



## Board of Directors Meeting

October 8, 2009

### Information Item

#### Child Welfare Advocacy Update

#### Item VI.D.

---

<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>

---

#### **Sallie House Discussion Follow-Up**

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) has scheduled a follow-up meeting for October 6, 2009, to further discuss community needs and strategic vision for the future use of The Salvation Army Sallie House. The Salvation Army is committed to working with community partners to identify needs and potential solutions that would fully utilize the new Sallie House.

At the last meeting in August, several possible concepts for the future use of the Sallie House were identified, 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. In order to further assess community needs, representatives from DCF and Eckerd Community Alternatives (ECA) compiled relevant data in an attempt to quantify the needs relative to the above mentioned areas. Data attached (Attachment A) includes:

1. Number of Teen Mothers Currently Placed with their Children
2. Number of Children ages 6-13 needing Therapeutic Placement
3. Prevention Intake Data/ESI Staffing Data
4. ECA Alpha House Census Fiscal Year 08-09
5. Total Out of Circuit Placements (as of 8/14/09)
6. ECA Placement Data for Fiscal Year 08-09
7. Children Removed by
  - o Maltreatment
  - o Placement Type
  - o Age

The Director of Children's Services at The Salvation Army Sallie House reported a temporary increase in census, most likely due to the initiative to keep sibling groups together. Two separate large sibling groups were recently admitted to the facility.

## **Dependency Summit**

The 2009 Dependency Summit for Florida's Child Protection Communities was held August 26-28<sup>th</sup> in Orlando, Florida. The event was well attended, with representatives from across the state participating in Workshop Sessions, and two Circuit Breakout Sessions identifying circuit specific issues and goals. Circuit 6 attendees identified the following three goals for the current fiscal year:

1. Reduce the number of children entering Out of Home Care through effective diversion services
2. Achieve timelier permanency for our children
3. Placement Stability within the removal county

The Circuit 6 Dependency Court Improvement Committee (DCIC) reviewed and revised the draft plan to include additional group participants and a lead for each action statement. The attached plan was formally adopted as goals of the committee. (Attachment B)

## **Foster Parent Recruitment Project**

The Foster Parent Project was initiated in 2007, when Eckerd Family Foundation began a partnership with the Youth Law Center and the Department of Children and Families in response to the use of inappropriate placements for children and youth in the child welfare system throughout the state. A plan was developed by the partners in 2007-2008, and implemented in three Community-Based Care (CBC) lead agencies in 2008 and 2009. The three CBC lead agencies that were selected to participate in the intensive project to reform the recruitment, care and management of the foster parent system were Big Bend CBC, Hillsborough Kids Inc., and CBC of Seminole. During the first year of the project the three CBC's:

- Developed a data-driven approach to analyzing the process
- Branded the concept of quality foster parents as partners
- Reformed the systemic processes in investigation, training, licensing, placement and case management and marketing
- Improved partnerships and collaboration among providers and foster parents

In 2009-2010 the Eckerd Family Foundation and the Youth Law Center will be expanding their Foster Parent Pilot Project in up to four additional Community-Based Care lead agencies. Eckerd Community Alternatives (ECA) has been selected as one of the lead agencies to participate in the expanded pilot project. On September 22, representatives from Eckerd Family Foundation and the Youth Law Center met with a local project team to provide an overview of the process and gather information about our local system. Follow-up meetings will be scheduled over the next six months.