

St. Mary's County Department of Social Services  
Board of Directors Meeting  
October 22, 2013

**Attendance:**

The regular meeting of the Board of the St. Mary's County Department of Social Services was held on October 22, 2013. Board members in attendance were: Wanda Brown, Chairperson; Susie Fowler, Vice Chair; Lynn Fitrell; Veda Willis; and Leisha Wood. Also present Jeanne Schmitt, Assistant Director for Services. Absent: Cynthia Brown; Richard Buckler; Ella Somerville; Pamala Emplit.

**Minutes:**

The minutes for the September 24, 2013 meeting were approved noting the removal of Jeanne Schmitt, Assistant Director for Services from those in attendance and the addition of Hilary Laskey, Team Leader, Leonardtown.

**Education Session:**

Alternative Response—Presented by Jeanne Schmitt, Assistant Director for Services  
A report of neglect or abuse must meet the legal definition of maltreatment to be screened in for investigation or Alternative Response. The new Alternative Response allows for a flexible response to an investigation of reports that meet the definition of maltreatment but are low risk and have not resulted in serious physical or mental injury to a child. This response allows for the agency to work with families to provide services and referrals to increase the level of functioning within the family without an indication of abuse. Those reports that are screened in with a high risk will result in an investigation. Reports may shift between the two responses depending on information that may be revealed during an assessment for Alternative Response or an investigation.

Ms. Schmitt commented that St. Mary's County has a need to develop more resources for referrals for families. Ms. Brown suggested that churches could possibly be a resource for parenting or mentoring referrals.

A handout was provided.

**Chairperson's Report:**

**Old Business**

Ms. Brown reported that she is waiting on information from Ms. Laskey for an article she will write and submit to the "Letter to the Editor" section of *The Enterprise* concerning the need for foster families.

**New Business**

Ms. Brown thanked Lynn Fitrell for agreeing to continue as the Legislative Liaison for the Board.

Ms. Brown suggested that the Board do outreach to local business for gift certificates that could be used for recognition of staff—Customer Service award winners, Social Worker of the Year, etc.

The November meeting in reference to the upcoming agency closure for the Thanksgiving Holiday's was discussed and the members in attendance unanimously agreed that the Board's participation at the Homeless Resource Day on November 8, 2013, would stand as the November meeting. Ms. Brown would notify those board members not in attendance by e-mail.

Ms. Brown asked for volunteers to work at the Homeless Resource Day. Lynn Fitrell, Veda Willis, and Leisha Wood expressed interest. Ms. Schmitt requested that anyone interested contact Bonnie Abell or herself for coordination.

The Board proposed a book drive for children served through the agency with possible distribution at the Homeless Resource Day. Lynn Fitrell will contact Kathleen Reif about possible storage space for the books. The intent is for the books to be used and distributed under a reading program in the Lexington Park Office that has been proposed by Delta Sigma.

### MASSB

Leisha Wood reported on the Maryland Association of Social Services Board (MASSB) Fall Conference held on October 17 and 18, 2013 at the National Harbor. Ms. Wood was in attendance for October 17<sup>th</sup>. The conference information for the 17<sup>th</sup> centered on human trafficking, a new tracking system for customers, and a mentoring program—DADS. Ms. Wood reported that Secretary Dallas recognized St. Mary's County DSS and had many compliments for the agency.

The next conference will be held in Alleghany County and the Legislative Committee will meet in January.

### Director's Report:

On September 28, 2013, Mrs. Russell, Ella Somerville, and Kerry Miciotto gave a presentation to the local NAACP on the services and programs of the agency. Ms. Miciotto was approached by the Delta Sigma representative on the possibility of a reading program for the children who come into the lobby of the Lexington Park Office. MS. Miciotto will work with the group to formalize a possible program.

Ms. Miciotto was invited to a meeting on October 2, 2013 at the Lexington Park Methodist Church. The meeting was actually a planned recognition event of the agency and the work that it does within the community.

### Dates to Remember

October 24<sup>th</sup> – The agency will be participating in a community “Round-up” event in the Spring Valley subdivision in Lexington Park.

November 8<sup>th</sup> – The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Homeless Resource Day will be held at the Lexington Park United Methodist Church. There will be vendors from housing, MVA, Three Oaks, etc., to connect with families and individuals who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless.

Novmeber 14<sup>th</sup> – All Staff meeting.

**New Business:**

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

The next meeting will be January 28, 2013.