



BOARD RETREAT MEETING MINUTES

April 26, 2019

Board of Directors:

Melida Akiti, Board Chair; Armando Fana, Vice Chairman; Michael Lepera, Treasurer; Joe Rogers, Secretary, Amy Black, Christopher Cade, Jillian Smath, Lisa McDermott, Rebecca Brock, Rosha McCoy, Sigrid McCawley, Victoria Thurston

Unable to Attend:

Amy Black, Armando Fana, Chris Cade, Lisa McDermott, Rosha McCoy, Sigrid McCawley

Other Attendees:

ChildNet Staff: Larry Rein, Donna Eprifania, Dionne Wong, Deena Ponto, Andrea Cunningham, Melody Morris, Sonny Burnette, Julie Janello, *Fifth Street Counseling:* Garry Smyth, *Consultant:* James Mueller

CALL TO ORDER – Melida Akiti, Board Chair

- Melida Akiti, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Joe Rogers, Secretary

- Roll was taken, and quorum was not established. Therefore, the March 22, 2019 meeting minutes will be reviewed at the May 2019 Board Meeting.

FUNDRAISING BOARD RETREAT

- **Setting the Stage – Larry Rein, CEO and President**

Larry Rein discussed why we want to have this meeting, which is to focus on developing and telling ChildNet's story. ChildNet has an incredible story to tell. We made a commitment, at the last Board Retreat, to have ChildNet be the best they can be for the children and families we serve. Among other items, we need to have adequate resources and we need to be much more aggressive in raising money and finding those resources. Everyone needs to be part of this effort. Board members can be a vital part of spreading ChildNet's story. ChildNet helps people transform their lives.

We have two individuals here who will be telling their story later on, who came into the foster care system through no fault of their own. Today they are remarkably successful people making an incredible contribution to their community and are trying to help others who are like they were. It is ChildNet's responsibility to support them, to support their caregivers, and to ensure that they are not the exception going forward. We need to set the stage, we need to provide the resources, and we need to create the environment where they and their caregivers can transform their lives.

- **Framework for Telling a Story – James Mueller, James Mueller & Associates**

Jim Mueller began by asking why do we tell stories? Responses were to create connections, to spark interest, to visualize. He then asked what is important to a good story? Responses were relatability, credibility, knowing your audience, passion, and the ability to be moved. Stories capture meaning in ways that you cannot if you just explain something.

- **Client Stories**

Melody Morris – is a former foster child who is currently a ChildNet Child Advocate Supervisor. Melody discussed how she and her two siblings were removed from their home twice and that they moved 13 times by the time she was 7 years old. Eventually, her grandparents got permanent guardianship of her and her siblings. Melody knew in high school that she wanted to work with children and families, and her goal was that she wanted to save or affect just “one” child from going through what she had in her life. Melody noted that everything a Child Advocate can do does help and can change a family’s life.

Discussion was held on what of Melody’s story moved you. Responses were that she is standing in front of us and she is a success and that there is hope, the story was genuine, and her story shows how she is constantly driven by her experiences. The thing about good story-telling is vulnerability.

Sonny Burnette – is a former foster child who was in care from the ages of 5-17 when he then transitioned to an Independent Living home. Sonny is currently a ChildNet Independent Living Aftercare Advocate. Sonny noted that growing up he was in many foster homes. He noted that having a child advocate and mentors helped him stay emotionally stable. Sonny noted that he had a Life Coach from SOS Children’s Villages from the ages of 13-17 and that he is still in contact with her to this day. He noted that while in college he was lucky to have met a very key person in his life, his godmother. She taught him how to be a humble, god-fearing man. Sonny noted that many young adults, when coming out of the system, struggle with life skills, i.e. finances, as they do not have a safety-net like many other young adults have who are not in the system.

Discussion was held on what of Sonny’s story moved you. Responses were that Sonny painted a very sad picture with his story; however, he tells his story with a joyfulness instead of sadness.

- **Elements of a Good Story – James Mueller, James Mueller & Associates**

Mr. Mueller discussed the elements of a good story:

- Connect to the cause
- “5-second moment” - captures a fundamental change in your life
- Defining your 5-second moment
- Finding your story’s beginning
- Building out your story
- Keep your story “real”

Requirements of a “5-second moment”:

- Must be authentic
- You must be connected to it emotionally
- It must be relatable
- It must be “your” moment
- Telling a real story makes the audience want to hear more

- **Small Group Discussions – James Mueller, James Mueller & Associates**

Mr. Mueller asked the Retreat attendees to break out into small groups and discuss their “5-second moment”. Pick a starting place, i.e. what moment best captures the opposite of the 5-second moment? The beginning is a set up to a satisfying ending, so focus on the contrast and create anticipation. Be honest and vulnerable, do not brag, use humor when appropriate, and do not be boring.

- **Who Should Hear Our Stories – James Mueller, James Mueller & Associates**

A handout was provided to Retreat attendees to provide names/contacts of people who may be interested in or whose lives might be better because they know about ChildNet's causes – and how lives are being transformed. These lists are to be provided to Andrea Cunningham, Director of Community Relations.

- **How to Have a Purposeful Conversation – James Mueller, James Mueller & Associates**

Discussion held on how to have a purposeful conversation, i.e. the importance of a positive attitude and the need to prep for an effective visit (what is my purpose of this visit, what is the best outcome for the visit, what do I need to know from the prospect to achieve my outcome, and what are my "yes" and "explore" questions?)

To have a purposeful conversation, you need to "listen...ask questions...listen". You can elicit what you need through "yes" and "explore" questions. The hierarchy of "yes" and "explore" questions: *personal interest, *cause, *vision/mission, *strategy, *program, *project (outcomes, impact) and *gift proposal.

- **Next Steps – James Mueller, James Mueller & Associates**

Discussion held that ChildNet, in the past few years, has focused on government relations. ChildNet has a strong lobbying company and good relations in Tallahassee. Now we have a great fundraising staff person, Andrea Cunningham, Director of Community Relations. Ms. Cunningham will create, for the Board, the ChildNet "elevator speech" to assist the Board in starting a "purposeful conversation" with donors. Ms. Cunningham is developing a gap analysis on tangible items for fundraising.

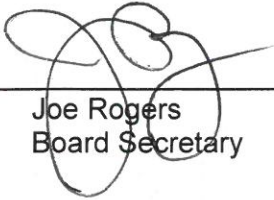
The Next Steps are for the Board, if they have not done so already, to complete the handout with their names/contacts, as noted under "who should hear our stories". In response to Board Director questions about where donated funds can be used, Ms. Cunningham said that she will meet with people within the child welfare arena to better define needs and gaps. At the next Board meeting, Ms. Cunningham will have a preliminary list of initiatives with a dollar amount attached to each initiative.

NEXT MEETING DATE

- The next scheduled Board meeting is Friday, May 17, 2019.

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 10:29 a.m.



Joe Rogers
Board Secretary



Date

(Corporate Seal)