

**Special Meeting of the Riverside County Children and Families Commission
Advisory Board to the Commission
Held Tuesday, April 13, 2004 at
San Geronio Child Care Consortium
671 North Florida
Banning, California 92220**

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 1:45 p.m. by Chair, Jean Benson.

Advisory Committee members present: Jean Benson, Judy Wood, Sheila Hillis, and Georgann Koenig. Carla Lidner joined the meeting at 2:20 p.m.

Staff Present: Carolyn Wylie, Executive Director; Stella Smith, Deputy Director; Michelle Burroughs, Community Engagement Administrator. Recorder, LaRae Embree
Representatives: Camille Linde, The Valley Partnership; Maxine Orozlo, Erin Ortiz, Martha Carrillo, Alma Bautista, Darla Anderson, Lesa Loomis, Tom Farr, Linda Lail, and Nicole Hoxie, AmeriCorps/VISTA members.

II. Advisory Committee Member Comments

Jean Benson: Thanked everyone for attending and extended a special welcome Camille Linde of The Valley Partnership and to the VISTA volunteers. Georgann Koenig was asked to share information about the San Geronio Child Care Consortium. The facility is licensed for 154 children and presently serves 140 children. Parents served from the surrounding areas include Cherry Valley, Palm Springs, Cabazon and as far away as Diamond Bar.

Ms. Benson shared news of her resignation as Chairperson of the Advisory Committee and her recent appointment as a Commissioner to First 5 Riverside as confirmed by the Board of Supervisors. Ms. Smith asked the Committee members to think about their interest in serving as Chair or Vice-Chair of the committee. Elections will take place at the next meeting in July.

Ms. Smith reminded Committee members that the Form 700, Statement of Economic Interests, is due by April 19, 2004. Forms are to be forwarded to Commission Secretary, Michelle Victor.

Ms. Wylie stated that the Preschool Initiative (Improving Classroom Education Act Ballot Initiative) has been removed from the November 2004 ballot. The decision to remove it was based on the uncertainty of the California budget as well as the addition of four other initiatives being added to the ballot that raises revenues for education.

III. Approval of November 10, 2003 Joint Commission / Advisory Meeting Minutes

Carla Lidner moved to approve the November 10, 2003 meeting minutes. Judith Wood seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of the Advisory Committee members present. [Six (6) in favor, six (6) absent (Shafai, Block, Sisson, Stephens, Tavaglione, and Nero, and zero (0) opposed].

IV. Community Conversation Update – Michelle Burroughs and Nicole Hoxie-VISTA

Ms. Burroughs and VISTA members provided an update on the Community Conversations. To date, three conversations have been held. Locations included: Home Gardens, Corona, and Rubidoux in Supervisorial Districts One, Two and Five. Five VISTA members covered the desert area and four were assigned to Riverside area. VISTA member, Ms. Nicole Hoxie provided an update on the status of the scheduled Community Conversations, including the preliminary work that was involved in start-up. Preparations included: budget creation, choosing the meeting location, securing the necessary permits and applications, advertising via newsletters, posters, and flyers, requesting donations for door prizes, child care for meeting participants, training and provision of translation equipment, and electronic key pads which allowed the public to anonymously vote on issues they considered important to the local community.

Other community outreach projects included the distribution of approximately 1,500 surveys. The surveys were printed in English and Spanish and distributed throughout the community at bus stops, libraries, pre-school and day care centers and other local community locations. Harder and Company gathered the data and then broke down the information by zip code, analyzed it and used the results to select the meeting locations for the Community Conversations. The surveys provided the community perspective of needs and priorities. The plan is to complete a minimum of two Community Conversations in each supervisorial district by the end of May 2004.

Learnings from the earliest conversations are being applied to subsequent meetings, i.e., asking more specific questions, changing the wording of the questions for clarity, etc. Questions included: Is child care available? Is transportation to child care an issue?, etc. Using the portable key pads, the audience voted on their top priority issues. A common theme that surfaced during the public meeting was the awareness of resources, but not having adequate information on how to access them. Resource tables were available with information about First 5 partners and various community resources (including telephone numbers, locations, access and eligibility information, etc). At the conclusion of each meeting, an evaluation form was distributed to gather input on the relevance of the issues discussed. Meals and child care were provided at each meeting.

V. Staff Report – Stella Smith

Community Conversation - Update

Ms. Smith commended the VISTA volunteers for their work with meeting arrangements for the Community Conversations. During each conversation, natural community and

neighborhood leaders emerged. Names and telephone numbers of the community leaders are being gathered for follow-up and consideration in the formulation of parent advocacy groups.

First 5 Commission - Update

Faith-Based Partnership for Community Change

First 5 California offered special assistance to certain county commissions to do outreach to targeted audiences. As a result of this arrangement, First 5 Riverside is working with a public relations firm specializing in outreach to African American families. Michelle Burroughs, Administrator for Community Engagement, is coordinating this work.

