

**Medina County Family First Council  
Meeting Minutes  
January 27, 2009**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

1. Anderson, Jeff..... Ohio Department of Youth Services
2. Andregg, Carol ..... Family Representative
3. Barlow, Betty..... Oaks Family Care Center
4. Calvert, Sandy ..... Hands Foundation
5. Carmon, Gail..... Alternative Paths
6. Castele, Lynne..... Family Representative
7. Dell'Anno, Amy ..... Family Representative
8. Dockrill, Diane..... Solutions Behavioral Healthcare
9. Geissman, Patricia ..... Medina County Commissioner
10. Gordon, Jan ..... OSU Extension
11. Grace, Debbra ..... Wadsworth Salvation Army
12. Hardin, Beverly ..... Society for Handicapped Citizens
13. Johnston, Charlie..... CFIT
14. King, Julie ..... United Way of Medina County
15. Koran, William..... Medina County ESC
16. Kubena-Yatsko, Debbie..... Medina Metro Housing
17. LaForme, Gregory ..... Medina County Achievement Center
18. LaMar, Michelle ..... Community Services Center
19. LeSure, Suzanne ..... Cornerstone Wellness
20. Leuthaeuser, Judy ..... Medina County Library
21. McGuire, Beth..... Hospice of Medina County
22. Meador, Barbara..... Community Action
23. Nowak, Brian ..... Medina County Drug Abuse Commission
24. Putka, Tim..... Catholic Charities
25. Quallich, Kristine..... Medina City Schools
26. Radecky, Debra..... Office for Older Adults
27. Ray, Billy ..... Family Representative
28. Robertson, Pat..... Family Representative
29. Shema, Timothy ..... Domestic Relations Court
30. Simon, Betsy..... Family Representative
31. Solar, Nick ..... City of Brunswick, Chair
32. Stepp, Randy ..... Medina City Schools
33. Strebler, Lisa..... Medina County Health Department
34. Tahajod, Sharon ..... Family Representative
35. Titterington, Phillip ..... Juvenile Court
36. Wilkins, Mead ..... Medina County Job and Family Services
37. Williams, Bradford ..... Solutions Behavioral Healthcare, Chair-Elect

**GUESTS PRESENT**

1. Grice-Walser, Lisa ..... Medina Creative Housing
2. Joyner, Cassandra ..... Community Action
3. Klue, Jerry..... Medina Police Department/DARE

**STAFF PRESENT**

1. DeGeorge, Vincent ..... Family First Council Executive Director
2. McCourt, Jayme ..... Family First Council Administrative Assistant
3. Perrine, Amy ..... Family First Council ICAT Coordinator
4. Ruf, Christine ..... Help Me Grow Project Director

**1. WELCOME, CALL TO ORDER, INTRODUCTIONS AND COMMITTEE SELECTIONS**

Nick Solar called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. and welcomed everyone. Nick recognized and thanked Lynne Castele for her service as last year's Chair. He also thanked Mead Wilkins for allowing Family First to conduct this month's meeting at Job and Family Services. Introductions were made. Nick circulated the Family First Council committee selection sheet. According to our Bylaws, each member must be on at least one committee. The majority of work in Council is done in committees and it is important that you attend the meetings.

**2. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Vincent DeGeorge discussed the Executive Director's Report (copy attached to original minutes). Commissioner Pat Geissman announced that \$4.5 million will be reduced from the commissioners' budget. Vince distributed information on what Family First Council contributed to the Medina County schools over the last few years (copy attached to original minutes).

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Julie King made a motion to approve the minutes and committee reports. Barb Meador seconded. The motion passed.

**4. ACTION ITEMS**

**A. APPROVE A 2.5% SALARY INCREASE FOR FAMILY FIRST COUNCIL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT AND ICAT COORDINATOR.**

Jayme McCourt and Amy Perrine were excused from the meeting. Council's approved 2009 budget maintains two part-time staff positions and the allocation of an increase of 2.5%. Carol Andregg made a motion to approve the 2.5% salary increase. Greg LaForme seconded. Discussion ensued on the economic conditions and therefore it would be unwise to authorize the increase. The motion was denied. Jayme McCourt and Amy Perrine rejoined the meeting.

**5. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**A. ADMINISTRATIVE**

Mead Wilkins reported that the committee discussed contractual and fiscal issues.

**B. FAMILY ADVISORY**

Pat Robertson gave a synopsis of the 2008 Eleemosynary (Christmas) Project. Through the generosity of Family First Council, we were able to provide items to four families this year. Amy Dell'Anno delivered the gifts to the Brunswick family, Diane DePasquale-Hagerty provided the name of a wheelchair-bound mom with a disabled child and Billy Ray read a letter from the mom of the little boy, thanking us for the gifts. A full accounting of the funding and gifts is attached to the original minutes.

