



“Working together to create a better future for children and their families”.

Clay County Early Childhood Initiative

Friday, October 16, 2020

Meeting Minutes

Carolyn welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Presentation: Churches United for the Homeless provided by Chandra Calixte, Family Case Manager. Churches United for the Homeless is made up of two shelters, Dorothy Day and Micah’s Mission; two food pantries, and a supported housing setting, Bright Sky. In our community, the program works to prevent homelessness and to support those that are experiencing homelessness. In 2020, the shelter has served 38 families which included 74 children. Nineteen of those families included a male in the household with sight families that of single dads. Micah’s Mission is the only shelter in a 250-mile radius that allows for males to stay with the family. The mission has 8 family rooms. Typically, families start in overflow and then move into a family room when it becomes available. 55% of families served are first time homelessness. One in four are a working family that have experienced a financial down from work or a family crisis that diverted funds from housing. One in five families have an adult that is disabled. 90% of all homeless served at the two programs self-resolve their situation and never present to the shelter. Churches is an access point for prevention information by providing a resource board and information when contacted. CARES (Coordinated Access Referral Entry and Stabilization System) is one tool that is used to help those at risk of homelessness. When a family arrives at the shelter, they are given time to adjust to the living environment before starting to work with a case manager. They are not required to work with Chandra but most do accept the help with information, referrals, kid activities. The initial assessment includes a story of how they landed at the shelter, their homeless history, need for services, assistance in registering the children for school, and a discussion on next steps. Case management at the shelter is very much a relationship building process. Some barriers the homeless population face include transportation to jobs and services, finding employment, finding affordable housing, and having the necessary paperwork such as a social security card. There are two housing programs that are helping families secure housing through vouchers. Homeless to Housed is a five-year rental assistance program. Homework Starts at Home is a two-year program for Moorhead Public School students that also offers case management. Clay County Social Services and Community Action Program Lakes and Prairies provide assistance for those that need help with a deposit on an apartment. Down Home is an organization that sets up a home for a family complete with furniture and kitchen needs. Open Door provide household goods for free and a Furniture Mission of the Red River Valley help with furniture needs. Needs that the ECI an help with include continued advocacy for the availability of early childhood services; send any program information on resources to Chandra, and help brainstorm ways to provide childcare for those living at the shelter with a job. The Mission is currently seeking donations or towels (wash cloths and bath towels) basic hygiene, and household goods. Donations can be dropped off at the shelter.

Agency Updates:

Head Start had its first virtual parent meeting last night. Seventeen parents joined the Zoom. The program is fully enrolled. They are still taking referrals that are placed on a waiting list in case an opening opens up. Some students are being served virtually and others are in the classroom. Monday through Friday they are delivering breakfast and lunch to students and families. Working through Friends of the Children, each enrolled family received \$500 that could be used to address needs of each family.

Parent Aware: The cohort of providers is waiting on hearing about their three- or four-star rating announcement which should happen around January 1st. The paperwork for those applying for a one or two star is due at the end of this month. Parent Aware is currently taking applications for the next cohort. The order form for cleaning supplies is on the West Central Initiative webpage. The process has been revamped, making it easier and quicker for getting the supplies to the child care provider.

Public Health is working on contact tracing for COVID-19. Saliva testing for COVID will occur at the CVS store in Dilworth and at the old Thomas Edison Elementary school in south Moorhead. Public Health has provided one flu shot clinic for Clay County employees. Additional clinics will be scheduled once a supply of the vaccine is received. Staff are providing support to childcare providers with questions and concerns over COVID. Home visiting programs continue to serve families virtually. There is some face to face contact if it is a new enrollee or they are working to re-engage the family. For regular updates check out the Public Health Facebook page and county website.

The Village Family Service Center is currently offering a free walk in clinic on Wednesdays. The clinic is available to anyone with a Clay County address. Most appointments are being provided through Tele Health with some in-person appointments for those not comfortable with Tele Health.

Lake Agassiz Library is temporarily providing curbside pick up services because the library is closed due to limited staff. You can access library material but not able to enter the building to browse the shelves.

Safe Kids is doing a shot clinic for children on October 24th. Appointments are required. Treats and resources will be available at the event. The organization continues to do face to face car seat checks. Appointments are required.

Open Doors 65 is a free thrift store that provides home needs and clothes. The store does not have furniture. No paperwork is needed to access the store that is open from Noon – 2:30 on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday

Next meeting: Friday, November 20, 2020

Clay County Early Childhood Initiative 2020 Work Plan

Goal #1: Increase awareness of the importance of quality early childhood experiences

Goal #2: Continue to build a strong early childhood coalition in Clay County.

Goal #3: Meaningful parent outreach that includes skill building in parenting, promoting reading, and support healthy social and emotional development

Goal #4: Support Child Care Providers to retain current providers and recruit new providers.