



JJDC Quarterly Inter-Agency Meeting

Minutes

October 12, 2023

Location: Rustin Conference Center (Entrance 1)

2085 Rustin Ave., Riverside, CA 92507

IN ATTENDANCE (In-Person): Christopher Collopy, Laurel Cook, Emily Headlee, Pam Torres, Natasha Dunlap, Elisa Judy, Jennifer Kopfler, Deanna McCarty, Cynthia Magill, Joelle Moore, Paul Parker, Charles Trembley, Norma Biegel, Lynette Jones, Shannon Crosby, Joseph Doty, Janine Moore, Mike Brinkman, Lori Wilson, Brandon Burns

ABSENT: Micheal Malsed (excused)

GUEST: Max Miner, Ryan Brown

Applicants: Amanda Wade

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

- a. With the presence of the quorum, the meeting was initiated at 9:40 am.
- b. Commissioner Laurel Cook led the pledge of allegiance.

2. Welcome / Introductions / Announcements

- a. All participants were welcomed by Commission Chair Christopher Collopy, and given the opportunity to introduce themselves (by name and title).
- b. Chair Collopy briefly introduced Ms. Amanda Wade, who is a prospective commissioner attending her first of two required meetings.
 - i. Ms. Wade shared that she is currently an administrator at a continuation high school in Fontana, where she has been working for six years. Additionally, she is conducting a dissertation at UCLA and working on aftercare programs for justice-involved youth in the public education setting.

3. Riverside County Probation - Chief Deputy Probation Officers (CDPO) Elisa Judy

- a. Overview / Highlights
 - i. CDPO Judy briefly mentioned that Probation's strategic plan and the different projects that the department is prioritizing can be accessed on our website.
 - ii. In terms of field services, CDPO Judy discussed the possibility of Latoya Thomas joining the next meeting to talk about the community-led diversion initiatives and the successes of our SSTS program. The commission agreed that having Latoya Thomas in attendance would be great.
 - iii. CDPO Judy expressed her enthusiasm for the upcoming JJCC meeting in November and hopes to have a full board, including representatives from District 3 and District 5, as well as a substance abuse representative.
 - iv. Moreover, Probation is considering the JJCC as a larger model to impact the community as a whole, particularly in terms of at-risk youth and their main model. Advertising will also play a significant role in promoting eligible services to the public.
 - v. In addition, Probation aims to provide information on their website that anyone can access regarding the programs and services funded by the JJCC. Moreover, Probation is exploring ways to incorporate a feature on their website that will facilitate the funding process for agencies in need. This will enable these agencies to effectively communicate their requirements and fulfill the community's needs.

4. Probation Report: Special Services Division - Division Director, Shannon Crosby

- a. Youth Report:
 - i. There are currently 36 youth in foster care. Out of these 36, 32 are in an STRTP placement, one is in a foster family agency placement, and three are in emergency placement with a relative while waiting for resource family approval. Additionally, two youth are placed in county, and there are 24 dual status youths with DPSS as the lead agency. There are also 27 non minor dependents in extended foster care.
 - ii. During a recent strategic planning session with DPSS and Probation, they discussed the challenges of placing kids in county and the limited availability of beds. They also talked about streamlining the support letter committee to increase agency participation and open more programs in Riverside County. This is an ongoing effort with Probation and DPSS.
 - iii. CDPO Judy suggested that it could be beneficial for the JJCC and its subgroups to actively engage in recruiting and raising awareness about the necessity for additional group homes. Furthermore, she shared with the group that there is a local individual who has shown interest in supporting the youth in our county. She also emphasized the importance of exploring how the JJCC can contribute to the betterment of the entire community.
 - iv. The topic of becoming a resource family was briefly touched upon, with Director Kopfler mentioning that she could provide the required information if you reach out to her.
 - v. Furthermore, Director Crosby highlighted that efforts that are underway to compile the annual placement report. The aim is to utilize the data obtained from the client management system to make informed decisions, identify existing gaps, and strive for improvement.