**C. MEMBERSHIP**

Judy Leuthaeuser welcomed our two new elected members Michelle LaMar and Gail Carmon. Thank you to Debbie Kubena-Yatsko for conducting the orientation this morning. Thank you to Jayme McCourt for the orientation binders. Judy reminded the committee chairs to keep attendance at your meetings.

**D. PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Phillip Titterington announced that the next Public Relations meeting is February 10, 2009 at 8:30 a.m. Phillip circulated a sign-up sheet for writing an article on "What Family First Council Means to Me" for the Family Focus Publication. There are only four editions scheduled this year so please consider writing an item for it.

**E. PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Nick Solar reported that the Planning Committee met today. Frances Strickland, the First Lady of Ohio, visited eighty-eight Family and Children First Councils in 2007/2008. The Ohio Family and Children First

staff compiled information on how individual counties operate and how they incorporate family engagement. This is the second round of visits by Mrs. Strickland. The visits are set up by region and there are five counties in our region: Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit, and Wayne. The meeting will be March 4, 2009 in the afternoon with the location to be determined.

Medina County has been asked to invite up to six people to participate in this forum. Only six people are being asked due to space limitations and the dialogue process. The individuals slated to participate are: Vincent DeGeorge, Christine Ruf, Debbra Grace, Nick Solar and Mead Wilkins. A Family Representative will be determined at the Family Advisory meeting after the Family First Council meeting. (Submitters note: At the conclusion of the Family Advisory Committee meeting, it was determined that Betsy Simon would be the Family Representative attending. The following day, Mead Wilkins advised he cannot attend on the date specified. Randy Stepp was invited and has accepted the invitation.)

The Planning Committee is working on details for the Strategic Planning retreat. Save the date of September 25, 2009 at the Western Reserve Masonic Community Facility on Nettleton Road.

**i. SUBCOMMITTEES**

**a. WELLNESS**

Diane Dockrill reported that the Wellness Committee met on December 5, 2008. The committee is working on applying for the Ohio Children's Trust Fund Grant. The next meeting is February 6, 2009.

**b. CARETEAM**

Kris Quallich noted that the CareTeams are looking at other sources of funding. Kris will be scheduling a sustainability meeting soon.

**c. SENIOR FOCUS**

Sandy Calvert attended the WRAAA Public Policy where discussions have been held on the Ohio Department of Aging budget and the impact it will have on direct service to older adults. The HANDS Foundation provided \$75,000 worth of Senior Wishes last year. In 2009, Senior Wishes will be capped at \$60,000. The HANDS Foundation "Farmers Market Nutritional" program will provide vouchers to four hundred older adults for fresh produce. A letter of intent was submitted for a mental health grant using an abbreviated form of the SAMHSA grant written in 2008. The HANDS Foundation fundraiser *Swing into Spring* is scheduled for Saturday, March 21, 2009.

The Senior Needs Assessment Survey recommendations were discussed and the need to move forward in a cohesive collaborative manner. A discussion ensued whether Family First Council is truly a lifespan organization. Sandy spoke about the U of A and the Medina County University Center's offer to provide programming needs identified in the six SNAS recommendations.

Nick Solar noted that the Planning committee is looking at Senior Focus concerning the lifespan process. This will be on the agenda at future Administrative and Planning meetings. A photograph appeared in the Tuesday, January 27, 2009 issue of the Gazette showing Commissioner Pat Geissman presenting a \$7,000 check to Tim Putka of Catholic Charities. Tim Putka noted that he is pleased and thankful for the funding from the Commissioners Ball. Pat Geissman added that senior issues were brought to light last summer and she is eager to help. She is also glad it is womb to tomb and there is some focus on seniors.

**e. YOUTH ADVISORY CONSORTIUM**

Lisa Strebler reported that the Consortium continues to meet on a monthly basis on the first Tuesday of the month. We have identified needs, and representatives from the schools are being sought for the Consortium. Many agencies are getting increased requests for services. We are all involved in the same

challenges on funding. Please send any data to Jayme McCourt to post on the Data Sharing Page on the Family First Council web site as sharing information is a great challenge.

