



**Arizona Parents Commission on Drug Education and Prevention
Meeting Minutes
November 18, 2020
10:00 AM**

A general meeting of the Arizona Parents Commission on Drug Education and Prevention convened on November 18, 2020. Notice having been duly given. Present and absent were the following members of the Parents Commission.

Members Present (7)	Members Absent (2)
Bryan Cox	Laura Ciscomani
Kristine FireThunder	David Reede
Beatriz Hurtado	
Eric Meaux	
Denise Beagley	
Bryan Harris	
Raynee Schneider	
Staff and Guests Present (8)	
Susan Alameda, GOYFF	Tonya Hamilton, GOYFF
Nicole Valenzuela, GOYFF	Gillian Vanasse, Department of Child Safety
Kim Brooks, GOYFF	Anna Loebe, Southern Arizona Children's Advocacy Center
Marie Fordney, Southern Arizona Children's Advocacy Center	Crystal Narcho, Southern Arizona Children's Advocacy Center

A. CALL TO ORDER

- **Chairman Bryan Cox** called the Parents Commission meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. with 7 members present and 2 members absent.

B. WELCOME/INTRODUCTIONS

- **Chairman Cox** welcomed members and guests. **Chairman Cox** took attendance via roll call.
- **Mrs. Susan Alameda, GOYFF**, welcomed and introduced the new Program Administrator for the Parents Commission, **Nicole Valenzuela**. **Ms. Valenzuela** thanked the commission for the welcome and is looking forward to working closely with the Commission.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- **Chairman Cox** requested a review of the **September 16, 2020** meeting minutes.
- **Raynee Schneider** motioned to accept the **September 16, 2020** minutes.
- **Eric Meaux** seconded the motion at 10:10 a.m.
The motion passed with no dissenting votes.

D. Ms. Gillian Vanasse, Department of Child Safety (DCS)

Chairman Cox shared that November is National Adoption month. The Parents Commission on Drug Education and Prevention invited presenters to share about the landscape of foster and adoption in Arizona.

Chairman Cox welcomed and introduced **Ms. Gillian Vanasse**, Assistant Director for Foster Care and Post Permanency Support at DCS.

Ms. Vanasse, after sharing the mission and vision of DCS, reported the current statistics related to child abuse reports received by the department.

- **Communications & Reports to the Hotline:**
 - **School Based:** Reports received from May-June 2020 are significantly less than expected due to virtual learning and children being on break for the summer.
 - **Law Enforcement:** There has been an increase in the number of law enforcement reports that are considered “high priority” and have a more significant need for immediate intervention.
 - **CARS vs. Child Entries:** The department found that there has been an increase in the number of Court Authorized Removals (CARS) petitions ordered by the court.
 - **Children in Out-of-Home Care:** **Ms. Vanasse** reported that there were over 20,000 children in DCS care in 2014-2015 and as of October 2020 there are approximately 13,500 children in care.
 - **0-17 year olds in Out-of-Home Care:** 45 % are in Kinship (Unlicensed) Care, 39% are in Foster Care, and 15% are in Congregate Care, Independent Living, or other. **Ms. Vanasse** stated that a priority of the department is to reduce the number of children placed in congregate care and have them placed in a family-like setting with kinship or a foster home placement.
 - **18-21 year olds in Out-of-Home Care:** **Ms. Vanasse** reported that youth ages 18-21 are provided the opportunity to receive support for life skills, employment, and education through a variety of Young Adult Programs.
 - **Children receiving in-home services:** DCS conducted virtual visitation and services during quarantine and have been back to in-person visitation and services since May 30, 2020, except when there is a high-risk circumstance for the families. There have been 2,978 youth successfully reunified with their family between March 1, 2020 and October 25, 2020.
- **Service Referral Waitlist:** **Ms. Vanasse** stated that the department makes efforts to connect families with the services and resources needed and there has been an increase in individuals on waitlists for services.
- **Shared Parenting:** **Ms. Vanasse** shared that the program was launched in April 2020 to bridge the communication between birth families and caregivers in an effort to build connected relationships for improved transitions home. **Ms. Vanasse** reported that these relationships between families are especially important when Substance Abuse is a challenge for the birth family.
- **Supporting Caregivers:** **Ms. Vanasse** reported that the current need that has been identified by the Department is for licensed foster homes, specifically for older youth, sibling groups, and youth with behavioral health or medical needs.

