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# BOARD RETREAT MINUTES

## January 26, 2018

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**Board of Directors:**

Melida Akiti, Board Chair; Armando Fana, Vice Chairman; Michael Lepera, Treasurer; Joe Rogers, Secretary, Christopher Cade, Jeff Dwyer, Kalinthia Dillard, Lisa McDermott, Nichole Anderson, Rosha McCoy, Sarah Thomas, Sigrid McCawley

**Unable to Attend:**

Jeff Dwyer, Kalinthia Dillard, Lisa McDermott

**Other Attendees:**

*ChildNet Staff:* Larry Rein, Donna Eprifania, Donna Skees, Lawrence Plaza, Deena Ponto, Kim Thai, Kenneth Brighton, Gillian Moxey, Brian Leitstein, Cecillia Shepard, Christine Butler, Andriene Treasure Gordon, Sheree Tortora, Andrea Chenet, Tennille Violandi, Kezia Stewart, Laura Leese, Eric Ellison, Naja Beckford, Stephanie Allen, Diane Rufus, Maggie Jovanovich, Julie Janello *DCF:* Raul Ocampo, *Group Victory:* Stephen Ferrante, *SOS Children's Villages:* Jillian Smath

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**CALL TO ORDER – Melida Akiti, Board Chair**

- Melida Akiti, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:40 a.m. Ms. Akiti noted that today's Board meeting is a mini Board Retreat where we will be breaking out into four (4) work groups.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Joe Rogers, Secretary**

- Roll was taken and quorum was established.

The November 1, 2017, November 6, 2017, November 17, 2017 and December 15, 2017 meeting minutes were reviewed. *A motion was moved to approve the four noted meeting minutes. A vote was taken. The motion was passed unopposed.*

**ITEMS FOR BOARD REVIEW AND APPROVAL – Melida Akiti, Board Chair**

- Approval of Resolution #159 – Signature Authorization for Contract Year 2018 – This resolution provides Larry Rein, Interim CEO and President, signing authority for the contract year. This resolution is signed on a yearly basis.

*A motion was moved to approve Board Resolution #159. A vote was taken. The motion was passed unopposed.*

- Approval of Board Candidate – Amy Black – Ms. Black is the Senior Director of Business Services at Florida Power & Light. Ms. Black would be a highly qualified addition to our Board as she meets many of the requirements needed to increase the effectiveness of the Board in meeting diversity and skills needs.

*A motion was moved to approve Amy Black as the newest member of the Board. A vote was taken. The motion was passed unopposed.*



## ITEMS FOR BOARD REVIEW – Melida Akiti, Board Chair

- Board Committee Structure – The Board reviewed all Board committees. It was noted that Armando Fana wanted to be removed from the Palm Beach Fundraising Committee. Discussion was held on the new Legal/Human Resource Committee. Armando Fana asked if providers could serve on committees as advisory members. This will be discussed more at the February 2018 meeting.
- Recognition – Melida Akiti presented Sarah Thomas a plaque for her six years of service as a Board Director, as she terms out her service this month. Ms. Thomas has made great strides in her life, going from being a youth in the system to being a Board Member. Ms. Thomas spoke that she learned many leadership skills from everyone on the Board.
- CEO Interview Panel Selection of ChildNet Employee – Discussion was held that the CEO Interview Panel will consist of the following: 3 Board Members (Melida Akiti, Sigrid McCawley and Joe Rogers), 3 providers (Broward Sheriff's Office, Children's Services Council of Broward and Broward County) and 1 ChildNet line staff. There were 9 ChildNet employees who met the requirements to participate on the panel. All 9 names were put in a box and Ms. Akiti selected the following name: Juanita Hill. Ms. Hill will serve as the ChildNet line staff on the CEO Interview Panel.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

- Susana Correa, a member of the public, was present and asked to make public comment. Ms. Correa asked the Board who she should contact in order to discuss settlement of a claim she has against ChildNet. Ms. Correa clarified that she is a current client. Ms. Correa was directed to a member of the Legal Department for further assistance.

