

Stamford School Readiness Council Meeting

July 14, 2010

9:00 a.m.

Abilis Offices, Summer Street

Council members present:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Burke, Jennienne | Care to Care (Family Day Care) |
| D'Luc, Imelda | Head Start |
| Farrell, Anne | UCONN Stamford |
| Feder, Karen | Abilis |
| Fox, Bridget | Chair, School Readiness Council |
| Hallissey, Jennifer | United Way of Western Connecticut |
| Morrow, Polly | Parent Representative/Pitney Bowes |
| Mullett, Alisha | Soundwaters |
| Sabia, Michele | Stamford Public Schools |
| Sandahl, Margo | Instructional Coordinator, William Pitt |
| Short, Bob | Family Centers |
| Ward, Caroline | Ferguson Library |
| Weller, Eva | PLTI |

Advisers:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Garvin-Kester, Barbara | Executive Director, CLC |
| Sargent, Carol | Director of State funded Programs, CLC |
| Taratino, Sherry | Sacred Heart |

Guests:

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Ahuja, Sonja | Graustein Memorial Fund |
| Hill, Carlin | Bright Horizons at First Stamford Place |
| Karlin, Melissa | Bright Horizons at High Ridge Park |
| Rauh, Polly | Board of Education |

I. Welcome & Introductions

Bridget began the meeting by thanking Karen Feder for hosting the meeting at Abilis offices.

II. Approval of Minutes from June 2010 Meeting

The Council unanimously approved the June 2010 minutes.

III. Announcements

- **July 22nd – Circus Workshop for Head Start and School Readiness children;** Bridget announced that the Stamford Center for the Arts (SCA) will be sponsoring 45 Head Start and School Readiness children (and five teachers) at an upcoming Circus workshop at the Palace Theater followed by a show at the Big Apple Circus. SCA covered the cost of the workshop, circus tickets and transportation for the day. The children will all come from CLC's Maple Avenue site.
- **Resource Meeting:** Bridget announced that she will be hosting a Resource meeting in the fall (*Thursday, 9/16 – time and location TBD*) for Stamford Public Schools' social workers and Childcare Learning Centers' family service workers to hear first-hand about the number of resources in the community that are available for families. The list of agencies to be included at the meeting to provide a brief presentation follows:

- Adult and Continuing Education Program
- St. Joseph's Parenting Center
- DVCC (Domestic Violence Crises Center)
- Abilis
- Stamford Hospital Obesity Task Force
- United Way's 211
- Family Centers
- **July 19th Joan Lombardi Event:** Bridget will be attending the July 19th event hosted by the Graustein Memorial Fund titled "Healthy, Safe and Ready to Learn!" at Central Connecticut State University. Dr. Joan Lombardi, Deputy Asst. Sec. & Interdepartmental Liaison for Early Childhood Development, US Dept of Health and Human Services, will be the guest speaker. The event begins at 5:00 p.m. All are invited to attend.
- Eva Weller reported that **Stone Soup** will happen this year on October 2nd. The group is still looking for presenters so please visit Stamfordasks.org for more information.
- Bridget and Caroline Ward shared that a doctor at Stamford Hospital, Dr. Schuster, will donate a book about nutrition and fitness to all four year olds. The Council will assist in the distribution of these books. Sonja Ahuja suggested Caroline speak with Sandy Malmquest in New Haven about distribution of books.

IV. **Regular Reports**

- CLC's report had been read previously by the Council (included as an addendum to these minutes). Carol added that June was a busy month with spring concerts throughout the SR program. CLC was busy preparing the Transition folders for the public schools. Summer is a fun time of the year for CLC – water activities.
- New children are starting at CLC which is helping the enrollment at SR.
- Sacred Heart did not submit a written report because the program is closed for the summer. Sherry Tarantino reported that the parents were delighted that the school opened a week longer this year (because of the March storm). Sacred Heart had a farewell lunch for families and 90% of the families attended. Sherry has found that hosting daytime events is easier for her families to attend.
- Enrollment at Sacred Heart has been slow this summer. The economy is hitting a lot of her parents very hard. Full house for the four year old program, half the class for three year olds and the kindergarten class is not taking off. There are 8 children enrolled and are not sure that the kindergarten classroom will take off.
- Health Committee: the Health Committee met in June at the Optimus health clinic in the South End. The committee will begin meeting regularly in October and they will be hosting a speaker on Childhood Obesity in the fall.
- Education Committee: Anne Farrell will be back in touch with the Education shortly. She has been caring for her mother who has been ill this summer.
- Jennifer Hallissey shared that a part time Discovery Coordinator, Karen Brennan, was hired and will begin working at the United Way in September. She will begin coordinating the various committees when she begins. She will create a standing calendar for the committees to meet on a regular basis. Karen has a strong educational and technology background.

