



CARTF

September 9, 2022

CDA/ Zoom

MINUTES

Joshua Wickard- Public Defender (Chairman)
Michelle Weir- DHW, Family & Children Services
Ruth York-Children with Disabilities Representative
Sheila Sturgeon Freitas, PhD- Mental Health
Curtis Carper- Law Enforcement Representative
Melissa Osen- Foster Youth
James Curb – Homeless Education Liaison
Jill Robertson – Parent
Molly Vaughn– Victim Services Coordinator

Jennifer Tachell– Educator (Vice-Chairman)
Susan Bradford, MD – Pediatrician
Stacy Pittman- Child Advocate Attorney
Hon. Steve Clark- Civil Magistrate Judge
Madison Miles- Prosecuting Attorney
Tahna Barton – CASA
Hon. Mark Rammell- Criminal Magistrate Judge
Nadine McDonald – Juvenile Justice
Teresa Vance- Administrator of the Courts Representative

Mindy Peper – Task Force Support

Indicates **ABSENT**

Guests:

Welcome

Wickard welcomes everyone. CARTF reviews the July 2022 minutes. Miles makes a motion to approve the minutes as is, Vance seconds, all in favor and so moved.

October Conference

Peper gives an update on the October 20, 2022, conference.

Baltimore Conference Take-Aways

Wickard, Vance, Pittman, Wickard, and Robertson were able to attend the 45th National Child Welfare Conference. Weir states that there was a lot of overlays of topics like racial inequality and justice issues. Good information about ICWA from a session they attended. Also, lots of ideas regarding parent-peer mentor programs and heard from some of those parents and their experience.

Pittman mentioned that one of the things that are important to her is that children have a voice in the process, and she appreciates the ideas that came from this conference about representation of kids in cases. Also, one of the breakout sessions she attended that stood out to her was focused on the value of foster parents and bio parents working together as a team.

Vance liked that there was a delegation from Idaho that was able to go and that in between sessions they were able to debrief. She felt the sessions on racial bias was eye-opening. Also liked the sessions on children with disabilities and 504 accommodations as well as the sessions on constitutional rights for parents.

Wickard felt that the ICWA information was very helpful, and he appreciated the handbook. He would like for CARTF to buy several copies to give out. He also liked the constitutional rights session as well as the session given on children with disabilities. Wickard mentioned that in 2 years the conference will be in Salt Lake City, and he would like to see a big push to send as many attorneys and public defenders as possible down to the conference.

Would like to bring together a subcommittee that would include members in and outside of CARTF that would give a voice to tribal groups, ICWA, and so forth that would be similar to how CFRT operates.

Judge Clark asks of those who attended the Baltimore conference, what can we do better here in Idaho? Wickard states overall we are doing well. One thing they looked at is the disparity of Idaho's racial makeup versus the racial makeup in the foster system. Weir says that disparity numbers are lower in Idaho although some similarity in percentages. On any given day, 1500 kids in foster care, with some disparity.

Pittman would like to see the age lowered in Idaho like other states are doing for child representation in child protection cases. She feels this would empower kids to have a voice and advocate. Weir mentioned she agrees. She mentioned that many states still do not offer any representation to the children. In 2021, Idaho had a 62% reunification rate. Whether reunification or another permanency goal, 6 months is a long time and a lot can happen in 6 months. Weir wonders how we can bring the parties together more to make sure that the case is moving along and as a system.

Wickard gives an overview of ICWA.

Vance said she has begun diving into ICWA data at the court level, she has begun to look at tribal court forms, and also looking to see how she can pull tribal judges into trainings.

ICARE Program, Katie Simmons, Director at St Vincent's de Paul and ICARE

St Vincent is largest provider for social services in Northern Idaho, mostly for Kootenai County but also Shoshone, Boundary and Benewah County. Goal is to help those in need and give a hand up. Located in Help Center (old library). Provide 200 units of housing, mostly in Post Falls. All income-based HUD housing. Also have homeless rapid housing program, which has ever-changing rules. Feel they are really good at adapting to get the services that people need. Work a lot with other partners.

ICARE offers 2 shelters and the only men's shelter in the area. Men's shelter has 12 bunks and one room for dad with children- utilized a couple times a year. Women's shelter has room for 16 women and families. Try to transition people from the shelter to permanent housing solutions and wrap around parenting services with that. All the men have jobs and about half of the women have jobs. The women tend to be a little older and less employable, but they do hold classes on resumes, job skills, interviewing,

GED, etc. Shelter is zero tolerance on drugs and alcohol, and everyone is tested every night-- if test positive, have a 6-month period before they can return.

