

Great Start Collaborative
May 17, 2011
Meeting Minutes

Those present: Shirley Gillespie, Jill Haan, Marcia Campbell, Sommer Poquette, Mandy Peterson, Theresa Simons, Beth Watts, Katharine Hawes, Jen Booher, Ron Fowler, Audrey Shapiro, Kolleen Homuth, Sharie Plain, Fiona Banfield, and Susan Chowen.

1. Introductions.
2. This meeting was designed as a World Café. Meeting attendees rotated every 15 minutes to a different table that had designated topics for discussion. The topics were: Messaging to businesses and philanthropy, Committee Work, New to Great Start, Fund Development, Increasing diversity in the work of the Great Start Collaborative and Parent Coalition, Recruiting and engaging parent members, Great Start Regional Resource Center, and Barriers to implementing local system building work. **See below for details.**
3. The following was shared during Round Table Sharing:
Audrey Shapiro, Charlevoix Library – Friday, May 20 they are having Bingo for books for Kdg. Through 5th grade. There will be a summer reading club taking place with the theme One World Many Stories. An Arts and Craft show will be taking place on August 2; the items are made and sold by kids. Kinder music will be taking place in July for birth – 5. A new website is in the process of being built.

Jen Booher, Grant Writer- She is working on Great Start Fund Development by writing grants and connections with community foundations and businesses.

Beth Watts, Parent- A few new parents attend the most recent Parent Coalition meeting. The coalition is working on planning summer events.

Mandy Peterson, Parent Coalition – The next Parenting Coalition meeting is taking place on July 18th, 2011. The topic is Scream Free Parenting and a speaker will be presenting. It will be held at the old Boyne City Middle School. A small fee will be charged to cover the cost of books for the evening.

Ron Fowler, Petoskey Library – He would like people to let him know great books are discovered so he can look into them for the library. A summer program is taking place and will have an early childhood focus. The theme is One World Many Stories. The summer reading program has varied levels regarding the number of books read. The Lapsit that is offered once on Monday and twice on Thursday will resume on June 6th. Be sure to sign up for and check out the libraries e-news.

Susan Chowen, Child Care Connections- There is a child care provider lending library available in Boyne City. There are about 70 themed tubes with activities and toys.

Shirley Gillespie, DHS- They will be getting 1 new foster care worker, 3 new CPS workers for Charlevoix and Emmet, and 2 new CPS workers for Antrim. At least 5 eligibility specialists will also be hired. A typical caseload for the specialists is 650 people. By hiring new specialists they are hoping to lower caseloads and increase contacts with families. Please remind families that DHS needs a current phone number in order to contact them and keep their services open.

Jill Haan, Char-Em ISD – Currently working on preschool programming for next year as well as home based services for general and special education.

Sommer Poquette, Great Start Collaborative- The fundraiser is taking place on June 21st at the Pleasantview Vineyard and Winery and tickets are \$25 per person. Star Power is taking place in Lansing on Thursday, May 19th, 2011. A group will be traveling down to participate.

4. The strategic plan was shared with everyone and copies were made available.
5. A group photo was taken to attach to the strategic plan.

Great Start Facilitation World Café Table Questions and Discussion Points:

What messages are most effective when you are trying to engage business and philanthropy in early childhood work?

- Need to start with goal of what you want to do.
- Goal could be amount money want raised, or what you're using the money for. Needs to be clearly stated. Need to make sure everyone within the network knows these key messages and is consistent in phrasing/message.
- Need to network with Bay Harbor, Harbor Springs and Charlevoix communities to seek out funders, summer visitors. Reach out and express need of our community and how they can help.
- Message: takes a team. Have kindergarten teacher (who was attending this facilitation session) do testimonials about the value of highly qualified/licensed preschool system providers. She sees the difference!
- Message to families whose child is in preschool: if you value education for your own child, you will value education for all children...so help support...
- Our local libraries are underused (by GS), according to Petoskey Area Librarian. Ron wants to get the people into the libraries who are GS families. Possibly have a joint recruitment program at the library or hold functions at the libraries. He admits to not "cross-selling" GS with his families. Some families are intimidated to visit libraries because they themselves cannot read. Provide classes for parents while their kids are entertained.
- Local libraries are not being stocked/restocked with any of the GS marketing materials, events, flyers, etc.
- Key is getting the business community to understand that \$1 today will pay dividends in the future. Need to get this message out.
- DHS staff member: GS needs to get to the people who provide the services. GS should try to get into staff meetings of their partners, including DHS, libraries, health department, pediatrician offices, etc., to talk about their services and explain how GS helps them help their clients.

- DHS would like to have GS marketing materials and would hand out brochures, event flyers to their clients. Info about day care providers would be helpful.
- To reach people who have resources/\$ to give we need to provide them personal stories, not a broad-reaching statement. People respond to a particular child who needs help vs. all children need help. Those who want to help respond to specific needs for a specific child. Church groups would be a good group for GS to present to.

How can you further investment in early childhood?

- Consistent message = effective advocacy
- Testimonials and parent advocates to share “stories” for potential supporters.
- Working with educators to spread the word and offer support when working with funders.
- Create a FAQ document to show stats, how we are funded, accomplishments and partnerships.
- More community events to show who Great Start is.
- Talking with partners regarding their donor bases and supporters. Encourage current partners to share Great Start with others will lend itself to more credibility for Great Start.
- Share the new strategic plan.
- A gift to Great Start equals a gift to the community.
- Service club presentations.
- Advocacy and marketing linked.
- Board roles.
- Relationships!

Increase diversity in the work of the Great Start Collaborative and Parent Coalition

- Invite a guest to collaborative or parent coalition meetings.
- Ask what times/places work best for potential members.
- Who are we missing at our table?
- Following up to find out where someone fits in after meeting them or having them attend a meeting.
- More events to recruit new members!

Challenges and Strategies to engage/recruit parents with the Collaborative and Parent Coalition.

- Help parents understand levels of commitment- they are able to do whatever works for them.
- Provide ways to reduce barriers- continue gas cards, childcare and a meal whenever possible

- Have specific tasks/asks for the parents to commit to when there are meetings (sign up for specific events/committees)
- Encourage collaborative members to attend a parent meeting to help build trust and a sense of connection with the parent coalition – parents feel that they are trying by going to collaborative
- Reach out to various places to get our information out about who we are – guests at our meeting had not heard about Great Start and where not sure if it was a program or not
- Possibly visit staff meetings at various business to help inform more people about how they can get involved

Barriers to implementing local system building work

- Star Power!
- Too many policies, not basic developmental skills.
- Need policies that support family's verses punishing them.
- Talk to our legislators but are they listening?
- Re-Design entire educational system to include early childhood rather than K-12 system.
- Recruit men.