

**School Readiness Council
Hamden
Meeting Minutes
September 13, 2005**

Members present: Portia Bonner, Arlene Cassello, Debbie Culligan, LuAnn Gallicchio, Susan Rubino, Lisa Sizer, Ellen Thompson, Alice Torres, Virginia Wright-Younger, Catherine Bradshaw, GMF Consultant, and Karen Piedescalzo, facilitator

1. Sub-Committee Updates

A. Steering Committee – no report

B. Communications and Marketing Committee- The website is almost ready. The website address is www.hamdenkids.org. LuAnn, Ellen and Karen met and suggested some changes to the organization of the resource section and the format of the calendar section. When sending in community events to be displayed in the calendar section, the street address and zip code must be included. We also need to get some frequently asked questions.

A copy of the Back-to-School Address by Commissioner of Education, Betty Sternberg, from August 23, 2005 was distributed. It included the following statements:

“To further the positive achievement trends we are seeing and to reverse the negative ones, know that I will continue to advocate for the programs we know will foster high achievement for *all* our children.

- Every needy 3- and 4-year old in our state must attend a high-quality preschool program.
- The literacy needs of the parents of the youngsters whose achievement we are trying to raise must be addressed.”

C. Program Committee – The Program Committee met immediately before the SRC Meeting to discuss the Baby Welcome Packets. The names of new Hamden baby births will be available through the Mayor’s Office in order to send a packet. Karen will contact Presto Print and Barker Specialty to get prices for magnets. LuAnn and Karen are still researching the best option for a book, keeping in mind the weight for mailing and the cost of choosing a board book. Karen will contact several community agencies for free brochures to be included in the packets. Brochures will be ordered from the Noodle Soup catalog and CT State Library.

D. Research and Development Committee – no report

E. Advocacy Committee – no report

2. Community Reports

- A. School Readiness Program** – The School Readiness Programs will bring in more fees this year than last year due to more two-parent working families. The program will look at Birth to Three referrals and single parent families when accepting children for the programs. The programs are a business and we need to keep the fees balanced. LuAnn tries to be flexible with the parents but there also needs to be policies. Four scholarships have been awarded.
- B. Family Resource Center** – The playgroups have started and they are already planning fall activities. They usually serve about one hundred families. LuAnn will connect with the YMCA After School Program and the Adult Education Program at Church Street School.
- C. PACK** – Pack programs were well attended this summer, in comparison with last year. Summer Reading was a success and families received a PACK bag with a chapter book and school supplies for attending PACK activities and taking part in summer reading. Community messengers are reporting seeing families at the PACK events. The mold problem in the community space has kept programs upstairs in the library. Hopefully it will be resolved soon. The next piece of social marketing is the PACK ID badges that will be distributed soon.
- D. Facilitator** – Workshops have been planned for the fall for both home and center child care providers.

The first workshop will be held on Wednesday, September 21 from 6:30-8:30 pm at Church Street School. Janna Wagner, Program Director, All Our Kin, will present "Fun and Exciting Science Activities for Children".

The next workshop will be held on Monday, October 3 from 6:30-8:30 pm at Church Street School. Jennifer Martin and Kim Sperry, DCF, will present "Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect".

A series of Home Child Care Provider Workshops will be held at Miller Memorial Library. The topics are "Open Your Door to a Career in Child Care" on Wednesday, October 5, "Marketing Your Family Child Care Home" on Wednesday, November 2, and "Running a Quality Family Child Care Home" on Wednesday, December 7. Shari Konn-Andrade (United Way-Infoline) will present this series.

A Child Care Director's Meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 14 at Alice Peck School. They will discuss the upcoming workshops and the child care expo planned for next spring.

- 3. Graustein Report** – The next Regional Learning Circle will be held on Tuesday, September 13 from 5:30-8:30 pm at the GMF Office and the topic will be “Community Organizing and Mobilization”. Hamden may send up to five people to the meeting. Karen Piedescalzo and Susan Rubino will attend.

The Graustein Memorial Fund is revising the self-assessment form to reflect economic and racial equity and parent involvement. The council will complete the assessment at the October meeting.

On Thursday, October 20 GMF will hold Stone Soup at the Farmington Marriott. Registration forms will be sent soon. On Thursday, November 17 GMF will have the last Community Cohort Meeting of the year. The topic will be Sustainability for the Discovery communities.

- 4. Other Business** - ACES has recently opened Parent's Place, a Family Resource Center, in three newly renovated rooms at Mill Road School in North Haven. A playgroup is starting in October. There will be an Open House at the center on October 6 from 3:00-7:30 PM. LuAnn is on the Advisory Committee. The Center will serve families in North Haven and children in ACES Pre-K programs from other towns.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 11, 2005, at 9:00 A.M. at the Government Center Conference Room.