

MEETING MINUTES
ST. MARY'S COUNTY FAMILY VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY – FEBRUARY 26, 2014
ROOM 14 * LEONARDTOWN, MARYLAND

CALL TO ORDER – The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. (This is a recorded meeting)

ROLL CALL – Members present were Laura Joyce – Chair, Ashley Croyle – Vice-Chair, Judge Karen Abrams, Kimberly Gregory, Sheriff Tim Cameron, Reverend Sherrill Page, Kathleen Lacer, Lanny Lancaster, Buffy Giddens, Darla Hardy, Gary Lynch, Libby Blair, and Ella May Russell.

Members who did not attend and were excused were: Bob Rezza, Karen Ann Talbott, Bella Wright, and Dr. Kathy O'Brien.

Staff members present were Amber Norris – Office Manager for the Department of Aging and Human Services.

OTHER ATTENDEES – Jason DuBard, Kaya Daley, Yvonne Dawkins, and Nicole Clark.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – Motion to approve the November 20, 2013 minutes was made by Judge Abrams and seconded by Ms. Lacer, the motion passed.

STATUS REPORTS –

- Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) – The hospital is in the process of reviewing memorandum of understandings with different agencies in the community. They are still do not have an FNE-P on staff, there are three FNE-A's on staff.
- Child Advocacy – Ms. Russell shared statistics from the Child Advocacy Center – for the month of November there were nineteen cases referred; fifteen of physical abuse and four of sexual abuse. In December there were fourteen cases referred; of nine physical abuse and five of sexual abuse. In January there were nineteen cases referred; nine of physical abuse and ten of sexual abuse. In January, the Child Advocacy Center began alternative response which is determining when a call comes in if the case is referred for investigation or alternative response; twenty-seven cases were investigated and seven were referred to alternative response. Alternative response assesses the family to determine which services are needed and help change patterns.
- Lethality Assessment Program – Ms. Croyle reported with every domestic assault a lethality assessment is completed. Dave Sargent has been scheduled to meet with the law enforcement agencies and Walden Sierra on March 3, 2014.

COMMITTEE UPDATES –

- Multidisciplinary Team – No updates.
- Education and Social Media – Ms. Croyle stated they have met and would like to establish an identity first then move to social media. The *Southern Maryland Woman* magazine has agreed to publish an article about the commission and resources available. The committee will met with

Angel's Watch to determine their role in the community and the resources they provide to include in the article.

- Fatality Review – No fatalities to report. The committee discussed possibly meeting on a regular basis.

DISCUSSION OF OLD BUSINESS –

- The Council reviewed the letter to the Judge Clyburn drafted by Ms. Joyce regarding the concerns with the Court Commissioner system.
- Ms. Joyce is working on completing the 2013 annual report for the council.

DISCUSSION OF NEW BUSINESS –

- Vital Community Connectors (VCC) – represents an informal coalition of over twenty non-profit community organizations in St. Mary's County, and was formed in 2012 to raise awareness about the value that non-profit agencies and organizations provide to our community and its citizens. The VCC hosted a community forum at the Southern Maryland Higher Education Center on February 20, 2014.
- 2014 Legislative Overview – Ms. Joyce distributed information to the council regarding bills that address domestic violence:
 - HB 307 and HB 333 ■ *Peace Orders and Protective Orders – Burden of Proof*
 - A final protective order could be obtained by *proving abuse by preponderance of the evidence* instead of the current heavy burden of *clear and convincing evidence*. The preponderance of the evidence standard is used for the majority of family law cases.
 - HB 309 ■ *Family Law – Domestic Violence – Permanent Protective Orders*
 - Those dealing with extreme domestic violence could obtain a final permanent protective order in cases where the respondent has been convicted of *second degree assault*, the majority of domestically related crimes, not just the crimes currently listed in our Code, and is *sentenced* to five years of imprisonment for the crime, not after *serving* five years for the crime.
 - HB 306 and HB 185 ■ *Criminal Law – Crimes Committed in the Presence of a Minor – Penalties*
 - Criminal defendants who are convicted of domestically related crimes in the presence of children would be eligible for an enhanced penalty.
 - HB 647 ■ *Peace Orders and Protective Orders - Extensions*
 - The terms of a peace order or protective order will remain in place when the court is unable to schedule a hearing on a timely request filed to extend the peace or protective order, even after the original peace or protective order has expired. A hearing on the extension would be held no later than thirty days from the request to extend the order.
 - HB 775 ■ *Domestic Violence – Persons Eligible for Relief*
 - People who have engaged in sexual relations – either consensual or non-consensual – and who have experienced abuse will not be limited to the relief in

the peace order statute, but will be eligible for the relief available in the protective order statute.

ANNOUNCEMENTS –

- Drug Summit – Parents and families are encouraged to attend the upcoming Drug Summit for Parents at the Hollywood Volunteer Fire Department on Friday, March 7, 2014 at 6:30pm. The Drug Summit for Parents is organized by The Department of Aging & Human Services in collaboration with several local partners, which include the St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office (SMCSO), Health Department, Walden Sierra Behavioral Health, and the Board of Education, in order to raise awareness of the drug abuse in St. Mary's County. The Summit will take the form of a panel of local agencies and an open discussion, allowing parents and families to freely communicate with one another about any questions or advice they have.
- Walden Sierra and St. Mary's College are hosting the Walk a Mile in Her Shoes® The international men's march to stop rape, sexual assault & gender violence is a project of Venture Humanity, Inc. a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit corporation. Men literally walk one mile in women's high heeled shoes to protest sexualized violence, educate their communities and raise money for chronically underfunded rape crisis centers, domestic violence shelters and other sexualized violence prevention and recovery services. The event will take place on April 6, 2014 from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., this is a rain or shine event taking place at the St Mary's College of MD Track: 18952 E. Fisher Rd. in St. Mary's City, Maryland.
- St. Mary's Hospital will have an education session on domestic violence awareness focusing on strangulation April 4, 2014 from 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. in Leonardtown, Maryland.
- Mr. DuBard is now handling domestic violence cases and following up on protective orders for Parole and Probation.

NEXT MEETING –

- The next meeting is March 26, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. in Room 14.

ADJOURNMENT –

- Ms. Giddens made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:48 p.m. and Ms. Croyle seconded, the motion passed.