

**School Readiness Council
Hamden
Meeting Minutes
October 10, 2006**

Members present: Portia Bonner, Arlene Cassello, Rebecca Cuevas, LuAnn Gallicchio, Jennifer Heath, Yvonne Jones, Susan Rubino, Ellen Thompson, Virginia Wright-Younger, Catherine Bradshaw, and Karen Piedescalzo, coordinator

- 1. Sub-Committee Updates** - Ellen, LuAnn, Susan and Karen had a meeting with Laura Downs and Carmen Siberon of the Graustein Memorial Fund to discuss where the Hamden Discovery Initiative is going in the future. They talked about how everyone in town should get involved in School Readiness. They need to talk about what we are doing as a community for the children. Technical assistance needs to help guide our group.

The council previously had five committees. After examining the needs of the council, they have been reorganized into four committees. People may be on a committee even if they are not on the School Readiness Council.

- A. Program Committee** – Oversee, develop and promote programs, services and resources for parents, providers and children; implement all provider and parent programs as part of the action plan and strategic plan; develop/coordinate training programs as described in the action plan; create subcommittees as needed - (LuAnn Gallicchio, Karen Piedescalzo, Susan Rubino, Alice Torres, Virginia Wright-Younger)
- B. Communication and Marketing Committee** – Promote the concept of school readiness through the development and distribution of media releases, literature and special events; maintain website; develop targeted mailing lists; alert the community to governmental initiatives; encourage support of early care and education reform on the local, state and national level - (Ellen Thompson, Jennifer Heath, Mary Marrantino)
- C. Parent Engagement Committee** – Recruit, organize and engage parents in initiatives that include advocacy, leadership, improvement of interactions between: parent and child, parent and teacher, parent and community leaders, and parent and parent - (Susan Rubino, Rebecca Cuevas)
- D. Kindergarten Transition Committee** – Bring together children, families and schools to encourage collaborative relationships between: schools and preschools, families and schools, parents and children to promote successful kindergarten transitions; work with the Kindergarten Transition Task Force and the Kindergarten Transition Committee – (Arlene Cassello, LuAnn Gallicchio, Karen Piedescalzo)

2. Community Reports

- A. School Readiness Program** – The School Readiness Program originally began with 15 children at Church Street School. Now there are a total of 48 children at Alice Peck School and Church Street School.

There was a meeting with Val Cappolla (Hamden Public Schools) and Valerie Cancelli (YMCA) to coordinate within Alice Peck School. This includes sharing the gym and playground, scheduling the bookfair, parking policies, etc. There is a real concern each morning and afternoon regarding the front door. There is nobody in the main office during this time and therefore the door is kept unlocked. LuAnn is waiting to receive money from a grant for a buzzer and monitor system. The staff will be able to buzz parents and other legitimate visitors in.

The name "School Readiness Council" does not seem to fit anymore for Hamden's Discovery Initiative. The council needs to think about a new name for the group that is inclusive for all of its members and community agencies. Council members are asked to think about a new name and bring any ideas to the November council meeting.

- B. Family Resource Center** – The playgroups at Church Street School and Alice Peck School are running. A new parent educator has been hired to conduct more parent meetings, to work with families and give them activities to do at home. The playgroups at Church Street School are mixed age groups due to the small space. This fall the Family Resource Center did registration for the playgroups for the first time. The monthly reports are much more detailed now for the Family Resource Center.

The event for the Hispanic PEP Program will take place this fall. Laura Downs and Carmen Siberon advised the SRC to conduct more PEP Programs for parent engagement and to continue to work with this group in order to keep them involved in the community. The SRC should look at the Children's Trust Fund and United Way for more financial support.

- C. Hamden Youth Services** – Susan Rubino reported that they did not get the grant that was mentioned at the earlier meeting. It was for programming. Their pre school currently has 34 children and 56 in after school. The Youth Center moved to the old middle school and the boxing program will move there soon as well. They are trying to hire a new outreach counselor.

Susan secured council membership from Parks/Recreation and the Chamber. They did not attend the SRC Meeting today but are expected to attend in the future.

3. **Graustein Report** – The Stone Soup Conference will be held on Tuesday, October 24. Several council members will attend. The annual Community Assessment and Planning Tool is due on Friday, December 15. Council members will be given a copy at the November meeting and it will be completed at the December meeting.
4. **Other Business** – It looks like Hamden will not be a part of the United Way's efforts to work with programs who's NAEYC Accreditation comes due in 2007 because there are no Hamden programs with that due date. If UW continues the program, then some Hamden centers would be able to participate if their due date falls in 2008 or 2009.

Books are still available for centers and can be distributed from Alice Peck School. LuAnn or Ellen must have a record of the number of books taken and the center/program that received them.

On Wednesday, October 25, former Connecticut Education Commissioner Theodore S. Sergi will be the featured speaker at a forum on "Advancing Literacy: What Will It Take, and What Can You Do?" sponsored by the Greater New Haven Literacy Coalition. The forum will be held in the conference room, 27th floor, Bank of America, 157 Church St., New Haven, from 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm. For more information, contact Tomas Miranda at 203-530-6620 or by email at tomastmir181@aol.com or log onto the organization's website at www.gnhlc.org.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 14, 2006, at 9:00 A.M. at Alice Peck School.