

Human Services Commission
Meeting 3/10/11
3rd Floor Resource Room, 51 Inman Street

Commissioners Present: Ayse Atasoylu, Claudia Hill, Nan Stone, Christopher Hall

Regrets: Kati LaBraico, Rev. Lorraine Thornhill, Maria Darlington-Hope, Lori Likis, Khari Milner, Paulina Mauras

Staff: Jackie Neel, Jolyon Cowan, Jose Soares (recorder)

Presenters: Nicole Horton, Department of Human Services Programs Inclusion Specialist

Mia Klinger-Powel, Director Daybreak Day Camp

Amy Stein, Executive Director of Cambridge Camping Association

Nicole Horton gave a brief overview of the Department's after school time and summer camps saying all of the City's programs are inclusive. The City runs 13 summer camps and Youth Centers. Over the course of the year there are 1,200 children enrolled in the City's programs; of these, 900 attend summer camp. Nicole said the largest increase in the numbers of children with special needs served in DHSP programs are in the autism spectrum.

Nicole then described the annual Camp Night, which has just occurred. Camp Night is offered by the Department in the spring at the high school, when parents have the opportunity to meet summer camp directors and learn about the various theme based programs. At this camp fair, families may discuss the children's needs with Nicole. Nicole already knows most of the children with special needs from her work in after school programs and in the classrooms. Parents' concerns are often related to occupational or physical therapies and some of the children who may have an aide in the classroom. Nicole then schedules an assessment by going to the child's school twice to observe him/her in the classroom setting. During the assessment, Nicole identifies accommodations, behavior modification plans, adaptive furniture, among other issues that would need to be addressed. Once the assessment is completed, she will meet with the inclusion advisory team, comprised of Michael Muehe from the Disabilities Commission, Alice Cohen, an outside consultant, and Lina Cravens, a retired school psychiatrist, to discuss the best situation for the child.

A release form is inserted with the application to allow Nicole access to the child's Individualized Plan.

In April, May, and June, summer camp staff are trained, and part of this training incorporates both inclusion and Positive Behavior Support Methods. Nicole looks at the whole group and dynamics to decide what staff should do to address the child's needs and works with staff to adapt the program to benefit all the children, not just the one child (Please see Kids Included Together attachment).

Mia Klinger-Powel used a power point presentation to present on Cambridge Camping Association's Daybreak Day Camp (please see attachment). Daybreak Day Camp was founded in 1990 and Mia has been its director since then. It is held at the Fayerweather Street School traditionally for four weeks in the summer; however, this year, staff at Cambridge Camping Association are planning to add three days to the summer camp. The camp serves low income children with mild to moderate social, emotional,

and behavioral issues. The camp provides transportation, swimming at the Gold Star pool, and three field trips per week. This past summer, 29 children ages 5 through 11 enrolled; 21 were from Cambridge. The camp atmosphere provides engaging activities in an informed, supportive and accepting environment invoking a sense of competence and belonging which promotes growth.

Most children enrolled have been diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, some in the autism spectrum, 30% bipolar and mood disorders, and anxiety. But Mia noted that children bring their creativity, openness, compassion, and playfulness to the camp.

Staff tend to be older than at typical summer camps. Generally they are graduate students. Last year's summer camp was staffed by 17 adults. There usually are 10-15 new slots; most campers return year after year until they age out or move. The Guidance Center purchases 10 slots.

At the end of camp, Mia, with input from staff, writes a report to parents and schools. When asked about the possibility of Commissioners coming to observe the camp Mia recommended the Family Night event.

Jolyon then began talking about this year's CDBG process. He mentioned that at the last Human Services Commission meeting, it was agreed that due to anticipated funding cuts, the Commission run a closed RFP and hold a CDBG event that would offer a presentation that could be a useful takeaway for agencies. He mentioned two possible presentations: one on the results of the 2010 census, or one on measuring performance outcomes. Commissioners agreed that the results of the census would be more useful given the anticipated CDBG funding cuts. After offering the Commissioners present a range of dates for the event to choose from, it was decided the best dates for the annual CDBG event would be either Thursday the 14th or the 28th. Jolyon will check with Cliff Cook from the Community Development Department on doing a presentation on the census results.

Meeting adjourned.