

Centralina Workforce Development Board

Youth Council Meeting

Boys & Girls Club of Concord

247 Spring Street NW – Concord, NC

Thursday October 22, 2009 – 10:00 A.M.

Members Present (8)

Carol Johnson, Youth Council Chair
Linda Smith
Katrina Duke
Rick Brown
Sharon Allen
Gisella Busse
Jamar Still
Rodney Harrison

WDB Staff

Patricia White
Natasha Pender
Vail Carter

Guests (25)

Bob VanGorden, Centralina WDB Chair
Susan Milliken, Futures 4 Kids
David Dutton, Resource Development Center
Jennifer Moore, Monarch
Monique Phoenix, I-CARE, Inc.
Amanda Graham, I-CARE, Inc.
Wanda Weeks, Goodwill/Concord Job Connection
Carolyn Mays, Cabarrus County JobLink Career Center
Almond Miller, Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc.
Shanell McLamb, Florence Crittendon Services
Garrett Malone, Union County Community Action Agency, Inc.
Robert Ellis, Cabarrus County Department of Social Services
Shirley Phifer, Cabarrus County Schools
Wilma Means, Logan Optimist Club
Kelley Bigger, Stanly County Family YMCA
Brenda McMillian, READ, Inc
Linda McPhatter, READ, Inc
Stacie Jacobs, CREW (Commercial Real Estate Women) Charlotte
Carrie Sharp, CREW Charlotte
Rev Franklin Lowery, Lincolnton Housing Authority
June Leazer, Cabarrus County Schools
Monique Hailey, Connecting Futures, Inc
Sabrena Thomas, Vocational Rehabilitation
Labeth Varh, Vocational Rehabilitation
Lindsey Haaser, Advocations

Youth Council Chair Carol Johnson called the meeting to order. Carol welcomed everyone, allowed everyone to introduce themselves and thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Mission Statement Affirmation

The Youth Council Mission Statement was read by Youth Council member Linda Smith.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the August 20, 2009 meeting were mailed prior to the meeting. Carol Johnson waived the reading of the previous minutes and asked if there were any changes or corrections. Linda Smith moved that the minutes stand as submitted and Gisella Busse seconded the motion. Hearing no objections, the motion to approve the minutes was unanimously approved.

Presentation: FUTURES 4 KIDS (F4K)

Jamar Still, youth council member and WIA participant at Salisbury-Rowan Community Action Agency, Inc introduced the speaker, Susan Milliken. Susan is the Executive Director of Futures 4 Kids (F4K) based in Raleigh, yet with a presence in over 40 North Carolina counties.

The mission of Futures 4 Kids is *To bridge the gap between the hopes and dreams of our students and the workforce development needs of our communities.*

Futures 4 Kids, hereinafter referred to as F4K is a web-based career exploration program; Vehicle for economic, workforce development; Brings businesses together to support local students' career goals; and it connects students to NC employers and professionals, regardless of where they live.

Initially F4K makes the connection – mostly targeting 8-12 graders – via school systems. Once the program has been put in place, youth and local “managers” most likely the Career and Technical Directors/staff are all given passwords to access the site. Young people are then able to fill out an initial assessment to see what careers may be a good match for them – and also which careers may not.

Students are often shocked to find out what careers they may enjoy, they may not have understood the connection or the possibilities among certain subjects, hobbies and careers. After the assessment, youth are able to go further and answer more detailed questions relating to their interests or moving forward and connecting with career coaches or “mentors”. They are able to ask all types of questions in order to gain insightful information into a variety of careers.

Susan was adamant in stating that F4K in no ways claims to be the ultimate answer when it comes to connecting youth with careers that they will be successful in – but rather they serve as a vehicle in helping young people in planning their futures.

