



CAN Community Council Meeting Minutes, 9/21/2015

Community Council Members in Attendance: Cathy Brandewie, Michelle Casanova, Rolando Delgado, Nancy Gilliam, Anne H. Harutunian, Kirsha Haverlah, Knox Kimberly, Molly Latham, Carmen Luevanos, Ara Merjanian, Blythe Plunkett, Eileen Schrandt, Gloria Souhami, Terry Wilt

Community Council Members unable to attend: Christopher Auruajo, Sylvia Blanco, Crystal Crawford, Rhonda Douglas, Monica Guzman, Vincent Harding, Stacey Mather, Stephan Molina, Laura Poskochil, Clint Smith, Michelle Zadrozny

Staff in Attendance: Mary Dodd

Call to Order and Introductions: Anne H. Harutunian called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m. Members introduced themselves and shared announcements. November 5th summit Children and Youth Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition at IBC Bank on Research Blvd. Gloria Souhami shared the agenda for an upcoming Travis County Underage Drinking Program.

Citizens' Communication: There were no speakers present.

Approval of Minutes from 07/20/15, 08/17/15, and the Special Called meeting on 09/03/15: **Corrections to the Knox Kimberly** made a motion to approve the minutes. Ara Merjanian seconded that motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Updates from Community Council Chair: Anne Harutunian thanked Community Council members who participated in the September 3 interviews of the top candidates for the CAN Executive Director position. The CAN Executive Committee met on September 10th consider input from those interviews. The Board also approved the CAN Executive Committee recommendation to pursue hiring Raul Alvarez as CAN's new Executive Director. The 09/11/15 Board meeting featured a presentation about the newly created Travis County Plan for Substance Use Disorders by Ellen Richards with ATCIC. They discussed the importance of person centered care in providing services. The plan was developed by multiple partners. Oct 22 State of Black Education at ACC Eastview Campus. ATCIC Stepping Up forum on the intersection of mental health and incarceration, Oct 5th the former Secretary of State Robert Rubin will be speaking as part of a live feed

Election of Membership Nominating Committee: According to the CAN bylaws, "A Membership Nominating Committee will be comprised of the Vice Chair, Past Chair, and up to three additional Community Council members selected by the Community Council Chair and approved with a majority vote of a quorum of Community Council members present at a regularly scheduled meeting." Anne Harutunian announced that Community Council Vice Chair, Eileen Schrandt, has agreed to chair the committee. Other members, in addition to Past Chair Kirsha Haverlah, will be Blythe Plunkett, Rolando Delgado, and Terry Wilt. Anne said she would serve as an "ad hoc" member. Gloria Souhami has agreed to serve as an alternate, in the event that other members are not available to attend the meeting. The appointments were approved with a motion by Knox Kimberly that was seconded by Kirsha Haverlah.

Panel discussion of a person-centered approach to serving people with disabilities: Diana Treviño, Director of Agency Services, reviewed the services provided by The Arc of the Capital Area, which was created by parents of children with developmental disabilities. The organization provides family and care-giver support services that include mentoring, advocacy, basic needs, crisis assistance and a guardianship program. Anne Alva Wieding, Director of the Arc of the Arts Studio, also presented. She said the studio matches artists in the community with clients who are interested in the arts. She said the studio is especially helpful for young adults with developmental disabilities who are making the transition from child to adult services and are looking for enrichment opportunities that allow them to develop new skills and talents. Some clients are very talented and are creating art in the community. The Best Single Source Plus program provides financial assistance to families who are threatened with homelessness.