5. Community Care Licensing (CCL) Licensing Program Manager, Natasha Dunlap

- a. Updates:
 - i. CCL is currently looking to hire five licensing program analysts. These positions are part of a group of 24 analysts. Interviews are being conducted and the goal is to fill these positions within the next two months. The qualifications required for this role and the salary range were also discussed.
 - ii. Meanwhile, some of CCL's Licensing Program Analysts (LPAs) are volunteering to work extra hours to help with the backlog of complaints and annual inspections.
 - iii. Furthermore, CCL addressed the backlog of complaints and the procedures for managing them. They have a dedicated complaint unit that prioritizes resolving issues related to physical and mental abuse (complaints one and two) as well as violations of personal rights (complaints three and four), which may include concerns about food and clothing.
 - iv. Additionally, the commission has requested that the average number of complaints received by CCL annually, categorized by complaint type, be presented during quarterly meetings.

6. Riverside County Probation (Institutions) - Chief Deputy Probation Officers (CDPO) Joe Doty

- a. Current Population:
 - i. As of October 10th, there was a total of 165 youth in custody, spread across our three institutions.
 - ii. Indio Juvenile Hall currently houses 47 male youth, including two who have returned from the DJJ. One of the original three DJJ youth has been released and is being monitored for community adjustment, while the other two are awaiting release based on a court order. Out of the total youth population, 38 are undergoing court proceedings, 2 are serving Ricardo M. time, 4 are awaiting placement, 1 is deemed unfit, and 2 are PTS youth.
 - iii. Further discussed, the DJJ youth released back to the community on a supervision. The treatment plan when DJJ youth leave the facility, the cut off time, or benchmark they are kept on supervision before the max out age, next stages, court orders and recommendations
 - iv. Additionally, CPDO Doty restated details about the young woman who has been in custody for an extended period, the court's directive for the Pathways step-down program, and the positive outcome of her integration into the community. Additionally, her age and the duration of her total confinement were also addressed during the discussion.
 - v. Southwest Juvenile Hall has 47 youth, with 41 males and 6 females. As discussed previously, the detention females were moved to Southwest Juvenile Hall. Of the 47 youth, 34 are going through the court process, 9 are pending placement, 3 are serving Ricardo M. time, and 1 is unfit.
 - vi. The YTEC treatment program and the PTS program together have a total of 71 youth participants. The YTEC treatment program currently has 40 participants, showing a slight increase in numbers.
 - vii. Among the 40 participants, there are 35 males and 5 females. However, due to limited space, there is a waitlist for the program, with 14 individuals currently on it. Out of the 14, 13 are males, and only 5 additional males can be accommodated at this time. To prevent bottlenecks, the youth are being admitted to the program gradually, resulting in an average wait time of 30 to 45 days. Efforts are being made to reduce this wait time to under 30 days.
 - viii. Currently, Pathways to Success (PTS) has a total of 31 young individuals, with the majority being male (30) and only one female. However, the female youth has been assigned to the step down program within PTS and is currently residing with the YTEC treatment females. She is allowed to leave the premises as per a court order and is participating in equine therapy sessions and community activities.
 - ix. Additionally, this particular female has been in custody for a significant period of time. She committed her crime when she was young and had previously spent time at DJJ before returning to PTS. Probation is making significant efforts to support her reintegration into the community. As part of this process, they have taken her to the bank and organized outings to help her readjust to life outside the facility.
- b. Significant Events / Critical Incidents: (September)
 - i. In September, there was a total of 17 fights, which is around the average for a month. However, when compared to the past six months, it was actually the lowest. Fights can also sometimes be triggered by the youth's community gang involvement. Despite this, there were no major injuries or critical incidents resulting from the fights.
 - ii. On a separate note, there was one attempted suicide where a youth tied a sweatshirt around their neck. Although it was a serious situation, staff was able to intervene quickly and the youth did not suffer any harm.
- c. Staffing / Highlights / Updates:
 - i. As mentioned in our previous meeting, probation is currently facing a shortage of staff. To address this issue, they are actively working on hiring new correctional officers. Currently, there are 24 new officers undergoing training in the Probation Corrections Core Class. They are expected to complete the course next week, and their graduation is scheduled for October 19. This will result in the addition of 24 trained staff members to the 3 facilities.
 - ii. Additionally, Probation has been successful in meeting our hiring targets of six PCO's a month for the past three months and will continue to strive towards bringing in the necessary new staff.