One component that Susan is particularly proud of is the fact that the online mentoring relationship satisfies the requirements for the mentor relationship that must be established between youth and career mentors while they work on their Graduation Projects. The North Carolina Graduation Project is a multi-faceted performance assessment completed over time. The Project provides students the opportunity to connect knowledge, acquired skills, and work habits to real world situations and issues. The Project consists of four components (a research paper, product, portfolio, and an oral presentation) and culminates in a student's final year of high school.

Immediate opportunities for youth council members to become involved with the program are to sign up, via F4K's website, to become Career Coaches. Career Coaches are all subject to a 7 year criminal history background check, and they only know the first name and county of residence of students that they communicate with on the site. Personal email addresses are hidden from both parties – the student and the coach.

Susan assured the group that the posting boards are monitored. Career coaches are instructed to ONLY provide guidance as it relates to careers. "Chat" conversations are archived and can be read by any participating member.

Several questions from members and guests followed. Carolyn Mays, Director of the Cabarrus County JobLink Career Center asked if the program is only available to schools or if it could be set up in a JobLink Center. Susan's reply was that yes, the JobLink would be a great possibility as a site for F4K. Youth Council member Linda Smith asked if youth have the ability to chat amongst themselves through the site. Susan's reply was that they used to but can't any longer. They want to assure the site is being utilized to accomplish the intended goal and not otherwise. Workforce Development Board Chair, Bob VanGorden asked what Centralina counties F4K is currently active in. At this point f4K has a presence in Iredell and Stanly counties. Bob suggested inviting a local group that has used the program for some time to share how effective or ineffective they have found the program to be. Susan noted that several schools in Mecklenburg and Gaston counties have used the tool and are pleased – they may be good contacts.

Jennifer Moore of Monarch asked about the financial stability of such a program. Susan said that f4K has been incorporated since 2001 and they are a 501c3 organization, all records are public information and that she is free to seek more information. Shanell McLamb of Florence Crittenton Services in Charlotte asked if students get involved in one county and move to another county where there is currently no program in place, if they would still be able to use F4K? Susan replied as long as they still have a log on and password, that yes they can still access the site.

Carol Johnson, Youth Council chair, asked if they work with Community Colleges. Susan stated that yes they do, but through the Early College system mostly, as they do try and target young people before they are involved in a specific career readiness pathway.

Susan concluded by stating that she will email a demo to anyone guest interested in learning more. Natasha Pender stated that the presentation shared with the group could be found on the youth website at: www.way2work.org.

Carol thanked Susan for her time and a wonderful presentation.

WIA Update

Patricia White, Centralina Workforce Development Board Operations Manager, gave a report on the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth program, stating that Centralina WDB received the final report from the State in regards to the summer American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) program. Centralina did meet performance measurements. She added that there are about 30 youth in the regions who are still receiving work opportunities from this summer. Patricia added that in light of all the staff additions and retirements in the Centralina region, there have been many trainings going on to bring everyone up to speed on WIA.

Patricia concluded by stating that the Division of Workforce Development plans to be in the Centralina region conducting a Validation Review the week of December 14-19, 2009. A total of 59 folders will be reviewed from the contractors. More details to follow.

Other Business

Natasha Pender shared a report regarding the Centralina Youth Services Summit. She said that nearly 150 people gathered at the Embassy Suites in Concord on September 18, 2009 and that of those about one third, 47 of them responded to the online survey. She pointed out a handout in the folder of materials that reflected the responses, which were overwhelmingly positive in regards to the Summit. Bob VanGorden commented that he really enjoyed the Summit, the speakers and the workshop content. He commended the Youth Council on a job well done. Youth Council member Rick Brown also commented that he thoroughly enjoyed the summit and is looking forward to next year. Carol thanked them both for their comments.

Carol then moved on to discuss Youth Council meeting dates for 2010. She directed members to take a look at the proposed schedule included in their folders, compare them to calendars and be prepared to vote on changes or confirmed dates at the next Youth Council meeting. Carol also asked what Youth Summit attendees thought of the facility. Everyone was in agreement that it was a great facility. Carol suggested that Natasha Pender try to go ahead and confirm the

availability of the Embassy Suites for the 2010 Summit. Natasha stated that she would work on that right away.

