

Child and Family Committee
Audubon Area Community Services, Inc.

MINUTES
January 5, 2010

Daisy James called the January 5, 2010, meeting of the AACS, Inc. Child and Family Committee to order at 12:00p.m. A quorum was established with the following members present.

Members Present:

Ms. Phyllis Church
Ms. Janie Drury

Ms. Daisy James
Rev. Jerry Manning

Dr. Sandra Obilade
Ms. Helen Sears

Staff Present:

Mr. Ronald Logsdon, AACS Executive Director
Mr. Aubrey Nehring, Head Start Director
Ms. Amy Rafferty, Head Start Executive Assistant Administrative

GENERAL REPORTS

Update on Strategic Objectives. Mr. Nehring explained that the agency's 2010 strategic objectives, which have been approved by the Board, have changed and are revolving around a *Social Enterprise* initiative, which the agency will work on developing this year. The agency's *KentuckyWorks* program (KWP) identifies clients and puts them into positions where they can learn new skills, attend training, and hopefully, achieve full-time unsubsidized employment. In Head Start, the Local Area Managers have been identifying specific types of jobs where they could both utilize this type of help and help those clients develop saleable skills. Mr. Nehring said that he has given Ms. Blackham a complete list of the positions in Head Start where the social enterprise approach might provide mutual benefit, and Ms. Blackham will begin placing KWP clients in those positions over the next year. Mr. Logsdon added an explanation of the *Social Enterprise* objectives of the agency as a whole.

Financial Report. Mr. Mayes was absent from the meeting but had provided the agency's Purchase Card Report and the current Budget Performance Reports, which Mr. Nehring distributed to and reviewed with the Committee. Mr. Nehring reminded the members that the purchase card report tracks the agency's activity over a rolling 12-month period. He pointed out that agency purchase cards are being used extensively due to efficiency and savings as well as the restricting and tracking capacities that accompany their usage.

Although Ms. Blackham and Mr. Mayes were not present to comment on her programs' budgets, Mr. Logsdon said they all looked good and seemed to be on target. Mr. Nehring explained that he hasn't been able to submit the Head Start budgets to Mr. Mayes due to the extra work from the expansion, but he is confident that this information will be ready by the next meeting. He introduced and explained five new reports that have been added to track the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) funds being used for COLA/Quality and Expansion.

NEW BUSINESS

Family Assistance Services. Ms. Blackham was unable to attend the meeting but submitted the following updates for the minutes. Mr. Logsdon presented this information to the Committee. He also distributed the Early Childhood Training Calendar for January-March, 2010. Her program summaries:

Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R). Mary Beth Jackson, director of the Division of Child Care at the Cabinet for Health and Family Services — the funding source for both of these programs, visited AACS in December. The visit went quite well. It was nice to spend two days without any competition for her attention, an opportunity that is unlikely to arise again. We spent a day in Hopkinsville, briefly visiting the CCR&R office and one of the ACCYN programs currently in the accreditation process. We also stopped by the Head Start center and Gladys Williams, the Local Area Manager, was nice enough to show Ms. Jackson around.

The next day, staff showed Ms. Jackson AACS’ “mini-model” classroom and explained how the related training is organized. Ms. Jackson has a Master’s Degree in early childhood with a focus on Reggio practices, so they visited the Head Start Reggio program at Henderson Community College – and she said she was quite impressed and noted that as far as she knew, it was the only remaining Reggio program in the state. Staff also took her to Grandma’s Corner and explained how that program came into existence.

Imagination Library. Imagination Library a program instituted by the Dollywood Foundation (Dolly Parton). It provides an age-appropriate book per month for every registered child in Daviess County from birth to age 5, is being transitioned from The Learning Community (for which AACS has served as fiscal agent) to AACS. This project will be operated in collaboration with the Junior League of Owensboro and they have agreed to change its configuration somewhat. The Junior League is currently selecting an advisory panel for Imagination Library which will primarily have fundraising responsibilities while CCR&R will take on the other administrative responsibilities. While the administrative functions of Imagination Library are not funded, it fits in so well with the agency’s mission and the CCR&R program that it seems imperative that we keep this program in Daviess County despite the dissolution of The Learning Community.

Army Child Care in Your Neighborhood (ACCYN). The Army Child Care in Your Neighborhood project has provided AACS with the funds to help several family child care homes and child care centers in Christian County become nationally accredited. The purpose of the program is to provide off-post care at the same level of quality as found on-post since there are not enough child care slots on post for all military personnel. For the past four and a half years, this program has given Fort Campbell area child care providers a wonderful opportunity that they may not have been able to take advantage of otherwise. It has also provided AACS with a great opportunity to invest in these child care providers and the children in their care. Other than Audubon Area Head Start programs, Christian County will have the largest concentration of nationally accredited child care programs in the state.

There are currently twelve (12) “Army Child Care in Your Neighborhood” projects across the country — all funded by the Department of Defense through the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRA). Those funds come directly from the Department of the Army. The Army has several similar projects that they actually administer and operate successfully themselves, and the Army has decided to do the same with ACCYN.

