

Stamford School Readiness Council Meeting
March 9, 2011
9:00 a.m.
Sacred Heart School, 1 Schuyler Avenue

Council members present:

Cook, Lucia	Literacy Volunteer Stamford/Greenwich
D-Luc, Imelda	Childcare Learning Centers/Head Start
Feder, Karen	Abilis Youth Services
Fox, Bridget	Chair, Stamford School Readiness Council
O'Brien Morrow, Polly	Parent/Pitney Bowes
Sabia, Michele	Stamford Public Schools
Sandahl, Margo	Stamford Public Schools (Preschool)
Short, Bob	Family Centers
Swan, Ellen	MFGGC/Early Childhood Consultation
Reardon, Ellen	Stamford Museum & Nature Center

Advisors:

Garvin-Kester, Barbara	Childcare Learning Centers
Sargent, Carol	Childcare Learning Centers
Tarantino, Sherry	Sacred Heart School

Guests:

Ahuja, Sonja	Liaison, Graustein Memorial Fund
Brennan, Karen	United Way of Western CT
Druehl, Vicki	Sacred Heart School

I. Welcome and Introductions

Bridget began the meeting by thanking Sherry Tarantino and her staff for hosting today's meeting.

II. Approval of Minutes from February 2011 Meeting

The Council unanimously approved the minutes from the February 2011 meeting.

III. Announcements

- On Thursday, February 10, we took 900 children from CLC and Sacred Heart to the Palace Theater to see *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. This was a remarkable community collaboration with business, foundation, and nonprofit partners including NBC Universal, Pitney Bowes, Fairway Market, The Ferguson Library and many, many volunteers. Our many thanks to all the Council members who helped make the event such a success.

- As many are aware, the bill calling for a change in the age for Kindergarten enrollment has died. It may or may not resurface during the next legislative session. As a result, we have decided to postpone our community forum to discuss the issue.
- The Early Childhood Fair is scheduled for Saturday, May 21 and a committee will be meeting next week to begin the planning.
- We are still hopeful to co-sponsor an Early Childhood Breakfast with Stamford Achieves, but will look to the fall for this event.
- The School Readiness Council RFPs have been sent out to all area providers. This is the process the State requires for all providers interested in receiving School Readiness funding. This year there has been interest from other providers than CLC and Sacred Heart. We are not sure what this will translate into, but they have been sent the RFP. Applications are due to the City by April 4th and after revisions are made, are due to the State on May 20th.
- Karen Wenz shared that on April 5th the Stamford Preschool Director's Group will be hosting a speaker at 6:00 p.m., Cindy Bess who will be speaking about her book, "The Little Chair". The event will take place at the First Presbyterian Church on Bedford Street.

IV. Regular Reports

- CLC's and Sacred Heart's reports were sent to the Council in advance of the meeting and are included as addendums to these minutes.
- Barbara reminded Council members of CLC's March 26 Alphabet Ball. There is a non-profit ticket rate this year and the theme is Hooray for Hollywood". Roberta Flack is the headline entertainer.

V. Old Business

Polly asked if we'll be reconvening the RBA training group, as our last meeting was cut short due to snow. Bridget promised to schedule this soon.

VI. New Business

Saint Joseph Parenting Center:

Measi O'Rourke, Executive Director of the Saint Joseph Parenting Center, came to introduce her program to Council. Their mission is to provide parenting education for individuals who are at risk of abusing and/or neglecting their young children—from birth through age 12.

Clients are offered a variety of free parent education classes around children's developmental and behavioral needs and coping skills to deal with the everyday stress of life. In addition to offering classes, the Parenting Center offers parents a safe place to gather and discuss the many issues they are dealing with regarding their children.

Participants are given a light meal before each class and a bag of groceries at the end of class. For those who complete all 22 of Saint Joseph's classes, there are additional incentives—specifically items from parent wish lists including toddler beds, bassinets, cribs, bikes or strollers.