## WORK GROUP BREAK OUT SESSIONS

- The Retreat participants broke out into the following four (4) work groups: 1) Finance, 2) Legal Transparency, 3) Fundraising, and 4) Quality Reporting. Below are the reports for each of the noted work groups. The work groups sessions were 45 minutes in length.

## WORK GROUP REPORTS

1. Finance – New Format for Board Reporting - *Board Attendees: Armando Fana, Joe Rogers, Michael Lepera, Chris Cade; Staff Attendees: Donna Eprifania, Donna Skees, Brian Leitstein, Eric Ellison, DCF Attendee: Raul Ocampo.* Donna Eprifania reported that they spoke about three major topics that the Finance Committee wants to delve into: 1) ensuring that the information presented to the Board adds value and is easily understandable – i.e. use of key metrics that drive the organization's fiscal performance, 2) They spoke about the consistency of the message as it relates to the organization's financial posture being the same in all presentations. As well as contingency and reserve budgeting, budgeting within our means rather than based on utilization, projection methods being agreed upon and consistent throughout the year and how to factor in fundraising efforts in the support of the day-to-day business operation, and 3) Board reporting needs a high-level overview of the Finance Report, the detail should be vetted through the Finance Committee.

Next steps – Finance Committee committed to meeting face-to-face once a quarter. Staff are working the finalization of county specific spending plans that will include all of the detail of the organizations financial transactions; once the Committee has an understanding of the detail, it can then be rolled up.



- 2) Legal Transparency – What information the Board needs to know about Legal Engagement - Board Attendees: Sigrid McCawley; Staff Attendees: Christine Butler, Cecillia Shepard, Andriene Treasure Gordon, Maggie Jovanovich, Lawrence Plaza, Stephanie Allen. Sigrid McCawley requested Madam Chair to allow legal reporting to be added to Board Agenda so that the Board can be informed of pending litigation that may impact the organization. Suggest that any significant media issue that is facing the organization be provided to the Board by Legal as soon as possible. The group discussed the need to create better billing guidelines and standard engagement letters. Many large law firms have pro bono requirements within their organization. This is something that ChildNet can look into and use so that we are not spending so much money on legal fees. Make a preferred provider list of go-to firms and negotiate with them in advance to something coming up. All legal bills/invoices to be viewed by Legal first before processing in order to control costs.

New Chief Legal Officer – Cecillia Shepard was introduced as the new Chief Legal Officer. Ms. Shepard stated that the Legal staff wants to increase their visibility to all staff, to work closely with the Executive Team, to increase visibility in the community and to provide education about legal matters.

- 3) Fundraising – Board Attendees: Melida Akiti, Sarah Thomas, Nichole Anderson; Staff Attendees: Diane Rufus, Gillian Moxey, Kenneth Brighton, Naja Beckford. Mr. Brighton reported that they spoke about engaging the Board more in fundraising. Suggestion was made to have more “mini” fundraisers; to set-up payroll deductions for donations; have Board provide Community Relations with lists of people who tend to give to the community. It was noted that the Community Relations department is down by 1.5 FTE and we need to replace 1 FT position with someone with grant writing skills. Important to continue awareness building. To keep the Board informed, the Community Relations Department will provide documentation that will highlight some organization-wide needs, i.e. beds, furniture, etc.
- 4) Quality Reporting – What are the 12 Quality Indicators that DCF is measuring and what format to report to the Board - Board Attendees: Rosha McCoy; Staff Attendees: Larry Rein, Kim Thai, Sheree Tortora, Andrea Chenet, Deena Ponto, Tennille Violandi, Laura Leese. Larry Rein reported that moving forward ChildNet will be treating quality differently than in the past. The approach will be more focused and this is largely in hopes of more effectively and efficiently responding to the several crucial events facing ChildNet in the next several months. These include DCF Contract Monitoring in both Broward and Palm Beach in April 2018, COA reaccreditation culminating in a site visit in November 2018, and the statutorily required competitive procurement of the Broward CBC lead agency contract whose five-year extension concludes on June 30, 2019. If everyone stays very focused on doing the best job they can and improving performance quality, then ChildNet should be successful in all three and in ensuring its continued financial viability. ChildNet will concentrate on the 12 indicators of child welfare performance that DCF and the state’s lead agencies and service providers have all agreed upon as essential, which are the CBC Lead Agency Scorecard measures. These encompass measures of child safety, well-being and permanence and include both federal and state standards and targets. Staff will report to the Board, through the Program Quality Committee, on how ChildNet is performing compared to those standards, how its performance is improving on them and how its performance looks in the context of statewide performance. Bi-weekly Scorecard meetings will identify barriers to performance on them and develop strategies for addressing them. Methods for more broadly communicating with staff about how they can contribute and what they can do will be developed. Also, for many of the measures, the performance of service providers is a key component and, therefore, they too will be more thoroughly engaged in the process and held accountable for their performance on these quality measures.