- iii. In the course of the discussion, CDPO Doty placed significant emphasis on the crucial role of offering thorough training to our newly hired personnel. He has been proactively seeking guidance from experts in the field within our department, as well as holding discussions with the union, all with the aim of enhancing Probation's training resources and techniques. These efforts have been a primary priority in recent months, and the department is steadfast in its commitment to consistently enhancing their training programs.
- iv. In answer to the commissioner's questions, CPDO Doty explained the training plan for 30, 60, and 90 days, the longer staff orientation period of 40 to 80 hours, the revised prerequisites for the PCO's job description, and it was mentioned that the Institutions were offering tours to applicants during the background process to provide them with a clearer understanding of what they can expect. Furthermore, the conversation touched upon the youth involved in the Moving Mountains program.
- v. Probation organized a rapid improvement event to assess the target state for institutions. The primary objective was to ascertain the optimal site for accommodating diverse populations across the three facilities, guaranteeing their access to essential services and resolving concerns such as wait-listing. One area of concern was whether there existed a more favorable placement for YTEC and Pathways youth in order to enhance capacity.
- vi. Furthermore, the existing Pathways to Success program is limited to only two units, which hinders the ability for youth to progress in a structured manner and earn additional privileges as they transition through the program. In order to address this issue, Probation has recognized the need for smaller units that will allow for a phased approach. They have devised a plan that involves creating three 10-bed units for PTS and their initial group, followed by a 20-bed step down unit and a transitional living unit.
- vii. Probation will provide more details about the plan once they receive approval from various agencies to proceed. Currently, they are engaging in internal discussions with representatives from each facility and intend to consult with RCOE, correctional health, and behavioral health to ensure that the staffing plan can be accommodated.
- viii. Moreover, it was mentioned that probation has partnered and supported the College of the Desert and Norco City College. These institutions have been granted funds by the state to support the Underground Scholars program. As a result, all three institution sites will receive resources and funding to provide much-needed support to the youth. Additionally, noted being an Underground Scholar requires individuals to have been previously incarcerated, as a prerequisite.
- ix. Subsequent dialogue revolved around the topic of credible messengers and the general changes made by probation to make it easier for them to enter into the intuitions and work with the youth.
- x. Lastly, Chair Collopy inquired about the progress of the expansion plans at YTEC. CPDO Doty mentioned that the plans are still moving forward, but we are currently awaiting approval from the state. Despite this, Probation is hopeful to begin construction in a year's time as they already have the designs prepared. Probation is also seeking additional funding from the county to make further enhancements, such as adding an HVAC system to the classroom for activities like a wood shop. Chair Collopy suggested reviewing the plans at the next regular quarterly meeting, to which CPDO Doty agreed to bring them for the commission to see.

7. Riverside County Office of Education – Dr. Deanna McCarty

a. Highlights / Updates:

- i. In terms of attendance, the schools have not experienced a significant increase. The total number of students is currently at 95, with IJH having 32 and SW 38 in YTEC having 29.
- ii. These numbers indicate that the students currently attending school are consistent and not graduates. It is important to note that probation is currently having RCOE deal with graduates due to the limited number of students attending school. It is worth mentioning that the students are actually coming to school, and RCOE has consistently seen numbers around 95, with a peak of 103 in one of the weeks.
- iii. RCOE has experienced a staffing impact as two teachers left our team in Indio, resulting in a complete absence of teachers. In response, RCOE's principal stepped in to teach.
- iv. Furthermore, RCOE has a group of substitute teachers who have been collaborating with them for many years. Moreover, one of the teachers from another RCOE site has taken on the role of mentoring these substitutes, and they are receiving extra compensation for their efforts.
- v. They have conducted interviews and successfully hired someone for one of the vacant positions. However, this individual will be filling a different role temporarily until the original position is filled. This situation poses a challenge for us as we move forward.
- vi. In terms of education, there is currently Test Data available that cannot be shared in detail. However, it is worth mentioning that there has been an improvement in scores compared to last year's cast testing. This is significant for RCOE as it is challenging to observe any substantial growth within an average time frame of 31 days. Therefore, they are genuinely excited about this progress.
- vii. At present, there is a significant number of students who are actively participating in dual enrollment classes. The ongoing programs include Cybersecurity and ethnic studies in collaboration with UCR, with a total of 15 students enrolled in court schools. It is noteworthy that all of these students are successfully passing their courses.



