



**Florida
Faith-Based and Community-Based
Advisory Council Meeting**
Tuesday, April 26, 2016
8:30 am– 12:30 pm
Brownsville Assembly of God
3100 West Desoto Street
Pensacola, FL 32505

Note: The following is a summary of the highlights of the proceedings and is not intended to be construed as a transcript. Please contact Frenchie Yon at Frenchie.Yon@eog.myflorida.com to obtain meeting materials or visit www.flgov.com/fbcb.

Attendance Summary

Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council Members in attendance:

- Ms. Pat Smith, Chair
- Mr. Richard Albertson, Vice Chair
- Pastor Kirt Anderson
- Ms. Trenia Cox
- Reverend Perry Davis
- Mr. Alan Dimmitt
- Ms. Sheila Gomez
- Dr. Gretchen Kerr (via phone)
- Ms. Carolyn Ketchel
- Rabbi Jeffrey Kurtz-Lendner
- Pastor Pam Olsen
- Pastor Carl Reeves
- Ms. Patricia Robbins (via phone)
- Pastor Marcus Smith
- Pastor Blaine Whitt
- Dr. Leo Mesa (via phone)
- Mr. Thomas Lukasik (via phone)

Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council Members unable to attend:

- Rabbi Sholom Ciment
- Mr. Karim Veerjee
- Mr. Roland Gonzalez
- Pastor Reno Zunz
- Dr. Jerry Haag

Proceedings

I. Exhibitor Engagement

II. Call to Order and Welcome

- Chair Pat Smith welcomed the Florida Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council (Council) members and called the meeting to order. The Chair reviewed the meeting agenda and charge to the Council members.
 - Chair Smith recognized the Governor's Office of Adoption and Child Protection, Pastor Carl Reeves, Ms. Carolyn Ketchel, and Ms. Phyllis Gonzalez with the Department of Children and Families for their support in organizing the meeting, and the Florida Channel for live streaming the meeting.
- The Opening Prayer was given by Reverend Dr. Earl F. Jackson, Pastor with the Damascus Road Missionary Baptist Church in Pensacola.
- The Welcome was provided by Commissioner Lumon May, Escambia Board of County Commissioners, District 3.

- The roll was called by Ms. Frenchie Yon, Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection and a quorum was confirmed.
- The previous meeting summary for January 2016 was not included as part of the meeting packet and will be disseminated to Council members for review and approval.

III. Chair Updates

- Chair Smith introduced and welcomed two new members to the Advisory Council. Ms. Trenia Cox, Faith-Based Coordinator with the Juvenile Welfare Board in Pinellas County. Ms. Sheila Gomez, Executive Director of Catholic Charities in Palm Beach County.
- Mr. Zackary Gibson, Chief Child Advocate and Director of the Governor’s Office of Adoption and Child Protection provided information on the following upcoming activities and events:
 - Child Abuse Prevention Month – April 2016
 - JuST Faith Summit on Child Sex Trafficking Update
 - National Foster Care Month – May 2016
 - Christian Alliance for Orphans (CAFO) Summit - May 5-6, 2016, Orlando, FL
 - 1ST Annual Supportive Housing Summit – May 20, 2016, Pensacola, FL
 - 2016 Florida Faith Symposium
 - Pastor Pam Olsen announced the upcoming National Day of Prayer, Thursday, May 5th.
 - Department of Health- Escambia County initiative to engage faith organizations to partner on various health initiatives.

IV. The Historic Brownsville Community – Community of Hope

- Dr. Evon Horton, Senior Pastor, Brownsville Assembly of God
 - Dr. Horton welcomed everyone to his church and discussed the Brownsville community history. He recounted the creation of Operation Brownsville through the collaboration with county elected officials in partnership with faith-based organizations that aims to provide resources for the betterment of the community. Currently, the church has given up a building to create the Brownsville Community Center. Additionally, there are plans to bring local healthy and affordable supermarkets that can improve the food desert situation that the community faces. There are also plans to bring a local bank to the community so that residents can rely on secure banking services. Pastor Horton wishes for a third great awakening in the Brownsville community, in the State of Florida and in the great United States of America.
- Chair Smith thanked Pastor Horton for his service in the Brownsville community and commended his efforts of focusing on one person, one family, one mission, and one day at a time.
- Pastor Olsen thanked Pastor Horton and agreed with the Pastor in hopes that pastors and faith leaders around the state will take part and invest in their communities.
- Ms. Carolyn Ketchel thanked Pastor Horton and reiterated the importance of a great awakening in this nation and that we need to find leadership.