- **Adoption Recruitment**

- “Children’s Heart Gallery” has been re-designed and relaunched to bring awareness to the children in foster care in Arizona.
(www.childrensheartgallery.org).
- “Light Up a Life” is a site to provide an opportunity to learn about becoming a foster parent and to learn about the impact foster parents have in children’s lives.

Chairperson Cox thanked the presenter and asked if there were any questions for the presenter.

Mr. Bryan Harris asked **Ms. Vanasse** how people can get involved in addition to donations.

Ms. Vanasse responded and shared that there are volunteer opportunities at dcs.az.gov including becoming a mentor to a foster child or by becoming a Child Appointed Special Advocate (CASA). She also shared that CarePortal is an application utilized by the faith-based communities to support kinship and foster families.

Ms. Denise Beagley shared that she was grateful for the support and services that the Department of Child Safety is providing for children and families. **Ms. Beagley** shared her experiences with children needing the department’s involvement and stated that she has seen a positive shift in the department’s involvement and appreciates the work the department is doing.

Chairman Cox stated that he mirrored the sentiments of **Ms. Beagley**. **Chairman Cox** shared his appreciation for the Department of Child Safety and the support they have provided at his precinct through supportive services and coordination of resources.

Ms. Vanasse encouraged individuals to engage through social media to learn about what the Department of Child Safety is doing to engage the community in their efforts. **Mr. Bryan Harris** asked **Ms. Vanasse** if she has shared the links to their social media accounts. **Ms. Vanasse** stated that she had not, but would share them with **Ms. Kim Brooks, GOYFF**, to distribute to the commission members.

E. Southern Arizona Children’s Advocacy Center (SACAC), Tucson, AZ

Chairman Cox welcomed and introduced **Mrs. Anna Loebe, Southern Arizona Children’s Advocacy Center**. **Mrs. Anna Loebe** thanked the commission for the invitation to present and introduced the Executive Director, **Marie Fordney** and **Crystal Narcho**, Family Support Specialist Supervisor. **Ms. Loebe** indicated that **Ms. Fordney** and **Ms. Narcho** would be available for questions after the presentation.

Mrs. Loebe shared that the Southern Arizona Children’s Advocacy Center is a child-sensitive environment providing the following services in one place:

- Investigative and advocacy services to child victims & their families. They provide expert medical evaluations, videotaped forensic interviews, crisis intervention and case coordination with law enforcement and Department of Child Safety. **Mrs. Loebe** stated that SACAC offers parent education classes and they utilize the STEP parent education curriculum to support parents in learning about healthy relationships, how to talk to children that have experienced abuse, and how to build positive relationships.

- **Mrs. Loebe** stated that children placed in foster care may grieve the loss of their parents, need mental health services, or may have involvement in the juvenile justice system. **Mrs. Loebe** shared that an adverse childhood experience (ACEs) increases the use of alcohol and substance use. **Mrs. Loebe** stated that older children often repeat the cycle of substance use to find a way to numb the pain from their own experiences.

Ms. Loebe stated areas of opportunity to support adoptive parents:

- Increased multi-agency collaboration to provide wraparound services and support
- Trauma-informed practices and training for providers from a family systems perspective and to understand the complex dynamics of the “new families” created through foster and adoption.
- Providers to be culturally competent to be better equipped to work with families of all races, cultures, ethnicities, and sexual orientations.
- Improved support services for kinship, foster, & adoptive parents to include supportive services post-placement or in the event of a disruption.

Chairman Cox thanked **Southern Arizona Children’s Advocacy Center** for her presentation and asked if there were any questions at 11:02 a.m..

