

# STATE OF ALASKA

## DEPT. OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

### Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

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#### *Faith-Based and Community Initiatives Advisory Council*

### **Meeting Minutes**

Friday, January 11, 2008

#### **Call to Order**

**Scott Merriner** welcomed members and called to order the tenth meeting of the **FBCI Advisory Council** at 9:30 a.m. on Friday, January 11, 2008, at the Frontier Building in Anchorage.

#### **Welcome & Introductions**

Advisory Council members introduced themselves and roll was taken. Michael Curran began the meeting by telling the Athabascan story titled: "Raven and Loon: The Necklace Story."

**Council members present:** Scott Merriner, Loren Leman, Kathleen Svenson, Julie Morris, Lucy Hansen, Nancy Campbell, Keith Hamilton, Kim Patterson, Cindy Cashen,

Gloria Tokar, June Ulz, Jay Pullins for Lt. Governor Sean Parnell, Robert Flint, Judy Fulp, & Allen Levy

**Council members not present:** Glen Clary, Eugene Harnett, Jeanie Greene, Mike Enschede, Diane Johnson, & Ryan Ray

**Staff members present:** Michael Curran, Ann Marie Sack & Stephanie Wheeler

**Also present:** Representatives from two organizations that received a Compassion Alaska sub-award: Cathy Lee, George Hernandez, Joaquin Barbachano (First CME-Community Development Center) and Rodney Clark and Kylie Clark (Goose Lake Recreational Foundation)

#### **Expiration of Terms – Update from Boards and Commissions**

Executive Director, **Stephanie Wheeler** and Council Co-Chair **Scott Merriner** reported meeting with Frank Bailey, who oversees Boards and Commissions, to discuss how to proceed with Council members' terms. Many members' terms expire May 1, 2008. **Scott** reminded members that the Council exists via an Executive Order, which is less permanent than existing by a statute. Therefore, he suggested that members consider this issue in the future. The following are other issues that were discussed relating to the Council's structure:

- What size should the Council be? There are many pros and cons to having a small and large Council
- Continuity is very important. Some members should remain because of their institutional knowledge of the Council's activities
- Terms should be staggered to ensure continuity and to bring in new energy
- Most board terms are too short: Council terms are three years, which is standard for most boards
- Current members should express via e-mail to **Scott** their intentions of continuing to serve on the Council or not
- **Scott** will follow up with Frank Bailey about the responses he gets from members

**Approval of Minutes:** Council members approved the minutes from the September 14th, 2007 meeting

## Office Update

### National Scene

*Stephanie* updated members on the activities of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (WHOFBCI). There has been a lot of dialogue at the National level regarding this Initiative. She reported that the national Faith-Based and Community Initiative (FBCI) is seven years old and has been the longest standing initiative. The initial intent of the national FBCI was not to invent anything new, but to encourage states across the country to support the efforts of faith-based and community-based groups.

The WHOFBCI will be releasing a 100-page report on January 29, 2008, titled, "The Quiet Revolution." The focus of the report will be on the following four major pillars/activities of the national FBCI:

- Providing equal treatment to faith-based and community-based groups in accessing funding
- Focusing on Capacity Building
- Promoting strategies involving the philanthropic community and volunteers
- Encouraging program innovation

*Stephanie* has sent information to the WHOFBCI about: Alaska's FBCI Task Force, names of Task Force and Advisory Council members, and other AOFBCI activities to be included in the report. She also mentioned how Alaska's Office is a model state and was the first state to hold an annual FBCI conference.

*Stephanie* noted that there will be a White House Conference targeting individuals, who work with At-Risk Youth. Alaska can nominate up to 50 people to attend. Council members are encouraged to recommend names of people to *Stephanie*.

### ASPIRE Bill: SB76 (Alaska's youth Succeed when People Invest Resources in Education)

Staff member, *Michael Curran* provided members with an overview of the ASPIRE Bill that was sponsored by Senator Johnny Ellis and Representative Bill Stoltz and was passed on May 9, 2007. The AOFBCI was asked to plan the media portion to help get the ASPIRE program going. The following points provide an overview of the purpose of ASPIRE:

- It will allow individuals and businesses to establish an educational savings plan for a non-related beneficiary through the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA)
- Prior to this bill, a person could only establish an educational savings plan for a person, who is biologically related
- A beneficiary of an educational savings plan does not have to attend UAA
- Provides children and youth in foster care an equal opportunity for getting funding for post-secondary education

*Michael* will let Council members know what the emerging media plan is for ASPIRE

### Volunteer Awards/Annual Conference Report

*Scott* reported that the AOFBCI has been working closely with the Alaska State Community Service Commission (ASCSC) in planning the upcoming "Volunteer Awards" luncheon that will happen April, 2008. The Annual Conference and the Volunteer Awards luncheon will be two separate events this year (previously, they were combined into one event). The Annual Conference will happen October, 2008. *Stephanie* reported that the ASCSC has a new Executive Director, who is very sharp and who is sure to contribute equally to the planning for the Annual Conference (unlike the previous conference, where most of the work fell on AOFBCI).

