



## Board of Directors Meeting

September 10, 2009

### Information Item

#### Child Welfare Advocacy Update

**Item V.E.**

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

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#### **Dependency Court Improvement Committee (DCIC)**

The JWB Manager of Child Welfare Advocacy is participating on a DCIC DJJ Subcommittee with representatives from Eckerd Community Alternatives, Gulf Coast Community Care, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Children & Families, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, Guardian Ad Litem, Community Law Program, Personal Enrichment through Mental Health Services, Advocacy Center and the Behavioral Evaluations Office. The main objective of the sub-committee is to reduce the number of foster children being referred to DJJ by developing and promoting an understanding of how abuse/trauma affects the behavior of this population. After obtaining input from community partners, the DJJ Subcommittee will identify a system-solutions' proposal that will be presented to the Unified Family Court judges.

Two initiatives the subcommittee is currently working on that will be included in the proposal are:

- Developing a *Who to Call and When* brochure. The purpose is to provide clarity to foster parents and others caring for and having contact with these youth so they know who they can contact at various stages of the delinquency process, i.e. before arrest, after arrest, and other.
- Planning and coordinating trauma training with an emphasis on cross-over youth and how trauma impacts behavior. "The Impact of Trauma on Behavior," training with an emphasis on cross-over youth, will be available to case managers and foster parents in Pinellas County on Sept. 15th and 16th, and in Pasco County on Sept. 23rd. Drs. Solazzo, Jaggi, and Zarlino from the Behavioral Evaluations Office will be providing the training.

#### **Domestic Violence Inter-Agency Agreement Update**

The final draft of the Domestic Violence Inter-Agency Agreement has been approved by all parties to the agreement. The intent of the agreement is to promote the safety and well being of both children and the adult victim of violence through a team approach to helping families where child abuse and domestic violence are present. On Tuesday, September 8, 2009, @ 11:00 a.m. the JWB Children's Services Council of Pinellas County (JWB) hosted a signing event to finalize the agreement and

*The Community's Investment in Our Children*

recognize the commitment and partnership we have in Pinellas County when child abuse and domestic violence are present. Eight county-wide leaders will be in attendance to sign this historic agreement to help families of domestic violence and improve coordination between agencies. By signing the agreement, all parties express their commitment to work as partners on shared cases.

### **Infant Mental Health Conference Update**

The Pinellas County Early Childhood Mental Health Committee of the Early Learning Coalition and community partners sponsored the *Infant Mental Health: Foundations of Early Social and Emotional Development Birth to 3* training and community action planning event on July 31, 2009, at All Children's Hospital Education Conference Center. The presenters at the conference were Kathryn Shea, LCSW, Dr. James McHale and Dr. Wil Blechman. There were 250 people in attendance including over 50 physicians, residents, and medical students that participated as part of the All Children's Hospital Grand Rounds. Input was obtained from those attending the afternoon community action planning and will be included in the development of the local Infant Mental Health Strategic Plan.

The JWB Training Department has scheduled the following Infant Mental Health workshops:

- The Importance of Infant Mental Health and Early Brain Development (10/9/09)
- The Positive Social-Emotional Development of Young Children (11/16/09)
- Positive Behavioral Support (12/17/09)

Additional information about the workshops is available at [www.jwbpinellas.org](http://www.jwbpinellas.org).

### **Sallie House Discussion**

The Director of Children's Services at The Salvation Army Sallie House reported consistent under-utilization of the new Sallie House since mid-April. The under-utilization is reportedly a result of fewer children entering the child welfare system and a recent shift in policy at the Department of Children & Families (DCF) that prohibits children ages 0-5 from being placed in group shift care placements.

DCF convened a meeting on August 18<sup>th</sup> to discuss community needs and strategic vision for the future use of The Salvation Army Sallie House. Representatives from DCF, The Salvation Army, Eckerd Community Alternatives (ECA), Pinellas County Sheriff's Office Child Protection Investigations and JWB Children's Services Council participated in the discussion. Several potential concepts for future use of the Sallie House were discussed including: a house parent model, voluntary foster care, kinship/foster respite, teens, pregnant and parenting foster teens, mental health/therapeutic children, independent living youth, family placement or a receiving/assessment facility.

The Salvation Army is open to exploring other concepts and potentially developing a multi-use facility model provided the concepts are compatible and consistent with the mission of the organization, and will address the current and future needs in the community. In order to further assess community needs, representatives from DCF and ECA will coordinate data collection in an attempt to quantify the needs relative to the above mentioned areas. DCF will re-convene the group once the data has been collected.