Guests Speak!

Carol opened the floor up to members and guests to share “goings on” in their communities. Labeth Varh of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) stated that October is Disability Awareness month and that VR has several things going on in observation. Lindsey Haaser of Advocations stated the her company is having a Grand opening celebration and she would love for all to attend. Carol told her to email the invitation/flyer to Natasha so that she could distribute via email to the members and guests. Lindsey agreed. Almond Miller of Salisbury Rowan Community Action Agency thanked the group for all their encouragement that they give the youth in their program, it really makes a difference. She also stated that their youth are working hard on Key train and Career readiness Certification. Jamar Still added that he is preparing to take the final test of his GED on Tuesday October 27, 2009 and he hopes to pass so that he can enroll at Rowan Cabarrus Community College and begin studying biotechnology. Everyone applauded his efforts and wished him luck.

Linda Smith wanted to extend a special thank you to David Hollars, Centralina WDB Executive Director for all that he does in opening opportunities for JobReady to continue its mission. She credited David with laying the groundwork that has resulted in Linda being asked to share the JobReady experience with Union County Chamber of Commerce Executives to garner support for the program. Wilma Means of the Logan Optimist Club added that she is grateful for the networking opportunity and growth that the Youth Council has allowed her group of young people that she works with. They have been able to take advantage of opportunities that otherwise they would not have even known about were it not for the Youth Council. Wanda Weeks of Goodwill invited everyone to see the new Concord retail store and checkout the Job Connection site that is located there. She added that Chakia Dixon, a WIA participant has been working there and has been doing an excellent job. She also thanked Vail Carter, Centralina WDB Business Services Coordinator for all the work he has done in helping them to set up the Job Connection site.

Bob VanGorden stated that the day’s conversations all tied in well with an article forwarded to WDB members by Board vice Chair Janet Hudson entitled: *The New Untouchables* from the NY Times. Bob encouraged everyone to try and get a hold of the article as it is great, informative and relates to the discussion that was held during this meeting. Carol agreed and Natasha Pender stated that she would email the article to everyone.

Youth Happenings

Natasha Pender asked that everyone focus their attention on the contents of their folders. Included was a letter from the office of Congressman Mel Watt’s office regarding the Youth Services Summit, and acknowledging the Youth Council and the WDB for all the work they do

for the youth in the region. Also, the Centralina e-newsletter story highlighting the Youth Services Summit was included along with the program booklet from the September event. Four newspaper articles were included:

- Article – “Teenagers discuss work experience” – *The Stanly News & Press*
- Article – “Wentz Manufacturing Camp held at SCC” – *The Stanly News & Press*
- Article – “Nonprofit works to improve literacy” – *The Independent Tribune*
- Article – “SHAKE to receive \$1 million” – *Statesville Record & Landmark*

Updates

Carol Johnson encouraged anyone with success stories to email them to Emily Clamp for inclusion in the Centralina WDB E-Newsletter.

Carol stated the November Youth Council meeting will need to function a little differently than normal. Board chair Bob VanGorden has asked all committees of the Board, in which the Youth Council is one, to take a serious look at the Board’s 2010 plan and create a plan of action to implement and really make some things happen in regards to the priorities and goals listed in the plan. The Youth Council is expected to present a report to the Board during its December 8, 2009 meeting. For that reason, Carol stated that it is necessary for all youth council members to really try and make the meeting so that we can get fulfill our obligation. She added that all come prepared – for this will indeed be a working meeting!

Carol went on to state that she has had a conflict arise with the date originally set for the November meeting and due to the task at hand she feels the need to take an active part in the conversation and therefore suggested rescheduling the meeting. With youth council member approval, she instructed Natasha to follow up with members on dates that they may be available to meet in November. Natasha agreed to follow up with all members immediately and communicate via email the final date within the next few days.

Carol thanked everyone for coming out. Meeting was adjourned at 11:35 am.