



## Luzerne County Children and Youth Services Advisory Board Meeting

**Date/Time/Location:** June 9, 2021/noon/ Conference Room 132 (MS Teams/Conference Call Meeting)

**In Attendance:** Denise Acosta, Nicole Buckman, Robert Childs, Dennis Gochoel, Maylan Nicholson, Olga Papa, Eileen Song, Josh Wilder

**Absent:** Charlene Aben, Mary Agnes Kratz, Larry Marchetti, Alex Milanes, Susan Roskos

**Children and Youth:** Ceil Bartolai, Janice Bonner, Donna Domiano, Kelly Gaughan, Caitlyn Holland, Lisa Koval, Dave Maslowski, Georgine Meyers, Robin Ritsick

**Office of Human Services:** John Alunni

**Welcome** – Chairwoman Song welcomed everyone to the June meeting. Ms. Meyers announced that participants on the phone will need to press \*6 to unmute to speak and all Advisory Board meetings are recorded in order to do the meeting minutes. Ms. Meyers took attendance. Chairwoman Song thanked all the new members for being active and participating.

**Approval of Minutes** – May meeting minutes approved by Member Buckman, seconded by Member Nicholson, all in favor.

**Director's Report** – Kelly Gaughan, Manager, announced that she will be presenting the Director's Report as Director Van Saun and Deputy Director German are attending a PCYA conference. Manager Gaughan discussed the May National Foster Care Month webinar entitled: "Dispelling the Myths about Fostering Teens: Straight Out of the Horse's Mouth". This webinar was live streamed on May 19<sup>th</sup>. There were technical difficulties, but the agency received positive feedback. The webinar will be used for future trainings and also for recruiting foster families. Once the link is up and running, Ms. Meyers will email the link to the Advisory Board. The Governor designated this week as Child Welfare Professionals Week in Pennsylvania. The agency held a staff appreciation by serving a take and go hot lunch to staff. Thank you to the Board as the agency was able to give away three lottery baskets to staff. The agency plans to order padfolios for all staff in the future. Luzerne County Council recognized C&Y Staff this week in a Proclamation at Tuesday's Council Meeting. June starts the budget season. Staff completed the first training on this year's Needs Based Budget. The budget is due in August. Currently there are 30 vacancies with two more resignations. Management has been conducting interviews and recommended several candidates to Human Services. The process is going well in filling vacancies. The Independent Living Unit will be holding an in person graduation celebration for this year's graduates at the Apple Tree Terrace on June 17<sup>th</sup>. Chairwoman Song talked about the thank you letters that the Advisory Board wrote to staff. She received emails from staff thanking the Board for the recognition and raffle baskets. She is always looking for

ways to show staff they are appreciated. They have challenging jobs. She thanked the Board for writing the notes.

### **Committee Reports**

1. **Events and Fundraising** - Secretary Wilder noted they will be doing the donation letters again this year and are looking to hold one annual event for fundraising. The Board will be looking for sponsors for a t-shirt project. They would like to have eight sponsors at \$250 each. Art to be provided by children via a drawing contest. The committee hopes to do this project in September. Secretary Wilder noted that he touched base about fundraising with Attorney Rodgers. Member Nicholson sent out letters and received some monetary donations for the events. She will also develop a draft for the t-shirt drawing contest.
2. **Strategic Planning and ByLaws** – Vice Chairman Gochoel noted no report this month. He plans to have the committee meet next Wednesday at 5pm. He asked Ms. Meyers to send that out to all Board Members.
3. **Recruiting and Community Advocacy** – Chairwoman Song noted that they are waiting for Member Acosta to schedule a meeting. She would like the committee to document the accomplishments of the Board to send to County Council. She also discussed the pipeline for new Board Members. The committee will reach out to Members not attending meetings. Member Acosta noted that Council interviewed people for the Board but they have not voted on it yet. If you know of anyone interested, please let them know the application is on the county website.

**Old/New Business** – Member Childs asked if the Board can do something like grocery stores do with rounding change up for a cause. Chairwoman Song would like to do a drive for maybe back to school or food drive. She hopes the t-shirt project will raise enough money. Chairwoman Song noted that Member Childs had some concerns about situations and will come up with a list of ways to help improve things at the agency and have a better understanding of how the agency works. Director Van Saun did some education with what happens when calls come in and Chairwoman Song would like to continue with this. She asked Board Members to attend 10 day meetings as they help Board Members to have a better understanding of the workings of the agency.

**Fiscal Update** – Ms. Holland noted that the agency is coming up on the fiscal year end which is due mid August. There is additional reporting to do. The audit report was sent out to all Board Members. If there are any questions, please reach out to her or Mr. Dalessandro. The management team met to discuss the upcoming Needs Based Budget and section assignments.

**Final Questions/Comments** – There was a question and answer period for Board Members to ask anything that was on their minds about C&Y. Discussed were Guardian Ad Litem and their role, consents for educational services, what kind of resources are available for children/families after case is closed, differences between formal/informal kinship and foster care and resources such as [kidconnector.org](http://kidconnector.org)

**Adjournment** - Motion to adjourn made by Secretary Wilder, seconded by Member Papa, all in favor.

**NEXT MEETING: Wednesday, July 14, 2021 at 12:00pm.**