V. Programs and Activities to Effectively Engage Youth

- Pastor Reeves introduced Chief David Alexander III, Pensacola Police Department.

- Chief Alexander shared the Safe Haven Initiative began in a Sunday school class where children were taught how to trust and believe in God. Later, the initiative transformed to engage and win the youth over.
- Through his experience in law enforcement, he has recognized that some of the issues we deal with adults goes back to their early childhood. Trauma informed care is here to teach us that everyone has something they've been scarred by in life, whether it is great in the eyes of others or small. It's not insignificant; it has an impact.
- Chief Alexander stated that he wants to merge the divide between the youth and law enforcement. When you bring faith and justice together, a great outcomes happen. The Safe Haven initiative provides opportunities for community service for the students to serve their community during their free time or if they are suspended from school. The community service teaches the students rules and discipline. Part of this service includes fundraising activities and events to raise funds to take the students on field trips. Many of the children have never been out of their neighborhood. Through the funds raised, the church took the students to visit the Orlando Holy Land Experience and afterwards to an Orlando waterpark. This experience has impacted their lives and helped them with items to write about during the FCAT test.
- Chief Alexander mentioned that he is involved in Youth Challenge, mentors youth and is involved with Big Brothers and Big Sisters. This experience encourages children to succeed and gets the children's parents involved in their children's educational experience and in the church. From my experience in my Sunday school class, he takes what he has learned and applies it to police strategies within the Pensacola Police Department through intentional policing. We intentionally engage the members of our communities especially parents and the youth. We encourage the youth to engage with our police officers and create trusting relationships.
- Chief Alexander stated that we have to go one-on-one, churches have to go one-on-one to change one life at a time. To engage neighborhoods, one block at a time. We are trying to replicate our efforts and will work with partners of different organizations to help the children and their families. He also stated that we have to work outside our convention boxes in order to reach children and their families.
- Chair Smith commended Chief Alexander on his leadership in the community and for putting his faith in action. She stated that she believes his efforts can be replicated and plans to go back to Tallahassee to speak with the Tallahassee Police Department
- Ms. Cox commended the Chief on his efforts to engage the youth and bridge the gap between law enforcement and the youth in his community.
- Pastor Olsen asked Chief Alexander where other community members and organization can reach him for possible partnerships.
 - Chief Alexander can be reached through the Escambia Police Department website. He stated that he wants to expand to a county-wide area using other non-profits.
- Pastor Blaine Whitt asked if Chief Alexander has been contacted by other Police Departments wanting to replicate his model.
 - Chief Alexander responded that he has not been contacted yet, but that he is willing to help other police departments. His one-on-one approach with police comes from a model used in Texas. Other police departments are recognizing the importance of this model as what you do

in between calls can make you or break you. We have to capitalize on opportunities; these may be small initiatives but have a big impact.

VII. Finding Foster and Adoptive Parents for Children

- Mr. Shawn Salamida, CEO, Families First Network
 - Mr. Salamida discussed the initiatives and strategies that Families First Network uses to recruit families to adopt children in foster care. He provided an overview of the trends in the circuit that in the last fifteen months, there has been a 45% increase in children in foster care. This has overwhelmed the system that presents challenges in hiring and retaining staff.
 - Families First Network has implemented Decision Support Teams to provide guidance to Child Protection Investigators and their supervisors. Additionally, they implemented the Conditions for Return Staffing to focus on accurate assessment, decision making and planning.
 - Another initiative is the Family Support Services re-design which shifts to an evidence-based, family-centered model for high risk families. To recruit more foster parents, the organization has implemented advertisements in the most popular phone applications and social media. The organization has also utilized different assessment methods to classify and find the statistics and demographics for possible foster parents, including those children who are teens.
- Chair Smith stated that this could be a great opportunity for the faith community, especially pastors, to challenges them to talk about the importance of family and needs of the community. She thanked Mr. Salamida for his service and great work in the community.

