

Advancing Our Community Coalition
Steering Committee meeting
August 23, 2007; 12:30 pm

In attendance: Willow Griffin – SAIL, David Voluck – YAS, Doug Osborne – SEARHC Health Promotions, Gordon Blue – SCPS, Curt Ledford – Community Schools.

Flexible Funding

Kayla and Matthew have been trying to get Flexible Funding up and running again, but still seeking the Steering Committee's blessing to roll with the revised application. One change is that K&M have taken on the responsibility of fielding requests and getting feedback from the committee members. They will also put together a flyer about it and distribute to the "gatekeepers" – primarily staff of the schools or agencies who work directly with families and know their needs.

In addition to providing needed resources for qualifying families, the application process will hopefully also help to identify gaps in services and persistent needs; maybe also help in pursuing grants to solve those issues.

Resolution to support foster care plan for the community/resource families

In June, Jon Wunrow & David Voluck presented from YAS about their plan for transitional living. YAS and other Sitka agencies have growing concerns about youth housing issues, particularly for youth transitioning out of facilities, emergency foster care, therapy, MEHS getting kicked out, etc. Based on their presentation and following discussion, AOC members agreed it would be good for AOC to write a resolution to show support and show how the transitional living program aligns with the coalition's goals and plans. David offers to craft the initial language for the resolution, send to SCPS for their input/approval and then submit to AOC to approve/change/adopt.

Common workshop/training for Sitka human service providers, focused on local resources

Willow mentioned that last summer someone brought together all the human service agencies for a 2-day training, but she can't remember who put it on. She felt it was very effective and would like to do it again. She gets new staff every year, and feels it's important for them to know about the resources available in this town. This has been a recurrent theme in AOC, also – the Behavioral Health committee has also recognized their agencies do a lot of training with their staff that could be combined with other agencies.

Steering Committee members agree that this could be a useful event, and offer the following suggestions:

- make it fun!
- Collaboration brainstorm at the end, about how to work together better,
- orientation to the local "alphabet soup", and show the faces to go with the agencies/services
- Could plan it in blocks/units, so not everyone has to be there for the full two days

- another topic is cultural sensitivity – bring people in to speak to that (may be helpful for them – STA, e.g. – to do just one presentation, rather than every agency);
- also Filipino community, learn more info about them;
- domestic violence basics and non-violent intervention;
- include brief time about facilitation/meetings dos and don'ts,
- how to do special events/fundraising in Sitka,
- self-care,
- celebrate people that are doing the work and the services that are available

The next step is to get a few people together to map this out, decide on core topics.

Big Focus Topics for AOC this year

At the May meeting of AOC, the group discussed the possibility of hosting a few special forums during the year, e.g., Assembly candidates forum, minor consuming, early childhood, affordable housing, and recruiting/retaining behavioral health personnel.

The most pressing is to host a forum of the Assembly/School Board candidates to understand their positions on relevant topics. Someone asks what the “AOC agenda” is and why we would want to host our own forum, but after some discussion, the group seems to agree that the employees of AOC member organizations constitute a significant voting block. The idea would be to prepare a list of questions relevant to where city policy intersects with the world of non-profits healthy families/youth. The questions would be provided to the candidates beforehand. This also provides the candidates the opportunity to hear about the concerns of this segment of Sitka. The forum will need to be held in September, and they hope to schedule it as an evening event, with Dan filming it. One Steering Committee member clearly stated that he would like to proceed with caution on this, so as not to allow AOC to become branded in the political world and dismissed by the community leaders. Willow, David, and Curt agree to meet next Tuesday, August 28, at 8:30 am at SAIL to start creating some questions. Matthew will send them an email with AOC goals/mission.