

CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES COLLABORATIVE COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES – 10/09/24

4850 MARK CENTER

Attendance

Dan Edwards
Trinady Maddock
Nicole Davi
Mike Mackey
Catherine Clinger
Amanda Ruff

Zeinab Yassin
Laura Funes Quiñones
Meredith Forbes
Eva Billips
Julie Murphy
Christina Raino

Angela Green
Isabel Shultz
Daniel Daponte
J-Lynn Van Pelt (Virtual)
Ursula Rocha (Virtual)

Excused Absent

Amanda Ruff
Kate Garvey
Laura Durham
Marcia Jackson

Councilwoman Alyia Gaskins
Councilwoman Sarah Bagley
Jacinta Greene
Tim Beaty

Rose Dawson
Terry Glover

Unexcused Absent:

Katie Cissel Greenway

Guests

Allen Lomax – Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria

Staff

Noraine Buttar
Chelsea Eickert

Begin 6:38P

Welcome

- The meeting was called to order at 6:38 p.m. Dan introduced the new members.

Public Comment

- Allen Lomax – Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria
 - New volunteer-fundraised grants program—raised \$55K this year!
 - Last month awarded seven grants to seven nonprofits, including Campagna Center and Casa Chirilagua, NVFS, etc.
 - Community Health Assessment kicked off a few weeks ago
 - Discussed information for the city’s walk-and-talk—volunteers walking around the city to learn about each neighborhood
 - DASH looking for a youth board member

6:49P Approve the Minutes

- The meeting minutes were approved.

6:52P Updates from Dan

- Still in need of two mentors—Trinady will send the form around again
- Letter from the City Manager
 - CYFCC is not submitting a budget letter this fall, but can respond to the draft budget
 - Instead, they plan on sending a letter to the City Manager expressing their priorities
 - Members should reach out to Dan if they have thoughts or ideas for the outreach to City Council on the budget.
- Racial Equity Toolkit - <https://www.alexandriava.gov/equity/alexandrias-racial-equity-toolkit>
 - Should we invite someone to talk about the Racial Equity Toolkit—Emerald Christopher?
 - A toolkit created by the city with community input, detailing how you would be able to assess racial equity in the work in your organization, advocacy, etc
 - Something that we could promote the use of, and we could apply pieces of it to our policy and advocacy work

6:57P Goal Group Discussion

- What do GGs want to focus on this year?

7:36P Goal Group Report Out

- GG3
 - Concerning trend that young people in ALX feel less connected to the community, less valued, voices aren't heard, no opportunity to engage
 - CYFCC high school representatives concurred
 - Youth don't feel engaged with volunteer opportunities—it feels more like something they have to do for college, etc
 - Wanting to help other young people find opportunities that they feel passionate about
 - Youth are dealing with so much, the school is so large, high school paper did an article about how young people are not feeling heard
 - How can we uplift the voices of young people, even among their peers?
 - Ensuring young people understand how important volunteering is, and how to help them fit it in their busy schedule
 - Can we get a group of young people together, make it fun?
 - Can invite Volunteer Alexandria to speak
 - Highlight the Out of School Time (OST) portal available to ACPS students
 - Question for GG3: Is there something that adults can do, a message adults can send to young people to make them feel heard? What do they want to see from adults in order to feel heard? What is the action adults need to take regularly in order for young people to be seen and heard?
 - As a Commission, if we seek out youth input, we need to make sure we are giving it weight and acting on it
 - And is there something as simple as a campaign/messaging to adults—here's how you can make youth feel heard?

- When adults hear criticism/feedback from students, they tend to get defensive. Actions speak louder than words—adults are showing that the a lot of the feedback doesn't make a difference
 - **Data points:** Adult relationships, service
- GG2
 - **Data point:** Suspension rates, disproportionate number of black and Hispanic youth who are being suspended
 - What is happening at the school level? What is happening out of school?
 - Students of certain racial groups seem to be being targeted unfairly—what are the determining factors when suspending a student?
 - Things GG2 would like to elevate
 - “The Third Space”—other groups outside of home and school where kids are connected to caring adults. Involvement in these programs yield better academic/mental health outcomes. How can we grow those programs?
 - Importance of afterschool programs, connected to importance of volunteer programs
 - Fostering the third space in the community and the school could be very helpful
 - Hearing from YIP, Cornerstone Crossroads
 - What kind of support are we giving to the parents of students who have been suspended? Suspension is often a symptom of something else going on—mental health, family conflict, effects of the pandemic, etc
 - Where do students go when they've been suspended?
 - Most students are given a packet of things to work on at home
 - Chance for Change: Alternative placement school for students with chronic issues
 - Observation from youth member: It seems like many students who have been suspended are coming from homes where the suspension is not taken seriously, their parents may not care—or have time to care—about the suspension. This is another reason why having that third space is so important—having another caring adult to show youth why involvement is important. Students whose parents are more involved and encourage them to participate in activities are more likely to
 - **FACE:** another group to consider connecting with
- GG1
 - Top priorities
 - Listening session with youth to cover safety and mental health
 - Indicators showed increase in not feeling safe, experiencing verbal abuse, poor mental health
 - Where can we connect with a group of young people?
 - Having someone from that PRC (whole spectrum of disabilities) and therapeutic rec center (most high-needs children) speak to the entire group in November or December, since it affects all the GGs
 - Disabilities: General state of wellness for youth in the area, any data they have? Mental health needs of children with disabilities? Representation of children with disabilities in the JJ system/child welfare system? What data do others have/does the city have? Can we advocate for that data to be included in the next plan?

- There could be an argument to include more traditional data (like what the school collects) since individuals with disabilities may not be able to participate in surveys, which are a primary driver of the CYCP

ADJOURN 8:02P