Basically, what has happened is that NACCRRRA lost its contract with the Army, so AACS is losing that contract with NACCRRRA. Ms. Blackham said she had met with Army representatives to discuss the transition of this program from Audubon Area to Fort Campbell. Despite the fact that AACS is losing a valuable contract, she said that she left the meeting feeling good about this transition. The Army is going to continue the project with the plan of investing an incredible amount of money into those child care programs — much more than AACS had available for the same purpose. Ultimately, this will be better for the providers and the children in their care.

Kentucky Works Program (KWP). There have been a couple of changes in the program with respect to the *KentuckyWorks* Program and “JRA” in particular — Job Readiness Activities — the training component of KWP in which trainers work with KWP participants on such things as the importance of showing up to work on time, work expectations, how to properly leave a job, budgeting, etc. The Cabinet for Health and Families/Department of Community Based Services’ Rivers Service Region (Green River and Barren River Area Development Districts) has determined that JRA does not have enough of a positive effect on the state’s participation rates. There is no argument that JRA has a positive impact on clients, but DCBS is primarily concerned with their participation rates at the current time. So, we’ve been asked to re-focus our efforts away from JRA and more towards the work experience placements such as volunteer experience and wage subsidy placements.

Interestingly, the Cabinet for Health and Families/Department of Community Based Services’ Lakes Service Region (Pennyrite and Purchase Area Development Districts) has asked AACS to *begin* providing JRA in Hopkins and Christian Counties – which we are doing.

What this means for AACS’ KWP staff is that six (6) JRA trainers will be laid off at the end of January 2010. Hopefully, AACS will have a *KentuckyWorks* contract modification in hand by then and those trainers who haven’t found other positions can be reassigned to the positions that should be added to the KWP contract.

In Ms. Blackham’s opinion, she said, no longer providing JRA will leave a big hole in the KWP program since AACS staff will not be a mechanism to address the underlying reasons *why* their clients haven’t been successful. She and her KWP staff feel that this (JRA) aspect of the program is important enough to look for additional funding opportunities to supplement KWP and hopefully allow the agency/program to provide this resource sometime in the near future. With the current administration and its focus on jobs, such funding seems likely in the near future, she said.

Senior Community Service Employment Program /Title V (SCSEP). Title V is the Senior Community Service Employment Program which provides job experience for low-income seniors. The struggle with this program has always been the lack of funds to hire staff to operate it. AACS has managed to squeeze some funds from the SCSEP administrative budget to hire Joe Abel, retired Rivers Service Region Administrator, on contract and therefore avoid the expenses related to benefits. In the few months since Mr. Abel has been on board, all SCSEP slots are finally fully enrolled and it seems as though the program may be more successful than it has been of late. Now, she said, she just has to figure some way to keep him on board.

There were no actions requested or taken by the Committee on behalf of the Family Assistance Department.

Head Start/Early Head Start Program. Mr.Nehring presented this departmental information to the Committee. He began his presentation with a video summary of the AACS group of twenty-one who November 27-December 6, 2009 attended the North America Study Group conference in Reggio Emilia, Italy:

Reggio Emilia Study Tour. Mr. Nehring spoke about the importance of the trip and how information obtained there will be incorporated into our program. Mr. Logsdon added that there were typed notes of all the conference sessions and that persons who desired copies should contact him.

Mr. Nehring’s program summaries:

ARRA Head Start and Early Head Start Expansions. Mr. Nehring informed the Committee members that AACS had received official award notification for **all** of the expansion, i.e., the initial Head Start ARRA expansion award and the lagging Early Head Start ARRA expansion award.

Together, these ARRA grants totaled some \$8 million. He said that his staff and those Head Start programs are busy spending the funds and preparing for startup.

The operation of the Head Start expansion began the previous day, January 4th. The expected startup date for the Early Head Start expansion is March 1st. Mr. Nehring reviewed the budgets for each of the program expansions. He also explained some of the new program models that are being introduced with the expansion.

Head Start CARES Project. Mr. Nehring distributed a handout describing a research study sponsored by Head Start in which the AACS Head Start program had been *invited* to participate. Members of the CARES project team will now be meeting with some of the AACS staff to discuss the program's social-emotional curriculum. More information will follow should AACS' program now be *chosen* to participate in the research project.

Head Start I CAN Training — January 14th in Christian County. Mr. Nehring said that he was expecting to have over 160 parents attending the "I CAN" training. Updates about this program will be provided to the Committee at a later date, he said.

There were no actions requested or taken by the Committee on behalf of the Head Start Department.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Logsdon noted that Margaret Bailey had begun working for the AACS Head Start program earlier in the week, so there was no Early Childhood Consultant currently on the Board. The agency is required by law to have a qualified early childhood professional/consultants on the Board, so he will need to know who will be assuming this position by the time the Board meets in February. Mr. Nehring said he was planning to extend an invitation to Ms. Bridgett Murray, professor of early childhood at Henderson Community College. Ms. Murray was extremely involved in setting up the Reggio Emilia program there, he said.

FUTURE COMMITTEE MEETING DATES

March 3, 2010	July 7, 2010	November 3, 2010
May 5, 2010	September 1, 2010	

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business...

The meeting adjourned at 1:15p.m.

Ms. Daisy James
Committee Chair