They also provide substance abuse, mental health, and traumatic brain referrals.

Provide vouchers for clothing such as for work, as well as items to set up people in new homes when they transition out of shelter.

Provides payee services for 90 clients who are deemed not able to manage their social security payments. Help them pay their bills and set aside savings.

Offer veteran services. Has a coordinator that can help with clothing, car repair, rental assistance, home repairs, etc. Seeing a big influx of older veterans who were in other programs and couldn't comply to rules as well as older veterans who have families who have said they won't help them anymore.

Veterans and domestic violence victims have first preference at the shelters.

ICARE used to be a standalone agency, formed in 1992, as a result of several separate incidents of young children being murdered by mothers' boyfriends in the area. A group of citizens came together who decided that something needed to be done to help parents. They created PRO (parent resource organization- modeled after a program in Spokane), which eventually became ICARE. They started with parent aids, so essentially parent mentors. They provided resources, talked about self-care, and age-appropriate expectations. In 1995, Katie Simmons became a parent-aid after 40 hours of training. Twenty-five years later she is still part of the organization and still does home visits and provides services like parenting classes. ICARE is a strength-based program to help parents with parenting- work on goals, provide emotional support, provide resources, and always focused on their strengths. Program lasts 18-24 months. The focus is about relationship building.

Rosa Mettler asks how they help regarding childcare and if they track childcare services? Simmons states they track it organically via the USDA food services. She is then aware who has openings. They have 5 specific childcare providers that they work with and then they reimburse them. Some problems they run into is no childcare services during summer or using untrained childcare providers who are friends or families. Childcare in this area is very limited (especially between 0-3 years) and expensive. The ICARE program is open to those outside of the program as well.

Pittman asks how families are referred to ICARE. Sometimes it comes through shelter. Nurturing Parenting program is the curriculum they use. Based out of Seattle. Look at first the childhood of the parents. It's a 12-week class that looks back at how they were raised (routine, rules, communication styles, etc.). Classes on self-care, appropriate expectations of children, appropriate discipline, rewards. Also have Nurturing Fathers program which is 13-weeks which covers working with the mother, fear of parenting, fathering daughters vs sons, drug and alcohol use. Offer Circle Security 8-week class

which is about building bonds, repairing relationships, attachment, seeing the cues of children. Used to do love and logic but not anymore since not evidenced-based.

Hold Stewards of Children for adults in the community (camp counselors, CASA, parents in the ICARE program, etc.). This is a free class.

The Nurturing Parenting classes have a fee but can be covered via scholarships, other partners, etc. They never turn anyone away due to inability to pay. Now because of virtual meetings, the reach is much greater. Trying to schedule in person and virtual meetings so that the wait is not more than a month. Will even do one-on-one classes if necessary due to availability or other issues like mental health issues.

Pittman asks how families find these services. Simmons says there is a small, pocket-size resource guide that is updated every two years—also google, website, and finally via word of mouth through partner organizations.

Simmons states one area she feels they can work on is working more with the court systems, especially regarding court-ordered classes that need to be taken but are only offered at certain times.

One issue they are seeing is dirty homes and hoarding and even after helping them clean-up for a home visit, the homes are back to same state a couple weeks later.

To help not duplicate services, or to avoid too many home visits between the many agencies that provide them are taking place, they will back off if the family is being overwhelmed, and let other partners take lead.

Judge Clark asks if ICARE gets incorporated into the case plan. Simmons says sometimes yes. But not always. But if they have a DHW family they will look at the plan to see how they are involved.

CDA Tribe, Indian Child Welfare Program Manager, Toni Whitman

Whitman is very new to the position. Previously handled vocation rehabilitation. Pittman asks what kinds of trends and challenges she is seeing. Wickard asks also what is next and how can we improve our working relationships. Whitman says that in Idaho, need communication sooner. Trends have included babies born and tested with methamphetamine. Tribal Council passed a rule that if a mother has a baby born addicted to substances, they lose their payout from the casino for 3 years. Saw the numbers drop from 22 to 4 but feel what is happening is that they are getting cleaned up long enough to have the baby and then go back to that lifestyle. Those monies are put into the child welfare program. If they do identify these cases, then they are provided resources and programs, and may not have their monies taken away.

Pittman asks what the tribal procedure is for how families get involved, referred, and is there a protocol. They have a referral form at the organizations on the reservation as well as from tribal police. They may get referrals from Washington or pediatricians.

