

**Kansas Foster & Adoptive Parent Association
Executive Board Meeting, February 16, 2008
Salina, Kansas**

Present: Dennis Finch (President), Bruce Bynum (Vice President), Sandra Hiller (Secretary), Eltanis Volen (Region 3 VP), Greg Jaquis (Membership Committee Chair)

Agency Representatives: Joyce DeBolt (KDHE), Sylvia Hernandez (St. Francis Community Services), Marci McCullough (St. Francis Community Services), Beth Randall (Kansas Kids Gear Up),

Members Present: Bill & Nancy Weigant, Peggy Jaquis

Others Present: Brenda Bynum

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by President Dennis Finch. Tracie Wyatt is not available to attend today due to recovery from recent surgery. Sheila Peterman is not available due to a foster child involved in a district wrestling match.

Beth Randall from Gear-Up was introduced. Beth provided a short talk about the Gear-Up program (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs). The goal is to keep children in school and interested in going to college or technical schools. The program is a nation-wide, federally funded program and each state has different goals. Kansas' goal is specifically related to foster children, 75% of the children they provide services to should be foster children, or children who have ever been in foster care. They are trying to expand services state-wide to a core program similar to what is offered in the Salina area. The Salina program meets on Saturdays at Brown-Mackie College. There is a tutor at the public library on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 5 - 7 pm. The program provides cultural events, educational field trips, and trips to view college campuses. They serve grades K-12, or later if the child is working on a GED. They have a support group and they do trainings. They offer scholarships. Their website is www.wichita.edu/gearup. The program needs referrals of foster children. St. Francis Community Services has a section about Gear-Up in their regular newsletter. Beth passed out brochures and application forms.

The minutes of the previous meeting were distributed electronically. A copy was available today. Bill Weigant moved that the minutes be approved as distributed, Bruce Bynum seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

A treasurer's report sent electronically by Tracie Wyatt was read by Sandra Hiller. Beginning balance was \$1,448.66. Expenses were \$142.80 to Shelby Ross for Internet website, \$26 for postcard stamps, for a total expense of \$168.80. Membership fees taken in totaled \$440.00 Ending balance \$1,719.86. Outstanding debt is to Dennis for the website sites purchases. Bruce turned in the receipts for the Walk Me Home state coordinator training, we are awaiting a refund for the air travel. Sandra Hiller moved that the treasurer's report be accepted, seconded by Eltanis Volen and motion was approved.

President's report from Dennis Finch:

A) The Compassion Kansas grant was completed and mailed. We requested \$12,287 for computers and software, table top displays for each region, mailings, website development and webmaster fees etc. KFAPA is working with Compassion Kansas, which is a grant from Wichita State University, to help us with our initial organizational structure, such as writing job descriptions, policies and procedures, etc. It will be several months before we are informed about the grant.

B.) The Missouri Resource Parent Handbook is a tool that we should perhaps use as a sample. Dennis verbalized that he would like each regional vice president to develop a similar handbook specific to their region. Sylvia Hernandez mentioned that the Wichita State University Self Help Network has a resource book online that we might want to take a look at.

C.) Nebraska is having a foster care conference in March and Dennis may attend, as there is one that would be fairly close to his home in Beloit.

D.) The contracts for Walk Me Home have been signed and returned to NFPA.

E.) Dennis distributed copies of the ballot for elections from NFPA, and suggested that we could use a similar ballot for our election.

Secretary's report from Sandra Hiller:

A.) An Adoption Awareness in School Assignments booklet was received from an adoptive parent and is available via email to anyone interested. A copy was available for inspection at today's meeting. The booklet is an excellent tool for adoptive parents to have as a way to make biographical assignments possible for an adoptive child. This could be posted on our website.

B.) The SRS CFS Stakeholders Meetings were held in Wichita, Overland Park and Hays. The meetings were to gain input about Family Preservation, Reintegration/Foster Care, and Adoption services so that service delivery could be strengthened. Sandra attended the one in Wichita and the input that was given by those present was distributed via email. A copy of that is available for inspection today and can be emailed to KFAPA members upon request.

C.) There is a NFPA Board of Directors meeting being held today via teleconference, it began at 11 am so we were not able to participate because of our own monthly meeting.

D.) The call for proposals for the Governor's Conference on Child Abuse has been posted and is available by either going to the Children's Alliance website or the KCSL website. The deadline is in April for anyone interested in submitting a proposal to be a presenter at this year's conference in October, which will be held in Wichita.

E.) The CFSR audit report has been received by SRS and will be available on their website at some point in the future. The PIP team that Sandra Hiller has been participating in will meet again on Tuesday, February 19 and is concerned with case planning. Bruce and Dennis are also on PIP teams. The report indicated areas of need and a response to those areas must be prepared and sent back to the federal government within 90 days.