- viii. RCOE has implemented various programming at different sites to facilitate connections between individuals, mentors, and students while providing ongoing support. One such program is the TRLA program offered through Lattimore, which incorporates a financial literacy components. This program aims to equip students with the necessary knowledge to avoid financial setbacks after leaving the program. Additionally, the program will also work with Pathways students, recognizing the significance of financial education in areas such as obtaining car loans and maintaining good credit scores.
 - ix. Moreover, subcommittees are actively exploring ways to incorporate services that support individuals on longer placements, including cooking skills, literacy, and finding suitable housing. These efforts aim to streamline the contracts process and enhance the overall support provided to students.
 - x. The tribal alliance was recently presented with RCOE's programs in order to increase awareness among people. This presentation aimed to provide outside agencies with a clearer understanding of the available programs. RCOE discovered that Native American and English learner youth in custody were not experiencing significant growth. Therefore, RCOE is actively seeking ways to establish connections and support these individuals in the future.
 - xi. On the 17th, RCOE will be hosting the Interagency symposium titled "Unmasking the Opioid Crisis: Raising Awareness for the Well-Being and Recovery of Families and Communities." RCOE will serve as the Co-chair for this event, which will be conducted virtually. By attending, participants will have the opportunity to earn CEU's.
 - xii. Currently, RCOE is in the midst of their accreditation process. Every six years, they undergo accreditation, and all of their programs are currently undergoing this process simultaneously. In addition to that, they are also undergoing federal program monitoring. This is a particularly busy period for RCOE as they thoroughly assess systems, procedures, and overall functionality.
 - xiii. The week of the 25th RCOE will have their court school walk visits. They'll be at the site, and if you would like to attend the meeting just let Ms. McCarty know. There will be a meeting open to community partners and individuals, where they will discuss their collaboration with partners. You are invited to attend and listen.
- b. Dr. McCarty addressed various subjects raised by the commission in relation to the following matters:
- i. Chair Collopy updated Dr. McCarty about the Commission's actions to tackle school violence in Riverside County. Commissioner Malsed is currently analyzing data from certain districts in the county where violence has been a recurring issue. The aim is to identify the underlying causes and consider collaborating with other agencies to implement preventive measures. While Commissioner Malsed is not here today, he may have inquiries for RCOE in January.
 - ii. Dr. McCarty highlighted the county's regular child welfare attendance meetings, where incidents in different school districts are discussed. It is crucial to understand that the definition of violence may differ among schools, as each district has the authority to establish its own requirements. Furthermore, she mentioned that the county does offer an extensive Restorative Justice Practices Training Series.
 - iii. McCarty pointed out the importance of differentiating between schools being aware of school violence and schools actually having the data on school violence. By examining the information provided to the State, so they can identify patterns and trends. She emphasized the need to recognize the limitations of any system. She also mentioned that private schools and homeschooling are registered with the state instead of the county, as charter schools are not overseen by the county.
 - iv. Moreover, the issue of school attendance following the COVID-19 pandemic was also discussed. Although attendance has not completely returned to pre-pandemic levels, the decline is not as drastic as it was during the immediate aftermath of the pandemic. This trend can be observed statewide. She mentioned that the upcoming attendance day report will give a better understanding of the situation.

8. Moving Mountains Unlimited - Max Miner, CEO & Founder, Ryan Brown, COO & Co-Founder

- a. "Beyond the Walls" Presentation:
 - i. Mr. Miner and Mr. Brown delivered a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation, offering a detailed introduction and background of Moving Mountains Unlimited. This non-profit organization is dedicated to bringing positive change to the lives of young individuals within the juvenile justice system. Presently, Moving Mountains has successfully implemented their program within Indio juvenile hall.
- b. Program Highlights:
 - i. Moving Mountains Unlimited focuses on creating positive cultures by providing intensive mentorship, leadership training, and tool development. They believe in examining and adopting a positive mindset and values to establish new guiding principles.
 - ii. The program aims to enhance current treatment and remediation methods by emphasizing competency development. They strive to equip individuals with transferable skills that directly contribute to the success and opportunities of communities and youth.
 - iii. Through an individualized approach and dedicated attention, Moving Mountains Unlimited establishes connections that many youth have never experienced before. These connections play a crucial role in the rehabilitation process.