First, they go do a home visit and check on the child. Can be hard to open a case because need a clear and convincing evidence via tests. Tribal code is fairly strict on what the prosecutor can accept as convincing evidence and that makes it hard. Pittman asks if there is language that helps define an unstable home environment. Whitman says such a small community, and everyone knows everyone, can just call a family member to find a placement that is safe.

Mettler asks if Whitman is allowed to place children outside of tribal care, like at Children's Village. Whitman says she doesn't know for sure. Never had thought about that. She says they do have a youth shelter for when they can't find a home, but it didn't have staff until lately. Pittman asks what happens if a case cannot be opened. Whitman writes the orders, so a case is always opened but only if it has clear evidence. They do have case plans for reunification which typically includes parenting classes, substance abuse help, random drug tests, etc.

Pittman asks about how many cases reunify vs termination. Whitman states about half of the cases reunify. Miles asks when they get a notification from DHW how does ICWA apply? Whitman says she can only get involved if the family is enrolled in the tribe and will intervene in all cases if they are. If they are eligible to be enrolled, they will still get involved. Whitman states when a family is not enrolled but she recognizes the last name, she will let DHW know that they may be part of another tribe.

They do both kinship and foster care. Whitman starts with family first, then tribal members. They do a background check on foster families. Training is a 12-week course, one hour per week.

Biggest struggle is finding placement. The children are considered in care and custody. Each child is counted as one case and currently have 14 cases, one with 5 kids in it.

Parents who show up to court don't generally have attorneys.

Whitman feels their biggest strength is giving compassionate care.

Training is lacking and would be helpful, especially because 4 of the 5 team members are new. Need more child abuse investigation training. The tribal police help with some of the investigation if they refer the case but also as security on home visits.

Clark says it is obvious CARTF needs to communicate better with the tribes. Also need to invite tribal child welfare members to trainings and workshops. Also need to let them know there are grants available.

Funded via 7 grants, monies from Casino. Not sure about 4E funding. Foster families get \$200 per child plus a \$400 check to help with getting clothing. They can also go to the youth shelter for clothes and shoes.

Peper shares with Whitman about the IDCARTF website, grants, October training, free resources, etc.

The Children's Village, Vanessa Moos (CEO) and Rosa Mettler (COO)

Vanessa Moos introduces herself and Rosa Mettler and the goals for today's presentation.

Children's Village (CV) is a trauma responsive haven who looks to restore hope for children and families. Have two 4000-sqft homes with 20 bedrooms, 2 nursery crisis centers, and 15 acres. Now includes long bike path and also installing first sensory path in North Idaho. Community groups are helping build the sensory path.

Miles as what they define as a crisis nursery. Mettler says it is 0-4 years old, working with kids with attachment disorders, and also staff have enhanced background check, and in process of QRTP funding.

Children's Village serves 0-12 males and 0-17 females. Sibling groups stay together and do not segregate based on gender. Hope to build an all-boys home in the next three years. Mettler will be touring nationally over the next year to see what models are out there.

Average age of kids is 11. Can receive kids via IDHW referrals but also can take kids by a family at their point of crisis. State placed children are average age of 14 and private family placed children are 10. Privately placed by a guardian calling (DV, homelessness, etc.) and stating they can't keep their children. They are screened for risk, the parents can tour the facility, parents retain all legal rights. The children remain until they have a safe home. Most privately placed families fall under respite program (3 days)- kids are running away, lots of fighting, etc., and need 3 days of respite. 14% of those situations are homeless. 50% of those families have used the services more than once this year. Certified under ADAPA and in legal contract with parents. Parents have to meet with case managers at least once a week.

Staffed 24/7. CV is a prominent employer in the area and are seeking to be a premier employer.

29% of residents are placed by state but accounts for 65% of bed use and 71% of children placed by private families but account for 33% of bed use.

Philosophy is Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI). See more on presentation.

In their strategic plan the organization had to stop and pivot from removing children from their program with advanced behaviors to a model that is trauma informed. COVID really thwarted what they were doing but they got through it.

Crisis Respite: 24–72-hour placement by private families. Greatest need for funding. Always have one bed available funded by Children's Mental Health. Allows CV to

launch resources via family support manager (housing, food, parenting classes, etc.) and offers ongoing support after they leave the respite care. The community-based therapist is a short-term solution focused therapy to help them while on a waiting list for other services.

Emergency Shelter: long-term private family treatment; don't access in-house therapist unless needed but try to connect them with resources in the community.

Residential Care: QRTP federally accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. Vance says that she is doing a training with court clerks and creating a bench card for judges. Mettler feels would be better to keep separate the progress of DHW care plan from the reports given by CV to be able to maintain and preserve relationships of confidentiality they build and to continue to move therapeutic services forward. They agree with the spirit of Families First, but it is so difficult in regulation, messy and rigid, and it has become a relationship barrier with other partners.

