

**Council on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren  
June 20, 2013**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:**

<b>In-Person</b>	<b>By Phone</b>
Toni Buxton, Dept. Children & Family Services	*Mary Norris, Dept. Health & Hospitals
Rosemary Davis, Citizen Committed to Rearing Grandchildren	*Monty Molaire, Louisiana Bar Association
Merieta Hathorne, Citizen Committed to Rearing Grandchildren	*Linda Ruffin, La. Dept. of Education
Dorothy Thibodeaux, Citizen Committed to Rearing Grandchildren	*John Wyble, La. Court Appointed Special Advocates
Rose Noel, Citizen Committed to Rearing Grandchildren	*Mary Joseph, Children's Defense Fund
**Tiffany Simpson, Children's Cabinet Exec. Director	
Judy Harrison, La. Children's Trust Fund Executive Director	
<p>* It was discussed participation by phone does not count toward achievement of a quorum for voting and decision-making purposes.</p> <p>** It was discussed Tiffany Simpson can not serve in the capacity of two members on the council, (Children's Cabinet Exec. Director and Chairman of Children's Cabinet Advisory Board).</p>	

**Others Present:**

Elizabeth Touchet-Morgan, Office Juvenile Justice

**Members Not Present:**

Donna Bowie, Office of Juvenile Justice  
 David Helveston, Louisiana Workforce Commission  
 Senator Sharon Broome, Louisiana Senate  
 Representative Regina Barrow, Louisiana House of Representatives  
 Stacy Mills, Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs  
 Designee, Chairman of Children's Cabinet Advisory Board  
 Anthony Recasner, Agenda for Children  
 Amanda Brunson, Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana  
 Delores Dyer, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren  
 Winona Lejeune, Citizen Committed to Rearing Grandchildren  
 Carmen Weisner, National Association of Social Workers  
 Judge William Dupont, Louisiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

## Disbanded Organization ~ Louisiana Maternal and Child Health Coalition

### **Discussion:**

John Wyble, Council Chairman, called the meeting to order.

Participants present by phone and in the meeting room (Library) at the Office of Juvenile Justice, 7919 Independence Blvd., Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 70806 introduced themselves.

Minutes of the last two meetings, March 28, 2013 and October 31, 2012 were provided by Toni Buxton for review by the group. The minutes could not be approved as a quorum was not present. They will be held for a vote until the next meeting.

Members present in the meeting room were provided copies of the legislation ACT No. 867 of the Louisiana 2010 Regular Legislative Session and ACT No. 313 of the Louisiana 2011 Regular Legislative Session for review of the membership and copies of the strategic plan. Advised documents would be emailed to phone participants along with today's agenda and the copies of the March 28, 2013 and October 31, 2012 minutes after the conclusion of the meeting. Reviewed documents to consider how to engage membership and move strategic plan forward.

To engage membership, John Wyble discussed contacting each individual on the roster of members individually to encourage participation. Judy Harrison volunteered to help with this effort. Elizabeth Anthon, who serves as the DCFS representative organizing the meetings, has contacted each member with details regarding the meetings. She will be requested to send to John Wyble the complete roster of individuals designated to serve on the council with information on challenges in reaching particular individuals and those who have declined to attend meetings or any concerns regarding individuals who may no longer be active within an organization. Have Elizabeth Anthon start following up with monthly with contacts to council members to engage and encourage participation in meetings.

To move the goals of the council, mandates of the legislation and strategic plan forward, the following options were discussed:

- Present information on the Council at the Children's Cabinet Advisory Board meeting in September (Toni Buxton and Dorothy Thibodeaux agreed to present at this meeting on September 10, 2013 at 10:00 AM at Capitol on 4<sup>th</sup> floor.)
- Electronic Letter/White Paper/Fact Sheet/Scoop Sheet – create a one page document that pulls together facts in a “nutshell”, including research to support and Louisiana-specific data, regarding grandparents raising grandchildren, the challenges faced and the priorities of the council with regard to this population of citizens
  - Use the research report funded by Louisiana Children's Trust Fund for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren organization
    - Pull out 2 or 3 simple, affordable recommendations from the report and use to engage legislators in trying to accomplish
      - Need bi-partisan support of the council and strategic plan per John
    - Need to determine most critical data points to garner desired interest and outcome from dissemination of document

- Reflect over the past 10 years since the report was developed and describe how we have moved forward as a state
    - Use this strategy to showcase what we still need to do
    - Need to stress immediacy of the services needed by the grandparents when they have needs, per Elizabeth Touchet-Morgan
    - One positive development would be the formation of this council
- Blue Cross/Blue Shield might partner to do printing of the document
- May want to consider a front/back document with message on the front and resources available to grandparents raising grandchildren on the back
- Toni Buxton to get with DCFS Communications Director, Trey Williams regarding development of a “tagline” to use in the report and other materials the council may develop and to get assistance in formatting the document to look professional and interesting
- Judy Harrison volunteered to work on the document and gather the appropriate information
  - Toni Buxton volunteered Elizabeth Anthon to work with Judy
  - Dorothy Thibodeaux mentioned April with Senator Broome’s office might be a resource for assistance as well
  - Committee agreed having Senator Broome and Representative Barrow aware of and involved in development of this document would be very beneficial to dissemination to other legislators
  - Judy Harrison also thought Senator Ben Nevers’ office might be engaged to assist or support the council in this effort

Other business brought us included consideration of how the council can support the local Grandparent Raising Grandchildren organizations around the state.

→ Judy Harrison recommended encouraging the local Grandparents Raising Grandchildren organizations around the state to recognize “Heroes for Grandparents” at their annual conferences to build local support for the issues of grandparents and other relatives fulfilling this role.

- Recommended starting with legislators from local areas that voted for the ACTS, 867 from 2010 and 313 from 2011

→ Recommend local organizations invite local legislators and local government officials to meetings and invite local photographer/reporter to come and provide some local media coverage of the attendance

- Public expression of appreciation for participation and support of local legislators and local government officials at the meetings will garner greater support

→ Advise local organizations on how they can build upon the Baton Rouge area Grandparents Raising Grandchildren organization’s partnership with Blue Cross/Blue Shield Foundation

- Get support to provide presentation on Darkness to Light (awareness of sexual abuse prevention) to council members

- Louisiana CASA and LCTF have already sponsored the Darkness to Light from the Stewards of Children program for the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren organization
- Blue Cross/Blue Shield Foundation is already supposed to be sponsoring the Darkness to Light presentation for Hope House in Covington
  - Recommendation made contact with Covington organization of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren might need to be made to insure access by members at Hope House presentation
- Each member of the council look for ways to educate own agencies on needs of grandparents and improving service delivery/advocacy/etc., including incorporation of grandparent sensitivity related to grandparents raising grandchildren in regular training offered to staff of partner agencies
  - Per Elizabeth Touchet-Morgan, OJJ is planning a large family engagement training for their staff in their 11 regional offices and can include this issue in that training
    - OJJ is also planning a meeting with the Shreveport Grandparents Raising Grandchildren organization
- Document more fully what the council has done to develop reports, move forward with our strategic plan and engage members to put into annual report to legislature

An agenda item for the next council meeting to be held on August 28, 2013 needs to include discussion of the annual legislative report. Final council meeting for the year on November 20, 2013 needs to include review of the draft of the legislative report.

→ Elizabeth Anthon needs to send out reminders about the upcoming meetings to all members.