The following Council members expressed interest in participating in the Volunteer Awards committee to help nominate volunteers for the Lt. Governor's Stars of Gold Award (**June, Gloria, Cindy, Kathleen, and Jay**). **Stephanie** will be sending Council members information via e-mail on how to nominate individuals or groups for a volunteer award.

#### Anchorage's Anti-Gang and Youth Violence Task Force

Staff member, **Ann Marie Sack** provided an overview of Anchorage's Anti-Gang and Youth Violence Task Force. Her role in the task force has been to participate in a smaller workgroup that is focused on planning a "Family Assessment Center." This workgroup is newly formed and therefore, **Ann Marie** will be able to participate in the group's initial strategic planning process.

#### Compassion Alaska: Regional Trainings and Sub-awardees

**Ann Marie** provided Council members with an update on the current status of the Compassion Alaska program. There are currently seven small grassroots and faith-based organizations who have received a \$20,000 sub-award. The seven organizations include:

- Goose Lake Recreational Foundation (Anchorage);
- Parachute Ministries, Inc. (Anchorage);
- First CME-Community Development Center (Anchorage);
- Careline Crisis Intervention (Fairbanks);
- Fairbanks Rescue Mission (Fairbanks);
- Boys and Girls Club of Northwest Alaska (Kotzebue); and,
- Holy Name Catholic School (Ketchikan).

The first of five two-day capacity building trainings (offered at no-cost) occurred in Anchorage on January 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008, and was well attended. The remaining four trainings will be held in Kotzebue, Fairbanks, Bethel, and Juneau. Council member **Keith Hamilton** requested that AOFBCI consider bringing the training to the Kenai area, so that people in the area can benefit from the services.

#### Advisory Council Initiatives

##### Food to Rural Alaskans Discussion

**Scott** began the discussion about Council members' efforts towards getting food to rural Alaska since the last meeting.

**Keith** reported that the biggest challenge that remains and will continue to remain is **transportation**. There are three major components in getting food to rural Alaska:

- 1) Gathering the food to send to rural Alaska
- 2) Arranging for transporting the food to rural Alaska
- 3) Arranging for who will receive and store the food, once it gets to rural Alaska

**Keith and Scott** reported that there is plenty of support for the first and third component, but not the second.

The following are highlights from the overall discussion on getting food to rural Alaska:

- Hunger issues in rural Alaska will never go away
- There is support from Alaska Airlines outside of the State, but Alaska Airlines within the State does not even have the capacity for hauling freight
- There has not been support from the Air National Guard with providing transportation
- Council members are encouraged to talk with legislators about the high transportation costs

- Council member **Cindy Cashen** reported that it may be possible to seek support for this issue from the new Deputy Commissioner for the State's Aviation Division
- **Jay Pullins** recommended re-visiting the option of seeking support from the Air National Guard for transportation
  - He agreed to meet with the Colonel of the Air National Guard
  - He mentioned that initially, the Air National Guard could not get involved because it could potentially take away business from Alaska Airlines
  - But if Alaska Airlines lacks the capacity, perhaps the Guard could reconsider
- Council member **Bob Flint** suggested looking into the Denali Commission
- **Scott** asked if Council member **Allen Levy** could work with Council member **Loren Leman** on communicating with the Denali Commission
- **Allen** reiterated that providing food to rural Alaska can be done and there are stories of success
- **Allen** mentioned that the Food Bank of Alaska is now requesting that the public donate money instead of food, because they are able to get even more food with money and can better meet the needs of communities.

#### Foster Care

**Scott** introduced the discussion on the Council's Foster Care Initiative and reported that:

- A group of mostly pastors have met twice to look at this issue (he wants to keep the group small and cohesive so that the group can be open and frank in their discussions)
  - Most members of this group are skeptical about taking on this issue
  - Despite their skepticism, they are willing to look further into the issue
  - One strategy may involve creating a duplicate OCS system, but group members emphasized that they would not want any government money
- The foster care group will convene seven more times
- Dennis McMillian has agreed to facilitate the group's discussion
- **Jay** wanted to share with Council members that after having met more than 100 OCS workers, he learned that: they are very well intentioned people, who work under tough conditions, in a high turnover environment and are severely underpaid
- Council member **Julie Morris** expressed the importance of remembering the whole family and that works needs to be done to dispel the animosity that often exists between foster families and biological families
- Council member **Kathleen Svenson** reminded members that at the last meeting, there was some discussion about identifying a liaison to help bridge communication between the foster care initiative and the State

#### Mission Moment (Allen Levy)

**Allen** showed a video titled: "Creativity for Peace," that highlighted a camp for young Israeli and Palestinian girls that was held in New Mexico. He volunteered at this camp during the summer of 2007. The video demonstrated the power of building peace among young girls in the Middle East, and it generated a lot of interest among Council members.