- iv. By sharing a common background and speaking the same language, Moving Mountains Unlimited can establish powerful and transformative personal relationships. These relationships are instrumental in supporting progress at the individual, family, and community levels.
- v. In closing, Mr. Miner and Mr. Brown actively engaged with the participants by responding to their comments and questions, while also encouraging them to get in touch for more information on Moving Mountains Unlimited or any queries they had regarding the program.

9. County Counsel - Emily Headlee

- a. There are no updates or developments to report at this time.

10. Operation Safe House, Inc. - Norma Biegel

- a. Overview/Updates:
 - i. Operation SafeHouse in Riverside is hosting an open house on October 19th from 5:00pm to 7:30pm. Their Desert program will also have an open house on October 26th at the same time. These open houses are mainly for agencies, as Operation SafeHouse wants to raise awareness about their programs.
 - ii. In addition, Operation SafeHouse is excited to announce the launch of their coffee with a cop initiative in the desert. The Riverside County Sheriff's Department Safe House and Palms Desert Citizens Control will be at the McDonald's in Palm Desert for two hours, interacting with the community. Other upcoming events include the "Stuff the Bus" campaign at the Target store in Palm Desert, organized by Operation SafeHouse. There will also be an art show at the desert location of Operation SafeHouse this weekend, starting at 1:00pm and ending at 5:00pm. If you're interested in learning more about Operation SafeHouse events and services, flyers are available.
 - iii. Ms. Biegel presented a captivating narrative about a young individual hailing from another county. This individual had been living on the streets for a considerable period of time. She pointed out that the director of Operation SafeHouse driven by a strong sense of obligation to help made the decision to extend assistance and provide shelter to her during the night.
 - iv. Ms. Biegel provided a detailed account of the care they provided to the youth while she was under their supervision. She also described the events that unfolded and the level of care required for that particular youth, from the moment she arrived in the middle of the night until she was placed.
 - v. Ms. Biegel emphasized that Operation SafeHouse made a life-saving difference in this case. By providing a safe environment and preventing the youth from being on the streets, they were able to ensure her well-being until she could be placed. To the staff, the effort was completely worthwhile because the girl is now safe.
 - vi. Staffing: Operation SafeHouse is currently facing the same challenges as other organizations when it comes to hiring. Being open 24 hours a day poses difficulties, and unfortunately, their grants do not increase in line with the rising minimum wage or any other factors. Hence, we are encountering the same issues that many others are experiencing.

11. Office of the Public Defender - Attorney Joelle Moore

- a. Updates / Overview / Highlights:
 - i. The Riverside County Public Defender's office is in discussions about implementing a diversion program led by the community. They are closely evaluating the San Diego model, which is offered by the National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC). However, Riverside County does not have the same umbrella organization as San Diego County, resulting in the unavailability of those services. Hence, they are exploring various alternative options.
 - ii. The Spark program is experiencing continuous growth and success. The number of referrals has seen a significant increase compared to last year, with a total of 361 referrals so far this year. These referrals encompass a wide range of services, such as adding cases to the calendar to recall warrants, assisting with the school discipline process, making placement changes, and ensuring the IEP services are in place. The awareness of available services to assist families has grown, leading to a rise in demand from community partners for Spark Services.
 - iii. The DA's office has formed a new collaboration with the Thrive program through Oak Grove. They will be conducting presentations for the youth on topics that the youth themselves have chosen and expressed interest in. The programming will be tailored accordingly to meet their needs and preferences.
 - iv. In addition, they recently had a meeting with Alvord Unified School District to explore a potential partnership. The aim is to facilitate easier access to resources for the youth and potentially have members of the Spark team present at the district on certain occasions throughout the month. The Spark program is also exploring similar connections with other districts in high-need areas within the county.
 - v. Furthermore, they are currently undergoing a data transformation, with both the probation and DA's office exploring various methods to enhance their data collection and management systems. This will enable them to gain a comprehensive understanding of the situation and make informed decisions based on data when it comes to service provision, locations served, and the resulting outcomes.

