



Family Strengthening Peer Network Meeting Summary

Tuesday, December 6, 2005, 11:00 am – 3:00 pm

Hosted by Volunteers of America, Alexandria, VA

In attendance: Barbara Taylor, YMCA; David Carrier, NHSA; Kelita Bak, Camp Fire; Anna Christ, NHSA; Irv Katz, NHSA; Camille Murphy, CWLA; Karen Parker Thomas, Alexandria Public Schools; Peter Goldberg, Alliance for Children and Families; Melissa Ratcliff, VOA; Lisa Esquivel-Griffin, Communities In Schools; Molly French, NHSA.

- Defining family strengthening
- “This network is an opportunity to share info/ideas within our own networks and use our collective voice.”
- “We want to use this group as a resource for your agency”
- CWLA: Creating Parenting-Rich Communities initiative with three pilot sites. Also: parenting tips and parenting resources for policy makers
- Barbara Taylor Director of Programs, YMCA: 5 different family programs
1) Family Time 2) Parent/Child programs 3) Family Resource Centers 4) Active Families 5) Family Volunteering/ Civic Engagement. New Search Institute research on families.
- P. Goldberg: “We must be *intentional* about including family in programming.
- Communities in Schools has created family strengthening training modules for CIS
- VOA has family strengthening awards programs (on www.aecf.org). Awardees become training sites. “Words Travel” literacy program for children with incarcerated parents.
- Camp Fire USA has community family clubs which involves parents in the programs. They featured family strengthening at the annual conference.
- Kelita Bak, “How do you talk about family strengthening in the policy arena and to other stakeholders”
- The Alliance: National Family Week. Helping individuals balance work and family is a core competency in Alliance organizations. National Ways to Work loan program for 1-time cash infusion to help parents get into or stay in a job.
- “We’re starting to see a shift from agreement with the family-strengthening concept to integration into agencies’ work.

What's Next?:

- Focus peer network on 2 critical issues: quality time and family economic success.
- Option 1: host 1 or 2 convocations on these 2 issues. 18-24 months to plan the convocation, try to build momentum on how to do this work, identify programs and policies in the human services community. We need staff and resources to put together (touch base with board/CEOs about this). Ideally would engage stakeholders, especially the business community, to connect them with the human services community to advance family strengthening. Use the convocation as a milestone to test members' commitment to continuing to work on common issues in peer network.
- Option 2: the FSPN meets on a more interim basis (meet a few times a year), with no goal of a convocation, but each meeting could focus 2-3 hours on one of the topics. Example being the program peer group of the Assembly. We share resources through listserv as well. Could use meetings to identify existing or initiate new collaborations.

Next meeting: spend more time talking about "quality time" and family economic success. Example: a speaker, information sharing, and next steps with one topic from 9-12 am and the other 2-5pm.