

# Marion County Children & Families Commission

November 21, 2019

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM

Grant Room, Broadway Commons

**Commission Members Present:** Patrice Altenhofen, ~~Phil Blea~~, Sue Bloom, ~~George Burke~~, Paige Clarkson, ~~Jayne Downing~~, Troy Gregg, Lisa Harnisch, Sheriff Joe Kast, ~~Levi Herrera Lopez~~, Stacy Lake, ~~Kimberly Lemman~~, Pete McCallum (via phone), ~~Honorable Judge Pellegrini~~, Allan Pollock, Eric Richards, ~~Jim Seymour~~, Sam Skillern, Shaney Starr, ~~Commissioner Colm Willis~~

**Honorary Members:** Carla Munns

**Guests:** Michelle Halter, Hayesville Elementary; Tracy Moisan, Scott Elementary; David Wood, Adam Stephens Middle School; Shemaina Miller, Mountain West; Chris Pineda, Mountain West; Cliff Carpentier-Salem-Keizer School District Director of Safety and Risk Management; Ali Swanson, A Ray of Hope Today – Woodburn

**Staff:** Tamra Goettsch, Heather Johnson

Meeting Summary Notes by Melinda Hautala

## Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 11:38 am. Welcome and introductions were made.

## HOPE Story

Shaney recounted that she and her family had recently discovered a stray dog at their home, and contacted Marion County Dog Services. They discovered that the dog belonged to a family who has been living in their car and that someone had broken into their car, stolen all of their belongings and releasing their dog. The staff at Marion County Dog Services worked diligently with Shaney and her family to reunite the dog with its owners without adding any financial burden or emotional trauma for the dog and the family.

## Approval of October 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting Summary Notes

Lisa motioned to approve the meeting summary notes. Eric seconded the motion. All were in favor of accepting the meeting summary notes. **Motion:** Approved

## HOPE ALIVE

### **Outward Mindset Exercise**

Shemaina referred to the exercise from the October meeting, where members listed the different sectors that would be impacted in the East Salem neighborhood--schools, partners, faith community, businesses, families. She asked that the members split into three groups to have further discussion about these focus areas, what resources they know are available, what are possible partnerships, etc. After the exercise, Shemaina encouraged the group to continue to have these conversations as they move forward.

## **East Salem Project – New Data from Juvenile Dept, Family Building Blocks, Salem PD**

### Juvenile Department

Troy referred to a map using GIS data to show “hot spots” within the project area. The hot spots indicate higher volume of referrals, which in this context is defined as youths who have active records in the Juvenile Justice Information System during an identified date range. While the data does not show the types of referrals, that information that can be retrieved if needed.

- In 2018-2019 there were 233 referrals within the radius of the project area
- 12.7% of all Marion County referrals were in this radius
- 20.4% of all referrals in the Salem/Keizer area came from this radius

### Family Building Blocks

Family Building Blocks submitted a federal grant in early 2019 with a focus on serving youth ages 0-8 years old. Unfortunately, no grant funding was awarded to Oregon; however, preparing the grant led FBB to collect an abundance of data for the 97305 zip code, which Patrice shared:

- Oregon has the highest mental illness and substance abuse rate in the US, yet 49<sup>th</sup> in access to mental health coverage.
- Marion & Polk counties are 36% above the national average for suicide rate.
- 97305 is Oregon’s 17<sup>th</sup> poorest zip code, with 47% of households earning less than \$25,000 annually.
- The poverty rate for all ages in Marion County is 15.2%.
- More than 5,500 children ages 8 and younger live in the 97305 zip code.
- 4,200 children in Marion & Polk counties are uninsured, which is 15% of the total number of uninsured children in Oregon.
- 27% of Marion County residents are of Latinx origin. Research shows that Latinx communities are more likely to have unmet mental health needs.
- The public school population in 97305 is 62% Hispanic/latinx, which is above the county average of 49%.
- There are 4,200 children in Marion Polk counties that are uninsured which is 15% of all uninsured children in the state of Oregon

### Marion County Sheriff’s Office/Salem PD

Within the northeast neighborhood under discussion, there are areas under Salem law enforcement authority and areas under Marion County authority. Deputy Chief Burke could not be at the meeting, but Sheriff Kast stated that 50% of all calls to the Sheriff’s Office come from the East Salem project area, and pointed out that the data provided by the Salem PD show that a high density of their calls are also from this vicinity, along the I-5 corridor. MCSO has received funding to assign deputies specifically to this area; there are currently 6-7 deputies assigned there, and they plan to increase that number to 10.

Sam asked if someone could create a map that combines the data from Salem PD and MCSO. Sue said that they have discussed making such a map and she is already planning to talk to DHS and get permission from the entities that collected the data.

Sam also asked whether the focus range should include the area on the other side of I-5, near Hallman Elementary. Sue said that Boys & Girls Club research over many years has shown that the farthest that kids will usually walk to get somewhere is one mile, which is a factor they use when determining where to locate a Club, and why this map shows a one-mile radius area. BGC doesn't include areas that would require kids to get across a major highway, but because the CFC's project will be broader, it may be useful to include that area, taking transportation issues into account.

Sam and Sue both reiterated that the CFC needs to use focus groups with people who live in the area to find out what they actually want. Lisa added that with this particular neighborhood, it is imperative that the CFC be culturally sensitive, which may require approaching it in a new way.