12. Juvenile Defense Panel (JDP) - Attorney, Brandon Burns

- a. Updates / Highlights:



- i. Juvenile Defense Panel has recently recruited three social workers to evaluate learning assistance. Additionally, they've hired an educational advocate to support them in addressing the educational aspects mentioned by Miss Morgan. This includes enrolling children in schools and providing assistance in various areas. Furthermore, one of their attorneys is involved in running the Family Preservation Court on Thursday mornings or afternoons. Furthermore, they have four upcoming graduations this week and potentially one more in the future. Overall, these efforts have been successful.
- ii. Lastly, Mr. Burns concluded by stating that those were the latest updates from the Juvenile Defense Panel and they are open to addressing any further inquiries.
- iii. Ms. McCarty from RCOE recommended that the educational representative of the Juvenile Justice Panel should establish contact with them in order to align with RCOE's educational representative for better coordination and tracking. This will also enable RCOE to provide assistance in case of any resistance. Furthermore, an introduction between the two individuals can be arranged.
- iv. In response to the question about the Family Preservation Court, Mr. Burns explained that it is a rehabilitation program for parents who have struggled with drug addiction or similar issues. It primarily focuses on parents whose children have been removed from their care, aiming to help them rehabilitate and get back on track. He also clarified that Family Reunification services are distinct from Family Preservation, as the latter is a voluntary court process that families choose to participate in to benefit themselves on the dependency side of the court.
- v. The commission asked about the number of families that go through Family Preservation Court in a year or month. Mr. Burns mentioned that currently there might be eight or nine families in the court, but he is uncertain about their duration of attendance. However, he can speak with the attorney who manages the court to gather more accurate information. Furthermore, Mr. Burns expressed uncertainty regarding the confidentiality aspect if the commission wishes to visit the family preservation court, but he promised to inquire and provide an update to the commission.

13. Kids in Conflict (KIK) – Executive Director, Lynette Jones

a. Updates / Highlights:

- i. Since January, KIK has received 1330 referrals. However, as of the last reporting period, they have provided services to 1059 youth. Between the last reporting period and today, they have serviced 144 new youth and provided a total of 6857 service hours with their staff of five. In the last reporting period alone, they provided 840 hours of service. Additionally, 473 youth successfully completed the programs since the last time they were here, resulting in a success rate of 97.5%.
- ii. KIK has collaborated with the UCC Urban Conservation Corps to offer employment opportunities to young individuals aged 16 to 24, regardless of their school credit status. Moreover, even those on probation or parole can join UCC and receive training for fire camp. This sets them apart from the California Job Corps
- iii. Ms. Jones mentioned that KIK plans to explore potential partnerships with a couple of community-based organizations. The aim is to enable the youth on the Eastern end to access these organizations' centers or locations, where they can receive additional mentoring and support for themselves and their families in that area.
- iv. KIK recently participated in a training conference in Sacramento for their capacity building program called the KIK Champ Program. The conference was attended by 500 young individuals, including black, brown, and Native American youth. One of the most impressive moments was when a 15-year-old youth expressed that as nonprofits, everyone is always striving to be the best, but they realized that all the organizations present were united in their goal to help them fight the problem. This statement had a significant impact.
- v. KIK also brought one of their youth to Sacramento, and plans to bring 25 more in the future, at their own expense, to visit the capital. The purpose of this is to encourage discussions about change in their communities and what improvements they would like to see.
- vi. Additionally, KIK is actively promoting cultural awareness. Instead of clapping, they have adopted the practice of saying "oh-oh" when children do something good, as a way to respect Native American ancestors. This is just one example of how KIK is incorporating various cultural practices to educate and raise awareness among young people.
- vii. Their holiday preparations are in progress. They were able to provide goodie bags to the youth during Halloween and are hopeful to do the same for the youth in Detention, YTEC, and Pathways this upcoming holiday.
- viii. KIK continues to collaborate with the young lady in Pathways. They are present every Friday and have been doing so for the past two years. Additionally, they are also working with YTEC youth, including the young lady from Pathways. Recently, they made smoothies two weeks ago and potato pancakes last week, incorporating the young lady's cultural influence. The youth had a great time and enjoyed learning how to make potato pancakes.
- ix. KIK has recently opened a new location at the Learning Center in Riverside's Jurupa area. In addition to in-person classes at the Jurupa Center and the Youth Opportunity Center, they also offer a hybrid learning option.



