

Eaton County's GREAT START Collaborative

Minutes: September 24, 2007

Eaton County's GREAT START Collaborative met in special session on September 24, 2007. Joyce Nickle, Collaborative Co-chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. The meeting began with introductions.

The agenda was approved as presented.

Committee Reports:

- D'Lynn Kowalk reported on website progress for the Website Committee. A new method for updating the Activity Calendar has been initiated.
- Nancy Sherd reported on the upcoming training on domestic violence awareness. This two part program will be presented on October 9 and October 16. Registration is online through the EISD website.
- Joni Risner presented the completed Great Start Community Report. Changes approved at the last Collaborative meeting have been incorporated into the finished brochure, and the sub-committee proofread the draft prior to printing. The Report will be used at upcoming community strategy sessions.
- Laurie Newland presented the Eaton County Goals developed from the product of the work session held at the last Collaborative meeting. The goals are:
 1. *Eaton County will empower families of young children to aspire to provide basic needs, economic security, and safety for their children.*
 2. *Eaton County will advocate for quality childcare and early learning experiences for all children beginning at birth.*
 3. *Eaton County will provide opportunities for parent education and family support using a variety of resources, and enabling families to support and guide the early learning of their children.*
 4. *Eaton County will promote a safe stable and nurturing environment for all children, including opportunities for positive social growth and awareness of community resources for social-emotional health.*
 5. *The Great Start Collaborative challenges Eaton County to address all areas of children's health including environmental and personal well-being.*

Mona proposed a motion to adopt the goals as presented. This was supported by D'Lynn and was approved unanimously by Collaborative members.

Next Steps:

Ronda explained how with the Report to the Community and the Goals adopted, the Collaborative is charged with holding community meetings to develop strategies and raise awareness. Ronda, Nikki, and Joyce will facilitate the community meetings. From these sessions, plans will be developed for implementation over the next eight months and also for future action. These meetings must be completed by the end of December. The following

meetings are currently being planned: Charlotte PTO, Eaton Rapids MOPS group, Head Start, and “Toddler Time” groups. Other suggested groups are: Proud Fathers’ class, groups associated with Lori Poyer’s practice, Eaton Rapids Asset Builders, Erase, and private schools, Strong Families/Safe Children Council, and the Program and Services Committee. Collaborative members are asked to email Ronda with dates, time, and locations of groups wishing to participate.

Opportunities for Council Members:

The “Cosmic Celebration” will be held in the Dearborn area on October 11. Members are encouraged to attend.

A mini-conference on collaboration will be held in Battle Creek on October 22. Again, members are encouraged to participate. Ronda will provide further information to anyone who is interested.

Upcoming Events:

- “Fun To Be Four” - Cindy reported that the scheduled “Fun To Be Four” events are going well and distributed a schedule. Peg added that teachers have also made positive comments about the events.
- Frontline Workers Presentation - Mona reported that the session to be held on the County’s aging population has been cancelled.
- Mr. Al Concert - D’Lynn updated the Collaborative on the upcoming concert, specifically on ticket availability.
- Early Childhood Literacy Week Events - Cindy presented the schedule of storybook character literacy events. Books will be provided at all Eaton County sites.
- “Toddler Time” - several changes in the “Toddler Time” schedule were noted by D’Lynn. These include: Charlotte meeting is now held at 10 am; Eaton Rapids now has only one session; new volunteers are working at both the Bellevue and the Dimondale “Toddler Times”; and the Vermontville group now meets at the Congregational church. An updated listing was distributed.
- Car Seat Inspection - Cindy advised the group that a safety inspection will be held in conjunction with a community event at the Fairgrounds on Friday of this week. She explained that 80% of children’s car seats are installed improperly.
- Marybeth Hicks - Ms. Hicks will be speaking in Eaton Rapids this week. Kim provided a positive review of the coming presentation, as she has previously heard the speaker.

Following announcements, the Great Start Collaborative adjourned at 2:10 p.m.