

ASSETS FOR YOUTH WORKGROUP
MEETING MINUTES
MAY 14, 2004

Virginia National Bank
12:00pm-1:30pm

Members Present:

Harold Boyd
David Brown
Lee Davis
Nikki Evans-Bowles
Sibley Johns
Heather Kellams
Winx Lawrence
Relda Manuel
Lacy Peale
Kala Somerville
Bob Taibbi

Staff Present:

Saphira Baker
Linda Rahman

Handouts

Update from the Coordination Sub-Group,
5-04-04
Selected low-cost or free summer opportunities
for young people

I. Welcome/Introductions

S. Baker opened the meeting by welcoming members and thanking them for attending. An overview of the meeting agenda and a re-cap of April 's meeting/action steps were given.

April's Meeting

- The Coordination sub-group discussed what is needed for better referrals for after school programs, reaching more referral sources, and getting better program information distributed.
- The work plan was approved.
- Transportation was discussed and the group explored several options.
- The sub-group was to review other web-site providers of youth resources to inform the promotional campaign and website idea.

II. Report back from Coordination Sub-group

S. Baker stated that the only changes that are not noted in the handout is that the sub-group was able to meet with a group of Charlottesville High School and elementary guidance counselors who were very enthusiastic about having a referral source. The guidance counselors stated that it would have been great to have the referrals this summer because of the amount of requests they receive. S. Baker reported what the sub-group discussed at their meeting, what they wanted the website to look like and depending on the focus group results, whether they would be developing a youth piece or not. She stated that the sub-group decided the website needed to be something simple to navigate and they will be trying to get some technical support to see if they can develop a common application. S. Baker stated that the Commission was going to update the *Guide to Youth Services* and would include after school programs. She stated that the promotional campaign is on hold waiting to hear back from the focus groups but they are looking at web site models, other promotional materials and are thinking about different products. The launch date, if they are able to get resources, would be September or October. S. Baker distributed different logos that the CCF Outreach Coordinator had put together for the "YO" Campaign for their opinions. The sub-group is aiming for a unique look and something that will be universal in its appeal. H. Boyd suggested calling Tim Sinatra as there is a company who has offered to help the

Boys and Girls Club with their computers free of charge. L. Davis volunteered the use of the city school's expertise. K. Somerville stated that the Coordination sub-group is also going to speak with groups in town who have similar information on their website (Albemarle Family, Albemarle Kids, Monticello Avenue) to see if we can collaborate or have links onto their websites. She further stated that they did not want to be linked to any group. They would start with having a home page that would have youth opportunities, something simple and, if successful, go from there. They ultimately would like to have data-based driven queries for after-school activities. It was noted that, if there is a lot of excitement, we might be able to find a small amount of grant money and potentially have Computer for Kids maintain the site. W. Lawrence inquired as to where the home base would be for the website. S. Baker stated that they have been struggling with this issue, as the sub-group will soon disband under the current plan. One option would be to generate it from the Guide, but if it requires a lot of up-dating on a daily or weekly basis, additional staffing and resources will be required. Members discussed ways to promote the website at the beginning of the school year (August 23rd) and the following ideas were decided on:

- S. Baker or sub-group member to speak for half an hour at a workshop for school administrators at the beginning of the school year (L. Davis to arrange)
- Inform Principals and have them mention it at orientations
- Do a single one-page flyer to go out to parents with school packet on exciting after-school programs
- Advertise in parent's newsletter
- Produce posters for Guidance Counselors, schools and libraries

W. Lawrence stated that the first stage would be to start the campaign in August by introducing it to the school administrators. The second stage would be to distribute posters in schools and organizations where kids go, and the third stage would be to advertise to the community at large; where school supplies are purchased, community police and the housing authority for example. The Sub-group is to bring back their ideas for flyers and posters to the next Assets for Youth meeting.

