



Prevention Work Group Purpose Statement

Reduce system entry and recidivism by strengthening community support and increasing access to preventative services.

- I. Welcome and Introductions
 - a. Present: Reshea Bristol, Kyle Kinney, Ronda Newman, Emily Weber, Darren Flores, Regina Tullos-Williams, L.D. Richardson, Andrea Wright, Janee Pannkuk, Karla Dush

- II. Member Check-In and Agency Updates
 - a. Omaha Home for Boys has been open and operating during this time and they have a shelter opening up on May 26. The shelter will serve juveniles, both boys and girls, referrals will go through Darrell Howard, with Clinical Services, and possibly Brandy Gustoff; will get us more information on who's being served, age limits, and different requirements. UPDATE: This is currently a pilot between OHB and Probation, serving youth ages 12-18. If all goes well OHB would like to duplicate this program; offering other agencies the ability to refer.
 - b. NE Helpline hasn't shut down either, people are working from home and it has been going very well; calls went down initially but have slowly trickled back up – top 3 calls have been parenting in a crisis, families with COVID related items, and utility/rent assistance (although this last one has gone down).
 - c. Project Everlast has been working from home, still doing all the same business just doing it virtually, doing pantry deliveries to young people every Tuesday; top 2 issues/needs are housing and food. Facebook Live is the primary way they are interacting with people right now.
 - d. Nebraska Children's Home Society's education team is having difficulties trying to find ways to get in contact with their kids since they are unable to use social media, so they're working on sending out letters to talk to some of the kids right now, and preparing for this next year; they work with 7th and 8th graders. Staff is starting to slowly transition back into their work areas.
 - e. Boys and Girls Club has been closed since March 13th; full-time employees will transition back to a club on June 1st and then they'll work on a strategy to bring their part-time employees back. Have been connecting with their kids virtually for 2 hours on Monday, Wednesday and Friday providing programming, they send packets to the kids with materials for the activities they are going to do. They have 4 grade cohorts: K-2nd, 3rd-5th, 6th-8th, and 9th-12th; the biggest age groups are 6th-8th and 9th-12th. With the 9th-12th they

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are providing a lot of information about what the job market is going to look like and have added some educational support; OPS has provided a package and they have teachers who are part of their staff and they are delivering those in 15-20 minute increments. The younger kids are more hands-on, more creative, fun stuff for them to do. They have 8 clubs that are distributing evening meals, since the school district is providing breakfast and lunch for their families the need is the evening meal. By this Friday they are projected to have provided 30,000 meals; have partnered with No More Empty Pots so on Fridays they provide them with prepared, frozen meals that the families can take home and on Wednesdays they do pizza; families don't have to be a member, if they're hungry a meal will be provided. For their members, because they recognized that the elementary schools did not send devices home with the children, they have distributed 250 chrome books/laptops/tablets along with information from Cox Connect so they can use those devices. Their 4 gang specialists have been connecting with their highest-risk kids using the Zoom platform and they have parents in the case load that they contact every week just to see how they're doing. On Monday their gang specialists will start using their vans and taking 25-50 of the sack lunches and going to the areas where kids are hanging out, to connect with them, and to get the vans out and about in the community to remind people that the Boys and Girls Club is still out there and active.

- f. Heartland Family Service, as well as other organizations, are experiencing funding issues and are concerned with support of the workforce and it trickling down to the amount of families not being able to get the services they need.

III. Activity

- a. COVID discussion - avoiding system involvement /further system involvement
 - i. Current Barriers
 - 1. For some of the youth, it is required that they have jobs. Unfortunately, many have lost their jobs during this time.
 - a. If we could get fabric to OHB, the kids could work on cutting the fabric and, possibly, learn how to sew the masks.
 - 2. Idle time and lack of engagement, trying to be creative in getting them engaged and keep them engaged.
 - a. Project Everlast asked for NE Hands and Feet information and suggested that they might be able to provide some type of stipend for youth who would help out with this project.
 - 3. There's a large percentage of kids who the schools haven't been able to connect with during this time and if those kids don't show up when school starts back up and no one knows where they are, we may see an upswing in system-involvement with these kids.
 - ii. Strategies
 - 1. Connect with youth using Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, anything that engages them.

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2. In the forums we held last year at the Boys and Girls Club, the 3 top three things the kids said they needed were a mentor (someone who's always there, that can be reached, does things with them, positive support), mental health, and positive community activities/engagement; they need someone they can talk to.
3. Boys Town National Hotline has 'Your Life, Your Voice' which is their online and social media presence where kids can reach out and talk to a crisis counselor by phone, chat, text or email, 24/7, so they can reach out and talk to a counselor at any time, whether its emotional issues, relationship issues, suicidal thoughts/ideations, and with the COVID situation there has been a big upswing in calls about family dynamics and runaway issues; it's a free app or access it on the website. There are resources also available on the app.
4. Re-engaging youth is going to be something that needs to be thought about in the next few months.

IV. Announcements

a. OYS Updates

- i. OYS has been working remotely and holding virtual meetings during this time. Most likely, we will continue to do so through mid-June at least.

b. Nebraska Hands and Feet

- i. Has been around since about the end of March 2020
- ii. Started as a grassroots group with a lady in Plattsmouth who got together with some friends to make a small number of masks
- iii. To date they have made over 50,000 masks, have over 100 seamstresses, and have distributed throughout the US and internationally
- iv. If you go on their website, masks4medics.org, you can request masks
- v. OYS has made a request for 1,000 masks to hand out to our work group members so we all have them to give out to people. If anyone is in need of masks, please let OYS know (we will receive them as they get them done, not all at once)
- vi. If you know of anyone who might need community service hours there is the opportunity to assist the organization by cutting out the 7" x 8" and 8" x 10" fabric rectangles used; that alone can save them time they can use sewing
- vii. If you would like to make a donation of fabric (best fabric is quilter's 100% cotton), we can make arrangements to pick it up (wash and iron it first so it's ready to be used)
- viii. If you would like to help by cutting the rectangles, they will bring fabric to cut
- ix. If you take an old 100% cotton t-shirt, cut off the bottom hem and cut up 1" wide, 18" long strips, they can use them to make the ear bands (no patterns)
- x. Monetary donations can be made on their Facebook page, NE Hands and Feet

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- xi. This would be a good way to teach kids a skill by teaching them how to use sewing machines by sewing masks and this organization is willing to show them how; it's a skill that can be used in many different professions or as a way to make money on their own.

V. Next Steps

- a. Everyone talk to their respective entities, or challenge people personally, to donate fabric or donate cutting time

Next Meeting: Wednesday, June 17, 2020, via Zoom

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