For the Arc, “person-centered” means meeting people where they are and assisting them in developing long-term plans that work best for them. This often involves helping clients make connections to other agencies with whom they want to connect. The Arc considers the “whole family” and the family’s needs. Often caregivers and family members need attention and services. The Arc also provides services “where they are” and in the least restrictive environment, whether that is in the home, school, work, or the Arc of the Arts Studio. Services are individualized and tailored specifically to the needs of caregivers, parents, and children with special needs. Treviño said, “Families choose to come to the Arc when they receive Medicaid Waivers, which lets us know they appreciate our services.” Families and clients are often referred to ATCIC, DADS.DARS, and other agencies. The Arc has funding contracts with the City of Austin, Travis County, United Way, and the State of Texas. They own and operate a charity Bing Hall and have several fundraising events. The Arc is the primary philanthropic agency that benefits from the efforts of the “Texas Cowboys.”

What is needed? More affordable housing. Adequate healthcare through Medicaid and Medicare. Third is better transportation options, especially for people in the rural areas. We have patients who live just outside the access of Capital Metro, and when receiving services through Metro Access, it is difficult to get them where they need to be. Because housing is more and more unaffordable, group homes are moving into the suburbs in more affordable areas. The Arc utilizes volunteers on a regular basis and also for special events.

Kirsha Haverlah introduced Tanya Winters, who works with her at the Travis County Constable Offices and is Chair of the Mayor’s Committee for People with Disabilities and also is on the board of Texas Parent2Parent. Tanya said she first heard of “person centered planning” in 2005 when he Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities received grants to work with parents of people with disabilities and people with disabilities to teach them about self-advocacy and self-determination. Winters said, “They gave us the skills to speak in legislative platforms to advocate for positive change.” She really got into person centered planning when she managed the peer to peer grant for the Arc. They would go into group homes and State Hospitals to teach people how to speak up for themselves and advocate for themselves. She said the Path program is one in which clients are encouraged to identify and name their dreams, prioritize their dreams, create a circle of support to help them achieve their dreams, and then make their dreams come true. She also credited the Institute for [Person-Centered Practices](#) and Shelly Dumas, a trainer at the Institute, with promoting and teaching people and non-profits how to do person centered planning and services. This idea of person-centered care happens way before a person actually gets services. It starts with the family, teachers, friends, and involves how to teach people to make decisions for themselves and how to be self-advocates. They may not have the confidence to speak up for themselves. You can have all the services in the world available to you, but the person with the disability needs to first decide who they want to be and what they want from life. Then they are ready to select the services that can help them achieve their life goals. She said a poor continuum of care with a lack of communication between agencies and service providers creates road blocks. Sometimes each agency has a different plan, and they want people to prove their disability over and over again. She said some people with disabilities do not qualify for services and they fall through the cracks. Ann said Tanya touched on so many things that are so important, most especially the need to be a self-advocate. She said “learned helplessness” is a real problem that is often perpetuated when service providers do not use a truly person-centered approach. She said it is important for families to teach children to make decisions for themselves early on. Panelists also discussed the important of accepting failure. Especially children and people with disabilities, who face many more obstacles than most people, need to understand that failure is an ordinary occurrence on the road to success and cannot be used as an excuse to give up. Building resiliency skills. It was suggested that ECHO’s new [Coordinated Assessment](#) may provide a good model for creating a Continuum of Care that involves multiple service providers.

Sub-Committee Report – Building a Person-Centered Community: Nancy Gilliam and Mary Dodd reviewed the agenda for the event and the structures that will be used to help participants think about what person-centered means. Knox Kimberly suggested that when people consider the “bold ideas” in the 25/10, they make bold, but serious suggestions, and not “cute” ideas with no real substance. The ideas should be bold, but attainable. CAN will hire Norris Deajan to do a video about the summit. Gloria Souhami recommended asking AISD, the city of Austin and Travis County to air the video.

Adjournment: Anne Harutunian, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m. There will be no October meeting. Instead, all Community council members are encouraged to register to attend the “building a Person-Centered

Community summit” from 8 a.m. to noon on October 21st. The final meeting of the year will be held on November 16th. This meeting will focus on de-briefing what was learned at the Summit and discussing the Community Council’s final report to the CAN Board of Directors at the December 11th Board meeting. There will be no December meeting of the Community Council.