There will be a benefit breakfast for the SJPC happening on Wednesday, April 13, 2011 at the Italian Center.

For more information, visit: www.sjpcenter.org.

Ellen Swan discussed her work at Early Childhood Consultation Partnership around the offerings her agency can provide for programs experiencing children with behavioral issues: 1) work in a classroom for 12 weeks to develop a plan and 2) child specific—social/emotional challenge to work with classroom teachers in the home.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

**THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13 AT 9:00 A.M.
AT PITNEY BOWES, 1 ELMCROFT ROAD.**

Addendum 1: CLC Report

School Readiness Council Report
Childcare Learning Centers, Inc.
January 2011

- Program Utilization
 - a. Authorized Capacity – Full Day – 334; Part Day – 97; Extended Day – 113 = 544
 - b. Ages: 3 year olds – 121; 4 year olds – 403; 5 year olds - 20
 - c. Children with disabilities = 33 with IEP, 7 without IEP
 - d. Notes and Trends: The Part-Day program is having more withdrawals than usual. Parent’s visas are expiring and they are moving out of the country.
- Program Attendance:
 - a. 99% Attendance
 - b. Notes and trends: - We are noticing a lot of absenteeism that is sporadic. This is due to transportation issues and people not walking to school in the poor weather and illnesses.
- Staffing
 - a. Open Positions – 1 Teacher position in F1
 - b. Recruitment – ad on-line, local newspapers, postings at NCC
 - c. Training:
 - Behavior Health Team meets weekly, focusing on universal practices for transitions, ways to improve staff morale, and individual case work.
 - “Training Wheels”. Team continues to meet with Julie Coakley on a regular basis.
 - Yale conducted a full day training on the RULER Approach to social and emotional learning on January 19th. This first session was attended by Supervisors and others in Leadership roles with our collaborating agencies.
- Special Events/Activities:
 - Teachers are preparing lesson plans based on the Preschool Curriculum Standards and the individual needs of the children.
 - Parent Advisory Committee meeting was held on Wednesday, December 26th.
 - Kindergarten Night was conducted on Thursday, January 20th.
 - “Twice Upon A Time” was celebrated from January 10 – January 21st. Children had stories read to them at home each night and stories recorded in the classroom. Parents recorded the books the read at home and a display was made in the classroom.
 - Notes and trends- Since we have had such terrible weather many activities that were scheduled have been cancelled. We are trying to make sure everything is rescheduled causing for a very busy February and March.

Addendum 2: Sacred Heart Report

Sacred Heart School
School Readiness Report
January 2011

Program Utilization:

- School Day – School Year - 45 children
- One child added to our Pre-K 3 Class.
- Ages – 3 year olds/17 Ages 4 year olds/28
- Children with disabilities: 2 child with an IEP
43 children without
- Attended PPT for 4 year child at Westover. Child will receive resources from Stillwater Elem. School.

Program Attendance:

- Snow/bad weather days – 75% attended – Parents called in with the decisions to leave children at home with babysitters and grandparents.
- Days without bad weather – 95% attended
- Few children with colds/stomach flu out for 2 days or less.
- Staff attendance – 1 staff member stayed out 1 day due to ice/snow.

Staffing:

- No positions at this time
- Continued training for LEP's (Learning Experience Plans) were done at Staff Meeting 1/31.

Activities & Events:

- SHS held a MLK, Jr. Celebration. Art projects, songs, poems and stories were shared together on 1/14.
- Director/Sherry Tarantino attended a Directors' Group Meeting at the 1st Presbyterian Church on 1/20.
- Open House on Sunday, January 30th, 2011, from 11am to 1pm. We hosted approx. 20 parents at our Open House. We gave them a tour of the school. Many have already returned with paperwork for the next school year.
- Snowed, snowed and snowed some more. We have had 2 early dismissals and 5 snow days. Will make a decision about make-up days once we hear from the Superintendent of Stamford Public Schools. We will make a decision as to how SHS will make up the days.