III. Report back from Youth Focus Group Sub-group

H. Kellams gave a brief re-cap of the Focus Group by stating that back in April, they held trainings and focused on team building. They reviewed checklists for the focus groups and had mock focus groups and behavior scenarios where they discussed things that might happen in the focus groups. She commented that they had excellent student leaders who were very enlightening. They have finished up 16 focus groups (14 in schools and 2 in community agencies). They have three schools to go and one community program and there have been varying degrees of cooperation and flow within the actual focus group members. H. Kellams reported that the school liaisons have been phenomenal. The lowest number of kids in the focus groups has been seven and the highest was 30. She stated that it has been very interesting. The last focus group will be held on June 4th. After that, Robbie, Gretchen, Reuben and Heather will get together and complete the report. H. Kellams reported that the common theme from high school and middle school is adolescent development. The kids were honest as there were not any school personnel in the focus groups. Students commented that first, after school activities are not marketed to be cool enough to attract them, to get them excited. Secondly, kids are not aware of after school activities. They hear things by word of mouth only and would like someplace where they could find out what's going on. They do not like the activities to be school driven and prefer for them to be held somewhere cool or unusual. There is a real disparity on the feedback of themes of what the parents want and what the kids want. The kids expressed that they are just physically and mentally spent by 4pm and how incredibly stressful it is for kids to go to school. Because of the peer issues, all they want to do is "chill" with friends that they feel safe with. They want to eat, sleep and regroup for their next huge pressure day at school. The largest barrier the students found for them to participate is the "click factor"; they feel they don't want to be labeled. They suggested we let them form their own social group and then they can decide on what they want to do and where they feel comfortable hanging out. W. Lawrence stated that what she is hearing is to have a guidance counselor select some kids and tell them we are thinking about forming an after

school activity and get 5 of your friends and have the group come tell us what you want to do. H. Kellams stated that the kids felt that all after school programs are adult driven and they want input in the planning and discussion. The kid's recommendations were a soda bar, an after school place for kids to come where there is an adult leader who is kind, caring and nurturing, who will be on the "back burner", flexible and will let things slide. The activities kids want to participate in are: drag racing, more fun parks, theme parks, after hours soda bar with great bands, not the teen center or structured service programs, as they would rather be "chilling". The barriers are cliques, transportation and money. The predominate theme among the focus groups is that major partying goes on during the weekend for high school and middle school. L. Davis stated that in the city school survey the kids stated that they party on the weekends and 53% of high schoolers said they use alcohol and marijuana. H. Boyd reported that some kids have adults rent hotel rooms for them to have parties in on the weekends. Members discussed how the stress factor in youths contributed to their participation in drugs and alcohol, the "clique factor" and the lack of positive things for kids to participate in. Members all noted that this is a nation-wide problem. H. Kellams stated that the kids also discussed problems that arose from racial profiling, limiting their involvement in activities and their desire to meet kids from other schools in a safe environment. The members discussed encouraging a youth event that involved more than one school once a semester. Possibly developing a Leadership Council or Youth Advisory Council. The members agreed to do a letter of thanks to the school personnel (liaisons) and the youth leaders with a copy of the report. Members discussed that once the report is completed, we should also include the costs involved and what direction we want the City and County to take. It was suggested that the youth and adult leaders should make a presentation to the City Council and Board of Supervisors.

IV. Limited Low-Cost or Free Summer Opportunities

Members reviewed the information previously distributed on selected low-cost or free summer opportunities for young people. S. Baker stated that the community has lost job training federal funds, including Weed & Seed this year, and there are no new federal funds coming in. There is a gap of employment opportunities for older children. At this time, we do not know how many kids are working or how they are finding jobs, but we do know we have lost a lot of programs for older kids. L. Davis stated that approximately 150 students, 16 years of age and older, are in work-study programs. The city school contracts through the Work Source Enterprise for their employment with a limited amount of follow up. There are another 100-150 kids (14 to 15 year olds) who want jobs and are not able to find them because programs and money have dried up, and the job market is tight. Plus the number of kids has grown. The members foresee problems this summer at the downtown mall with so many youth with nothing to do. W. Lawrence asked the members if, as a committee, they would like to do a little investigation and put this as a topic for the next meeting – "How to fulfill that need?" With lost youth service work programs, what is going to happen? There is not enough time to have any affect this summer, but we can put some things in place for next summer. H. Boyd stated that the YMCA might be a good source. L. Davis will bring a summary of city kids on where they work and the number of 13-14 year olds who don't have jobs. H. Boyd is going to have Sarah Morgan with Albemarle County call S. Baker with the county information so the members can get a sense of the number of kids wanting to work.

V. Next Meeting Date

Next meeting to be determined.

- ◆ **THE NEXT MEETING OF THE ASSETS FOR YOUTH WORKGROUP WILL BE AT 12:00PM ON FRIDAY JULY 9, 2004, VIRGINIA NATIONAL BANK BOARDROOM, 2ND LEVEL.**