Ms. Kristine FireThunder asked Ms. Loebe about what SACAC has found to be appropriate cultural competence training and if there was a specific number of hours or type of training prescribed to achieve cultural competence. Ms. Marie Fordney, Executive Director of SACAC, shared that the agency recognizes that a training that includes the identification of implicit biases coupled with cultural competency training is needed. Ms. Fordney shared that SACAC is looking at innovative approaches to develop a training that is comprehensive and responsive to community needs.

Chairman Cox thanked **Southern Arizona Children’s Advocacy Center** and asked if there were any further questions. There were no additional questions.

F. **Subgrantee Updates, Nicole Valenzuela, Program Administrator, Governor’s Office of Youth, Faith and Family**

Chairman Cox introduced **Ms. Nicole Valenzuela** who indicated that grantees reported that there were over 4,300 individuals served in the first quarter (July, August, and September) and in October 2020 alone the grantees reported over 9,500 individuals served. **Ms. Valenzuela** shared that site visits have resumed virtually.

Ms. Valenzuela provided updates for two Parent Commission Grantees:

- **Child & Family Resources, Inc. (CFR)**
 - When CFR moved to a virtual platform, they took the opportunity to implement a Spanish version of the program as well to broaden their reach in the community and meet the needs of their local families.
 - CFR increased their collaboration efforts with the Department of Corrections and Manzanita Employment Center and parents being released from custody were referred to the program. JDAI, Pima County Juvenile Court and Jewish Family Services have promoted the program and assisted families to overcome barriers to their participation.

- **Chicanos Por La Causa (CPLC)**
 - CPLC implemented a “Trauma Informed Action Plan” to identify and respond to the immediate needs in the communities they serve.
 - CPLC’s culturally competent approach, partnership with the Navajo Nation, and diverse staff, including members of the Navajo Nation, contribute to the successful outcomes of participants.

Chairman Cox thanked **Ms. Valenzuela** for her update and asked if there were any questions at 11:14 a.m. There were no questions.

G. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Cox asked if any commissioners had any announcements they would like to share.

Denise Beagley shared a “Save the Date” for a First Responders and Mental Health conference on April 8th and 9th, 2021. **Ms. Beagley** shared that the event is being planned as a “live” event at this time, but will transition to virtual if needed. **Chairman Cox** thanked **Ms. Beagley** for the announcement. **Chairman Cox** shared that there have been some advancements in the roll-out of the first COVID-19 vaccines.

Eric Meaux, shared information about a project Maricopa County Department of Public Health and Maricopa County Juvenile Probation Department is working on to improve the awareness about opioid use for youth in juvenile detention and to provide linkages to services on a virtual platform.

Chairman Cox asked the commission members how the passing of Proposition 207 would impact each of their fields and the potential impact on the work of the Parents Commission and Parents Commission grantees. **Eric Meaux** stated that there will be areas that will need to be addressed at Maricopa County Juvenile Probation Department. **Chairman Cox** proposed continued discussions at future commission meetings.

Tonya Hamilton, Deputy Director, provided the following information:

- The GOYFF awarded 22 subgrantees through the Substance Abuse Block Grant (SABG) administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). A total of \$3.5 million was awarded for Trauma Informed Primary Prevention Grant (TIPP) programming which supports and expands the utilization of the principles of trauma-informed care in a comprehensive approach to preventing substance abuse.
- STOP RFGA awardees will be selected and will be announced on the GOYFF website in December. A total of \$2.5 million is being offered for a 3 year grant cycle through federal funds authorized through the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and administered by the Department of Justice’s Office on Violence Against Women.
- GOYFF is hosting a grant writing workshop, free to the community at large on November 18th and 19th. GOYFF focused on non-profits and tribal nations.

- The Volunteer Summit will be held in the spring on April 20th and 21st, 2021.

H. FUTURE AGENDA/MEETING SCHEDULE

Chairman Cox stated the next scheduled meeting is set for January 20, 2021 at 10:00 AM via Zoom.

I. ADJOURN

A motioned to adjourn the meeting was made by **Bryan Harris** at 11:26 a.m.. The Motion was seconded by **Eric Meaux and approved by all attendees.**

Meeting Adjourned

19th Day of November, 2020
Parents Commission
Respectfully Submitted By:
Nicole Valenzuela
Program Administrator, GOYFF