

DURHAM COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE

Agenda, Minutes, & Subcommittee Report Form

Community Collaborative Meeting
Minutes
February 26, 2009

Welcome: Nick Myers-Chair of the Collaborative welcomed and thanked everyone for attending. He gave an explanation of the collaborative for new attendees. He also spoke of the different organizations that make up System of Care (SOC)-TDC, DPS, DSS, Private Providers, etc. The agenda for today was to discuss gaps in housing options for persons ages 14-21, discuss transitioning for this age group, and to find resources for housing and transitioning issues. There is still a question as to what is transitional age?

Nancy Kent spoke of the problems/barriers in housing for this age group and turned the discussion over to the group for more talks about the availability of resources in the community.

Rapid Response beds are available thorough Caring Family Network providers. There is however an age limit of 18. Nancy explained that sometimes this is not a “perfect match” and the first three days are covered as Emergency Authorization and then becomes Level II. Nancy also noted that this is not a permanent placement.

Nancy spoke about the Wren House (youth shelter) located in Raleigh that has an independent living program component. Durham does not have a Youth Shelter and there is a huge need for this.

Lanea Foster with the 10 year plan stated that the only data available to count the number of homeless children in Durham is through DPS. The DPS number is a little under 300 to date for this school year. She also stated that HUD’s definition of homeless is living in uninhabitable conditions. They don’t recognize that some teens house hop or couch hop or live doubled up.

Some things to figure out are the actual number of homeless youths, and what is the definition of homeless. It was stated that real numbers are needed to figure out the why’s and where’s of homelessness. We need real numbers to identify these kids in order to possibly obtain grant money. As of now, there is no data collection other than via DPS.

Yolanda Davis, homeless liaison for DPS stated that social workers and counselors can help identify homeless children. She also stated that she helps provide services for students to help with school supplies, family needs. These are some things that help children become successful in school.

Fantasia Johnson-Links Coordinator stated that their program assists youth ages 13-21 in foster care make the transition to adulthood. It was stated that talking about transitioning should begin at ages 13 or 14 just to let them know that they have help. Transitioning help should include living skills, basic skills, and possibly linking with employers to help find employment.

Wake Tech has a program that helps with college funding for foster children. It was stated that a talk with Durham Tech about providing this service would be helpful as well.

Katie from Carolina Outreach stated that they have an Independent Living Program for children that are aging out of the foster care system. She stated also that the company has purchased a home to help with children transitioning. They also offer an Independent Living class series 2-3 times per year for ages 16-18. This is a 10-12 week session covering ILS. Carolina Outreach also offers some flexible funding to help with teen that are not in DSS custody transition- question was asked as to what happens with these kids. Children in DSS custody that are transitioning into adulthood have access via DSS to an Education Training Voucher (ETV) if still in foster care after 17 or adopted up to \$5000/yr to help with school and expenses. Also, NC Reach pays a full scholarship for college for persons aging out of foster care. Some housing funds are also available. After age 13, they qualify for LINK services. About 44 youths accessed this service.

Teresa Mangum with Lutheran Family Services Carolinas spoke about their program-supportive apartment living for ages 18-21 who have aged out of DSS. She also passed out fliers about the program.

Michael Ward from DSS asked about options for pregnant teens. It was stated that no one in Durham is doing housing for pregnant teens and the question was asked about a possible state grant for this. One option was Florence Crittenden located in Charlotte. Carolina Outreach has hired a grant writer and is applying for funding for transitioning youths. The Youth Development division is also trying to get funding for additional Independent Living housing. ALS will take pregnant teens.

There are 590+ adults at the shelter. The number of youth at the shelter is unknown.

Some ways of gathering information in order to obtain real numbers are: possible surveys for youths at school, request help from teachers, social workers, other kids, see what other states are doing ,a possible point time count at malls, set up tents, surveys asking specific questions and by partnering with other agencies and groups.

The need for a youth shelter-what does this look like? - Possible custody issues may arise, profit vs. nonprofit, what will be the requirements? Some teens may not go, may not feel safe due to DSS reporting concerns. It was stated that "big" cities have shelters such as safe havens and shelters that help someone possibly return home.

It was suggested to have possible legislative intervention, more collaboration, youth housing advocates, come up with Youth Homeless Task Force, and also to meet with people who are already providing this service. Charlotte, Greensboro and Raleigh have programs for youth.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation has a checklist on their website that teaches kids basic needs, life skills,etc. Youthhood.org-a kid/teen website that discusses safety, hygiene and life skills.

Nancy also spoke about VFC.org-Volunteer families for children- a program that offers respite foster care.

Debra Rewalt with the Cooperative Extension will be offering training entitled Strengthening Families. The dates for this training are March 9-11 and consist of a full day.

In closing, Nick discussed the function of care review and asked more people to join the review teams. The consensus of the group was that more people are needed; we need to identify homeless kids in the community, we need real numbers, the need for a drop in shelter and services for pregnant teens, connect with the legislature and convince them of the need for a teen shelter, hold peer groups and ask police to attend.

The topics for the next meeting are health, recreation and summer programs for youth.

The Making a Difference breakfast will be held on April 23 from 8:30-10am. This breakfast will recognize families and service providers.

The May meeting for the collaborative is to discuss solutions to some issues.

Everyone was thanked for attending and the meeting adjourned at 11:43am.