Chris Ruf is looking for individuals representing the pre-natal population. Goals achieved are reduction in the number of meetings to attend and to share information. The mission statement is being developed. We have had presentations from the Health Department on obesity, child mortality and on mental health issues.

ii. **AD HOC COMMITTEES**

a. **BYLAWS**

Nick Solar announced that Lynne Castele is now Chair of the Bylaws committee and Brad Williams is the Co-Chair. The committee will meet on February 13, 2009 for our last look at the draft. It will then be forwarded to the Planning committee for review. Each Chair will be asked to look at the pieces and parts of the Bylaws pertaining to their respective committees. Our goal is to have the Bylaws complete by the end of June 2009. We are looking for feedback and comments on the draft document. The Bylaws will be in compliance with HB 289.

b. **MID-CAT**

Christine Ruf reported that Mid-Cat is continuing to work through the process on who should be referred, risk assessment tools to evaluate, and pre- and post-testing. The Mid-Cat group meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 10:00 a.m. at the Medina Library. Mid-Cat needs a Chairperson and it must be a Family First Council member. Chris is part of the initial formation of the program but it will need to have a Chair. Gail Carmon will consider chairing after attending Mid-Cat meetings to learn more. Mid-Cat focuses on the 19-59 year old population who use multiple systems.

8. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None.

9. **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

10. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**A. Nick Solar** – The Northern Medina County Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign raised \$37,500. They were very pleased in the amount as the needs are skyrocketing, along with utility disconnects and rising food costs.

**B. Suzanne LeSure** – Thank you to Betty Barlow and the Oaks staff for their support on the Incredible Years Program.

**C. Mead Wilkins and Amy Dell'Anno** – Mead announced that we are in the Berry Room at Job and Family Services. This room was named after Amy Dell'Anno's sister, Wendy Berry. Amy informed us that Wendy was diagnosed with Marfan Syndrome and was legally blind. Her physician pursued funding for eye surgery, something the family never thought would happen. Wendy's life had really been lived in those years she became a foster parent, had the eye surgery and ultimately obtaining her driver's license. She spoke about the foster parent training room being so small. She was so excited by the training, involvement, and opportunity to become a parent. Wendy fostered a teenager and then smaller children. Twelve years ago this week, her son Jacob Berry was born. Only one week after his birth, Wendy passed away due to complications from Marfan's. Amy's whole family was comforted by the fact that she had those years and that she was able to hold Jacob for that week. Before that, she was becoming very depressed and withdrawn. The family was so full of joy at the fact she made it through her pregnancy and her dreams had been realized only to have it dashed within seconds. Thank you to Job and Family Services and the Foster Care Program, as her memory lives on in this room.

- D. Sharon Tahajod** – Thank you for all of the Christmas gifts and to Pat Robertson for organizing the effort.
- E. Pat Geissman** –The Commissioners Charity Ball will come again next year. Pat is open on whom she will award funding to. Please let her know if you have a project needing funds.
- F. Lisa Strebler** – The Health Department was funded for portable dental equipment. We will begin to do some outreach to provide basic dental services.
- G. Pat Robertson** – A family called the United Way to provide a piano to someone who could not afford to pay for one and has a talented child who plays. If anyone has any suggestions on how to find such a family or has the ability to speak to music teachers at school, it would be appreciated. The donor will pay to have it moved and tuned. Vincent DeGeorge offered to pay for a lesson with Pat Robertson, if such a child is found.
- H. Julie King** – Every other year the United Way completes a count on homeless people. Any agency that has a shelter please let Julie know of individuals in Medina County. The last time a count was taken, we had 66 homeless people. Thanks for help with the project.
- I. Betty Barlow** – Community support was awesome this year as 50 families were provided with Christmas giveaways by the Oaks. The Lodi Resource Center had 26 families being served. We worked with 25 families on making traditions at a Hinckley church. Some families were adopted by people wanting to give back.
- J. Debbie Grace** – On Saturday, March 7, 2009 the Second Annual Breakfast with the Tooth Fairy will be held at Medina Salvation Army. Tickets for Breakfast with the Tooth Fairy are \$5 and available at the Medina County Health Department. Also on March 7, 2009, the Wadsworth Salvation Army Women's Auxiliary is sponsoring Swing into Spring. The event is being held at the Galaxy and tickets are \$20.
- K. Debbie Kubena-Yatsko** – Thank you to Greg LaForme and MR/DD for organizing the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Medina County Non-Profit's Chili Challenge. This is an example of how one organization is willing to help out another by collecting non-perishable food to benefit the Coalition of Medina County Food Pantries.
- L. Michelle LaMar** – Thank you for the warm welcome to Family First Council.
- M. Beth McGuire** – Beth distributed a flyer with the current workshops and education groups for the Robertson Bereavement Center. Hospice is proceeding on the new building and is moving forward.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

Tim Putka made a motion to adjourn. Sandy Calvert seconded. The motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Jayme McCourt