

# Valley Early Childhood Regional Council

**MARCH 11, 2019**

In attendance: Pam Lorenzo, Nurturing Families Network; Valerie Knight-DiGangi, Valley Community Foundation; Ayanna Williams, Derby, Seymour, Shelton Liaison; Krista Gambino, Ansonia School Readiness; Desiree Caporaso, Zero to Three Infant Toddler Court Team; Stephanie Collier, Child First PCRC; Linda Jordan, Child First PCRC; Jean Schoenleber, Child First PCRC; Debra Hansen, Valley Regional Adult Education; Dee Kopec, Shelton Youth Service Bureau; B.J. Hornby, Shelton; Alison Conway, Little Raiders University; Jamie Peterson, TEAM, Inc.; Amanda Graham, Prevention through Early Intervention; Nicole Cignoli, Derby Public Library; Michele Fratta, DCF; Kimberly Farmer, Seymour Parent; Gladys Lazurek, Derby Day Care Center; Victoria White, Shelton Board of Education; Barbara Eckner, Valley YMCA; Carissa Caserta, Naugatuck Valley Health; Mary Sue Feige, Seymour Public Schools; David Morgan, TEAM, Inc.; Dorca Rodriguez, McKinney-Vento Liaison Ansonia School District; Sharon Kelley, Julia Day Nursery; Evie North, Community Member; Janet Buchanan, DCF; Michele Holovach, TEAM. Inc.

## **Welcome/Introductions**

The originally scheduled meeting on Monday, March 4, 2019 had to be postponed due to snow closings. Pam welcomed everyone, announced that she had received regrets due to the change of date and introductions were made.

## **December 10, 2018 Meeting Minutes Vote**

Jean made a motion to accept the minutes from December 10, 2018, Desiree seconded and all were in favor to accept the minutes as written.

## **Regional Budget**

Pam reported that currently, the regional budget is \$9,676.02. Anyone interested in using funds for regional activities or projects needs to submit a proposal with an attached budget to Pam and then the request needs to be approved by the Council.

## **Read Across the Valley**

Pam thanked the Valley Community Foundation and Valerie for the grant of \$1,500 to support the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Read Across the Valley Kick-Off Breakfast being held on Wednesday, April 24, 2019 at 8:00 a.m. at Brownson Country Club in Shelton. Dr. Christopher Clouet, Superintendent of Shelton Schools will be the guest speaker.

## **Guest Speaker**

Valerie Knight-DiGangi, Program Officer at the Valley Community Foundation spoke about two initiatives of the Foundation: Valley Community Index and Collective Impact. The Valley Community Index is collecting information and data throughout different facets of life in the Valley: Prenatal to Five; Kindergarten to 12; Health; Economic Opportunities; Housing; Transportation; Elderly; etc. Data Haven completed a Community Well Being Survey of approx. 1,000 residents and compiled the results.

Work groups met to discuss the data and today's discussion was based on the Prenatal to Five work group findings. Valerie shared information on the following topics: demographics of young children and families; maternal health during pregnancy; birth outcomes; health disparities; lead poisoning and screening; young children with developmental delays; access to childcare and preschool; preschool

enrollment; childcare costs and subsidies; and asthma. A discussion followed on all of the Prenatal to Five work group topics highlighting increased lead levels in different communities, transiency of families, preventative screenings, increased awareness of delays, access to child care and preschool and Care 4 Kids cuts in funding. Conversation continued in expressing a need in the Index for cross referencing as pieces of the Prenatal to Five work group findings such as childhood obesity, lead and asthma could be covered as health issues in the Health work group. Behavioral mental health might need to be added to the Prenatal to Five work. The Valley Community Index is slated to be released in the Fall of 2019.

Valerie discussed the second initiative of Collective Impact which is when a community comes together to define a problem and then creates a shared vision to solve the problem. It takes collaboration to work on systems change. The Valley issue of this focus is childhood poverty and task forces have been formed to look at different aspects of childhood poverty. Task Force 1's job is to determine who these families are. Task Force 2 is then going to try to bring these families to the table. Task Force 3 will establish how to best talk to the identified families. This is a developing process and will likely take 10 years to move the needle on childhood poverty in the Valley.

### **Governance Reports**

**Child First** – Jean introduced Stephanie Collier, the new clinician at Child First. However, another clinician position has opened and Jean is seeking to now fill that opening. Child First will be going through another accreditation process for 2019/2020.

**Early Head Start Home Based** – Michele announced there are openings in the caseloads of the two newly hired Home Visitors so any pregnant moms and/or families with children younger than 3 interested in home visiting can be referred to the program. Two of the Home Visiting Staff will be trained next week to become Certified Lactation Consultants after 52 hours of classes and an exam.

**Family Resource Center/Diaper Bank** – Ayanna reported that for 2018, TEAM, Inc.'s Diaper Bank distributed 113,194 diapers to 302 children. Planning is beginning with Sue Sherman at Derby Public Library to host Kinder Camp 2019 in August.

