Following are the summary minutes from the Doña Ana County Juvenile Justice Continuum Board meeting held on Wednesday, February 09, 2022, at 12:00 p.m., La Vida Project, 118 S. Main St., Las Cruces, NM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Honorable Samantha Madrid, Chair (DAC Division I)
Brian Kavanaugh (Families & Youth, Inc.)
Amy Himelright (Proxy, LCPS)
Dominique Gomez (Proxy, Mesilla Valley Hospital)
Tessa Abeyta-Stuve (Proxy, CLC Mayor’s Office)
Sylvia Herrera (Drug Court 3rd Judicial District Court)
Brandon Morales (Proxy, CYFD-JJS)
Robert Nuñez, (City of Las Cruces)
Rory Rank (Retiree)
Marianne Hernandez (CYFD-PS)

ABSENT: Chief Miguel Dominguez (LCPD)
Susana Chaparro (DAC Board of Commissioners)
Lindsay McDonnel-Benatar (Public Defenders Depart)
Bill Rothengass (Retiree)
Chief Vanessa Ordoñez (Anthony NM Police)
Steve Nance (Doña Ana Community College)

OTHERS PRESENT: Matthew “Mateo” Ortega (Proxy, Families & Youth, Inc.)
Aralis Chacon (FYI)
Manuel Arellano (L.C.S.C.A.)
Diego Vallejo (FYI)
Alyssa Fierro (FYI)
Jolene Martinez (FYI)

STAFF PRESENT: Sofia Hughes (Case Manager/Youth Services)
Martha Moreno (Recording Secretary)
Thomas Edmonds (JCP)

1. CALL TO ORDER
The meeting was called to order at 12:07 p.m. by Ms. Madrid and recognized the meeting as having a legal quorum.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
Board members, staff and guest introduced themselves.

4. CONFLICT OF INTEREST
No conflict of interest

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA
Ms. Abeyta-Stuve moved to approve agenda as presented, seconded by Ms. Hernandez. Motion carried unanimously.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

6.1. Doña Ana County Juvenile Justice Continuum Board Meeting Minutes for December 15, 2021

Mr. Kavanaugh stated he has a correction, on page 2, line 45, strike out “not necessary the existing but” and add “and” after the word funds.

Mr. Nuñez moved to approve minutes for 12/15/21 as corrected, seconded by Ms. Abeyta-Stuve. Motion carried unanimously.

7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Rank said New Mexico Ranks 49th in Child Well-Being. Look at publication “America’s Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2021”.

Mr. Rank said there’s a bill before the state legislation that talks about CYFD getting funds for children in our county. I believe there should be language from our contractors; FYI, JARC, etc. that we have programs in place, talk to your legislators. Hate to see that all the funding goes to CYFD.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1. Continuum Board Membership Recruitment (Action) – Manuel Arellano

Mr. Rank shared a mission statement that was submitted by Mr. Arellano. He’s involved with the game CHESS. Great way in engaging youth; what is their next move, strategize, think through problems, etc.

Mr. Arellano said he founded the Las Cruces Scholastic Chess Association over 8 years ago. It is free of charge and based on education. Averaging 20 students per class. Provide two (2) tournaments per year; it’s a fun environment, it’s beginners against beginners.

Mr. Nuñez moved to approve Mr. Manuel Arellano as Board Member, seconded by Mr. Rank. Motion carried unanimously.

8.2. Continuum Youth Board Membership Recruitment (Action) – Alyssa Fierro and Diego Vallejo

Alyssa Fierro said I was placed in the system at a young age, my main thing in life is to help others, give my opinion, my voice, and choices, at my job. Make changes in positive ways.

Ms. Abeyta-Stuve moved to approve Alyssa Fierro as Youth Board Member, seconded by Ms. Gomez. Motion carried unanimously.
Diego Vallejo said he was born in Deming, raised in Las Cruces. I have been a product of the system at the age of 6 years old, skipping school, etc. In and out of trouble. Being here today is a huge honor and milestone being in the presence of a judge, and not for sentencing. My presence will benefit the youth.

Mr. Rank moved to approve Diego Vallejo as Youth Board Member, seconded by Ms. Abeyta-Stuve. Motion carried unanimously.