Ms. Smith shared information on the first meeting that was held in September 2003 outreaching to predominately African American congregations. Approximately 23 congregational pastors and/or representatives were attended the introductory meeting designed to determine the level of interest in partnering with First 5 Riverside to address the health disparities of African American children in Riverside County. Following the initial meeting, a Steering Committee of committed pastors was formed and remains active. The committee has identified several areas of focus: to increase participation in the partnership, to identify experts within each congregation equipped to share information to promote positive practices and outcomes, inform the community of critical issues and solutions regarding the health status of African American children and to link families to available resources. An informational brochure has been developed and will be updated to include new members joining the Steering Committee.

Several of the churches have hosted educational seminars to provide and strengthen access to existing community resources. The partnership collaborates with the Black Infant Health program (BIH) which is administered through the Public Health Department and provides assistance to pregnant women to improve birth outcomes. BIH also has a component, "Role of Men", designed to work with fathers to foster positive relationships between the father and the child. The Role of Men program focuses on effective parenting skills, legal rights and responsibilities, job/vocation preparation, and education assessment.

A communication plan is being formulated in order to keep the larger group of faith-based organizations informed of the Steering Committee's progress and status. This partnership focus is currently African-American congregations and is being piloted in Riverside. Eventually, the Faith-Based Partnership will be extended to all congregations regardless of ethnicity throughout the county.

Collaboration with Cops N Clergy

First 5 Riverside is working with the local Cops and Clergy Network to assist in identifying the needs in represented congregations as it relates to providing child care in their facilities. The group approached First 5 after hearing Carolyn Wylie's presentation on Preschool For All. Many congregations have facilities that are currently not utilized or are under utilized. Several expressed interest in operating quality child care programs

and need assistance with the steps necessary to become a licensed child care provider. Program Specialists from First 5 Riverside have been meeting with several of these organizations to determine their readiness for licensure.

Discussion

Lynne Craig stated that the early education community is concerned about the faith-based initiative and the potential that funds will be diverted from their programs. Carolyn Wylie explained that the assistance First 5 Riverside is offering to the faith community is building infrastructure and capacity. Ms. Wylie stated that there may be some funding from the federal level for faith-based and other community based agencies. Hopefully, the local child care community will understand that this is “new funding” and not accessible to them. The federal funding is targeting building capacity-building for the faith-based and community based organizations.

Ms. Craig shared information that she is now one of the directors of the Senior Center in Rubidoux and offered use of the conference rooms there if needed.

Ms. Wylie informed the Advisory Committee that First 5 Riverside has just entered into an agreement to utilize the services of Nancy Maich, who previously worked in Supervisor Venable’s office. Ms. Maich will be working on legislative and facility issues regarding Preschool For All. Ms. Maich has experience working with the Riverside County Child Care Consortium, knows the issues and has the contacts and ability to move forward on this issue. Work will be done with the AbCd task force to address zoning laws in local communities faced by organizations attempting to open new child care facilities. This position is almost entirely funded by Packard Foundation.

Ms. Wylie mentioned that the State Budget crisis has resulted in the reduction of child care licensing ombudsmen from ten positions to only two statewide. One ombudsmen will be located in northern California and the other in southern California.

Ms. Smith referenced the letter Jean Benson mailed to the members of the Advisory Committee. Ms. Benson asked that each member again align themselves with one of the First 5 Riverside work groups. Staff can be contacted for a copy of existing work groups.

Ms. Smith shared information on Jean Benson’s resignation as Chair of the Advisory Committee due to the fact that she had been appointed as a Commission member of First 5 Riverside. Ms. Benson replaces Sheriff Bob Doyle. Ms. Smith thanked Ms. Benson for all of her hard work and dedication during her years of service on the Advisory Committee.

Jean Benson thanked everyone for their hard work. She also provided some background on the history of the Advisory Committee and the work accomplished by a small group of members that reviewed applications for funding, etc., approving funding, etc.

Georgann Koenig shared audience comments from a recent meeting that she attended. The community was surprised to learn all that First 5 Riverside does for Riverside

County compared to other neighboring counties. She stated that First 5 Riverside leads the way in efforts to be user-friendly and to promote quality child care.

Carolyn Wylie announced her retirement as Executive Director for First 5 Riverside effective November 14, 2004. The job description is being completed, advertising will commence and additional processes will occur prior to several other county Executive Directors being invited to participate in reviewing incoming resumes. The Commissioners themselves will be the final interviewer panel.

VI. Public Comment

Camille Linde expressed her appreciation for the efforts of the Advisory Committee, Carolyn Wylie, Stella Smith, Michelle Burroughs. In addition, she stated she is proud to partner with First 5 Riverside in their efforts to make a difference in Riverside County.

Georgann Koenigh offered a tour of the San Geronio Child Care Consortium for those interested.

VII. Future Agenda Items

Election of Chair and Vice Chair

VIII. Commission Adjournment to July 21, 2004 at 1:30 p.m.

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Meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.