

**Great Start Collaborative Meeting Notes**  
**February 28, 2018 - 1:30-3:00 p.m.**  
**Kent ISD Transition Center**

**Attendees: Julie Young, Nicole Burman, Christina Pocklington, Joslyn Ward, Kathleen Neumann, Aarie Wade, Rachel Binkowski, Anthony Quinn, Olivia Nash, Frank Florido, Tomarra Richardson, Ben Brower, Crystal Bulgarella, Kailey Cline, Tana Martin, Annastashia Flores, Kathryn Steiner, Adnoris Torres, Nirali Bora, Joann Hoganson, Wendy Wheeler, Candace Cowling, Karen Lezan, Mike Nassar, Kate Parr, Kristyn Bomberg, Ashley Karsten, Alyce Hernandez, Brittany Mastenbrook, Kate Lara, Fredericka Brown, Wayne Hill, Nancy Nieves, Maggie Lancaster, Alicia Guevara-Warren, Misti DeVries, Jayme Vosovic, Andrea Swiger**

**Staff: Jessica Turk, Anthony Queen, Paula Brown, Leslie Hawkins**

- **Agenda Item: Welcome and Introductions**

**Maureen Hale**

**Approval of the December 19, 2018 meeting notes**

- **Agenda Item: Great Start Parent Coalition Report**

**Jessica Turk**

- GSPC March meeting is Protecting Youth from Abuse. Speakers will be coming from the Children's Advocacy Center focusing on how parents should talk to their children about their bodies in the early years and safe touches. Every flyer is translated into Spanish and an interpreter is available at all meetings. Meetings have been double and triple the attendance from the previous year. April will be a resource night (Nova Care Kids, Wheels 2 Work, MI Works, Literacy Center, Dwelling Place, Healthy Homes, GRCM, COFI, Parent Support Station). Parents have given feedback they want to see more parent focused information (barriers they face that cause negative outcomes for children). Parents and providers have also expressed wanting a conference that supports parents and focuses on their identified needs. We have done a parent retreat in the past but may hold a conference in its place this year. Why has the parent coalition grown so much? New location that is right on the bus line, strong parent reps that are getting the word out. We have also been focusing more on engaging the whole family during meetings and being more intentional about building relationships and connections. Not so many speakers but more community engagement and supporting organizations present. Latesha gave feedback that she likes the retreat and would like to keep it.
- Diaper Drive Save the date: The GSC Diaper Drive Competition is the month of May. Materials will be distributed at the April meeting and the winner announced in June. Please contact Jessica if your organization plans to compete for the benefit of the littlest in our community.
- Dad's Bowling event: Parents/dads should sign up soon, the event is filling up. Wenger Bowling on the Westside 6 – 9pm on Friday, March 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Dad's Café on March 6<sup>th</sup> at Westside Collaborative.

- **Agenda Item: Presentation – The Housing Crisis and Its Effect on Early Childhood**

**Grand Rapids Area Coalition to End Homelessness**

**Courtney Myers-Keaton**

Question was asked about the Community Rebuilders funding from Bezos Foundation: will the use of funds follow how they've structured the support for veteran's homelessness? Unsure at this time, they have not come out with their plan yet.

Family Promise Presentation: As an organization, local churches are used to house families with children (adults with children 18 years old and younger able to stay with their mother). Typically, families are housed in a church for a week. During that time, they are at Family Promise during the day and at the church in the evenings. There is a lack of available shelter, a combination of local organizations has family units that total 37. Mel Trotter has the majority with 22 units. Many families are doubled and tripled up in places they shouldn't be because of safety. In the last couple of months an emergency shelter has been opened at Fulton Manor. Up to 75 families can be housed there. About 26 are there right now. There has been a large shelter wait list in the past but currently there is no waiting list. During this time the community is working on what the actual need is, so no families are turned away. The goal of shelters is to not turn anyone away and find permanent housing quickly. What is the time frame for people to stay at Fulton Manor? 30 days is the goal to get them into housing as quickly as possible.

Housing instability greatly effects children learning and the more housing is unstable the more behind they get. Children are continuing to fall behind in school, mental and physical health is suffering. The housing shortage has huge implications that some families must choose unsafe housing (lead exposure) rather than be homeless. Does Family Promise have someone that helps make sure children are still going to school and through the routines of daily life? Yes, they make sure to make all the connections with community partners to best support children/students, schools being a part of that. Diversion is practice that assist in keeping stable housing in place (conflict with people living with, finances). 235 families have avoided homelessness through this practice. Do families have direct access to Fulton Manor? It is by 2-1-1, coordinated entry system. Family Promise also offers the Partners in Housing program that connects families to manufactured housing. They can purchase a restored manufactured home for \$7600. After the purchase the family is responsible for the lot rent which is affordable currently in our area.

