Wyoming Citizen Review Panel Meeting

Wednesday, December 2, 2020

Attendance: Emily Genoff, Chair, JoLee Schuler, Treasure, Sherilyn England, Secretary. Panel members: Carol Nicolarsen, Lynn Huylar, CJA Liaison; Laura Dobler, Department of Family Services; Ilaine Brown, Department of Education; Dawn Sides, Department of Corrections; Carissa O’Malley, Chandra Ortiz; CASA Natrona County Liaison, Phyllis Sherard and Sara Serelson; Wyoming Children’s Trust Fund, new Panel Member.

Members Absent: Jana Conine & Stacy Strasser

Employees: Bryan Cook, Director, Billie Underhill, Bookkeeper

1. **Introductions:** The meeting was called to order and introductions made.
2. **Agenda Review:** The agenda was reviewed, and Bryan requested that we move the PAT update (8.b.) after #4 and move Kinship Navigator (8.c.) after the PAT update.
3. **September 2020 Meeting Minutes:** Lynn Huylar made a motion to accept the minutes and JoLee seconded the motion. A vote was taken, and the motion passed.
4. **Introduction and Recognition of PAT Staff:** Bryanintroduced Josie Brittain, Program Coordinator and Heather K. the newest member of PAT. Josie presented on PAT. At a minimum the program serves 113 families. Staff continue to serve their clients in a combination of in-person and through telecommunication. Staff are thankful for our partnership with the Children’s Trust Fund which donated Pack N Plays to PAT’s clients. PAT received a Blue-Ribbon award for performing exceedingly well on their review. The team worked extremely hard through the rigorous process. The final report was sent to all Board Members and Bryan will help with the press releases. Bryan presented the Blue-Ribbon award to Josie and Heather. Everyone thanked the staff and showed their appreciation.
5. **Kinship Navigator/Wyoming 2-1-1 Update:** Jena Monahan, Program Coordinator for Kinship Navigator shared an update on her program. Jena is working on developing policy and procedures. The Annual Report has been shared with Board Members. Kinship Navigator has worked with 35 families across Wyoming but has focused on Natrona and Laramie Counties. The majority of the individuals working with Kinship Navigator are grandparents and great grandparents, the majority of referrals are from DFS and word of mouth. The top reasons for seeking assistance were substance abuse, DFS removal of children, abuse, neglect and abandonment. If you have any questions, please contact Jena and she would be happy to answer any questions or give you more information. The program evaluation completed by Public Knowledge has been completed and the program is Federally funded through the end of September 2021. There is still lots to accomplish to be able to have the Kinship Navigator Program be listed on the Clearinghouse site. The goal is to move the program throughout Wyoming and seek additional funding sources.
6. **Director’s Report:** Bryan reviewed his reports**.** He is working with DFS and others on gathering information from youth, foster parents, biological parents and service providers on how we can help our youth, foster parents and biological parents be successful. Bryan reported that a Facebook Foster Care Support Group has been created and will be inviting new members. Bryan reported that town hall meetings and a survey is being developed to elicit feedback from youth. A goal is to develop a statewide Youth Advisory Council. Bryan has been busy working with Sara Serelson on conducting Parent Community Cafes. Bryan has worked with DFS to gain information from Child Protection Teams. Bryan participated in the development of the Wyoming Early Childhood Strategic Plan over several months. Emily said there was good participation in the Community Café’s. Sara Serelson reported the Café’s went well and Bryan felt that having the individuals pre-register was very helpful. Laura and Chandra appreciated Bryan’s hard work and dedication.
7. **Financial Report:** P & L was sent out to all Panel Members by email. Billie Underhill stated that gave an overview of the financials. Emily thanked Billie for her report. Emily asked if Billie was working on anymore financial items that might need to be addressed and Billie is reviewing fixed assets and keeping inventory up to date. Billie has been addressing any financial issues that have needed to be addressed since she started her position. Bryan says Billie has done a great job and we have been fortunate to hire her and is a good edition to our team. Billie also mentioned that WYCRP was reimbursed from the CARES funding for quarantine pay for staff that were not able to work due to COVID-19.
8. **Committee Reports:**
   1. **Fundraising:** Bryan and Lynn have been working hard on the two 5K Races that will be held in Casper and Cheyenne. They are working on the dates, locations, sponsorships, the budget, t-shirts, medals, etc. They are considering earmarking this fundraiser for Kinship Navigator Program. Billie suggested a Facebook fundraiser. Lynn suggested a raffle. Bryan has sent a letter to Black Hills Energy to request funding. Bryan also discussed the Wyoming Public Radio Community Minute Highlights which spotlights non-profit agencies or programs. He has recorded his message but wants to review it before it is distributed or uploaded to the website. This would bring awareness to the program and there is no cost to participate.
   2. **Youth Involvement/Foster Care:** The Foster Care Committee is meeting monthly and developing a survey on figuring out the best way to engage Foster Parents. They will keep the survey short, maybe 7 or 8 questions. A new Facebook Foster Care Support Group was created, and new content will be posted as well as inviting members. This will drive improvements. There was discussion on drafting a job description for marketing and communication. Maybe looking at colleges for interns to help with Facebook and other social media needs. It could be a win-win situation. Bryan met with DFS and a GAL Program consultant, IL Coordinators, and youth to work on youth involvement activities.
9. **WYCRP Program and Contract Updates:**
   1. **DFS** – Laura Dobler, DFS Liaison/Bryan: Trying to engage focus populations to engage in Focus Groups, Town Halls, Community Café meetings and surveys. Laura and Bryan are asking for volunteers and wondering about interns to assist.
   2. **CJA** – Lynn: They plan on meeting tomorrow and review 4 cases including one from last time which was postponed due to insufficient information. They are looking at recruiting members, specifically a defense attorney and a judge. They also need to focus on retention of CJA members. Discussion was held on how to fill those positions and who could possibly be asked.
10. **Agency Update:**
    1. Sara Serelson with Children’s Trust Fund – It’s been a great partnership with CTF. CTF was able to provide PAT with Sleep Sacks and Pack N’ Plays for their families that needed those items. A diaper drive is happening will also benefit families of PAT. CTF is able to provide Protective Factors training along with Mandatory Reporting Training that will be offered virtually.
    2. WDE – Ilaine Brown – There is an opportunity for youth and professionals to be involved in “Road Trip Nation”. It is a program funded by the Perkins Funding which is targeting the Foster Care population. Young Adults ages 18 and up can apply to be “Road Trippers” and the professionals will be interviewed by the Road Trippers. PBS will provide a Red-Carpet event and show the videos these Young Adults will be making.
    3. Phyllis wanted everyone to aware of the budget cuts that the legislators are working on including a bill on prioritizing mental health services.
    4. Emily wants to provide holiday gift cards to PAT & Kinship staff. She will collect the money from members and purchase the cards.
    5. Happy Birthday Bryan tomorrow!
    6. We celebrate the year ending as a healthy agency making a huge difference in the lives of families.
11. **Next Quarterly Meeting date is March 17th. CJA will meet March 18th. Hours will be determined.**
12. Meeting was Adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted

Sheri England, WYCRP Secretary