
Council Officers

Beth Hovind

Chair

Carmen Lake

Vice-Chair

Michael Arendall

Secretary

Mark Hopkins

KidsFirst Representative

Council Members

Eric Clark
Dawn Handley
John White
Mary Sharrow
Nadine Spring Nickeson
Pinellas County Sheriff's Off.

Joanne Reich

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I. Call to Order. The January 16, 2025 meeting of the North County Community Council, Juvenile Welfare Board of Pinellas County, was called to order by Chair Beth Hovind at 6:00 p.m. at Dunedin Mease Hospital, 601 Main Street, Dunedin, Florida.

In attendance: Council Members Beth Hovind, Michael Arendall, Mark Hopkins, Dawn Handley, Deputy Nocera, as well as guests Adriana Palacio of the Mattie Williams NFC, Lisa Mansell & Tracy Hawkins of Church of Scientology, Rev. Allee Wood - First UMC Clearwater, Maria Amodo- Empath Health, Gabbi Tomaselli – Boley, Doug Griesenauer – United Way, Shakerah Molligan – R'Club Gateway, Dorothy Shipe – R'Club E Lemon.

Absent were: Council Members Mary Sharrow, John White, Nadine Nickeson, Eric Clark.

Introductions: Council Members and guests introduced themselves.

II. Special Presentation

The Council received a presentation from Doug Griesenauer of United Way Suncoast regarding the latest data and trends of ALICE families in Pinellas County, especially in the North County region. Doug also provided a summary of VITA tax preparation services for qualifying families (making \$79,000 or less annually), with options for seniors with AARP. United Way and AARP are trained by IRS personnel. Free tax software is available on the United Way Suncoast website also (such as for those who are not qualifying families). When asked about sharing guidance for family needs priorities in North County, Doug shared that wholistic work is really important, but educational opportunity and financial security are two central pillars upon which families can build successful homes. United Way Suncoast is working to try to cross-network with employers to emphasize stable employment and child care options given the critical role that financial security plays in lower rates of food insecurity, abuse and neglect, and a host of other challenges that financially insecure families can face. Because of net migration into Florida since the pandemic, the number of ALICE families has grown, even as the percentage of ALICE families has remained steady over the last 5 years.

III. JWB Updates

- A. Joanne shared that child care came up during today's Board meeting in the context of the School District providing care for employees, and she reminded us that we have heard about the importance of growing partnership with businesses regarding child care for employees and for quality early learning sites.
- B. Robyn Redd with Tarpon Springs Housing Authority contacted Joanne to share about a program that matches seniors who have space in

homes with young people or small families looking for a room to rent, providing some limited additional income to seniors. Joanne hopes that Robyn and/or her team will attend a future meeting to provide information.

- C. In the Council's February meeting, we anticipate having a presentation on the Fatherhood Collaborative, as well as a presentation on data from JWB. In March, the Youth Council will be presenting to the Council about their activities. In April, our goal is to receive a presentation from Dunedin Mease Hospital regarding the hospital's perspective in encountering children and families.

IV. Council Business

- A. Grand Families Program: Joanne again asked Council members to consider joining the Planning Committee for our 2025 Grand Families event. The aim is for the North County event to be held at the end of April, and two outdoor locations in Tarpon Springs (around the Evara Health facility) are under consideration, with an aim of including mental health providers and a food giveaway as a part of the event. The Council will plan to have a short 30 minute work session after the February meeting, and all Council Members are invited.
- B. Joanne has received applications from Nick and Maria to join the Council, and we are encouraged by these new prospective Council Members.
- C. Consideration of the minutes of the Council's December 2024 meeting was postponed.
- D. Mark shared his uplifting visit to Mt. Moriah AME Church to welcome its new pastor, Pastor Lassiter. It was a tremendous welcome ceremony with participants throughout the Tarpon Springs area, and Mark was able to share about the Council's work.
- E. The Council is reminded that it will meet for the next 3 meetings at Dunedin Mease Hospital.

V. Community Updates

- A. R-Club is beginning its enrollment campaign for the new school year. R-Club is working to help provide resources to families in the apartment complex off of Drew Street who suffered severe flooding after the hurricanes. Needs include clothing, food, and transportation, as well as baby needs. The R-Club in Tarpon Springs has capacity for 40 children, age 2 months to 3 years, and it is currently at an enrollment of 31.
- B. The Clearwater Community Volunteer Center affiliated with the Church of Scientology provides support for non-profits throughout our community.

- C. The Mattie Williams NFC is almost finished with construction on its facility, with an aim to be done by the end of January. Isabella, a new case manager, just started with the Center, and they are seeking another case manager as well. Adriana is now with the agency for aging.
- D. Boley provides employment programming and support for young people age 15 to early adults, including support with completing FAFSA applications.
- E. First United Methodist Church is supporting families with cold night shelters.
- F. Beth asked the Council to think about a nomenclature change of single parent to solo parent, with an easy companion reference of "duo parent." She suggested that the term solo parent may take away some of the negative connotation.

There being no further business, on a motion by Mark that was seconded by Dawn, the Council adjourned without objection at 7:14 p.m. The Council's next meeting is Thursday, February 6, 2025 at 6:00pm at the Dunedin Mease Hospital.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Arendall
Secretary