

**Quad County Meeting
April 24, 2009
Kern County Office**

Attendance: San Luis Obispo; Summer Frappier, Madera; Kathy Steele from Aspiranet-county staff absent, Fresno; Rosalio Garcia, Donecia Wright, Shane Wilson, Kern; Kristie Esquivel, Dette Araujo, Elizabeth Meza, Aracelli Gomez, Miguel Montoya, and CeCe Anthony, Aspiranet Kern-Tul, Cheryl Jacobson, CPYP (chair)

New Materials/Trainings/Resources:

Several counties are finding several new diligent search sites helpful. Those are 123People.com, Face book social sites, Isearch.com, theworknumber.com, and globallocate.com. This helps to find cell phone numbers.

Kevin Campbell is training on May 14 and 15 in Tulare, Ca. Clarissa Phelps, who found herself on the streets, will present on June 11 in SIO as part of Why Try and will also be part of Fresno's June 26th training with Alfonso Tucker, an adopted law enforcement person.

The Kinship Center has developed a CD regarding grief and loss. The section with youth talking is an excellent section. It can be found on their web site.

Success Stories:

At a TDM meeting in Fresno for a 14 year old girl the facilitator saw the need for family finding and engagement. She only had a connection to her mom, who she saw one time a month. She indicated she wished to see her brother who is now 19 that she has not seen for 12 years. The permanency specialist got some names from mom and did a USSearch. He sent letters to relatives who lived nearby. Although he knew dad was deceased, he heard from Dad's sister who indicated she had been search for her niece. The permanency specialist began a family tree; initially it was more like a 'twig' but soon he has a three page tree with over 100 relatives. 50% of the relatives lived near by. It was learned that the brother lives in San Diego with an Aunt. The family decided to assist in organizing a quinceanera and with the help of 12-15 of the Family to Family Community Partners a church, limo, dress, cake and refreshments were all provided. Fifty relatives attended as well as the brother from San Diego, which was a tremendous surprise for the sister.

Funding Issues/County Updates:

In Kern County the OYA funding from the federal government runs thru Dec 09. However, they are requesting an extension through June 2010.

The goal in Kern County is to move the family finding and engagement efforts more and more to the front end at time of detention. From OYA funds they are paying for family visits, travel and six extra workers. These are called extra help so have nine months on and two off. OYA funds are the only way Kern County can look at expanding family finding efforts. The Administration

is reviewing the outcomes data from the family finding and engagement efforts. As of yet there is no hiring freeze.

The Fresno attendees did not know the status of funding and if the six people that were to be designated to do family finding as part of Families First are doing so.

Aspiranet believes the economy is impacting the community which makes fund raising and recruitment of foster families more difficult. Also, post adoptive families are having greater needs.

In San Luis Obispo, Cuesta College continues to have the permanency grant for another year. Because of their college connection youth can now get credit for the ILP classes, 10 high school elective credits or three college credits. They are using family to family money for travel, which recently paid for a reconnection for a youth with family in Oregon. The administrator now is not as focused on permanency as Matt A. was prior to his death. Also, with Katie acting as supervisor they are only providing family finding and engagement to 17 youth, six fewer, but which is an increase of five on Summer's work load. They obtained an Ameri Corp person to fill in but because she did not have case management skills she has only been able to work with the community.

Other Updates:

In San Luis Obispo, the CPYP Committee has been combined with the ILP board. Because attendance was dropping, the meetings have been changed to quarterly meetings. Katie is chairing the meeting and is making sure that permanency is a large focus. Other agencies in attendance, such as Aspiranet, have indicated that they are inspired to do more regarding permanency because of Summer's successes and are discussing ways of melding it into their agencies. One area is adding "Sibling Events" modeled after Fresno's efforts.

On May 30th Fresno will have their Sibling Carnival. This year they have a Circus theme. The FFA's continue to be of major assistance in the success of the sibling events, such as movie night and Sibling Connection at the Park. At that event they each made a craft item which was a gift for their sibling.

Fresno is providing LGBTQ training for foster parents and staff. Their Heart Gallery is now at the library and they are receiving steady calls regarding the youth in the event. The permanency specialist provides family finding information to case workers for follow-up. He believes that in 50% of the cases there is no follow-up with the information although his intern does follow-up on cases once time a month. Her time ends in May. The permanency specialist will address the lack of follow-up issue in more training for workers.

Kern County is providing family finding and engagement on 72 active cases with the expectation that will increase to 90 in the future. The six extra workers currently are working with 5 cases but that will soon go to 15 each. The permanency specialist supports them as well as the unit group that each are working on one of their cases in family finding and engagement efforts. By August she plans to have the first issue of a permanency news letter going and in the future wants to revamp the youth advisory committee.

Aspiranet from Madera are providing support for the grief and loss work there. Currently they are doing life booking for one youth and his siblings. They attend all CPYP committee meetings and trainings.

Kern Aspiranet continues to chair the grief and loss implementation group. They are continuing to train their staff to do life maps and have also provided training in the community to FFAs and others.

San Luis Obispo found paternal family members for the youth that they took to Oregon. The youth saw his Dad, grandfather, and Uncles and was happy to meet men who looked like him. Dad has a steady job in spite of his brain injury and the paternal family appears to be functioning better than the maternal side of the family in Wyoming that they visited in the past.