

## **Middletown School Readiness Council**

12:00 P.M. – 1:30 P.M.

Wednesday, November 18, 2009

Wilbert Snow School

299 Wadsworth Street, Middletown

**Members Present:** Betsy Morgan, Christine Fahey, Sheila Daniels, Wendy Berlind, Maureen Partyka, Monica Beylea, Bob Rosenbaum, Cindy Cappetta, Beverly Lawrence, Ed Bonilla, Bill Boyd, Steve Gaarder, Alice Ellovich, Krystal Ndukwu and Donna Marino. Catherine Bradshaw was also in attendance.

**I. Welcome & Call to Order:** Betsy Morgan opened the meeting at 12:10 P.M. welcoming all those present.

**II. Approval of Minutes for the October 21, 2009 Meeting:** Bob Rosenbaum moved for acceptance of the minutes for the above-mentioned date. Wendy Berlind seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**III. Announcements:** Chris circulated a SERC catalog of upcoming early childhood professional development opportunities and the VITA tax assistance program information. Donna distributed an informational flyer about P.L.T.I. tasters. Ed spoke about the United Way sponsored “Homeless Connect” event held at Middlesex Community College in October. 280 people participated in this event that offered connections to services as well as backpacks of toiletries, food, haircuts, dental and eye exams. He also circulated a flyer for the Mercy Housing and Shelter program. Beverly reported on a successful November 14<sup>th</sup> event sponsored by CT Parent Power and Meriden’s Children First with national, state and local folks on early education.

**IV. Financial Report:** A financial report that reflected \$3,477.50 in unearned funds was distributed. New legislation now allows up to an additional \$25,000 for administrative costs. Bill Boyd moved that the Council use the unspent funds to date of \$3,477 for administrative costs this year. Bob Rosenbaum seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

### **V. Coordinator’s Report:**

**Middlesex County Community Foundation Grant:** application has been submitted for \$5,500 to support literacy through a storytelling program with the CT Storytelling Center and a book distribution (10 books/child/year) in preschool programs for low-income children.

**Early Head Start Grant Update:** The ACES proposal continues to move forward and an award letter is expected shortly. A site visit will be held on Tuesday, November 24<sup>th</sup> with the ACES Early Head Start Team.

**Opportunity Knocks Update:** A discussion was held about the Child FIRST replication grant. Bringing a Child FIRST program to Middletown is in our Community Plan. This grant requires a large local match of \$197,000 over a 26 month period, which include both cash and in-kind. The program would provide a strong intervention with a high-powered home visiting component to serve the Birth to 5 age group and their families.

Beverly and Monica continue to facilitate focus groups with parents throughout the city. Their next meeting will be on December 5<sup>th</sup>. The “Fit for Kids” abstract for a two-year grant has been submitted.

Infant Feeding surveys went out this week to School Readiness and Head Start programs in our community. The Oral Health group and the Diaper Bank committee will be meeting after the Opportunity Knocks meeting on Tuesday, November 24<sup>th</sup>. Anyone interested is welcome to attend.

**Care4Kids Update:** Eligibility for this program was narrowed last May and as a result, many child care programs have lost revenue. Earlier this month DSS re-opened the program temporarily through December 31<sup>st</sup>. Eligibility is now up to 75% state median income with no requirement that families be on TANF within the last five years. Families will need to re-apply to the program even if they are already on its waiting list.

**Graustein Discovery Update:** Grant applications have not yet been distributed to communities. The funds are to be used to support infrastructure. Some communities will be invited to apply for literacy funds. Catherine noted that the turn-around time on the application will be quick. Discussion followed. Catherine also noted that she will not be present for the upcoming December 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting with David Nee, as liaisons have been asked by the Memorial Fund not to be a part of these conversations.

**Discovery Grant RFP Requirement - Reminder:** David Nee and Carmen Siberon from the Graustein Memorial Fund will come to Middletown to speak to the Council on December 3<sup>rd</sup> from 1:00 – 2:30 P.M. All members are invited to attend this special meeting of the School Readiness Council. The mayor will swear in new members and our early childhood plan will be unveiled.

**Important Calendar Dates:** The Coalition for Children and the M.A.I.C. co-sponsored Legislative Breakfast meeting will be held on January 21, 2010 at Middlesex Community College at 8 AM. The March School Readiness Council meeting will be held at the Legislative Office Building on March 17, 2010 from 12:00 to 1:30 with a private meeting with our representatives and senators. Please mark your calendars to attend these two upcoming events.

**DSS – Brochure Request:** Alice Ellovich would like to have brochures from agencies in the community to display in the Middletown DSS waiting room. Please send any brochures from your agency to Alice.

**Federal Funds:** Bills are being developed that have the potential to bring significant early childhood funds to states. CT Voices for Children is organizing a committee to study the parameters and requirements of each grant, and then provide input to Connecticut's applications.

**N.A.E.Y.C. Update:** Town & Country Early Learning Center on 195 South Main St. had their site visit this week. Even Start is expecting their reaccreditation visit to be held in February of 2010. Accredited programs are required to report safety and supervision incidences to N.A.E.Y.C. within a 72 hour time frame. An incident occurred at one of the School Readiness programs and they are expecting a verification visit from N.A.E.Y.C.

**Other Business:** Bob Rosenbaum asked if there was any additional information on the upcoming meeting with David Nee on December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Betsy said that the meeting will be informational. We will hear about the Memorial Fund's future plans through 2014 and they are looking for our feedback on their plan.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 1:25 P.M. with thanks to all in attendance.

A special meeting of the School Readiness Council  
will take place on  
**Thursday, December 3, 2009**

at  
Snow School  
from 1:00 P.M. to 2:30 P.M.

The next regular meeting of the School Readiness Council  
will take place on

**Wednesday, December 16, 2009**

at  
Snow School  
from 12:00 P.M. to 1:30 P.M.  
(Lunch will be served)

Respectfully Submitted by: Sheila Daniels