



City of San Marcos
Human Services Advisory Board (HSAB)

October 13, 2022 at 7:00 PM
Virtual and San Marcos Public Library

Regular Meeting – Minutes

Members Present: JoAnn Parsons, Board Chair
Mary Earls, Voting Member
Gloria Quinn, Voting Member
Rachel Montgomery, Voting Member
Mariana Zamora, Non-Voting Advisory Member

Member(s) Absent: Ruben Garza, Voting Member
Alison Duplecin, Voting Member
Monica Gonzales, Voting Member

Staff Liaison: Carol Griffith, Planning & Development Services, Community Development Manager

Staff Present: Brandon Johnson, Planning & Development Services, Intern

- I. **Call to order:** The meeting was called to order by JoAnn Parsons at 7:03 PM.
- II. **Roll Call:** Parsons called the roll. At the time that roll was conducted four voting members were present, forming a quorum.
- III. **30 Minute Citizen Comment Period:** No comments were received.
- IV. **Consideration of Minutes for September 29, 2022, Human Services Advisory Board Meeting.** Mary Earls moved for approval of the minutes. Gloria Quinn seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

V. Presentations:

1. **Agency: Girls Empowerment Network; Program: Girl Connect**

Chelsea Dean-Martinez introduced herself as the Development Director at Girls Empowerment Network and thanked the board for giving them the opportunity to present. Girl Connect provides girls weekly support on school campus for an entire semester. They were founded in 1996 addressing eating disorders, unhealthy relationships with drugs and alcohol, and other issues. They still exist to combat those issues but also other ones that social media has created and the devastating effects that COVID has had on youth. Recently the CDC reported an increase of mental health related hospital visits by 31% and suicide attempts made by girls increased by 50%. Girls Connect exists to provide girls with an extra layer of support and is for many the only layer. School counselors and case workers are reporting that their case load is too big and they do not have the band width to provide the support. Girl Connect provides a weekly consistent space for girls in which they can count on

support. They get connected to a relatable role model, have peer bonding, and are provided with a curriculum that equips them with the skills to navigate adolescence. The core of the curriculum is self-efficacy and belief in your ability. This makes girls more resilient, determined, and more capable, which leads to higher academics, better careers, and better mental health. In 2019 they hired a director of impact Dr. Sarah Miller Fellows and by using research-based evaluation methods she created a pre-imposed survey that is used with program participants. The survey measures a girl's belief in her ability before and after their programming across six different domains. These six domains include critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, coping skills, and confidence. These represent the six C's of 21st Century Learning which were voted by bi-partisan congressional caucus.

Parsons asked what time they offer their services. Dean-Martinez stated they work with school administration to identify a good time and focus on off periods or extracurricular activity time. They also offer Girl Connect for afterschool programming as well. Earls asked how many participants are in the program. They served over 1400 girls throughout the weekly Girl Connect program and 1100 of them were from the central Texas region. With this grant application, they are hoping to serve 100 unduplicated clients in San Marcos. Earls asked how many have been served in San Marcos and Hays County. They served over 100 girls last year and are just now getting into programming for this school year. Zamora asked Dean-Martinez to speak a little bit to Jen's retention efforts regarding working with students and if they have attendance issues. Dean-Martinez replied that whenever they go to schools, they work with a school counselor and a lot of the girls who are referred to the program are having truancy issues and as a result they have seen the positive impact Connect has had. One of their first third party surveys showed that Girl Connect increased girls school attendance. They work really hard to help girls feel connected to their school campus and peers so they can come to school. Parsons asked if they only served 100 from San Marcos. Dean-Martinez confirmed that is correct. Quinn asked where the bulk of their money was spent. Response was majority of the program budget is spent on salaries and benefits. Quinn asked if the girls who show signs of suicidal ideation are getting additional help. Dean-Martinez said they work really closely with the school administration and counselors to identify girls who need the extra support, and a lot of times girls are also struggling with mental health problems. They are a mandatory reporter so they will always work with the school counselor and anybody else to get the girls additional support if they think it's needed beyond the group. Quinn asked if they receive any matching funds. Response was they do not receive any matching funds but do receive funds from a private foundation to serve in Hays County in the amount of \$25,000.