They are also credentialed with OPTUM as well. Partnered closely with JJC for status offended children so that they don't have to go to detention.

Shelter homes is not where they want kids to fall into, but their goal is to be more preventative.

Trying to partner with region 1 IDHW to work on placements as they have seen many fall apart with kids who were not ready, placed somewhere without a support system, etc. CV must be invited into that process because IDHW is the legal guardian. Often, they aren't even made aware what the independent assessor report states.

As clinicians in the QRTP process would really like to have a voice in treatment and therapy plans with IDHW.

Clark mentions politically there is a real problem with the movement of parent rights and makes it hard to deal with. Moos mentions best way for them to overcome it is through relationships.

Recently received a \$1.5 million grant to build The Village- a Safe Teen Assessment Center and Multi-Agency Resource Center. Received grant from IDJC to build a tier-two Safe Teen Assessment Center on existing campus. Goal is to divert children and families from IDHW and juvenile justice system to early intervention and support offered by the Village.

This will be community run by Juvenile Diversion and Probation with help from CV and community non-profits. Building the center now but also creating a screening process that tries to identify the need behind the behavior. They want the Village to impact the entire community and the overall economics of the surrounding areas. Using a collective impact model and continuous quality improvements.

York asks if CV has a parent-peer mentorship workforce. Mettler says that Idaho is a little behind in this area, but it is something they are looking forward to building out for long-term sustainability. Will be part of the multi-agency resource center and hope to include Optum for billing and grants for those services. Vance says that court improvement program is going to fund a parent for parent program, modeled after Washington. Looking for a pilot project place and will provide a part-time coordinator.

Family Promises North Idaho, Cindy Wood

Cindy Wood introduces herself the Executive Director of Family Promise North Idaho, and Family Service Coordinator, Lisa Donaldson.

Pre-McKinney Vento numbers say 1 in 19 kids will experience homelessness by age 6. This number is different from HUD numbers. 25% of kids move 3-4 times during school year which increases trauma and instability.

Wood talks about the impact of COVID on rental prices and what it looks like now. Rent prices have increased and are out of reach. In Idaho, takes more than 80 hours a week at minimum wage to make rent. People over the border in Washington can make twice as much as they can in Idaho, but it can be harder for people at lower income to be mobile enough to go across the border. And there is not a workable transit system in the area. CDA is one of the most expensive places in Idaho to rent. Need to work 104 hours a week at minimum wage to make rent of a two-bedroom apartment.

In 2021, over half of the families that they helped had children with disabilities. They are working with a population that needs extra help, but they do not have extra time. Overwhelming circumstances for families already in overwhelming circumstances.

Rental stoppers are evictions, bankruptcy, low credit scores, felonies, and having a larger family.

Idaho can advocate for children by addressing childcare—for access limited income restrained (working poor) finding affordable childcare is a struggle. Many are closing down in CDA. Churches are closing their centers because they can't afford to stay open, and they often have lots of room for large centers.

Lack of mental health services for children and adults in CDA and no in-patient centers. There is a one-year wait for pediatric mental health in the area. Unsure as to why it shut down.

There are transportation needs in the area. City Link doesn't reach enough areas and doesn't go over the state border nor does it reach rural areas.

The bussing guidelines for McKinney-Vento need to change. They need to shorten the "no bus" distance. Causing some children to have to walk nearly a mile to get to bus stops. Would be helpful to have some special dispensation for using bus funds.

Woods talks about the mission, values, and vision of Family Promise. They have a 90-day goal of finding housing for families and that can be difficult.

Vance asks how Family Promise can help families with rent stoppers? Donaldson says that sometimes not every family can get into housing in 90 days, but they work on goals to move that direction. 3 families rotate through 18 churches over 90 days, moving each week, and meeting people in each church or facility that believes in them and supports them and wants to get to know them.

Last year provided in-depth resources to 19 families and community resources to 324 households. Donaldson covers all the resources that are offered through Family Promise.

North Idaho offers a Strengthening Families course each week to anyone who needs it. Other classes include financial literacy class and keys to good tenancy.

Things Family Promise need include more congregational partners for housing, volunteer groups, need board candidates with marketing skills, a building or space for diverse families, a day use shelter that is disability accessible, a kennel for family's pets, more funds for the eviction prevention program, and a therapist on staff.