VIII. Addressing Truancy throughout Collaborative Approaches

- Ms. Ketchel introduced Superintendent Mary Beth Jackson, Okaloosa County School District, and the Honorable Terrance Ketchel, Circuit Judge, First Judicial Circuit.
 - Superintendent Mary discussed the importance of not sending students home for suspension, instead finding other forms of discipline and alternatives to suspension.
 - Andy Johnson – The Student Training Program was created to keep students in school rather than punish them with in/out of school suspension. Student Training Program monitors and works with students on appropriate behaviors so that they become better students and citizens. When students misbehave, academic instruction should not end.
 - Mr. Chiloe – Excessive absenteeism is the leading factor in delinquency. There are many factors that affect truancy for example: low self-esteem, low family support, financial instability, and violence. We have created a system that encompasses the student's history, academic achievement and conduct history. This system makes it easier to keep up with the students' progress. We have also created a system of support to discourage truancy among the students which includes school faculty, parents and the students. A committee has been created to assess case by case to decide what accountability should be provided to a student.
 - Honorable Judge Ketchel - In the family court, we are trying to address family problems in the form that they come in to our courts. Truancy is an early indicator of trouble. We are trying to focus on rehabilitation for the students instead of incarceration. Schools need to commit resources and funds to create an in-suspension training program and this is why not all schools have one. Supporting the enforcement against truancy is important to avoid further complications and trouble for students as truancy is an early indicator for problems. I ask you, community leaders, to do whatever you can to figure out a way to strengthen our families.

- Chair Smith thanked Judge Ketchel and Superintendent Jackson and her dynamic team for the outstanding work you are doing in the community and we hope that we can replicate the efforts you are putting forth. It's great to see a Superintendent that really cares and that children need to be in school to be educated.
- Vice-Chair Richard Albertson shared that he was inspired by the presentation and acknowledge the importance of leadership, collaboration, and working together to find a way.

Targeted Areas for the Summer Meals Program

- Mr. Justin Mandrup-Poulsen, GIS Technician, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.
 - We have created a road map online which is a decision making tool for schools, non-profit organizations and for community members to find a place where to find healthy fresh food in their communities. Escambia County alone served 4 million free lunches. The summer break sites serve as the bridge for when schools are not in and the lunches cannot be provided in school. We urge faith-based organizations to provide their facilities for us to provide our free summer meals to feed the children. Food deserts is a phenomenon in rural areas where community members do not have places near to find fresh and healthy food. For a church or faith-based organization wanting to serve as a facility that serves free lunch for children, they can contact the Department of Agriculture.
- Pastor Pam Olsen asked if the website lists where people, faith and community organizations, can go in each county to find locations where free lunches are offered.
 - Mr. Mandrup-Poulsen stated the website has this information and is working to provide additional information to assist families with accessing food.
- Ms. Trena Cox thanked Mr. Mandrup-Poulsen for a great presentation and for sharing a phenomenal resource for faith-based and community-based organizations to utilize in order to provide free meals to children during the summer.

IX. Public Comment

- No public comments were received

VI. Closing

- Sharing of Ideas – Advisory Council Members.
 - Ms. Trena Cox – In Pinellas County, church organizations are currently teaming up with an organization called FOCUS to serve underserved communities in the Pinellas area. Through this initiative, the Florida Dream Center was created and for fifteen months, they have been knocking on doors of families and asking them every Saturday what they may need. They have provided food, utilities, repairs and other social service referrals to these families that are funded through the Juvenile Welfare Board.
 - Pastor Marcus Smith – I want to give kudos and thank you to all the agencies, departments and organizations that have been here today. It is refreshing to see that you are leaving politics aside and focusing on what matters most which is the people.
 - Vice Chair Albertson – We are developing a healthy marriage and family resource center in different communities in the state starting with the community in Jacksonville. It's about strengthening marriage and families by providing relationship education and marriage

education. We want to include resources that are free for the community that can appear on the center's online website so that the community can be informed of these free services. On this website, the community can have access to free programs, education and ideas. We will keep you posted with the development of this program.

- Chair Smith – I also want to highlight the photographs behind us that have been arranged for this meeting highlighting our children from the state of Florida who are in foster care. These photographs are from the Heart Gallery and they encourage citizens to adopt and become a foster parent.
- Pastor Olsen – For the next council meeting, I would like us to go through our work groups and assign the new members into work groups.
- Pastor Whitt – I would like to extend my thank you to all the organizations and departments for the services you provide, especially for folks who are transitioning back to society from incarceration. You guys are the hope for these citizens and you are saving lives.
- Next meeting date: Tuesday, July 26, 2016, Ocala, FL
- Meeting Adjourned