- **Agenda Item: First Steps Update**

**Heather Boswell**

- RFI: There will be an update going out soon. Kara could come and give an update when we would like.
- Shared Services: licensed childcare providers are closing their doors at a time when we need quality care. Shared Services is a model that alleviates the back end of childcare. ECIC has a shared services project manager moving this work forward in our state. They did six listening sessions across the state, including Kent County. Campfire West Michigan 4c's received a grant around Shared Services. Our community may be able to link to this funding and coordinate with it to develop a position for this effort.
- By Leaps and Bounds is a continuation of the WGVU Early Childhood radio series, <https://www.wgvunews.org/topic/leaps-bounds>. Kristyn is working on the education page of the website and there will be links to both series to find them. Segments will be posted on social media. GSC members, please share on your social media pages to better let the community know the need for investing in early childhood. If you want to give your expertise about a topic, please contact Kristyn or Ashley Greenberg at First Steps.

- Millage: continuing to work through the county process. The goal is to have a signed contract in place by the end of March. Bidders conference could happen as early as May. A lot of work will need to happen to organize that. Funding could be released in two rounds. Focus on navigation in the first round. Nothing is 100% until the contract is signed.

- **Agenda Item: GSC Updates**

**Maureen Hale  
Paula Brown  
Leslie Hawkins**

- GSC Nominating Committee: Kristyn Bomberg has been added to the Executive Team. Other spots are still in the process of being filled.
- Action Agenda: This year's document is in draft form to summarize what's happening in the workgroups. If you see any changes that need to happen call or email Paula.
- 2018/19 Budget: FY19 budget. Local programming dollars are missing, waiting on the numbers from the programs.
- New GSC Website: Please review our new site, <https://greatstartkent.org>. Each organization is listed on our page and has a link to your website. If you notice any content that needs to be changed please let Leslie Hawkins know and she will make any necessary changes.

- **Agenda Items: Partner Announcements**

- GSRP: Free Preschool application is online, and the number can be called. Placements will not happen any earlier, July as normal. Age guideline? Need to be four by September 1<sup>st</sup>, age waiver for up to December 1<sup>st</sup>. Age waiver applicants won't be placed till after September 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Candace: Michigan Home Visiting Initiative Conference is August 6 – 8 in Kalamazoo.
- Kristyn/WGVU: Save the Date for June 15<sup>th</sup> PBS Ed camp. Information will be attached with meeting minutes. More information will be coming out soon, this is for all providers, teachers, childcare providers. PBS national will be there. Everyone enjoyed it last year. If you have any questions, please reach out to Kristyn Bomberg. PNC is bringing Daniel Tiger Be My Neighbor to the it.
- Literacy Center: The first meeting to plan for next year's Summit was today. Focus will be on early childhood literacy.
- KCHD: March 7<sup>th</sup> there will be a training for CEU's around Pediatric Mental Health. The speaker will be from Pine Rest. 110 people can attend 80 people signed up. Focus is toward the professional community, but parents can attend as well. Call Kyla to reserve your spot, 632-7064.
- Bo/Hispanic Center: Six community focus groups will be held throughout the year. The gaps that effect the community they serve will be focused on to better support the community. Dad's Count is hosting a Coaches Corner focused on hearing from local men and dads on qualities that offer help toward your fatherhood success journey. The event will be held entirely in Spanish with English translation.
- Misti/Children's Advocacy Center: Two weeks from tomorrow is the Child Sexual Abuse Summit. Invite only but Misti can put you on the list. Reach out to her.
- Alicia/MLPP: New staff member, Jayme Vosovic was introduced to the group. The budget from the state is being released. MLPP will review it from a child/family lens. There will be a budget discussion analysis invite going out. Kid's Count data book is slightly different this year and will be released on 4/23.

- Conductive Learning Center: families can have up to four weeks free to try out Conductive Learning Center. Families are now able to directly call to sign up. They are also working hard on scholarships for families to continue their services after the four free weeks.
- GRCCM: In May there will be a free night for children with special needs. Connor's Night (focus on children with Autism) and Friends Just Like Me (focus on children with Down's Syndrome). Free valet parking is offered at the events.
- Anthony Quinn/Safe Families: If you know anyone needs help with their children and are in crisis. Call Anthony.
- Kathleen/GRCC: GRCC has received the Great Start for Higher Education grant with the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute and the University of Toledo. It will support GRCC in examining their child development course work to determine the extent to which the courses explicitly and intentionally prepare students to support young children who are culturally, linguistically, and ability diverse. Additionally, participation in this grant will provide them with high-quality early childhood resources to use in their ongoing work with students, children and families.
- Jessica: COFI group is launched. 12 parents are signed up. We had our first meeting on February 5<sup>th</sup>. Seven meetings in total. The parents that attended were very engaged and excited about starting to goal set. First phase is focused on goal setting for individuals, families, and communities. Not all the families came who signed up, believe weather played a roll. We meet next Tuesday and hope to have more that signed up in attendance. Tomarra and Nicole did a great job leading the meeting.