### **Determining Our "Why" – Ted Talk**

Tamra had emailed a link to a talk about starting with "why" and letting that drive the "what" and the "how". She urged anyone who had not watched it yet to take a look, and said that the Steering Committee would start using this framework to help plan for the CFC, and anyone interested was welcome to stay for that meeting after the CFC meeting. [ [https://youtu.be/u4ZoJKF\\_VuA](https://youtu.be/u4ZoJKF_VuA) ]

### **Q&A with School Principals**

Tamra opened discussion by explaining to the guests that the CFC was interested to hear from them about what they see as their biggest challenges.

Michelle Halter, the principal at Haysville Elementary, said that they desperately need mental health support, not only for children, but also for parents. She would love to have a therapist at the school, and classes to help parents who are often very young. Halter explained that there are a lot of issues for families in this neighborhood that may not be issues elsewhere. For example, Haysville ensures that children get 30 minutes of recess every day, because in some cases, this is the only "outside time" they will get. Parents are reluctant to let children outside because they are afraid not only of neighborhood crime, but also of police and ICE. Haysville has no after-school programs, because families do not have transportation to get to and from activities. Children need mental health support because they do not understand why their parents may be using drugs or in prison.

Halter said that the Outward Mindset training had been "life-changing" for her, and that Haysville is having all of their educators and staff attend this training.

Shaney asked the principals to elaborate on things that would be helpful for faculty and staff, separate from the needs of the children and families they serve.

Tracy Moisan, principal at Scott Elementary, said that the data presented at the CFC meeting was very validating, because although she and other educators had always assumed these issues were prevalent in their neighborhoods, they had never actually seen this data before, and often felt alone in their work. She agreed with Halter that the most urgent need is for a therapist who is on site at the school, to help children in crisis who cannot control their behavior and act out, often in violent ways, against the principal, the teachers, and others.

Shaney asked if the funding from the School Success Act might be used for this purpose and some other members offered that there is a public survey about this, which can be accessed online, in addition to public listening sessions.

David Wood, principal at Stephens Middle School, said that he too sees many kids who have experienced trauma and who do not have the ability to regulate their behavior. Before coming to Stephens Middle, Wood was an assistant principal at McKay High School for 15 years, and during that time he and other educators often talked about how useful it would be to have help and resources on site at school, not only mental health services but also agencies that help families. He noted that when he was at McKay, parents would show up when asked to. He said that if there were mental health resources on site, then when there is an emergency situation, a child could get help with no delay.

Tamra asked if any of the CFC organizations had programs or funding in place for this type of assistance.

- Sue said that BGC has a dental clinic that is not on site at school, but does provide transportation when a child is referred.
- Stacy said that DHS has family coaches that can help connect families to services, but they are not in all schools, and they are not there every day. She also said that in the past, some families have been wary of DHS, because they represent “the government” and they oversee Child Welfare services, but this has improved in recent years as they do more outreach.
- Troy mentioned the Early Intervention Family Support program through the Juvenile Department, which works with families in their homes, using programs like Family Check Up.

Sue asked if there is any capacity for schools to work with community volunteers. Principal Moisan said that they always welcome volunteers, but they would need to have a background check, they would need to be consistent and reliable, and they would be well-served with training in what classrooms are like now, so they are fully prepared.

Cliff Carpentier, SKSD Director of Safety and Risk Management, noted that there has been a 600% increase in staff injuries over the past 5 years, district-wide. Carpentier wanted to clarify what “threat assessment” means, referring to the data that Eric presented in a previous CFC meeting. The district assesses students who are having behavior difficulties to see if this is reactive behavior or targeted behavior, what are the underlying factors that contribute to this behavior, how likely is it that this behavior will continue or escalate, etc. Right now, he said, they are more concerned when they see low numbers rather than high numbers, because it doesn’t tell them that issues don’t exist, but rather that they aren’t being addressed.

Principal Moisan said that just being invited to this CFC meeting and knowing that people are talking about the issues in these schools and neighborhoods is a big help. She suggested that educators and administrators at all of these schools could use a comprehensive list of resources that are available to children and families, because when she meets with parents to assess need, they are usually very open about their histories and their children's histories, and she would love to be able to offer them specific help that they can use right away. Principal Wood agreed, adding that even when they have counselors on staff, they sometimes are inexperienced, so a central source of information would be a great tool.

Troy explained that the CFC had previously discussed the need for a person or persons to help families navigate the system – the information is very helpful to schools and families, but having someone to help with actually using resources would make an even bigger impact. Paige mentioned the LEAD (Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion) program as an example of this, and suggested that something similar could be created for younger-age children. [A partnership of law enforcement and the District Attorney's office, the LEAD program allows persons to avoid being charged if they agree to meet with a LEAD navigator. This person helps them get help and services right away, rather than making an appointment for some time in the future, and the program has expanded to have navigators who reach out to people before a crime is committed.]

Stacy said that 2-1-1 is working on creating a system of information for this purpose, but it is not fully operational yet. Tamra added that Northwest Human Services is also working on creating a more robust resource of this type.

Stacy asked that the group also keep thinking and talking about how to help those who provide services, in addition to helping children and families.

Meeting adjourned at 1:07 pm.