



Board of Directors Meeting

May 14, 2009

Information Item

Child Welfare Advocacy Update

Item V.C.

Recommended Action:	Information Only
Issue:	Child Welfare System Update
Program:	Child Welfare Advocacy
Budget Impact:	NA
Strategic Plan Goal:	Child Maltreatment

Prevention Campaign Update

JWB Children's Services Council of Pinellas County is continuing to partner with Eckerd Community Alternatives (ECA), Department of Children and Families (DCF), Healthy Families of Pinellas County, Operation Par, Children's Board of Hillsborough County (CBHC), and Hillsborough Kids Inc. (HKI), as well as other community partners to coordinate the across-the-bay, "Winds of Change" community awareness campaign. In Pinellas County, during the month of April, "Winds of Change" materials were distributed at events held at:

- High Point Neighborhood Family Center
- Sanderlin Neighborhood Family Center
- Lealman/Asian Neighborhood Family Center -in collaboration with the Police Athletic League (PAL)

"Winds of Change" Community Resource Packets were also distributed at the Abuse, Neglect and Dependency (AND) Committee "State of the Family" conference held on April 16, 2009. The conference was well attended with approximately 400 attendees representing the court system and 32 community agencies working with, or on behalf of, children and families. In addition, the Pinellas Park Chamber of Commerce partnered with the AND Committee in the evening to sponsor a Pizza Party for foster youth. Eckerd Community Alternatives (ECA) worked with Camelot Community Care to notify foster families and child welfare youth of the event. The Keynote Speakers from the AND conference, Todd and Lance Feurtado, former drug kingpins and ex-gang members gave a motivational talk to approximately 125 youth that attended.

The Prevention Group is working to coordinate the distribution of Parent Resource Booklets to agency staff that work with families and to plan additional community-based activities.

Ready for Life, Inc.

Ready for Life (RFL) is a “true community effort” working to address issues that impact the lives of youth aging out of the foster care system. RFL is committed to working in partnership with the foster youth to better understand the issues and needs they face during their transition to adulthood. Ten Community Committees have been formed and are meeting to address the key areas identified for a successful transition from foster care (housing, education, employment, life skills and etc.).

The Ready for Life Initiative is guided by youth input, and they have recently hired three former foster youth as Youth Leaders. The Youth Leaders will be assisting with outreach to other foster youth, organizing and supporting the RFL Youth Council, assisting with the development of the website and supporting community education efforts. The Youth Council has held two meetings and has another scheduled in May. The youth have been instrumental in providing insight as to the specific needs and questions they have regarding the transition from foster care to adulthood. The input from the youth is being provided to the RFL Community Committees.

RFL is having a community meeting on Thursday, May 7th at noon at Feather Sound Country Club to introduce community volunteers to RFL and emphasize the importance of the partnerships RFL has with the service providers and young adults. More information about RFL and the Community Committees can be obtained at their web site. <http://www.readyforlifepinellas.org/>

JWB TV

The Child Welfare Advocacy Office is partnering with the JWB Communications Department to highlight some child welfare events and topics on upcoming episodes of JWB TV. In May, JWB TV will have highlights from the AND Committee "State of the Family" Conference as well as video with interviews from the Lealman/Asian Neighborhood Family Center community breakfast and Winds of Change event.

JWB is working with ECA to develop a Public Service Announcement for Foster Parent Recruitment and are taping shows on Foster Parent Recruitment (airs in June/July) and Ready for Life (airs in July). JWB TV airs nightly at 6 p.m. on PCC-TV (channel 622 on Bighthouse) and various times throughout the month on WSPF (City of St. Petersburg) and Park-TV (City of Pinellas Park).