2. Agency: Salvation Army; Program: Emergency Assistance

Lisa Cruz stated The Salvation Army is requesting this grant to help keep their emergency programs running throughout the year. The Salvation Army in San Marcos is here to assist the less fortunate in the local community. They are getting ready to start their red kettle season where they go and ring the bells to request donations and in the past, they have tried to manage with those funds, but it is not enough. If it was not for the grant funding they received last year they would not have funds to help nearly as many people as they have been helping this year. They have seen an influx of people needing help with utilities, and the majority of grant funding that they requested goes to this part of their emergency programs. For example, last month in September, they helped 174 individuals with emergency assistance programs, not including the food programs or their children's programs. This totaled over \$11,000, and \$10,000 was for utilities alone. The remaining was for

prescriptions, IDs and transportation. The HSAB grant that they received last year helped with about half of this amount. In their emergency assistance programs, they have utility assistance which helps with up to \$250 per household once in 12 months on an emergency basis. They also provide transportation assistance that is mainly for homeless people who receive one time assistance for housing to get them off the street or find employment. They also provide a onetime Greyhound bus ticket. Prescription assistance of up to \$150 is provided once in 12 months. They also provide snack packs, housing and clothing assistance.

Parsons asked how much they raised last year from Red Kettle. Cruz replied that last year they raised \$53,185. Parsons asked where they get clothing from. Cruz stated they purchase clothing from Walmart, Academy, Goodwill, or use donations they receive. Parsons asked what happens if the utility bill is over \$250. Response was they provide the first \$250 and give the client resources and/or work with other organizations in the area to help with the difference. Parsons asked if they partner with the Food Bank. Cruz responded that they partner with Hays County Food Bank, which provides them with snack packs and food for their food pantry. Quinn asked if they have seen changes in the demographics this year versus last year. Cruz responded they have seen changes and get referrals from headquarters and other organizations.

3. Agency: Association of Collaborative Communities Equipping Youth for Steam's Success; Program: ACCEYSS Programs

Agency representative Shetay Ashford Hansford stated that this program was initially started as a research project. In addition to being the President and CEO of the Power to Prosper Community Development Corporation she is also an associate professor at Texas State. So as part of the research agenda she was fortunate to be funded initially from 2017 to 2020 by the National Science Foundation. This allowed her to be able to create the ACCEYSS Network, which is the assumed name of Power to Prosper CDC, and then also develop this evidence-based model, which serves as the framework for the ACCEYSS theme camps and clubs that have been proposed through this process. This is a collaboration and Dr. Hansford said she is passionate about how they can leverage resources from the university to really inform and impact the community. The initial function was to just serve as a coalition, bringing together faith-based community organizations with resources and funding. As they got involved with training of their partners, knowing their evidence-based model and nine guiding principles of the model, they realized there were additional needs within the community. Their whole model is really focused on how they reach black and brown students, students who have been historically marginalized within communities of color. They provided stipends to help support primarily the camps and serve as a direct service provider to complement other partnerships within the community. In 2017 when this project initially launched it was a process of working with community partners to be able to identify Science, Technology, Engineering, Entrepreneurship, Agriculture, Art and Mathematics (STEEAAM) success skills that students need to be successful, as well as to understand what the current resources are. After the National Science Foundation grant ended in December 2020 that was the initial call for them to seek additional funding from the City of San Marcos to sustain this program. Parsons asked about their summer camp. This past summer they hosted it for the first-time using funding they received from HSAB They were able to reach 69 students in San Marcos and additionally their food distribution served over 400 regional families who were connected to the camps and the community. Parsons asked about the partnerships with the Greater Youth Council and Youth Services Board. Dr. Hansford said that ACCEYSS provides the evidence-based model to help guide the learning and they train partners on how to

utilize those assessments and implement those practices within their camps. Zamora asked about the opportunity zones and where they are located. Dr. Hansford replied that they are located across the highway close to San Marcos High School where federal opportunity zones are designated within the community. Quinn asked if they are affiliated with a church. Dr. Hansford said they are really connected with any organization that is faith based by principle and other nonprofits.

