

Onondaga Citizens League meeting notes—Sept. 12, 2013

1

Meeting held at ProLiteracy, 104 Marcellus St., Syracuse

Co-chairs: Paul Predmore and Laurie Black

Attendees: Harold Breon, Ginny Carmody, Paula Freedman, Maria Gill, Michelle Haas, Kathleen Harter, Melissa Hidek, Phyllis Leach, Peter Knoblock, Annette Krisak, Peggy Liuzzi, Nancy McCarty, Lauren Merola, Donna O'Mahony Rohde, Janet Park, Linda Peressini, Marie Perkins, Jonnell Robinson, Peter Sarver, Addie Silvia, Marsha Tait, Sanford Temes

OCL: Sandra Barrett and Becky Sernett

Summary: Today's meeting served as a brainstorming session to help determine what the study committee has learned so far from the meetings and subcommittees, how this can be synthesized into focus areas or themes the committee wants to address in the report and what is still missing from the committee's discussions.

Upcoming Meetings: All regular study committee meetings will be held from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., on alternating Tuesdays and Thursdays, at ProLiteracy, 104 Marcellus Street, Syracuse. The next meetings will be:

- Tuesday, September 24—Kim Scott, managing partner of Literacy Powerline and a leader in the annual National Community Literacy Coalition Conference will lead a discussion of Early Childhood community systems and education frameworks and elements of successful collaborations.
- Thursday, October 10—topic TBA

Special Presentation:

There will be a special meeting on Wednesday, October 23, from 3 – 4 p.m. at ProLiteracy, with Ralph Smith, senior vice president at the Annie E. Casey Foundation and managing director of their Campaign for Grade-Level Reading.

Today's Topic: What Have We Learned?

OCL Study Committee Co-Chair Laurie Black explained how today's brainstorming meeting would work. First, members would brainstorm their ideas and talk in small groups. Each member was given a brainstorming "study theme" sheet that allowed him or her to write down ideas in the following categories: childhood health, early childhood development, family supports and delivery systems. The members were also given a chart that outlined the presenters, topics and summary of resources mentioned from the previous OCL study committee meetings. After this, the committee would engage in a whole-group discussion, and ideas would be recorded on flip charts.

What is exciting about the committee topic, Black said, is that: "There isn't a week

that goes by when there isn't a study coming out or new research on this topic." So many groups, organizations, agencies and researchers are focused on this issue.

"We have a strong zero to five system," Black said about Central New York. But, she added, it needs to be more cohesive and thoughtful to better harness its resources and reach a wider number of people.

From this, committee members began brainstorming independently, and then the ideas were shared to the entire group. Below are the notes that were recorded on the flip charts.

Childhood Health

1. Pre-Natal issues are of great importance
2. Access to resources
 - Information sharing/marketing
 - Coordination of services
 - Need for central source of information (hotline? Website?)
 - How many individuals are being helped? Who is being missed?
3. Value of collaboration with hospital providers
4. Limitations to available programs
 - Geographic/territories (zip code-based)
 - Funding – ages served (gaps for services)
5. Focus on first child – not many programs for parents of 2 kids or more (or for the 2nd or 3rd, etc., child)
6. Lack of coordination, consistency, fidelity for MD programs
7. Health information needs to be disseminated to parents/family (Adult education through existing outlets – literacy, schools, etc.)
8. Educate health care providers (MDs, nurse practitioners)
9. Children need "medical home"
 - Continuity of care
10. Medicare/Medicaid admin issues (recertification)
11. Focus on mental/emotional health issues/coordinate services
12. Include dental health

Early Childhood Development:

1. Learning starts at birth
2. Importance of play/role models
 - Trust, social/emotional/developmental
3. Interaction/relationship development
4. Powerful impact of the parent–child relationship (or caregiver–child relationship)
5. Bring back Home Economics (to school children that would perhaps focus on)

- Parental development skills
- Human interaction skills
- 6. Need for succinct “how to” list/message for parents, caregivers
- 7. Simple “How to Parent” guide
 - For each age 0-5
 - Adult education
- 8. Offer (mandate?) parental education with other services/government assistance (perhaps the long-term Medicaid side)
- 9. Need to have a universal approach to programs that is easily and universally accessible by all parents and children in CNY

Family Supports:

1. Reach out to parents where they are already going (school, work, stores, entertainment, etc.)
2. Evaluate how parents learn best by examining their attitudes toward early childhood education and its themes (how should we get our messages to parents in a way they can better accept/understand them?)
3. To coordinate services & communicate information, find out who parents trust (in the community) and work with them
4. Information from Family Supports Subcommittee focus groups (info TK)
5. Encourage and help facilitate parents with kids under the age of 13 to meet with Child Care Solutions
6. Have JobsPlus parent specialists engage JobsPlus parents in conversations

Delivery Systems:

1. Reach out to parents enrolled in adult education programs and coordinate educational efforts with adult education agencies and organizations
2. Make parent education (how to care for a child) part of adult ed
3. Develop a cross-sector coalition that goes beyond the OCL study
 - Can develop a strategic plan
 - Facilitates further discussion & coordination on this issue
4. Include Syracuse housing development agencies to become more aware of health risks to children (lead paint, etc.)
5. Think outside the box
 - Mundy Branch Library has a social worker available on a part-time basis to help address patron & parent concerns (who would ask reference librarians about where to buy diapers, etc.)
 - Booth at Shoppingtown Mall?
6. Create a community-wide campaign for awareness and promotion
7. Work with the criminal justice system (CCA, CASA)
8. Work with churches and faith-based organizations
9. Engage the for-profit community, not only to reach out to parents where they are (malls, restaurants), but also to encourage their active involvement

10. Use of commercial/community locations to provide services'
11. Cross-train frontline workers (food pantry, etc.)
12. Emphasize the importance of Quality Stars NY
13. State/Federal/Grant funding opportunities
 - Need for community coordination
 - Corporations may offer grants, bonds or scholarships

Moving Forward

OCL study committee co-chair Paul Predmore asked this question for the committee to consider as it moves forward:

- “What is the model program for our community? If you had unlimited funding, what would you do?”
- “What are those 4 or 5 key elements of Early Childhood Education that we would want to promote?”

Next Meeting

The next OCL study committee meeting will be at 11:30 at ProLiteracy on Tuesday, September 24.