

## **CAN Community Council Meeting - Minutes**

**Monday, September 16, 2019**

**700 Lavaca St, Multipurpose Room B**

**Present:** Aletha Huston, Ara Merjanian, Caroline Reynolds, Ginny Fredricks, Hunter Ellinger, Jenny Jensen, Kirsha Haverlah, Nancy Gilliam, Nora Comstock

**Staff present:** Raul Alvarez, Jelina Tunstill, Carlos Soto

**Guests Present:** Vanessa Perez, Don Tracy

**Call to order and announcements:** Nora called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm a quorum was not present. Members introduced themselves. Kirsha announced that October is domestic violence awareness month and there will be events. There will be a free screening of "Finding Jenn's Voice" on October 10<sup>th</sup>. The Stand up for Safe Families Paddle Parade will be Oct 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Discussion and Possible Action: New Member Recruitment:** Nora discussed the web-links that Hunter created that defined the purpose and work of CAN and the Community Council. Nora explained that right now we are trying to figure out what we are and how we fit, which ties to the Strategic Plan. Ara explained that he is advising the process of updating the strategic plan which will look at membership, fiscal agency, and legal status as an organization, staff capabilities, and how we set priorities. He stated that we are in the information gathering process which includes a survey and interviews with board members. Following that will be the development of future goals and strategies. That information should be pulled together by December. Raul added that November 8<sup>th</sup> CAN will be having a strategic planning retreat that anyone can participate in. Nora stated that the community council has shifted from an application to nomination format. We have sent nomination links to the board. She asked for volunteers to be on the recruiting committee which will include her, Hunter and three other people from the Community Council. Caroline, Nancy, and Ginny volunteered to participate in the Recruitment Committee.

**Communications Committee Report:** Laura wasn't able to make it to the meeting so there was no report for the Communications Committee.

**Executive Director's Report:** Raul shared a graphic he created to explain what CAN does and why CAN does those specific things. Activity types include: collect and report data; engage; and activate. The perception is that CAN just collects and reports data, but the wheelhouse of CAN also includes engaging around the data and report. The feedback we've been getting so far is that we need to try to move out of the informing role into action. The Language Access work is a good example of starting with challenges outlined in the data and moving across the chart toward the action/activation section. In the activate section, CAN has also incorporated deliberative dialogues into the work and supported the community schools collaboration. When we seek or received feedback on CAN, the kind of suggestions we hear are often in conflict (some people say more data/research and some say more action). This graphic helps conceptualize CAN and could help with the strategic plan process. survey that will help decide what we will do in the future. Aletha commented that she wouldn't want CAN to

lose an arena where CAN is perceived to be strong (i.e., the Dashboard) by getting a different organization to do the Dashboard. Aletha added that although CANs partners may be data rich, CANs Dashboard publicizes the data in an accessible way.

Raul mentioned the Executive Director's report included in the agenda packet. CAN will have a State of the Safety Net forum on Safety, Justice and Engagement at 700 Lavaca Street on Wednesday. The last Safety Net Forum will be in October on Education and Economic Opportunity. The purpose of these forums is to get feedback on the dashboard and to identify emerging community issues and challenges. The feedback from these forums will be considered by Dashboard Steering Committee but also inform the strategic plan process. The National Issues Forum just published an issue advisory guide on "preventing mass shootings." He suggested that the Community Council consider hosting a deliberative dialogue on this topic in place of its regular meeting. There was interest from the council to host a deliberative dialogue on preventing mass shootings.

**Community Council Chair's Report:** Nora covered most of what Hunter was planning to talk about in his report with the recruitment. He added that he plans on doing more with the accountability information project.

**Approval of minutes of June 17, 2019 and August 19, 2019:** Quorum was made at 7:12 pm. The June 17, 2019 minutes were approved unanimously on a motion by Ara with a second by Caroline. The August 19, 2019 minutes were approved unanimously on a motion by Kirsha with a second by Hunter.

### **Presentations:**

**Don Tracy, ACC** – In April, ACC started their first program at the Lockhart correctional facility. The manufacturing training program that they do at the Lockhart correctional facility is connected with the national certification for manufacturing. The program prepares the students to sit for the national assessment. When they launched this program they had three goals in mind. They wanted to make sure they connected their students to real living wage paying jobs through their trainings, build a relationship with their students, and identify employment opportunities for when they were released. Don stated that what was most important was building up their students' confidence and ability to navigate the real world. The considerations they use when building programs is literacy, which includes cultural literacy, digital literacy, and technical literacy. Another consideration in making these programs is building resilience and peer networks. Throughout his presentation he told stories about specific students and how they showed resilience and how they built their peer network.

Some of the challenges they experienced through the training program related to being incarcerated was their access to technology. They had to do everything with pencil and paper. They used those challenges as an opportunity to work together. Partners in making this certification program successful were Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, NTC, Texas Workforce Commission, and Rural Capital Area Workforce Solutions. This work is not only about developing workforce skills, but also about helping participants see themselves as valuable. Another important aspect of their reentry program is connecting their students

(pre-release) to resources in their community, cataloging employment/ service opportunities, and being able to coordinate those opportunities for them. They are planning to offer manufacturing, logistics, and welding classes in Lockhart. They also have programs serving Gardner Betts, Hays, and Williamson County Juvenile Justice Centers, Bastrop Correctional Institution, and Williamson County Jail. They are looking to expand to Travis and Kyle State Jails.

**Vanessa Perez, American Youth Works** – American Youthworks (AYW) provides many free services, including their work with youth that are incarcerated. AYW started as a volunteer organization that would work with inmates on literacy. Since then, it has launched into a larger organization with a lot of different services. They serve ages 18-24 primarily opportunity youth. They work through an apprenticeship model which provides vocational training along with GED and diploma programs. There are three different tracks: construction, IT, and healthcare. Their programs include a mix of youth that have and have not been involved in the criminal justice system. Students enroll in AmeriCorps so they can earn a living stipend while they are in AYW courses. They are able to start their vocational training before they receive their high school credentials, and through AmeriCorps they have the opportunity to earn post-secondary scholarships.

Each of their youth are case managed and receive wrap around services. There is also a child care center on site. AYW's goal is to remove as many barriers as possible to get youth to participate in their programming. The curriculum includes mindfulness based focused SEL classes for students. This kind of support helps the students develop their coping skills. Students do transition planning where they consider their options before they leave the program. Options typically include apprenticeship, college, or employment. AYW will have courses available at the Del Valle Jail and they facilitate group work weekly at Gardner Betts. All staff members at AYW are trained in Trauma Informed Care. AYW supports a culture of safety, and they promote self-care for their staff. AYW also provides culturally relevant curriculum. After her presentation Vanessa played a video that highlighted the experience of one of the AYW students involved with the construction program.

**Adjournment:** Hunter adjourned the meeting 8:00 pm