#### Overview of AOFBCI Budget

**Scott** provided members with an update on the AOFBCI budget. The biggest issues are:

- Current funding for AOFBCI is coming from the Compassion Capital Grant

- The first year of funding for AOFBCI was a very unique arrangement: four state agencies contributed money to implement the initiative in Alaska (DHSS contributed the most)
- In subsequent years, there has been no funding from the Legislature for AOFBCI
- The State must fund AOFBCI this next year
- Council members need to ask for the amount of money that is required to maintain the Office's current operations, which is approximately \$400,000
- Council members must be proactive!
- *Scott* will be meeting with the Lt. Governor's office to learn how to best approach the Governor in gauging her level of support for AOFBCI

### **Compassion Alaska –Anchorage grantees tell the story!**

Representatives from two Compassion Alaska grantees, First CME-CDC and Goose Lake Recreational Foundation, gave a brief report on their respective organizations, the current services being provided and their plans for how they will use the Compassion Alaska sub-award funding.

### **Future of AOFBCI – Planning Session/Preparing for Next Council Meeting in Juneau, March 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008**

*Scott* began asked members the following question: Have we accomplished what we planned to accomplish? The following activities still need to be accomplished by the Council:

- Ensuring the sustainability of AOFBCI
- Communicating to the public what efforts are happening at the grassroots level (e.g. sharing the stories of Compassion Alaska grantees)
- Requesting support from Legislators and the Governor
- Drafting a letter to the Governor
- Making an appointment to meet with the Governor
- Inviting the Governor to attend the Council meeting in Juneau
- *Scott* (through *Stephanie*) to schedule a meeting with the DHSS Commissioner to discuss the future of AOFBCI

*Scott* requested Council members to brainstorm a list of items worth mentioning to the Governor in either a letter or in a conversation. The following are the highlights:

- We thank you for your support
- Provide a list of activities that both AOFBCI and the Advisory Council have taken since the Office's inception
- Inquire into the Governor's level of commitment to Alaska's Faith-Based and Community Initiative
- Discuss the sustainability issues facing the Office
- Please commit funding for AOFBCI, so that the Office can continue to rally the faith-based community
- Consider embedding the AOFBCI into the fabric of the State
- Drug and alcohol abuse are extremely high priority issues to tackle
- *Scott* will draft a letter to the Governor and will circulate it among Council members

### Action Steps

- *All Council members* whose terms will expire May, 2008 should express via e-mail to *Scott* their intentions of either remaining on the Council or leaving
- *Scott* will follow up with Frank Bailey about the responses he gets from members
- *All Council members* are encouraged to contact *Stephanie* to recommend people who work with At-Risk Youth and would be good candidates to attend the White House conference on the west coast
- *Michael* will let Council members know what the emerging media plan is for ASPIRE
- *Stephanie* will be sending Council members information via e-mail on how to nominate individuals or groups for a volunteer award
- The following Council members expressed interest in participating in the Volunteer Awards committee to help nominate volunteers for the Lt. Governor's Stars of Gold Award (**June, Gloria, Cindy, Kathleen, and Jay**)
- *Jay* agreed to discuss the issue of food to rural Alaska when he meets with the Colonel of the Air National Guard
- *Jeanie Green* to consider making a video of Compassion Alaska grantees
- *Scott* asked *Nancy Campbell* to work with other members on the Council's Legislative Committee to prepare for the next Advisory Council meeting in Juneau on March, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008:
  - Scheduling meetings with legislators (just like last year)
  - Making dinner arrangements for the Council
  - Preparing introductions for the House and Senate chambers
- *Scott* requested Council member *Allen Levy* work with Council member *Loren Leman* on communicating with the Denali Commission

### Adjournment

*Scott Merriner* closed the meeting with a prayer

*Scott* adjourned the meeting at 3:45 pm on Friday, January 11, 2008.

### Agenda Items Not Covered

- New Travel Policy and Procedures

Minutes submitted by: Ann Marie Sack (Associate Coordinator)

Minutes approved by: Stephanie Wheeler (Executive Director) & Scott Merriner (Advisory Council Co-Chair)