

DATE: November 18, 2014

LEADER: Ben Maas

TIME: 4:00-6:00 p.m.

RECORDER: Lisa Gjerde

COUNCIL MEMBERS			LIAISON MEMBERS			GUESTS
Name	P	A	Name	P	A	Name
Caroline Beise	√		Alene Chelman	√		
Sam Deweese	√		Melissa Hanson	√		
Christine Dondlinger	√		Gary Norman		√	
Lisa Gjerde	√					
Lisa Inman	√					
Sue Kunitz	√					
Ben Maas	√					
Sue Maki		√				
Rod Sawtell	√					
Twyla Sawtell	√					
Becky Sorenson	√					
Eddie Tipton	√					
Virginia Wright	√					

Agenda	Activity/Discussion	Decision/Action/Conclusion
Call to Order	Ben called the meeting to order.	Approved by consensus.
Approval of Oct. Minutes	Ben made a motion to approve the minutes.	Approved by consensus.

<p>Approval of Nov. Agenda</p>	<p>Ben made a motion to approve the agenda. Lisa G. seconded.</p>	<p>Approved by consensus.</p>
<p>Roundtable Discussion</p>	<p>We briefly discussed ways in which caregivers can balance the amount of care they're giving someone with a mental illness or chemical addiction so the caregivers do not become codependent.</p> <p>Eddie did not receive any edits to the letter he is writing to local therapists (see Oct. minutes), so Ben read the letter aloud. Ben made the motion for the LAC to direct Eddie to send the letter to mental health professionals in Carver County and collect information on transportation. Eddie seconded the motion. Ben noted that the final wording would have to be determined, and he arranged to meet with Eddie after the meeting to work on this.</p>	
<p>Guest Speaker Becky Sorenson</p>	<p>LAC member Becky Sorenson works with Eastern Carver Schools' early education program as a special education teacher. As such, she works with children with mental health, behavior management, and social and emotional development concerns. Every school district is mandated to have a special needs program for children ages birth through five years. Birth to age three usually have home visits and are on a Family Service Plan, while ages three to five are in a center-based or inclusion program. There are about 140 children and their families in the Eastern Carver program, and they come with a wide range of family situations. For example, some families are homeless, and sometimes the parents are experiencing mental health issues.</p> <p>Besides teachers and paraprofessionals, the program staff includes a social worker, a school psychologist, and occupational, physical and speech therapists. The staff's intake team can do their own</p>	

<p>Speaker cont.</p>	<p>assessments and determine which services a child will need. Becky explained that cognitive delays and learning disabilities are separate from mental illnesses, and are usually identified between birth and age three. She also emphasized that they rarely find “poor parenting” as the reason for a disability; instead, there are underlying issues.</p> <p>Eddie asked if, once identified as needing special services, do children get “locked” in the system. Becky explained that services will continue depending on the need of the individual student once a student reaches kindergarten.</p> <p>At age three, children in the program are given an individualized education plan (IEP). Children must receive medical diagnoses from a health care clinic. The school program also holds classes for English Language Learners (ELL), particularly for parents, and this often results in fewer referrals later. When it comes to referrals, however, a family always has the right to say no to services.</p> <p>Currently operating out of the East wing of the Chaska High School, the early childhood program would like to move soon to its own space.</p> <p>Becky gave us an example of a “socialization” lesson: students learn to acclimate to being without their parents, and they learn how to share, take turns, and trade.</p> <p>When asked about the mental illnesses observed in some of the children, Becky said there is a wide array, from anxiety, bipolar disorder, emotional behavioral disorder, attachment disorder, autism-spectrum disorder, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. To help parents accept their child’s IEP, Becky said she often will share her own experiences with them, provide resources, and encourage</p>	
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<p>Guest Speaker (cont.)</p>	<p>them to go to parenting groups and take care of themselves as well. Parents often say that their child “needs to catch up before kindergarten,” but the fact is that progress is often slow and sometimes a child will never “catch up.”</p> <p>Becky noted that there is often reluctance on the part of parents to get mental health help for their children because the stigma is so great. When asked about her “wish list” for mental health services, she said we could use more child psychiatrists and therapists; also, parents are often unaware of what services are available to them.</p>	
<p>December meeting</p>	<p>Our next meeting is December 9, 2014. We decided to bring treats to celebrate the holidays.</p> <p>Ben briefly discussed various guest speakers we might consider in the future, including Carver County Commissioners and perhaps state representative Jim Nash. Also, we might ask someone from the hoarding project to come. Eddie said we should revisit our priority action items and insert one item into each upcoming agenda. Finally, Ben noted that it will soon be time to write a letter updating the Board of Commissioners on our findings.</p>	
<p>Adjourn</p>	<p>Ben made the motion to adjourn. Sue K. seconded.</p>	<p>Approved by consensus.</p>