



MEMORANDUM

To: Lee R. Feldman, ICMA-CM, City Manager
From: Thomas Harrington, Intergovernmental Affairs Coordinator
Date: 3/1/2021
Subject: Youth Direct Service Provider Workshop

PlayTennisGainesville (Christopher Champion) – they have programming at Westside Park, TD McPherson, Tom Petty, and Northside. He thinks marketing and getting public aware of many services that can be utilized are very important as a challenge exists in marketing for elementary schools (and any schools for that matter). He also suggested an alignment with all organizations providing services, especially during COVID19.

Meridian Behavioral Health Care (Alan Paulin) – they are the largest provider of mental health services in Alachua and surrounding counties. Outreach, prevention programming, residential, therapy, outpatient and services for children involved with substance abuse are all services they offer. Increase in telehealth has helped to provide services with traditional barriers of transportation. SBAC has funding for therapists and guidance counselors. A shortage of therapists exists so opportunities exist to work with UF with those graduating. How does the word get out effectively and what are barriers to capture times when kids need assistance or at risk to getting in trouble.

In addition, Meridian getting threaded out would be helpful as a lot of times it is not a matter of funding but being threaded out in the community. Getting word out with after school services would be a part of this with their screening and early warnings signs for school engagement with all the players threaded or embedded together. The Mayor mentioned about the School District, City, and County training employees with mental health, especially identifying early warning signs in children. He asked how effective has Meridian been at providing mental health first aid to nonprofit service providers to have those tools as well so they can make referrals to which the representative mentioned moderately, only minimally tapping into the overall market of all those who can benefit from such. If they can increase the percentage of all persons in Alachua County, it would really help at-risk youth. The Mayor noted of finding more ways the City can help facilitate such opportunities.

Cultural Arts Coalition (Nkwanda Jah) – this is a 10 year program and has seen up to 10 science clubs on the Eastside. They are serving 5 science clubs and very soon are planning to roll out a science bus with interactive science stations. They also have a teenage summer ambassadorial program where they learn to take care of the environment – water, air, energy, etc. - where camping and the springs is involved as well.

Take Stock in Children (Au’vian Cherry) – this is part of the Education Foundation of Alachua County. After conducting a needs-based survey, they found the need for microphones/headsets for student laptops or hot spots for internet accessibility. They were able to purchase 70 laptops but the need still persists. Marketing for the lunches at the schools and tutoring services as evident by second quarter failing grades are also important. Teen pregnancy and domestic violence in the home are additional issues. All this organization can do is make referrals. They are also definitely in need of mentors. Commissioner Simmons is interested in getting her into the fold with the efforts of the Digital Access Subcommittee to work with GHA and SBAC.

Greater Duval Neighborhood Association (Andrew Miles) – they have offered youth services since 2016 with the morning focused on 1st-6th grade and evening consisting of a tutoring session (both academic and social skills). They also have a summer program called Summer Sling focused on future planning and career opportunities. Phoenix House comes in and facilitates social skills and anger/frustration coping mechanisms. Money to expand outreach with current capacity to reach 13 kids. A garden club and cooking class are included too. He wants to partner more with police officers to help volunteer with tutoring at the center along with other organizations to partner on the mental health. The Mayor mentioned working with them and the GPD and River Phoenix Center, also allowing them and Alan from Meridian to get together on the mental health front.

Partnership for Strong Families (Cherie Kelly) – this is a library partnership to strengthen programs of children and families. It is targeted specifically in the NE area of Gainesville for those traditionally underserved. They provide an academic enrichment program that consists of homework help, tutoring, along with GSA, Meridian, and Pace Center partnerships. They conduct engagement and wraparound services to parents and families for other needs too. In addition, they offer summer program to prevent summertime learning loss in reading and math with the primary partner being CDHS, along with other partner agencies. Their recent outdoor family movie night is another example of an opportunity which they provided. Children’s Trust provides a grant for early childhood centers in Gainesville. East Gainesville has a need for free and affordable programs. No YMCA or Boys & Girls Club exists in their specific area and they have observed wider gaps due to COVID19, something that will need to be further addressed.

Peaceful Paths (Crystal Sorrow) – they serve survivors of Alachua, Bradford, and Union Counties – children in shelter or outreach services, along with teen violence dating and healthy relationships education in the schools.

