

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF VICTIM SERVICES MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 5, 2012

The Family Justice Center

ATTENDEES

BOARD MEMBERS: Ellen Alexander, Barbara Bond, Tammy Brown, Jessica Dickerson, Linda Fleischer, Rea Goldfinger, R. Gary Hofmann, Molly Knipe, Patricia Marshall, Margery Patten, Scott Beard on behalf of Sandy Roberts, Bonnita Spikes, and Debra Tall.

STAFF: Anne Litecky, and Nakita Long.

GUESTS: L. Jesse Bane, Caylin Blankenship, Debra Bradley, Buffie Burton, DaShawn Cabbagestalk, Joseph I. Cassilly, P.J. Chambers, Tracey Delp, Beverly Fidler, Tammy Fitzgerald, Pete Georgiades, Tonya Jackson, Lisae Jordon, Pauline Mandel, Gary Maynard, Veto Mentzell, Alethea Miller, Christine McPherson, Linda Nitchie, Ed Parker, Jennifer Redding, Valda Rotola, Michelle Schaffer, Erin Shifflet, Tracey Stamper, Terry Sullivan, Jill Svrjcek, Chris Taylor, Diane Tobin, Charles Whitley, Lt. Wann, and Tony Weddle.

WELCOME/CALL TO ORDER: Ellen Alexander, Chair, began the meeting at approximately 10:45 a.m.

WELCOME NEW GOCCP DIRECTOR: Edward Parker, Deputy Director introduced the new GOCCP Executive Director Tammy Brown.

- ❖ Tammy Brown is a graduate of the University of Baltimore Law School and brings more than a decade of experience in public safety administration to GOCCP. Her past experience includes:
 - Chief of Staff for Department of Juvenile Services
 - Director of Communications for Juvenile Services
 - Executive Director for Baltimore City Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
 - Fellow with Open Society Institute
- ❖ Tammy Brown thanked Ed Parker for her introduction and acknowledged that victim services will be a high priority.

MINUTES:

- ❖ Motion: Move to approve Minutes of July 11, 2012.
- ❖ Vote: Seconded and unanimously approved.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- ❖ **Grant Committee**
 - The Grant Committee met on August 29, 2012 to review last year's Maryland Victims of Crime Fund (MVOC) and Legal Services for Crime Victims (LSCV) Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and recommended some changes for this year's NOFA.
 - The NOFA, with the recommended changes, was forwarded to the Grant Committee for review and comment.
 - Once approved, the NOFA will be posted on GOCCP's website in September.
- ❖ **Public Awareness Committee**
 - The Public Awareness Committee currently does not have a Chair. Current committee members were urged to volunteer themselves or select a Chair for the Committee
 - Once a Chair has been selected the Public Awareness Committee meetings can commence.

COMMUNITY SPEAKERS

❖ Harford County State's Attorney's Office

- Joseph I. Cassilly, State's Attorney for Harford County, thanked the Board for hosting the meeting in Harford County. He expressed his pride in Harford County and provided the following information:
 - Harford County Family Justice Center opened about six years ago. The Justice Center brought the Child Sexual Abuse Unit (Child Advocacy Center) together with Child Physical Abuse Unit along with a State Trooper assigned to Internet Crimes against Children Task Force and Domestic Violence Investigative Unit into one facility.
 - Paramount importance to work together for the sake of the victim
 - Resources provided are as a result of grant funds.
 - Expressed his appreciation for GOCCP participation in brainstorming and coming up with new initiatives
 - Great Partnership with counselors from Family and Children's Services, the Domestic Violence Unit of the State's Attorney's Office, SARC, and the Domestic Violence Unit of the Sheriff's Office .
- January 1 through September 2012, there were 826 cases that the State's Attorney's Office prepared for prosecution for District and the Circuit Courts there were characterized as domestic violence cases, including police and citizen charged cases.
- All members of the Domestic Violence Unit receive training.
 - Four paralegals in the Domestic Violence Unit
 - Strive to have victim contact
 - Trained to listen and trained to recognize that the level of cooperativeness may be in relationship to the level of dangerousness in the household.
- All Board members and guests were invited to tour the Family Justice Center

❖ Harford County Commissioner's Office

- Anthony Weddle, Administrative Commissioner provided information about the role of Commissioners.
 - Point of service for the court that directly impacts many victims who are involved.
 - Most criminal cases are filed in the Commissioner's Office. Citizens present and file charges.
 - Protective Orders and Peace Orders
 - Available on holidays, weekends and evenings
 - Conduct bail hearings

❖ Harford County Sheriff's Office

- Sheriff L. Jesse Bane expressed his pride in Harford County and its partnerships and provided information regarding Harford County and the Harford County Sheriff's Office.
 - Harford County has the 5th lowest crime rate in Maryland
 - 5 law enforcement agencies in Harford County
 - Responsibility to Courts and Detention Centers
 - Involved with Lethality Assessment Project
 - One of the first agencies in the State of Maryland to enroll the VINE program in their detention Center
 - Experience with victims begins at the entry deputy training protocols and policies that address how to treat victims of crime.
 - Through grant funds provided by GOCCP, a county vehicle is provided for someone to do to different communities and provide resource information
 - Domestic Violence Unit, Child Advocacy, Megan's Law, Sexual Assault Response Center, Social Services, Prison Rape Enforcement Act, Schools - Bullying
 - Had to decrease Megan's Law Unit by one person due to budget restraints.

