



Brevard Family Partnership

A Community Based Care Agency

Board Report



October 19, 2017

Valerie Holmes, Executive Director

Narrative Report

In honor of National Adoption Month, BFP will hold its bi annual Mass Adoption Celebration on Friday November 17 in Court room 4D at the Brevard County Courthouse. There are 15 children scheduled for adoption finalization hearings; the ceremony will be followed by a festive celebration. As we are quickly approaching the holidays, the upcoming events have also been confirmed: Foster Parent Thanksgiving Celebration scheduled for November 18 from 12-2 at Ascension Catholic Church in Melbourne and Breakfast with Santa scheduled for December 9 from 9-12 at First Baptist Church of Melbourne. In addition, the Holiday Gift Drive has been initiated for children served through Brevard C.A.R.E.S. and Family Allies. BFP Public Relations staff are reaching out to the donors from previous years to solicit their interest in participating again this year. The marketing for new donors is well underway via the newsletter and through social media/marketing.

BFP responded to a DCF Request for Proposal in partnership with Parenting with Love and Limits (PLL) and the North American Family Institute (NAFI) to implement a pilot in the Central Region; (in Brevard and Polk County) for the target population of cross over youth dually served through child welfare and juvenile justice or at risk for such involvement. If granted, the first funding cycle consists of a 7 month period beginning on December 1 spanning through June 30, 2018 with a budget of \$353,766; the budget for the next funding cycle is \$452,549; July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2019.

BFP hosted its first Foster Parent Mini Conference, in partnership with The Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) held at the Hilton Rialto in Melbourne on October 14. Florida QPI representative, Mr. David Brown, provided training on the process and benefits of the mentoring of biological parents by foster parents. This is based on the premise that a foster parent can work together - or co-parent - with a child's biological parent to reduce trauma and help ensure a smooth transition from one home to the other. QPI is one of Florida's approaches to strengthening foster care, (including kinship care) using branding and marketing principles. It is a process designed to help develop new innovative strategies and practices, rather than imposing upon it a predetermined set of "best practices." The major successes of the project have been in systems change and improved relationships. PQI sites have also reported measurable improvement in outcomes such as reduced utilization of group care, reduced number of sibling separations and more successful improvements in reunification.

The Rally in Tally will take place December 4-6 in Tallahassee; its purpose is to provide education about the child welfare system with Florida's lawmakers. That includes the opportunities for advocates to meet one on one with legislators to share their stories. The FCC has formed a Strategic Alignment Work Group to help align DCF and CBC priorities for the upcoming legislative session and further strategizing about the impending loss of the Title IV E Waiver (expires on September 30, 2018) however a one year extension can be granted. If the extension is granted, the waiver will be in effect through September 30, 2019. The FCC Provider Council is reviewing the Guiding Principles outlined in the White Paper and a work group to examine the 35% rule (consisting of both CBC CEO's and Providers) has been ensued in an effort to provide clarity on the 35% rule. The goal is to bring recommendations forward at the FCC December board meeting and come to consensus. The 2018 FCC Legislative Priorities are summarized below:

- **Improve APD Resources for Children with Disabilities in the Dependency System**

Support policies that strengthen requirements for the Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) to assume full financial responsibility for qualified children in the dependency system.

- **Support Transition to the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS)**

States must elect whether or not they choose to be a CCWIS compliant state. DCF has recommended, by July 2018, to complete planning and assessment activities and assess current business processes to align the Florida child welfare community and systems to the new federal CCWIS requirements. The benefits of this change from SACWIS to CCWIS, (as proposed by DCF) include the creation of a more advanced, flexible system that affords

the opportunity for favorable federal funding, the potential for increased IV E eligibility determination to maximize achievable funding and better alignment of funding, programs, goals and objectives to federal regulations with new technology. With the loss of the Title IV E Waiver, Florida must explore other ways to expand Title IV E earnings to mitigate as much of the loss of federal funds as possible. Three initiatives which are needed to support continued and increased Title IV E Funding has been collectively titled “Path Forward” that includes: enhanced state information system to support 1) Title IV E Guardianship Assistance Program, 2) Determine Title IV E eligibility and 3) Support Title IV E Independent Living and Extended Foster Care.

▪ **Advancement of Florida’s Child Welfare Funding Model**

Support a new core funding allocation formula that more accurately allocates new funds for community-based care (CBC) lead agency core funding.

▪ **Title IV-E Waiver & Continuation of Ongoing Flexible Federal Funding**

Support DCF legislative effort to align with the Federal requirements to maximize IV-E funding. Approximately half of all funding for child welfare services in Florida (and every other state) comes from the federal government.

▪ **Support Florida’s Children & Families**

Support DCF’s legislative budget request and the Florida Coalition for Children (FCC) funding recommendations in support of the Florida’s community-based system of care to ensure the resources and funding is provided to best serve and protect children in care. Plus, support an additional \$10 million recurring appropriation to DCF’s legislative budget request to restore non-recurring community-based care lead agency (CBC) core funding.

▪ **Disaster Preparedness**

Support language that allows adaptation of practices that ensure children are served during a natural or terror disaster that thwarts required prescriptive action steps.

The Chief Judge of the Eighteenth Judicial Circuit approved the use of a therapy or facility dog when appropriate to aid in the testimony of a child/victim witness at hearing, trial or deposition. In Brevard County, the Guardian Ad Litem office is providing the therapy/facility dog with two trained handlers. The dog was provided and trained through the Brevard County Sheriff’s Office Paws and Stripes Program. The service is expected to be available within the next 60 days. This was also presented at the Dependency Summit.

DCF alerted BFP to a Notice of Claim received on or about September 25, 2017; filed on behalf of a father involved in a former dependency case that alleges that his two daughters were bitten by the foster parent’s canine service dog. The foster parent is a deputy sheriff with Brevard County Sheriff’s Office. BFP has alerted its insurance company and is currently researching the matter. BFP is currently in process of gathering the requested information from the Impower record request previously received and once finalized will be forwarded for review through external legal counsel. BFP has not received any further response from Impower regarding the request for repayment.

Financial auditors Moss, Krusick and Associates were on site at BFP October 10-October 12 to conduct the annual required audit. The preliminary report provided suggests that there are no findings.

The Together in Partnership (TIP) forum (which functions as an Advisory Board and planning committee) will sunset on December 16, 2017, unless extended by a majority vote of the Board County Board of Commissioners. The matter will be addressed at the November 20 TIP meeting. There is an upcoming Children’s Services Council meeting scheduled for early; at this juncture the plan for community messaging is still being crafted. Areas of identified priorities are Prenatal – 5, Afterschool and an “other” category for other community priorities. A Task Force is being formed to further examine data to refine priorities.

The Volusia/Flagler site visit to C.A.R.E.S. is scheduled for October 24 to discuss implementation of a pilot commencing in December led by Community Partnership for Children; training of the model is scheduled for November 14-17.

Respectfully Submitted,

Valerie Holmes
Executive Director