## **MILESTONES – Armando Fana, Board Vice Chair**

- Armando Fana noted that as a Board they need some direction on where to go. He suggested the Board can use the four work groups' goals as tangible milestones, i.e. Fundraising - what is the amount, how many activities, Finance - goal is to set up the Metrix and twice a year provide a high-level presentation to the Board on the agency's budget, etc. The Board should have its own goals and milestones. We hope to have these 4 work groups operationalized as to what we are measuring by March 2018.

Next Board Retreat – Melida Akiti stated that her agency could provide space for the next Retreat. Mr. Fana to work on the next retreat for April 2018.

## **GROUP VICTORY REPORT – Stephen Ferrante, External Evaluator**

- The Group Victory Preliminary Report was handed out to the Retreat participants. Joe Rogers noted that there is a lot of emotion in the preliminary report and that morale is at an all-time low. Mr. Ferrante also handed out an "Analysis Action Summary". This summary notes the major findings/concerns and Consultant Recommendations, in which Mr. Ferrante discusses below. The preliminary report is based on focus groups, stakeholders' interviews, electronic surveys and one-on-one interviews. Mr. Ferrante noted that staff hopes action will be taken by the Board. Mr. Ferrante noted that people's perception is their reality.

### **Findings/Concerns and Consultant Recommendations:**

- Finding/Concern** – The workforce is dedicated, mission-driven, talented and invested.  
**Consultant Recommendation:** Engage workforce in organizational & operational decision-making and enhancements; Re-engage Six Sigma certified employees in organizational continuous quality improvement; Invest in and increase staff retention; Ensure supervisors have capacity to be responsive and helpful to staff.
- Finding/Concern** – The workforce has a substantial workload, particularly those managing caseloads.  
**Consultant Recommendation:** Continue efforts to reduce caseloads to a manageable level; Increase workplace supports that offer staff opportunities to debrief, re-strengthen, and experience work life balance; Reconsider the role of specialized units with respect to workload efficiency; Examine the importance of flexibility to compensate for workload demands and hours, instituting and enforcing a consistent responsive agency policy.
- Finding/Concern** – The workplace morale appears extremely low.  
**Consultant Recommendation:** Consider adopting an accountable culture of collegiality and staff empowerment agency-wide; Analyze staff turnover at the department, unit, and position level and address staff retention based on contributing factors
- Finding/Concern** – There is a lack of unity and cohesiveness across the organization and among the two county sites.  
**Consultant Recommendation:** Revisit the "One ChildNet" philosophy; Reinstitute agency-wide meetings and communication activities; Consider team building, staff retreats, and related activities to enhance agency unity and cohesiveness; Review and update standardization of policies, procedure, practices, and processes as applicable; Provide interdepartmental education, cross-training, and shadowing; Consider opportunities to leverage and maximize resources across the Broward and Palm Beach offices