- Believes the next big issue is Elder Abuse.
- Debra Bradley discussed her role as the Victim Services Coordinator
 - Victim Services Coordinator for the Violent Part I Crimes
 - Respond directly to scene to provide services primarily when a death has occurred.
 - Provide resources and information and works directly with victims until case goes to Circuit Court
 - Works as a liaison with the detectives in the Criminal Investigation Division.
 - On call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year
 - Working with State's Attorney's Office to plan a two-day event for National Crime Victims' Rights Week.
 - Member of the Child Fatality Review Board for Baltimore County
 - President of the Maryland Association of Victim Service Professionals
 - Victim Services Certification Coordinator for State of Maryland
 - Board Member and Trainer for Maryland Roper Victim Assistance Academy

❖ Harford County Detention Center

- Captain Tonya Jackson, Administrative Service Commander for the Harford County Detention Center provided information about the offender populations as they relate to victims.
 - 67% recidivism rate
 - 97% are returning to same communities and many are committing more crimes
 - In an effort to reduce the recidivism rate, Detention Center staff have observed services that were currently offered (faith-based, self-help and education services and programs) to determine what other programs and services were needed. They now offer the following:
 - Reentry Liaison – look at the needs of the individual
 - Housing, education, resources
 - Extended partnerships
 - Health Department
 - Mental Health
 - Community Services
 - Provide Resources
 - Mediation
 - Restorative Justice
 - Habitat for Humanity
 - Repay Community

❖ Harford County CAC

- Lt. Veto Mentzell provided information about Harford County's Child Advocacy Center.
 - Director of Harford County CAC for 6 months
 - Government based center
 - Operational since August 1993
 - Reaccredited in 2005 and 2010
 - Handle all cases of child abuse, child sexual assault, physical child abuse, child neglect, child pornography, and adult survivor cases in Harford County.
 - Includes Megan's Law Unit staffed by one full time sex offender registry investigator, one full time coordinator and one part time investigator.
 - In the process of hiring a full time investigator
 - Staffed by 6 full time employees and 1 part-time investigator
 - Housed at the Family Justice Center
 - Recipients of the SOCEM, CJAC, and CACS grants from GOCCP
 - CAC along with Family and Children's Services of Central Maryland are involved in learning collaborative with experts from Duke University and the National Child

Advocacy Center to bring a trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (TFCBT) program to the CAC.

- TFCBT is an evidenced based therapy practice that focuses on victims of trauma.
- Studies show that 80% of children who go through TFCBT show significant signs of improvement.

❖ **Friends of CAC**

- P.J. Chambers advised Friends of CAC is a volunteer based, non-profit organization that does fundraising for the Child Advocacy Center.
- Provides networking/e-marketing crash course for Harford County in exchange for donations to charity of choice.
- During the month of October, the Harford County CAC will be the recipient of donations received from course on email marketing.
- Will also provide course on grant writing in Harford County.

❖ **Family & Children's Services of Central Maryland**

- Jennifer Redding, Director of Family & Children's Services of Central Maryland (FCS) provided the following information:
 - FCS is a private, non-profit agency serving Central Maryland for more than 153 years and they have been providing services to Harford County residents for over 50 years.
 - Partnership with CAC since 1994
 - Provide in all six jurisdictions and domestic violence treatment in two offices.
 - In 2011, FCS was designated as the Harford County's Youth Services Bureau.
 - Provide prevention and early intervention services for youth and their families with the goal of avoiding delinquency, substance abuse and youth suicide.
 - FCS offers the following services in Harford County
 - School Outreach and Advocacy Program – provides intensive counseling and case management services for at-risk students and their families
 - Supervised Visitation Center – A collaboration between FCS, the Harford County Circuit Court and the Harford County Department of Social Services for the purpose of assuring all court referred visitations and monitored exchanges are conducted in a safe and neutral location.
 - Adult Day Services and Elder Abuse Services – focuses on treatment for vulnerable adults
 - Trauma-Based Treatment Center- provides counseling for child victims, adult survivors and family members of childhood sexual and/or physical abuse and neglect victims.
 - Provide mental health treatment on site at CAC and in office
 - Trauma Focused –Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT) – Evidence-based, short-term treatment that addresses the unique needs of children with PTSD symptoms, depression, behavior problems and other traumatic life experiences.
- Thanked GOCCP for funding many of their programs

❖ **Safety Awareness Resources, Change (SARC)**

- Linda Nitchie, Coordinator for SARC provided an overview of the SARC program and how it relates to the Family Justice Center.
 - Serves victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and child abuse
 - Non-profit agency
 - Offer 24 hour hotline
 - Offer counseling services, legal services, clinical services
 - 28 bed safe-house serving mothers and children who are emanate danger
 - Abuser intervention program
 - Safety Planning

- One stop shop for victims at the Family Justice Center as most services are provided at the Family Justice Center
- ❖ **Department of Social Services**
 - Jill Svrjcek, Director of Services Division for the Department of Social Services advised that her unit is charged with the protection and safety for children who are victims of child abuse as well as vulnerable adults.
 - Been involved with the CAC since its inception.
 - Child Protective Services and Social Workers housed at the CAC who conduct investigations of child sexual abuse and physical abuse.
 - Multidisciplinary Team also provides services to vulnerable adults dealing with the following issues:
 - Financial Exploitation
 - Physical Abuse
- ❖ **LASOS (Linking All So Others Succeed)**
 - Christine McPherson advised that LASOS opened about 3 ½ years ago
 - Works with non-native, English speaking community
 - Serviced over 1500 members
 - Offers English classes, financial literacy pieces, mommy and me classes and other things to integrate into society
 - Offers citizenship classes
 - Cultural training and education for domestic violence victims
 - Assists with finding resources to find a home
 - Peer groups for moms and children
- ❖ **Question and Answer**
- ❖ **MEETING ADJOURNED:** Guests and Board members were thanked for their participation. The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:30 P.M.

**The next Board meeting will be held at
Anne Arundel County Police Department Headquarters
on
Wednesday, November 7, 2012 at 10:00 a.m.**