



## Board of Directors Meeting

July 8, 2010

### Child Welfare Advocacy Report

Item VI. F.

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<b>Recommended Action:</b>	Information Only
<b>Issue:</b>	Child Welfare Advocacy Report
<b>Strategic Plan Goal:</b>	Child Maltreatment

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#### **Eckerd Community Alternatives Data Call Schedule**

As of July 1, 2010, the frequency of the Eckerd Community Alternatives (ECA) Data Calls will change to every other week. To foster transparency the data packet will still be provided weekly; however, the calls will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of every month. The change in frequency will allow for a greater discussion and examination of changing trends and the identification of strength and opportunities. In addition, the off week will provide an opportunity for ECA and case management organization staff to discuss specific children and their status; due to confidentiality this can not be done on the conference call.

The first Data Call of the new fiscal year will take place on July 12, 2010 @ 9:00am. ECA will continue to utilize the same call-in number and pin. The Data Packet is posted on the Eckerd Community Alternatives web site (<http://www.eckerd.org/ECA/index.html>).

#### **Tampa Bay Rays Foster Kids Club & Suite**

ECA has announced that the Tampa Bay Rays, together with Rays' pitcher James Shields and his wife Ryane, will host an exclusive kids club and suite for children in foster care. Membership to the exclusive club will be offered to any child in foster care in elementary or middle school. ECA envisions a total of 50 kids participating this season. Children in the club will be invited to attend Rays home games at Tropicana Field in a specially designed, kid-friendly suite. Each suite holds a total of 16, 10 kids and 6 adult chaperones per game. Club membership will include invitations to pre-game batting practice, tours of the stadium, birthday celebrations, t-shirts, baseball caps and visits to the suite by players' wives and mascot "Raymond". There will also be special snacks and activities for the kids to enjoy while attending games.

#### **Jacksonville Child Welfare Site Visit**

On June 23<sup>rd</sup> representatives from Pinellas & Pasco Sheriff's Office, Florida Department of Children & Families, Eckerd Community Alternatives, Directions for Mental Health, Inc., Gulf Coast Community Care, Youth & Family Alternatives, Inc., and JWB Children's Services Council visited Jacksonville to learn more about their redesign efforts and see the process in action. The Circuit 6 team met with program administrators, observed the Foster Care Redesign and Integrated Practice meetings and toured one of the facilities. The team will be meeting to further discuss the visit and identify potential areas for change in Circuit 6.

The Florida Department of Children and Families, in partnership with Family Support Services of North Florida Inc., Community-Based Care Lead Agency for Duvall and Nassau Counties, are working with the community, employees and consultants to redesign the foster care system in Northeast Florida to improve the way children and families receive services. Their goal is to “eliminate foster care as we know it and reduce the number of children in care by 50% by 2012”. They have completed Phase I of the redesign and are working to perfect the system and implement components of Phase II. Duvall County has reported success in reducing the number of children coming into care and the amount of time a child is in care prior to reunification or adoption. Some of the changes made in Phase I to ensure the safety of the child while reducing the need for removal due to neglect and abuse reports include:

- Reduced the time a child is in care prior to reunification or adoption
- Increased the number of adoptions
- Created the Integrated Practice Team, a multi-departmental review team for high-risk cases
- Introduced expedited processes for prevention services to allow a child to remain safely in their home
- Increased the number of children placed with relative caregivers to reduce the trauma of removal
- Isolated major abuse causes and identified services needed to safely keep children at home
- Increased resources in Domestic Violence, Substance Abuse and Mental Health to provide expertise to the investigator in their needs assessment and resource evaluation.