workgroup. The next meeting will be May 20 at 11:30 at the Jail Administration building conference room. The mentoring idea is getting out to the public via billboard, civic groups and churches.

The next meeting of the Faith Community Network Workgroup will be May 13 at noon at the Ocala Police Department community room.

Kelvin Richardson reported for the Fatherhood Initiative. He is encouraging men to get involved with their children's lives. Approximately 250-300 have committed to getting back involved in their children's lives with this program.

The Sheriff stated that there is a re-entry program through the Faith Community and that a Visioning session was held with Board members last week with Margaret Spontak. The results will be distributed and will form the basis of the Strategic Plan for the Alliance next year.

Comments or questions from the Board were asked for:

Maureen Quinlan – Personal Money Matters is being taught at United Way. Toastmaster meets the first Tuesday of each month and is recruiting new members.

Jeff Shealy – Referrals are down 21% overall in Marion County. The number in detention is also down.

Scott Hackmyer – Gave an example of a middle-aged mother with seven children that has recently been helped to start a new life with the help of \$38.00. A one at a time vision is working.

John Cooper – Thanked KCI, Ms. Schuler and the community as a whole for all their efforts.

Kurt Kelly – Spoke about a surrogate foster care bill recently passed.

**Roundtable** was held. 1) Interfaith-Food4Kids will have their food drive this Saturday through the post office deliveries so please remember to put out your donations. 2) KCI has an RFP out on their website. 3) Abstinence education at Skate Mania will be held on May 30 from 3:30 – 6:30. Call Kathy Rucker 465-7698 or Nosheika Beard 812-2186 for more information. 4) Cheryl Howell, Marion County Community Services requested everyone fill out a Community Needs Survey on their way out. Her number is 671-8770. 5) Pastor Jeremy stated a FREE “*Parenting with Purpose*” is being offered at Living Hope Community Church May 22-24. He can be reached at 622-5555. 6) Cathleen Blagay said PACE is holding a “*Rock Star Ocala*” on May 29 at 6:30. 7) Haley Creasey stated The Vines hopes to expand their residential program to include young children; they are opening an office for youth prevention of suicide and have received Baker Act designation! 8) Connie King, Eckerd Mentoring said a civil rights volunteer training workshop will be held at OPD on June 6. She can be reached at 445-1410. 9) Brad Rogers requested people write about their program so he can do an opinion article in the Star Banner. 10) Judy Wilson, Domestic Violence Shelter said there were 56 new people at the shelter in the month of February and 5 new families since yesterday. They need cribs and baby items donated. 11) Bill Frye, Youth Ranch stated it was his first Alliance meeting attended and he was overwhelmed by the participation. 12) Rashad Jones, Brazen said an Abstinence Rally will be held on June 8<sup>th</sup> from 10-2 at the Health Dept. 13) Patricia Sokol, Kimberly’s Cottage reminded everyone of the CulinaryCombat event on May 16<sup>th</sup> 4-7 p.m.

**Future Meetings:**

Family Violence Prevention	2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday, May 11, 11:00 a.m., Sheriff’s Office
Autism & Other Disabilities	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, May 12, 11:00 a.m., 2810 NE 14 <sup>th</sup> St.
Childhood Nutrition	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, May 12, 3:30 p.m., MRMC Auxiliary
Safe Kids Coalition	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday, May 13, 9:30 a.m., Health Dept.
Faith Community Network	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday May 13, noon, OPD conf. rm.
Mentoring Workgroup	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday, May 20, 11:30 a.m., Jail Adm. Bldg.
Grant Writers Network	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday, May 28, 11:00 a.m. main Ocala Library
Alliance Monthly Meeting	1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday, July 1, 11:30 a.m., Jail Adm. Bldg.
Next Board Meeting	1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2009, 11:30 a.m., Jail Adm. Bldg.
9 <sup>th</sup> Annual “Children First Breakfast”	Tuesday, November 17, 2009

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

**REMINDER – THERE IS NO MEETING IN THE MONTH OF JUNE**