F.) Sandra Hiller and Sheila Peterman have been involved in the Kingman County Recruitment Team process. There is a need for foster homes in that county. A team of professionals that includes representatives from several child placement agencies, SRS, the local police, and county attorney have been working to develop a program to try to recruit foster homes. A copy of the power point that has been developed by that team is available for inspection today. Sandra Hiller commented on the positive steps being taken by this team, working together to recruit foster homes to address the needs of the foster children of that county. It is possible that this approach could be utilized in the future in other counties.

G.) KDHE has asked Dennis Finch and Sandra Hiller to review the Guidance Handbook that will accompany the new regulations. The handbook will provide explanations to the regulations so that families will have a clearer understanding of the regulations.

H.) The 501c3 application was completed and mailed to NFPA, who has acknowledged receipt of it and has sent it to the IRS with the application fee. There is no known response time, and it is understood that our Walk Me Home efforts have been somewhat hampered by not having our tax exempt status.

I.) Website development: Sandra Hiller announced that the website has been completed and is up and running. The young lady who designed our membership brochure is designing our website as well and has put information on it such as our bylaws, membership application, minutes of meetings, announcement of meeting. The website is kfapa.com. The Board was informed via electronic mail of the website, a copy of the website was printed out last night and is available for inspection today.

J.) A "What is KFAPA" was written at request of President Dennis Finch in response to an inquiry from a child placement agency about our association and what it has to offer. That is available via email. Eltanis suggested that that could be put on our website.

Vice President for Region 3 report from Eltanis Volen:

A.) Eltanis talked at Pawnee Mental Health about KFAPA and promoted membership.

B.) Eltanis talked about KFAPA at a St. Francis Community Services' training. She got feedback that people seem interested in the association and think it is a good idea. One family did question why they should join now, if they have to turn around and join again in July. The Board discussed this issue, and the membership year has been established and we will stick to that. The membership fee is very low (\$10) which is a positive thing.

C.) Eltanis will continue to talk about KFAPA and she is very excited about the Walk Me Home kickoff at the State Capital on May 3, 2008 and she will be very involved in coordinating that, as Topeka falls in her region.

There was a discussion about how to handle complaints such as the one about the membership fee. Dennis stated that he would like to discuss with the regional vice presidents how to mentor and be supportive without being judgmental. Sylvia Hernandez suggested that the association should be logging calls with complaints as well. Sandra Hiller reported that she was given the notebook about the FAST (Foster Allegations Support Team) program that we would like to use as a model to implement a program for support of our foster/adoptive/kinship families. There was a discussion about the impact on families, children, workers, birth families, etc. whenever any kind of allegation is made. Joyce DeBolt reported that KDHE will be addressing this issue in the Guidance Handbook and the BEST team will address the issue in the fall as well when they resume meeting. KFAPA is being represented on that BEST team. It was agreed that workers do not always have a good understanding of what can and cannot be discussed with families and children. Eltanis Volen reported that CASA has a training with their workers on the subject. This is an area KFAPA will be involved in, and Sandra Hiller agreed to proceed with writing a draft program based on the FAST program for use by KFAPA. Our goal is to have meetings with all the child placement agencies, SRS, etc. to review our program and be sure that our involvement in any situation is clearly understood by everyone. It will be important that everyone understand that we will be available in a supportive role only and not with any assumption as to the falseness or truthfulness of any allegation.

Vice President's report from Bruce Bynum:

A.) Bruce attended his third PIP meeting, and his team came up with some standards to ensure that fathers are being included in the process. Brochures will be re-designed to include fathers.

B.) Bruce talked about the Fatherhood Conference being held in Kansas City in April. KFAPA plans to have a booth there (there is no fee). Bruce will be presenting on non-custodial parenting.

C.) Walk Me Home: We are ready to go. We need officers, including event chairs in every region. We can negotiate with other organizations to help and give them a percentage of funds they help raise. Bruce needs a letter from NFPA stating that Bruce is the state coordinator for this event. Dennis stated he will write a letter from KFAPA for Bruce as well. Bruce is waiting for the publicity information from NFPA.