- Finding/Concern – The Board of Directors needs to be more educated, engaged, proactive, accountable, and transparent.  
Consultant Recommendation: Initiate Board training and development; Publish Board meeting notices and the call-in telephone number; Post Board minutes in an accessible agency electronic folder; Establish a staff liaison to the Board; Initiate Board member shadowing of ChildNet employees; Conduct Board and staff dialogue sessions with 100% Board participation; Conduct a Board retreat or planning session; Develop a hybrid board and agency strategic plan
- Finding/Concern – Organizational leadership needs to provide a more positive influence on workplace culture.  
Consultant Recommendation: Closely consider the skill set required for key leadership positions and ensure incumbents and hires possess these competencies; Consider moving agency leadership and senior executives' offices to the first floor with the majority of the workforce to increase visibility, accessibility, and exposure to day-to-day operations; Ensure organizational leaders rebuild relationships with contracted providers and community partners
- Finding/Concern – There is a lack of trust in Talent Management to best represent and support the workforce.  
Consultant Recommendation: Conduct a specific analysis on Talent Management and consider enhancements to Talent Management based on evaluation findings
- Finding/Concern – There are inconsistent hiring and promotion practices.  
Consultant Recommendation: Assess hiring and promotion practices and initiate improvements, as applicable, based on findings
- Finding/Concern – Inequity exists in the employee benefits structure, i.e. health insurance and PTO.  
Consultant Recommendation: Review policies and practices associated with employee benefits
- Finding/Concern – Opportunities exist for enhancement to staff training and development.  
Consultant Recommendation: Evaluate training effectiveness and fit with workforce needs, including at the supervisory level
- Finding/Concern – Communication and transparency needs to be improved organization-wide.  
Consultant Recommendation: Institute an effective communication structure that includes multiple methodologies and standardization, including based on past successes
- Finding/Concern – Employees are not adequately engaged and recognized.  
Consultant Recommendation: Establish employee engagement and recognition as a workplace priority; Develop an employee recognition system collaboratively with staff; Allocate an annual budget for employee recognition; Analyze staffing structure, patterns, and compensation, including to restore prior salary reductions and offer work schedule flexibility
- Finding/Concern – Facility conditions and security needs to be improved.  
Consultant Recommendation: Conduct an assessment associated with facility conditions, equipment, and security, (including the Safe Place Shelter), making enhancements as applicable
- Finding/Concern – Providers need to be engaged as trusted and valued partners.  
Consultant Recommendation: Engage providers in system of care development and decision-making

- Finding/Concern – External system stressors need to be addressed.  
Consultant Recommendation: Address the systemic issues that create barriers to achieving the organization's mission king

Joe Rogers made a recommendation that the Board Chair sets up a Special Board Committee, for six months, to work with leadership to address the Group Victory Report Findings. Mr. Rogers noted the following recommendations that could be researched/implemented quickly:

- ✓ Need to re-engage Six Sigma and set up four project teams – this empowers employees
- ✓ Inequity in benefits – Have Talent Management review
- ✓ Salary reduction – Donna Eprifania, CFO is evaluating the 1% budget cut
- ✓ Revisit the “one ChildNet” philosophy. Suggest by next Friday, start a monthly org-wide meeting.
- ✓ Board of Directors need to implement all recommendations. Unfortunately, 100% participation is difficult even for attending Board meetings.
- ✓ Create Leadership Training
- ✓ Do analysis of Human Resources
- ✓ Employees not engaged and recognized – need to set-up committee with staff participation
- ✓ Second Floor Executives need to do a weekly rounding
- ✓ Need to hire a guard. Kezia Stewart noted we have police detail by SafePlace until 10:00 p.m.

*A motion was moved to approve a Special Ad Hoc Committee, for six (6) months, entitled “Workforce Engagement Committee” to work with leadership to address the Group Victory Report Findings. A vote was taken. The motion was passed unopposed.*

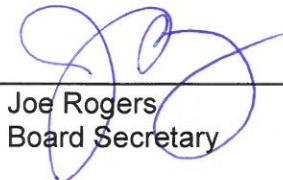
Joe Rogers offered to be the Chair of the special committee “Workforce Engagement Committee”. Mr. Rogers asked for volunteers for this Committee, therefore, Board Chair Melida Akiti asked Julie Janello to send an email to the Board asking for volunteers to sit on this special committee.

#### NEXT MEETING DATE

- The next monthly Board meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 23, 2018.

#### CONCLUSION

- Having no further business, a motion was *moved* to adjourn the meeting. *A vote was taken. The motion was passed unopposed.* The meeting was adjourned at 12:04 p.m.



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Joe Rogers  
Board Secretary

2/23/2018  
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Date

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