8.3. JARC (Update) – Aralis Chacon

Ms. Chacon said we are focusing on youth voice and choice. Changes to our program; we have increased our life skills classes, added; culinary class, voice counsel, etc., we will be adding a girl circle soon, so when the youth come in, they can choose what class they want to attend. We have seen an increase in services we are providing to them. The youth are more in engage because they can choose what they are interested in. We are also partnering with La Semilla and Friends of Organ Mountain. Our services are open to all youth and adults in the community.

Mr. Ortega said we also offer tutoring, trauma-informed yoga/dance, etc.

Ms. Chacon said we have seen a decrease in citations and increase in school referrals. We are working with LCPS counselors.

Judge Madrid said that is good we are seeing school referrals and less citations.

8.4. JCP (Update) – Robert L. Nuñez

Mr. Nuñez said that we have been short staffed for the last 8 months. Ms. Telles and Ms. Hughes have done and are doing an amazing job with current staff. 2nd quarter update we are at 40% spent, the JARC is at 52% spent. Most of our referrals are coming from JPO.

Ms. Hughes said we have had citations come regularly, had 20 citations last week. We will be providing zoom classes for the county starting on Saturday, February 26. County participants are having issues with COVID and transportation. We are providing services, being flexible and accommodating our participants and their families the best we can withing our timelines of our program.

Mr. Rank suggested to write a letter what you are doing for the county, addressed to former judge Macias, county manager or Susana Chaparro, Commissioner they are both strong advocates for children.

Mr. Nuñez said that Commissioner Chaparro is a board member but had a scheduled meeting and was not able to attend today.

Mr. Nuñez said that we are working on getting staff on board, Intake Specialist, Community Educator, and Juvenile Diversion Program Supervisor. Also looking at contracting a coordinator for the DACJCB to work closely with board members and networking with various organizations. Working with our grant office and legal to make sure our MOU is in place to move forward for FY23.
Judge Madrid asked if anybody had a chance to reach out to Judge Duran.

Mr. Nuñez said we had scheduled a meeting with her last month, and she had to cancel. We will reach out to her again and try to set that up.

Judge Madrid said even if Judge Duran is not able to be on the board, at least make her aware of the program.

Mr. Rank said having the District Court involved looks good not only national level but state level.

Judge Madrid said Judge Marci Byers retired and they are going to fill her position. The other suggestion that I have, if you or someone else can apply to be on the commission that choses the next few districts’ judges. Those commission meetings, when they interview for district judges, it’s very insightful and the public can participate. If somebody on the board, could try to get an appointment to that commission it would help, even Mr. Kavanaugh. To have that question, what you get to do when you are on that commission you get to interview those that are running for that position, their strength and weakness regarding working with youth.

Mr. Kavanaugh asked if there is an application process?

Judge Madrid said yes there is, go to the law school website, they have the application process.

Ms. Martinez said Ms. Abeyta-Stuve would be a good candidate, because of your role in the community. You represent families and children.

Ms. Abeyta-Stuve said she will reach out.

8.5. JJAC Statewide Continuum Meeting (Update) – Robert L. Nuñez

Mr. Nuñez said there is a reduction in continuums statewide, they are reaching out to northern and eastern part of the state to fill some of those counties with continuums. Funds are being limited, there are 18 continuums currently. We are in our 2nd year of a four-year agreement. Having one more application process before the end of this fiscal year. Will meet with FYI and the board to discuss potentially additional funds. Meeting with JJAC tomorrow, February 10 and they will make that announcement if whether they will have that application process.

8.6. La Vida Project Tour – Mateo Ortega

Mr. Ortega said from the color choices to the setup, program space, language you see on the walls is very intentional. What we are trying to do and heard from influencers, and staff is that one of our intentional strategic engagement efforts is to minimize and reduce stigma and shame that is associated with getting help and asking for help. This space is for everybody. Kids are proud in being here and it’s a safe space for them to thrive. Flyers are available to take.
Ms. Martinez asked the board if they would consider having a work group to include, JPO, law enforcement, protective services, and FYI. Reason, we run two (2) shelters, who take in high risk youth. What is happening across the state, we are taking in 20 – 35 kids, they are called shelter shufflers. We are having to call law enforcement all the time to assist with their behavior, arrest or cite them, etc. Some are a danger to themselves, to staff, law enforcement, etc. The work group would be to assist with alternative treatment, placement, etc. If possible able to place on Agenda for next meeting.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Abeyta-Stuve moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Gomez. Motion carried unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

Recording Secretary Date