Old Business:

Dennis Finch spoke about empowering the regional vice presidents to develop KFAPA programs in their regions. He stated that the regional vice presidents need to take the bull by the horns and go out and get things done, with the executive board available to help them as much as possible. It was discussed that the regions could actually receive a percentage of the monies raised in the Walk Me Home campaign in their regions as a competition among the regions. Dennis said the regional vice presidents need to find places to set up booths, talk, schedule Walk Me Home events, as a way to promote KFAPA. Eltanis said that it is hard to work on fund raising without the tax exempt status, and we have no way to know when that will be granted. We will have to proceed as if that is forthcoming, and it was discussed that people who pledge money will actually be able to take advantage of the tax exempt status once it is obtained. Eltanis stated that we need the pr information also, and Bruce reported that he has been trying to obtain that information from NFPA. Bruce will work on that next week with NFPA. Tracie Wyatt has agreed to be the event chair for the Walk Me Home campaign for Region 3. Saundra Hiller mentioned that it is perhaps difficult for the regional vice presidents to know exactly how to proceed with things since we don't have job descriptions. Board members and committee chairs all need to have those job descriptions to help them fulfill their responsibilities. We will request job descriptions from NFPA to use as a guide for our state association.

Joyce DeBolt spoke about the KDHE regulation changes. Effective March 1, 2008, there is a new standard requiring fingerprinting for all new licensed foster parents. Child placement agencies will receive their packets on this next week and will have to develop policies and procedures around this issue. Another change is that families who have lived in Kansas less than five consecutive years will be required to have background checks for all states they previously resided in. The fingerprinting will cost \$39, and it is unknown at this time exactly how that charge will be handled by the child placement agencies.

Joyce also reported on the foster home regulations. They will go into effect in the spring. In April, trainings will be offered throughout the state. KFAPA will be involved in the Guidance Handbook, as noted earlier in the minutes, and we have volunteered to be present at the trainings whenever possible as well. Joyce stated that the BEST team will re-convene in the fall, and Eltanis Volen, Sheila Peterman, and Bruce Bynum have all volunteered to be involved on that team from KFAPA.

Nancy Weigant brought up an issue of concern. A child in care who turns 18 and gets into trouble becomes a prohibitive placement and is not allowed to come in to a foster home the way the statute is written. Nancy asked what can be done about that, as a foster home may be the one connection that individual has. Joyce DeBolt explained that permission can be obtained to allow that individual into the home if certain steps are followed, such as writing a safety plan outlining that the individual will not be left alone or unsupervised with the children in the home.

New Business:

Elections must be held at the June meeting. The NFPA ballot, as discussed earlier, can be used as a guideline. Technically, we need a nominating committee made up of one representative from each of the five regions. The nominating committee would obtain the nominations and a ballot would be sent out with biographical information on the candidates. Up for election this year are the offices of President, Regional Vice Presidents 1, 3 and 5, and treasurer. Dennis will check with NFPA and our regional consultant, Jim McKenna, to be sure we are in compliance with the elections. Discussion centered around how to get out

the word for nominations. It was decided that the secretary will send out a flyer electronically that lists the positions up for re-election and the criteria: must be a member in good standing. Deadlines were discussed and it was determined that we need to give SRS plenty of time to get the mailings out and be in compliance with our bylaws. The following schedule was proposed: deadline for acceptance of nominations will be March 30, 2008. The biographical information and ballots will be ready for distribution by April 15 with an expected mailing date by SRS of May 1, and at the June meeting the ballots will be counted. Meetings will be March 15 in Region 4, April 19 in Region 5, there will be no meeting in May due to the NFPA conference, and the general membership/election meeting will be June 21 in Region 1. Saundra Hiller moved that the above schedule be adopted, Greg Jaquis seconded the motion and the motion was approved.

Nancy Weigant volunteered to resume the position of Vice President for Region 5 until the elections, which was gratefully accepted.

Eltanis Volen asked about offering CEU trainings as a way to get more people to attend the meetings. We will discuss that further with the Children's Alliance. Dennis pointed out that while we do want to improve attendance, we don't want people being bored sitting at our meetings waiting to get CEU trainings. If the regional vice presidents set up some regional affiliate meetings in conjunction with trainings, that would certainly boost attendance and get the word out about KFAPA. Offering child care was another suggestion to improve attendance and that will be considered as well. It was pointed out that once the association gets up and going, there will only need to be the quarterly meetings as stated in the bylaws. The monthly meetings are really more working meetings for the board at this point.

Another suggestion was that everyone begin to distribute our membership flyers at local agencies, health departments, doctors' offices, etc. Weigants will take some to an ambassador training meeting they are attending. Sylvia Hernandez will take brochures to the Power Conference at Wichita State University in March and have them at the St. Francis Community Services table there.

The Weigants reported that they are meeting with Shelby Ross this evening to get the information we need regarding the original website of kfapa.org. They accidentally destroyed the check written at the last meeting to Shelby, so they will write a check to Shelby and get reimbursement from KFAPA.

Door prize drawing of a box of chocolate truffles was won by Eltanis Volen. The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Saundra Hiller, Secretary