

Great Start Collaborative  
September 23, 2009  
Meeting Minutes

Those present: John Norton, Jenilee Whisler, Ambre Flynn, Joanna Kolodziej, Shirley Gillespie, Jim Rummer, Jill Haan, Marcia Campbell, Shannon Smith, Amy Pfluecke, Carol Stephan, Judy Wojcik, Denise Aungst, Carolyn Belknap, Bill Lovett, Marie Sarchet, Sommer Poquette, Lorraine Manary, Meagan Krzywosinski, Judy Samelson, Suzanne Miel-Uken.

1. August meeting minutes were approved – Marcia Campbell made the first motion of approval and Carolyn Belknap made the second motion. None were opposed.
2. A vote was taken on whether the collaborative would like to have Dr. Donna Beegle do a parent presentation in the spring 2010. Great Start would be joining Char-Em ISD, COP ISD and the Child Abuse Council who are planning to have Dr. Beegle do a presentation. The ECIC has given approval that funds can be spent on this but the collaborative is still waiting to see if all of the proposed \$11,000 will be approved. The executive committee voted yes to the proposal at the executive committee meeting. At the collaborative meeting Jenilee Whisler made the first motion of approval and it was seconded by Shirley Gillespie. It was passed with none opposed.
3. Judy Samuelson. CEO of the ECIC presented. The items she covered in her presentation are:
  - a. Legislature is working on a budget. She feels that they will probably have a continuation of funds with some modifications being made into October.
  - b. Smaller budgets are being passed but that they are holding off until all budgets are approved.
  - c. The school aide budget looks like it is heading to a conference agreement that would retain Great Start funding and return Great Start Readiness Program funding.
  - d. This all may be leading to a tax reform strategy that probably won't happen with this budget.
  - e. People need to remind the Legislature that there will still be money, around 40 billion plus dollars.
  - f. As a community it is up to us to hold politicians accountable. We are the conscience and we have to make Lansing recognize and have a conscience.
  - g. Great Start has to have community ownership.
  - h. A goal is to ensure that public funding comes to local communities.
  - i. A number of initiatives are in the works such as Re-imagine Schools
  - j. Programs in Michigan are being looked at such as the Great Start Readiness Program. Is the program serving the most at risk?
  - k. A State wide forum with the foundation community is scheduled for late October 2009.
4. Work Groups met and were asked to complete two tasks: 1. List things that Great Start has done since inception. 2. Brainstorm a commercial or billboard to market Great Start.

5. One commercial idea that was discussed is everywhere children and families go Great Start should be visible.
6. Suzanne Miel-Uken from the Frey Foundation discussed the Family Voices Design Grant:
  - a. The Frey foundation would like to see something in Charlevoix and Emmet County around the topic of social/emotional development.
  - b. A Family Voices Design Team made up of parents attended up to 6 working sessions to provide input and ideas.
  - c. The idea that the group came up with is: A Parent Led System. Parents would be trained and provided compensation. The two main activities would be a parent support group with no stigma attached at a central location and a system for parents to assist them when they are confronted with a challenge. They would be able to be linked to one on one support.
  - d. The Family Voices Design Team will be sharing their ideas with the community in various ways to spark interest and increase and encourage partnership from community agencies.
  - e. Whatever idea the group and community settle on will be put into proposal format and sent to Frey by the end of the year.
  - f. Whatever idea is selected will have to have funding in place before beginning; it will have to be sustainable (tied to a fundamental funding stream).
  - g. The group will be trying to see how their ideas fit with what is already being done in the community and make connections where appropriate or possible.
7. A Parent Coalition update was given by Jenilee Whisler:
  - a. The coalition is currently working on Mary Poppins Bags. The bags will contain toys that promote social/emotional and physical play. The bags will be taken to playgroups and events in the community and used to make connections with parents.
  - b. Advocacy packets have been created and distributed. Over 250 packets were created and have been distributed to agencies. The packets have detailed directions on how parents and community members can contact the legislature and the governor and advocate for early childhood funding.
  - c. The Business Friendly Window Clings should be ready for distribution soon. The group is working on a way to get the word out to parents and businesses on what the window clings represent as well as educating them about the Great Start Parent Coalition.
  - d. The Legislative Coffee Hour took place and had good attendance.
8. The meeting was adjourned with the next meeting taking place in November.