

Washtenaw County
Foster Grandparent Program Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Wednesday, May 17, 2006 **Time:** 9:00 AM

Meeting Location: Washtenaw County Michigan Works! Service Center, 304 Harriet Street, Ypsilanti

Members Present: Margaret Crawford, Trudy Hall, Ray Mellberg and Hazel Watson

Staff Present: Susan Sweet Scott, Barbara A. Patterson and Rana Al-Igoe

1. Call to Order

Crawford called the meeting to order at 9:22 AM. Crawford apologized for not being able to attend the Luncheon and a number of meetings this year. She values the efforts of the foster grandparents (FGs), the volunteers and the members of the group.

2. Welcome and Introductions

- Scott thanked everyone for attending today's meeting. She mentioned that a number of people may be absent due to the traffic resulting from construction work in the County.
- Everyone present introduced themselves.
- Crawford mentioned that she and Watson had the opportunity to speak with the foster grandparent program (FGP) monitors. Scott thanked them for their input and noted that the report was returned. The report was about thirty pages long and the information will be shared with this group. Crawford noted how impressed she was with the dynamics of the meeting. She appreciated the honest feedback and valuable knowledge shared at that meeting. The monitors spent two days with staff monitoring files and other programmatic areas.

3. Approval of the Minutes

Mellberg moved to approve the minutes from the 01/18/06 meeting. Hall supported. Meeting minutes approved.

4. Recognition De-brief

- Scott expressed the apologies of Rusher who is unable to attend today's meeting because she is at the state-wide Michigan Community Action Agency Association (MCAAA) meeting.
- Scott thanked Mellberg for being master of ceremonies for the FGP Recognition. She noted how pleased everyone was with his effort. Mellberg thanked staff for their help.
- Staff worked very hard on the event and the program booklet. Scott noted that budget restraints prevented the staff from printing the booklet cover in color. She noted that there was some question as to the value of the booklet and the event. Scott asked for some feedback regarding the event. Group members feel that the event is very important. The booklets provide the opportunity for everyone to share the work of the FGP with others. Mellberg commented that the event is very appropriate and memorable. He added that the FGs always look forward to the event and invite others to participate. Mellberg suggested that the sites be encouraged more to participate. Mellberg noted that he would be willing to pay for extra tickets to invite site members to attend. Crawford felt that would be something to think about. She added that we might want to think of some sort of incentives to ensure that volunteers and site staff are encouraged more to attend. Scott noted that programmatic dollars not spent on the FGs is not allowed. Mellberg noted that there are many people at the event and attendance is not typically a problem.

- The County Administer and local representatives attended the event. Watson felt that their attendance is important because their recognition of the FGs makes them feel great. Mellberg added that the way that the FGs dress for the event speaks for how they feel towards the event. They always dress in their “Sunday Best.”
- Scott asked for feedback on the decorations and the nametags. Council members felt that the nametags were very helpful. Watson commented that the event would not be as much fun without the decorations.
- Scott asked about the length of the event. She noted that some sites have a longer event. Crawford replied that a number of the FGs could not sit for a long time and that the length was perfect.
- Mellberg like the greeters, including the ones located at the end of the hall. Mellberg noted that the only negative thing he witnessed was the confusion at the end of the event with the FGs going home. It might have been a little bit hard for the FGs that on the busses and then had to get off due to the confusion. Patterson noted that perhaps a staff member or two could help in the future since they are more familiar with the FGs. Patterson added that there are a large number of FGs and a limited amount of seats for them to rest while they waited for their buses. Crawford suggested that it might be helpful to make an announcement at the end of the event or even route the FGs a bit differently. Patterson thought that staff could ask the FGs to remain seated until their names are called to board their bus home.
- Scott asked about the food and the site. Mellberg thought the food was perfect. He added that it is nice to know the place of the event and having it at the same location limits the confusion that may result from changing the site every year. Watson agreed and noted that she can even ride the bus to the event.
- Council members agreed that the slideshow was great.
- Patterson shared some pictures from the event with the group.

5. Report of the Older Adult Program Activities – (Scott)

A. Report on Senior Services

- The State application to the Office of Services to the Aging (OSA) is being prepared by staff and is expected to be submitted next month.
- All FGP and Senior Companion programs are in the process of entering program data into a common database. This tool is evolving and is expanding reporting capabilities statewide.
- The three-year application is being prepared for the Senior Nutrition Program (SNP). The program plans for 180,000 meals for 1,900 older adults annually.
- Monitoring for the SNP is scheduled for May 22, 2006.
- Scott thanked the Council members for their input on the FGP recognition event. She noted that input and assistance is always welcome.
- ETCS is continuing its efforts to keep FGP membership full. New links to promotion and involvement are always needed.
- Suggestions for transportation are also welcome and ideas are needed for cost reduction. Staff tries to place FGs in sites close to their homes, but this may not always be the case for all FGs. Crawford mentioned that a number of area churches transport their seniors. She added that she would contact the churches and inquire about some collaborative opportunities. Hall added that she is on another collaborative council and was going to also contact some of the area churches. She, too, will inquire about some collaborative opportunities.
- Volunteers are being sought to assist with program evaluation and project evaluation. Each year, staff conducts an evaluation. Scott asked for volunteers to help with this; work will probably begin in the summer on this.

B. Community Happenings of Interest to friends of Older Adults

- Senior Advocates for Washtenaw (SAW) members are being sought.
- The commodity food distribution is scheduled for Thursday, May 18 at Towner. Volunteers are welcome to help with the distribution.
- We are all very pleased that Patterson was awarded the Washenaw County Employee of the Year award. Council members applauded Patterson for receiving the award.
- Mellberg noted that the Ann Arbor News, although they write many good stories, did not cover the FGP event. He asked whether they are invited. Patterson replied that although they were invited in the past, the Ann Arbor News has not been invited for the past few years. Mellberg volunteered to help in inviting the Ann Arbor News to future events.

6. Report of the Foster Grandparent Program – (Patterson)

A. Overview

- There are currently eighty-one active senior volunteers that work one-on-one with children with special needs.
- FGs are placed at over thirty community agencies, including schools, day care centers, and hospitals.
- FGs are given a monthly stipend, a daily meal, ongoing training, annual physicals, public recognition events and the opportunity to volunteer.

B. Overview

- A new site, New Beginnings Academy, has been added.

C. Upcoming Events

- The July park outing is scheduled for Friday, July 21, 2006. Staff would like to move the July Advisory Council meeting to coincide with the event.
- August – the FGP fall kick-off is scheduled for the 21-24.

D. Help Needed

- Help is needed to retrieve the prom decorations from Ypsilanti Public High School on Saturday June 3 just before midnight. These decorations are used for the FGP Annual Recognition and whatever other events they can be used for. In return for using their decorations, staff and volunteers sit in and help chaperone the event.
- Additional speakers are needed for the fall kick-off scheduled for Thursday, August 24, 2006.
- Year round locations for site placements are also needed.

7. Comments from FGP Sites

- Watson commented on her site. She shared some stories from a fellow FG, Louise Holman, who works with young children at a number of different sites.

8. Other Business/Announcements

- There is a fundraiser to benefit local firefighter scheduled for Sunday, May 21.
- A copy of a photo from the Ann Arbor News was shared with the group. The photo depicted students from Willow Run Community Schools and the FGs who organized a meeting on March 13 commemorating the 76th anniversary of Gandhi's "Salt March" at Kettering Elementary School.

9. Upcoming Date(s) to Note

This item was covered during the meeting.

10. Adjourn

Crawford adjourned the meeting at 10:27 AM.