North Idaho CASA, Carol Brennan, Advocate Supervisor and Kristin Ludwig, Director of Development

Ludwig states that their mission is to train advocates and they have been successful in this, and it has allowed them to start other programs. Project permanency helps to provide essentials to reunified families so that they can focus on relationship building and progress on their case plan. They help with school supplies, ticket to dream, and back to school clothes and shoes. Grant is through Anovia.

Fostering Futures: A nationwide program that helps advocates who participate with teens receive more training and then they are equipped to help teens find jobs, fill out college applications, and even get their first apartment. Would like to see CASA used more as mentorship program for teens. Frustrating because they can't offer their services unless they are brought on by IDHW. Can be requested by IDHW, the child's attorney, or the judges. Prefer that each judge would check and see if it is a case that would be beneficial to have a CASA representative and then assign one.

Clark asks if they notice inconsistencies between districts. Brennan states that in District 1 that all counties assign CASA to kids under 12 but never with the teens. There are inconsistencies even within the same district. In Benewah County, many times an attorney is not appointed.

Another thing that has been an issue in the county is failed adoptions. Currently on their case load is four failed adoptions. Wondering how much support parents are getting after an adoption closes. Can there be higher trauma-based training, check-ins, etc.

Another concern they see is when there is a child death where a child is taken out of the home and a case plan fails and termination goes through, then a family has more kids who were previously found abusive. And unless a formal referral is made to IDHW, how do you protect those new kids born into the family. It really comes down to a legislative option.

Problem when children divulge sexual abuse knowledge to people working at Children's Village but not in a CAC interview. Nothing can be done if not divulged in the CAC interview.

Bonner/Boundary County MDT, Catherine Enright

Catherine Enright introduces herself. Enright is the Bonner and Boundary County Public Defender. Combining offices starting October 1. Working with public defenders' office for 6 years. Also have experience as a prosecutor in Washington and a CASA advocate. Currently handle most of child protection cases in Bonner and Boundary County. Set on the state of Idaho Bar Association Child Protection Committee.

Bonner and Boundary County share IDHW social workers and CASA advocates. Have lots of shared meetings. Do have separate prosecutors, judges, and juvenile probation meetings.

Have several meetings in Bonner County. Each of the counties have separate child protection meetings once a month. Same in Boundary County. In Bonner County, includes law enforcement and have great buy-in from sheriff's office. Also include juvenile and adult probation. Would like more buy-in from Sandpoint law enforcement. They go over all the cases and use it to prevent or problem solve before they become bigger issues. Her role helps to look at cases from the parent's rights perspective.

They also have a child protection stakeholder meeting which meets quarterly and is combined with Bonner and Boundary County. Enright leads that meeting. Includes CASA, prosecutors, judges, family court service, juvenile probation, etc. Main focus is to talk about issues seen in CP cases, changes to the law, lack of particular services, etc. Pittman adds that it is a place for each other to understand why someone does something and where they are coming from.

They also hold a youth mental health collaborative meeting. They hold meetings each month and they have an update from all their service providers, what they are seeing in the school districts, etc.

In Bonner and Boundary County what impacts the cases sometimes is the "redoubters", Constitutionlists or sovereign citizens, and seems to be a growing population in the area. Often do home schooling.

Lilybrook has a meeting each month that includes law enforcement and prosecutors, not the public defender. They have a very involved meeting.

Enright states she has about 35 cases a year from Bonner County and 5 to 6 in Boundary County.

The monthly MDT helps Bonner County keep shelter case numbers low by getting them services or get the kids moved to other adults before they end up in foster care.

The juvenile justice has weekly staffing meetings with law enforcement and prosecutors to discuss juveniles in the community and what to do with those kids.

Both juvenile probation and domestic violence officer brings a lot of referrals to the MDT meetings.

Some of the obstacles or struggles include the need for training on child abuse investigation, shelter hearings process, etc. The biggest issue they have is lack of affordable housing in Bonner County, which is then causing issues to make budgets work, but also losing service providers at a great rate as they move out of the area. Public transportation is also a big issue. Also need more parenting education in the area to include parenting classes as well as CEU opportunities for social workers and CLE's for judges and lawyers.

CARTF Wrap-Up/ Final Thoughts/ Oct and Nov Planning

October- conference planning; debrief September delegation- expand the idea?
Representative from IDCVVA; former parents of foster system; central intake from IDHW;
CJA annual report.

Peper share conference information with Janice Beller at the Child Protection Committee

Today's speakers seemed really excited to be heard. Plan to do this again in Eastern Idaho next September. Let's think about how we can reach these parts of the state on a more consistent basis. May be a good idea to visit each district to see what is unique to each one.

New Business

Adjourn

Next meeting will be October 7, 2022. This will be a hybrid meeting held in Boise.