

Facilitated Resources

Children, Youth and Families/Youth and Families Participant Work Products - Merger Conversation December 19, 2019

Overarching Focus:

“How will we collaboratively work together in the best interests of children, youth and families?”

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Context/Process Overview

Members of the Children, Youth and Families and the Youth and Families committees met in a facilitated session hosted by Promise Partners on December 19, 2019. The overarching focus of the session was:

“How will we collaboratively work together in the best interests of children, youth and families?”

The participants confirmed the following agenda:

- Context
- Information sharing
- Exploration, analysis and evaluation of possible options for moving forward
- Design possibilities
- Consensus decisions for next steps
- Debrief

Initial questions and expectations included:

- Someone to chair
- Prospect of sharing resources
- How will this new committee function?
- What will the questions and concerns be from individuals in the group?
- Get back on the same page
- Excited about bringing new energy and working together
- Cautiously optimistic about this group coming back together
- Will we still have guest speakers?
- Learn about other committees
- Make sure to take care of all people with collaboration
- How can we keep amazing things that were done and create new things together?
- Want to see exciting things continue
- How will we come together?
- Would like to keep the education part (PP), and enjoys the activities of HSAC

The participants agreed to the following working norms to guide discussion:

- Share all relevant information
- Test assumptions
- Speak your truth
- Share the air
- Have some fun
- Ask questions

- Don't take things personally
- Focus on the future
- Respect different opinions
- Take care of your needs

Initial assumptions that framed conversation included:

- Much good work has been done.
- More work is needed.
- Collaboration isn't always easy
- No decisions regarding merging have been made.
- We all want to serve families.
- Many think it makes sense to merge.
- Some things may have to change.
- Change is not easy.

In attendance at the session were:

- Grace Tunning
- Michaela Bonnett
- Sonya Fittje
- Liz Addison
- Clarrissa Newman
- Lorelle Mueting
- Jessica Rayment
- Molly Cumming
- Shelley Witcher
- Kimberly Kolakowski
- Emily McDermott
- Bonne Kerber
- Diana Reinsch
- Patricia Russmann

This report documents the participant observations and insights as well as the work products generated during the retreat. Questions regarding the process may be directed to the facilitators:

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Potential Pains and Gains of Merging

The participants were asked to share what they thought might be the pains and gains of pursuing a merger of their two committees. They said:

Gains

- Bringing more voices to the table
- Less stress and save time having 1 meeting
- More creative ideas with more hands to do them
- More boots on the ground for activities
- Volunteering for a new event- more volunteers
- Networking and collaboration- ability to build relationships between programs and agencies
- Better funding options
- Committee members are doing their passion work
- Have systems in place to deal with inevitable breakdowns in the group

Fears

- Meeting will be moved to a Friday
- Priorities shift around what activities get done
- Fear of loss
- Individual agency's voice and influence will be lost
- Too much to take on
- Merged group repeats history and splits again (down the road)
 - Miscommunication & not checking assumptions (it would be good to learn from this)
- Q: Would grants be limited- in applying for because of the larger group?
 - A: HSAC does not compete for funds

Current Committee Frameworks

The group was divided into two teams to report out on the current committee structures in order to identify areas of existing alignment. The teams shared the following observations around current operations and governance.

Promise Partners - Name of Committee: Youth & Families

Purpose of Committee: Support and encourage the wellbeing of all youth & families through ED, Networking & Collaboration

Short description of Initiative: We're a standing committee with networking and education opportunities

Time Frame: Committee meets monthly, except July & December. Typically around 19 people at the meetings. The Steering Committee meets on the Tuesday before the committee to determine the agenda and speaker for upcoming meeting.

Governance: Have a board, steering committee, chair, co-chair, secretary. No membership is required, it is an open group, has an email list.

Representation: non-profits, no set group, those who serve youth and families, city employee, membership to be at the table is an open door policy (anyone can come).

- Q: Do you recruit?
- A: Sometimes an invitation is extended to join the group based on the group's need. Often times those that come to meetings as speakers are invited to join the group.

Process/Methodology: Group conversation shapes the meeting, it's not just a "read out", action is then taken from these discussions.

Resources: Promise Partners puts some money toward projects

- Jessie (part time paid employee) does tasks & sets up logistics, ie: making sure there's a door greeter and a secretary for the meeting.
- Otherwise group "Duct Tapes" the rest together- requesting donations etc.

HSAC -Name of Committee: Children, Youth & Families

Purpose of Committee: to work in a collaborative partnership with community members promoting the physical, emotional and social wellbeing for those we serve.

Short description of Initiative:

As a standing Committee, hold at least 3 community engagement events that target specific and relevant community needs:

- Collaborate with other committees, community and HSAC, to increase participation in community events
- Continue to work on advertising strategies and evaluation components for engagement events

Seek Community feedback on relevant topics of interest:

- Develop a community survey to identify relevant topics within 1st quarter of 2019
- Collaborate with other committees that gather information from families and share data regarding topics of interest.

Time Frame: Meet once a month (2nd Wednesday 9am- 10am) in this same room, around 10 people are typically in attendance.