4. Agency: Southside Community Center; Program: Transitional Shelter

Andy Alejos stated the Transitional Shelter has worked side by side with the city of San Marcos since he has been employed by Southside which is over seven years. The shelter is not just a place for families and individuals that need a place to sleep. They do drug screenings, financial literacy classes, and encourage clients to develop and create a savings account to increase longevity of their well-being. They offer a daily meal that falls under the umbrella of the transitional shelter and serve dinner every day from 4 pm to 6 pm. They have an agreement with the Hays County Food Bank and are connected with Chick fil A, KFC and Red Lobster in San Marcos to provide surplus food. They are in talks with a church organization that is interested in donating a shower trailer. Currently they only have one male and one female bathroom, and the demand continues to grow.

Zamora asked about the length of stay. Alejos responded it is 30 days. Earls asked about the intake process. Alejos stated that clients must fill out an application and in the past ten months they have received 400 applications. They go through the applications and call them if they are a good fit. If the meeting goes well, then they are sent directly from there to get a drug screening because it's part of their policy to be drug and alcohol free. Zamora asked if they have any funding that has been granted from Hays County. Alejos stated they have been approved for \$25,000 of funding from Hays County.

5. Agency: Southside Community Center; Program: Specific Assistance

Andy Alejos stated that Specific Assistance falls under the range of rental assistance and utility assistance for which the amount is \$50 for utilities and \$100 for rental. They collaborate with other nonprofit organizations to try to alleviate the duplication of services. They work with the Salvation Army and get referrals from each other. They cap the amount they spend and keep it around \$1500 to \$2000 monthly and divide it between utility and rental assistance depending on the need. They occasionally use the specific assistance funding for clothes that is needed for job interviews. They also operate a free clothing distribution at the emergency shelter whenever it's not being utilized during extreme weather temperatures. They have seen a consistent increase in the amount of applications over the past six months now that COVID funding has run out.

Earls asked how often a resident can come to request assistance. Alejos responded every six months. Quinn asked about the maximum amount of assistance provided to each client. Alejos stated they spend about \$2000 of assistance per month total. He stated payments go directly to the landlord or the utility company. Parsons asked if they work with utility companies to prevent disconnection of services. Alejos said they collaboratively work with other agencies to help pay for a bill if the assistance they provide does not cover the bill.

VI. Discussion Items

1. Hold discussion among board members on the format of HSAB regular meetings including the length of presentations by agencies and question and answer sessions and provide staff direction

Quinn had asked to hold a discussion regarding the length of presentations by agencies and the question and answer session. Earls agreed with Quinn and wanted to give the agencies more time to present. Montgomery agreed and wanted more time to ask questions. Griffith suggested they could give each agency 15 minutes to either present, have a question and answer session, or mix it up. Parsons agreed with this. Zamora stated she would prefer to have a set time limit for each presentation. She feels the five minutes of time they have to present is sufficient. She would like to add three to five minutes for questions and answers. Earls agreed with Zamora and wanted more time to ask questions. Parsons suggested they omit the discussion session at the end of the meeting so they can provide more time to the agencies. Board voted on presentations to stay at five minutes, question and answer session to be 10 minutes and to omit the discussion period at the end of the meeting effective next year.

2. Hold discussion among board members on programs, agencies, and applications for the purpose of clarification, comparison, evaluation, and assessment.

The Board opted not to hold this discussion session by general consent.

VII. Reports: No reports were provided.

VIII. Future Agenda Items: No items were received.

X. Question and Answer Session with Press and Public. No questions were received.

XI. Adjournment: Earls moved to adjourn the meeting. Quinn seconded. Motion carried.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:28 pm.

The minutes for the October 13, 2022, meeting of City of San Marcos, TX; Human Services Advisory Board are respectfully submitted October 27, 2022 by:

Carol Griffith, Staff Liaison

Approved By:

JoAnn Parsons, Chair