V. **Old Business** **No old business.**

VI. New Business

- Parent fees for parents with siblings in the School Readiness Program *earning above the School Readiness income* guidelines: Bridget shared that a month ago she received a phone call from a parent who was enrolling his twin sons in the School Readiness Program in the fall. This father’s income is above the income guidelines for School Readiness. For families who do fall within the income guidelines for SR, a family with siblings will pay just one fee (see below):

School Readiness PO-09-03:

- *No family, regardless of the number of children participating in a SRC’s sub-grantee School Readiness program, shall be charged more than the calculated family contribution.*
- CLC currently provides a family with siblings in the program who are over-income with a 10% discount for one child.
- Bridget surveyed other School Readiness communities and found that many School Readiness Councils do honor one fee for all families with siblings, regardless of a family’s income.
- There was significant discussion around the fee question. CLC provided the following chart that depicts the number of enrolled families with siblings enrolled in the past three years. Additionally, the chart breaks down the tuition discount and the amount of money that the agency (CLC) loses if a family is offered a 10% vs. a 20% discount:

Childcare Learning Centers Families with Siblings (2007-2011)

| Year | Income | Family Size | Tuition 1 | Tuition 2 | Discount/year 10% | TOTAL per year 10% |
|----------------|--------------|-------------|------------|------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 2007-2008=NONE | | | | | | |
| 2008-2009 | \$200,000.00 | \$4.00 | \$1,075.00 | \$967.00 | \$1,296.00 | |
| 2008-2009 | \$97,327.00 | \$0.00 | \$778.00 | \$701.00 | \$924.00 | \$2,220.00 |
| 2009-2010 | \$90,000.00 | \$5.00 | \$900.00 | \$810.00 | \$1,080.00 | \$1,080.00 |
| 2010-2011 | \$145,000.00 | \$5.00 | \$1,161.00 | \$1,045.00 | \$1,392.00 | |
| 2010-2011 | \$87,000.00 | \$4.00 | \$875.00 | \$787.00 | \$1,056.00 | \$2,448.00 |

- The preliminary consensus from the Council was that asking School Readiness providers to absorb more than a 10% discount for families would be cost prohibitive for agencies. Agencies are already being asked to accommodate homeless families with a zero fee for those children and asking them to absorb any additional loss of revenue at this time would not be feasible for programs that are already struggling to accommodate diminishing revenues in this economy.

- The Council asked that Bridget survey the community and see what the general policy was for childcare agencies around sibling discounts as well as fees for full day care. The following is a chart that outlines the information that Bridget received from private daycare providers in Stamford (garnered following the meeting):

| <u>School / Center Name</u> | <u>Charge for Full Day/Full Year</u> | <u>Sibling Discount Rate</u> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Baby Cottage 1 | \$720 bi-weekly basis | On average \$1,320 every two weeks; did not provide % |
| Bright Horizons at High Ridge Park | | |
| Bright Horizon's Children's Center | | |
| Building Blocks | \$320 a week | 10% discount rate |
| Creative Care Child Care | \$265 a week | 10% discount rate |
| JCC Kinderplace | | |
| Learning Center at Piper's Hill Inc | \$290 a week | 10% discount rate |
| Long Ridge Child Development Center | \$1375 a month | 10% discount rate (Process of implementing) |
| Our Lady of Grace Day Care Center | \$190 a week | Ranges from \$10-\$15 off depending on family |
| Shiny Little Stars | \$325 a week | Depends on the family |
| UBS Child Development Center | \$1472 a month | 10% discount rate |

*highlighted agencies did not provide information.

- It was agreed that the preliminary decision would be to hold the sibling discount at 10%.

Meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

THE NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16th location TBD.