Governance: Committee Chair leads the meeting and helps guide the speakers, agenda etc. Chair reports back to the HSAC Board.

Representation: Members of Agency = HSAC

Q: how do you recruit?

A: at meetings for committees.

Process/Methodology: A general consensus, time for discussion, Informal Agreements.

Resources: HSAC provides a certain amount of funding. Can also fundraise or ask for in kind donations.

Upon reflection, the participants identified the following current alignment between the two committees:

- Missions
- Location (meet in the exact same meeting room)
- Target population
- Membership sectors
- Decision making culture
- Both have board support
- Fun and creative culture with projects
- Funding - ask community then backbone support from board

Differences identified included:

- Meeting size
- Date & time of meetings
- Fiscal Year
- PP is Quasi-Governmental, nonprofit 501 C 3, DCAT Children Youth and Family makes up this committee.
- HSAC is nonprofits coming together- committee is named in the bylaws
- This could be a coalition
- Meeting structure: PP- steering committee forms agenda; meetings consist of networking, a speaker, and project planning is done at a different meeting.
- HSAC- Chair makes the agenda. There's not an "education" piece at the meetings- work on projects at meetings.

Design Possibilities

The participants were asked to brainstorm answers to the question: "What do you NOT want to lose if these two committees were to be combined into one entity?" The following five things rose to the surface during the exercise (listed in no order of priority):

1. **Community Events** (i.e. Laundry Love event, community education events, resource drives)
2. **Member Driven Culture** (i.e. Participatory culture and self-governance, autonomy and relationships)
3. **Committee Education** (i.e. Continuing education presentations for committee, and speakers leftover from this year: “Marcy’s Law” & “Bikers Against Child Abuse - BACA”)
4. **Networking**
5. **Focus on a healthy community**

By consensus, the participants endorsed the idea of working together to develop an organizational structure for a single community committee focusing on the needs of children youth and families. They then participated in a model-building exercise in which three teams brainstormed proposals for chartering such a committee. The following work products resulted from the exercise:

Committee Charter- Group 1

Name: Children & Families Committee (CFC)

Purpose: To work collaboratively with community partners to support and encourage the well-being of children and families in our community.

Description: Provides education, networking and support related to physical, social and emotional well-being.

Time Frame: Meets monthly, here! (Promise Partners conference room)

Governance: Chair & Steering committee - Report to HSAC board

Representation: Non-profit agencies, members of HSAC, government agencies, education, foundations.

Process of engagement: Committee votes, Majority Rule

Resources: HSAC Fundraising, donation, apply for grants

Committee Charter- Group 2

Name: Youth & Families

Purpose: Similar as before, i.e. “PP - Support and encourage the well-being of all youth & families through ED, Networking & Collaboration. HSAC- to work in a collaborative

partnership with community members promoting the physical, emotional and social well-being for those we serve.”

Description: Continue serving youth/families in Pottawattamie County through events, education, networking and building collaborative relationships.

Time Frame: Goals set in January, with ability to run committee on fiscal calendar (July 1 - June 30) and school calendar (Aug - May). Meetings monthly, once set with date & time being member driven (i.e. Google - scheduling, doodle polls)

Governance: HSAC Committee with Board member attending meetings so able to report to Board. Could be MOU's in place, Bylaws in place and can be changed with a vote.

Representation: Not necessary to be HSAC member to participate/attend meetings. Voting members need to be registered members (HSAC member that has paid the fee).

Process/Methodology: Consensus

Resources: In kind, donations, Grant (Laundry Love), membership fees- HSAC

Committee Charter- Group 3 Name: Group creates a new name

Purpose: Use existing - “PP: Support and encourage the well-being of all youth & families through ED, Networking & Collaboration - HSAC: to work in a collaborative partnership with community members promoting the physical, emotional and social well-being for those we serve.”

Description: A committee that would focus on the five values agreed upon (things we don't want to lose): community events, member driven culture, committee, networking, focus on a healthy community (see page 7 for detail).

Time Frame: monthly meetings, 1.5 hours. No meeting July/Dec.

Governance: HSAC?

Representation: Retain all current and good time to recruit

Process/Methodology: Fist to five (consensus tool)

Resources: Community Chair, In-kind, Community Donations, Duct tape and chewing gum PP ---> L of L

After report outs the participants identified the following insights:

Areas of agreement:

- We should create a creative new name for this new committee - one that represents a new day, a new story.
- Our mission will remain close to the same - needs to be wordsmithed to represent the new committee
- Time frame will remain pretty much the same.
- Governance will be under the HSAC umbrella.
- Processes and resources are fairly in alignment for moving forward.
- Representation will include an invitation to all currently involved and be open to new members.

Areas of concern:

- Governance details yet to be worked out.
- Culture - how do we maintain a “member-driven” culture?

Next Steps

- Kim and Jessie craft one invitation to be sent to both existing groups to meet as one and confirm decisions related to the new committee charter and action planning for the year ahead.
- Use doodle poll to establish day and time.

Respectfully submitted,

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S. Pierce

December 21, 2019