- x. The KIK champ program is a notable feature, functioning as both an incentive-based program and a trauma healing center. It focuses on teaching leadership skills and addressing past traumas, while also providing access to mental health services. This initiative aims to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health among youth, helping them recognize and cope with their traumas. As a reward for completing the 12 sessions, participants receive a \$350 stipend.
- xi. Lastly, the Annual toy drive organized by KIK is scheduled for December 23rd, running from 10:00am to 2:00 PM. Information regarding the event will be shared via email by Ms. Jones to the group. In the previous year, they distributed 2500 toys, and this time they aim to double that number through partnerships. Ms. Jones emphasized that everyone is welcome to join, and families are encouraged to attend, gather toys, and actively take part in the event.

14. Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) – Director of Public Social Services, Jennifer Kopfler

a. Updates:

- i. Every year, they have what they refer to as March Madness, during which they receive a surge of referrals. Similarly, in September, there is always an increase in calls when children return to school. They currently have around 5800 calls into the hotline, with approximately 3800 of them leading to in-person investigations.
- ii. Prevention services has been expanded. This expansion allows DPSS to provide support to individuals with risk factors and in need of services without the individuals having to engage with the child welfare service, and it also reduces the need for extensive in-person response investigations.
- iii. In order to address their attrition, they are currently hiring individuals to fill vacant positions. After several years, they have finally reached a point where they are nearly at maximum capacity with full-time equivalent positions, resulting in a decrease in caseloads.
- iv. The organization's main challenge is finding suitable placements for children with behavioral and mental health issues. Currently, they have around 5,200 dependent youth, with approximately 3,400 of them placed in out-of-home facilities. However, they are still struggling to find appropriate placements for those teenagers.
- v. Over the past year and a half, they have been averaging about 33 teens, but in the last six months, the number has increased to an average of 43. To address this issue, they have acquired a property formally known as ChildHelp in Beaumont and gradually relocated some of the teens with behavioral challenges and specialized needs to the newly established Harmony Haven campus.
- vi. Starting today, the third cottage will be opened, enabling them to accommodate additional youth from the hotels on campus. To meet the demand for 24-hour supervision at Harmony Haven, a substantial increase in staffing was necessary. As a result, approximately 80 new staff members have been recruited.
- vii. DPSS has formed partnerships with various service providers to align with an integrated services model. They are currently exploring options to bring on board on-site transitional program services to the campus. In their efforts to enhance services, DPSS has engaged in discussions with Mr. Max Miner from Moving Mountains to explore possibilities. Mr. Miner and Ryan Brown have been in contact with their contracts department, and DPSS is optimistic about proceeding with the utilization of their services.
- viii. Ms. Kofler shared information regarding the commission's inquiries, covering topics such as the training for DPSS staff, the duration of stay for unplaced youth, DPSS's focus on out of home placements, and the process of determining the most suitable level of care and services for youth.
- ix. In addition, DPSS highlighted their commitment to assisting youth who undergo interviews for different placement options, including STRTPs, higher levels of care, and small family homes. They emphasized the significance of working with these individuals who may not be accepted, and helping them cultivate positive ways of engaging with others.
- x. The final topic of discussion revolved around the responsibility for managing dual status cases, with the observation that it could be assigned to either dependency or 600 as the lead.

15. Meeting adjourned at 11:42 am

16. Next Meeting:

Date: January 11, 2024

Time: 9:30 am

Location: Rustin Conference Center (Entrance 1) Room TBD
2085 Rustin Ave., Riverside, CA 92507