**PEIP** – Amanda shared that there are 130 children in over 8 classrooms receiving the Prevention through Early Intervention Program (PEIP). Interns are delivering a social/emotional curriculum tying lessons into preschool curriculum for classes at Julia Day, Little Raiders University and Ansonia preschool. There is 4 weeks left in the program and planning is beginning for the 2019/2020 school year. PEIP will have a table at the Ansonia Kindergarten Registration Event on Saturday, March 30, 2019.

**Valley Regional Adult Education** – Debra reported that 300 adults are participating in programming and enrollment is open and ongoing for GED and ESL classes. The monthly literacy cart has been a big success for the students' children, grandchildren and sometimes for ESL participants themselves who are learning English. Read to Grow has been a contributor to the literacy cart and VRAE is continuing to accept book donations.

### **Office of Early Childhood Liaison Report**

Ayanna and Krista shared the overview and description of the CT School Readiness Grant. They reviewed the following: the purpose of the grant as outlined in CT General Statutes; to whom the School Readiness grant is intended to provide funds for; community administrative funds; monitoring requirements; reports; and eligible recipients (see attachment Overview and Description CT School Readiness Grant). Qualifications and the Early Childhood Professional Registry (see attachment) and Grant Submission Information (see attachment) were highlighted.

The School Readiness Grant Program Fiscal Year 2020 (July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020) Local Request for Proposal purpose, basic requirements checklist, local sub-grantee RFP table of contents and the school readiness policies and requirements (see attachment) were reviewed. The Freedom of Information Act makes all of this RFP information accessible to everyone. The RFP's will be posted on the VECRC website: [www.myfirst8.org](http://www.myfirst8.org). A discussion ensued centered on a Facebook page for the VECRC and the free app Burbio which syncs local events to your personal calendar through local municipality zip codes.

Ayanna and Krista asked all those on the Council interested in reading and scoring the rubric for the School Readiness RFPs to please notify them. Two dates have been set for the reading and the scoring: Thursday, April 4, 2019 beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the School Readiness Office behind Ansonia Middle School for the Ansonia School Readiness proposals and Thursday, April 11, 2019 beginning at 9:30 at TEAM, Inc. in Derby for the Derby, Seymour and Shelton proposals. A third date, Thursday, April 18, 2019 is on hold if more time is needed.

Ayanna reported that the 4 year grant cycle for PDG grants is ending June 30, 2019. This is affecting 18 PDG slots at Little Raiders University in Derby and 18 PDG slots at Chatfield/Lopresti Elementary School in Seymour. The OEC is offering a no cost extension in the fall for expansion slots which is not school readiness dollars.

A motion was made by Gladys to fund 17 slots for 3 and 4 year olds at Little Raiders University in Derby and 5 slots for 3 and 4 year olds at Chatfield/Lopresti in Seymour for one year with this no cost extension money. Dee seconded the motion and all were in favor.

### **VECRC Committee Reports**

**School Readiness Governance Committee** – The committee met on February 26<sup>th</sup> to discuss the new RFP scoring rubric.

**Transition to Kindergarten Committee & Family Engagement Committee** – The committee met on February 5<sup>th</sup> and planned the upcoming workshop: The Special Education Process: From Referral to Eligibility – A Guide for Families on Tuesday, March 19, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at Derby Public Library. Another workshop is planned: Challenging Behaviors presented by Shoreline Wellness on April 23, 2019 from 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. When the flyer becomes available, Pam will distribute it through e-mail.

### **Agency and Program Sharing**

David announced that the Early Childhood monitoring system CLASS results were released. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) observation tool focuses on the effectiveness of classroom interactions among children and teachers in Head Start programs. TEAM, Inc. Head Start classrooms scored in the top 10% of the entire country.

Desiree shared that the State of Babies Yearbook 2019 has been issued and the CT page can be accessed at: [www.stateofbabies.org](http://www.stateofbabies.org).

Dorca distributed a save the date flyer for the Summer Reading Rocks Celebration on Saturday, June 1, 2019 (rain date of Saturday, June 8, 2019) at Christ Episcopal Church across from the Ansonia Public Library.

Pam announced that the hospital is holding its Griffin Baby Fair on Saturday, April 27, 2019.

Nicole shared that the Grow Up With Good Nutrition program will be at the Derby Public Library the first and third Wednesday of each month beginning in March and continuing through August. The program consists of nutritional workshops provided by SNAP followed by shopping for free groceries on

the Grow truck which is stocked with fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, meats and fish, dairy products, breads and shelf stable items. If anyone is interested in participating, contact Derby Public Library.

**The remaining meetings of the Valley Early Childhood Regional Council for 2019 are:**

**Monday, June 3, 2019  
Ansonia Board of Education  
42 Grove Street Ansonia  
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

**Monday, September 9, 2019  
Bungay Elementary School  
35 Bungay Road Seymour  
9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. (please note time change)**

**Monday, December 9, 2019  
Shelton Board of Education Central Office  
382 Long Hill Avenue Shelton  
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**