Lofton HS GPD SRO (Dontonya Smith) – Gainesville Police Explorers program – occupational scouting for police, fire, and other like military or police adjacent. They offer community service hours – about 175 hours on average. Guest agency speakers are brought in to share about various careers with Junior Police Academy for a week during the summer time. Funding is somewhat self-sufficient.

YMCA (Angela Howard & Tatiana Bastion) – they are about foundations of community, empowering young people, and inspiring action; youth development and healthy living with social responsibility to serve entire community. Their funding ability for youth involves subsidization of their programming via scholarships (one does not have to be a member) for participants. Collaborations and partnerships with many nonprofits are made wherever they can. Their age range is from toddlers to seasonally matured adults (95). Youth sports, STEM programming, and summer programs where mindfulness training, conflict resolution, social/emotional curriculum, self-regulation can be integrated. Staffing assistance and manpower are needed in terms of volunteers. They want to offer outreach but need help from those who can volunteer their time (e.g. NE area mentioned by Ms. Cherry). Regarding transportation, they are looking for 12-15 passenger vans as a donation and volunteers to drive for kids all throughout the area. One of the challenges has been finding someone with a CDL however.

City Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs (Billy Marcantel) – the City offers after school, summer, and holiday break camps. There are affordable opportunities and availability of several different facilities (four different locations for after school and five different locations for summer). Barriers are across the board, one being with summer camps when there is never enough time. Two week training would be helpful to have for summer camps with quality student/staff ratios. Capacity is capped out by their budget however. The Children's Trust will be focusing on expanding capacity this year. Additionally, access to professional support/staff training for cognitive support related to children with various disabilities would help. BOOST does provide some opportunity for trainings to service providers.

CDS Family & Behavioral Health Services (Autumn Santos) – this has been a nonprofit in Alachua County for over the last 50 years. They abide by three pillars – prevention, counseling, and youth shelters at no cost to participants and families. Of particular note, the youth shelter in Gainesville caters to ages from 10-17 who experience tumultuous life circumstances. The program is typically an average of 30 days where youth learn both social and soft skills. Funding is needed for a new youth shelter as the former one was built in the 50's. A legislative capital request to rebuild the shelter was submitted. Another major barrier to services is lack of staffing. Referrals are also missing out due to virtual school.

Girl's Place (Christi Arrington) – they have a great concern for silos with the City, Children's Trust, and the County. City representation is needed on the Youth Advisory Subcommittee on areas of growth and gaps for Children's Trust.

Project YouthBuild (Pastor Gerard Duncan) – this program serves youth ages 16-24 through AmeriCorps as well as volunteering. \$500,000 from Children's Trust for summer programming is not a lot when split between 30-40 programs. Trying to identify ways to work with students from UF to help train them is desirable with the need to tap into the university system and help the university develop in helping out. He would like to see opportunities to utilize their youth (e.g. – painting houses as Habitat and Rebuilding America cannot do it together) so please give him some work orders like pressure washing, hedge trimming, etc. for the youth as other youth will notice and will also be positively impacted.

HEROES Program (Will Halvosa) – this program is for 15-17 year olds. Collaboration is with COG and Children's Trust, the latter who could offset salary where businesses like McDonald's could just chip in \$2 of the overall hourly wage. A concept such as STW's –

Students To Work – would be good and is something that other Children’s Trusts do around the state in the other half of their activities.

Aces in Motion (Addison Staples) – funding is directly related to the staffing. UF and SFC are in our backyard. World experts are available and a certificate program has been mentioned many times before. Only \$500,000 will be distributed for the summer programming is a big disappointment for a lot of providers; easily 50 programs can apply which averages to \$10,000 per each. \$500,000 for all youth summer programming is not sufficient. How much is the City investing, the County, and what local funding is available for programs that serve youth? We need a youth system in the City and right now we do not have one. Better collaboration and systems supporting around the youth-centered organizations is needed. Commissioner Arreola’s intention aligns with the latter sentiment.

Commissioner Arreola – professional development/staff retention is of interest. Where are the BOOST trainings that need more support? Christi Arrington from Girl’s Place said that they have no paid staff but mainly advocacy and supporting each other. He commented that Management needs to re-evaluate youth, along with the City Commission. It is the place for the government to step in via coordinating support. City management and policy should be used to guide that support for resource leveraging in addition to bringing brain power together, all towards the effort of serving young people in Gainesville who comprise a large part of the population. He would like to receive a formal update on the City’s BOOST program from City Management.

CC:

Deborah Bowie, Assistant City Manager
Fred Murry, Assistant City Manager