

**Montgomery County Citizens Review Panel (MCCRP)**

**January 9, 2024 Meeting**

**Minutes**

**Members Present:**

Tinuade Akinshola	Stacey McNeely, Chair
Kenneth Beale	Lisa Merkin, CYFS Liaison
Laura Coyle	Elizabeth Simon
Kay Farley, CRBC Representative	Ronald Whalen

Ms. Stacey McNeely called the meeting to order.

Ms. McNeely advised that Shaoli Katana is currently not able to attend the MCCRP meetings.

**Review and Approval of the Minutes**

The draft minutes of the December 12, 2023 meeting were distributed prior to the meeting. Ms. Tinuade Akinshola pointed out two needed corrections in the draft minutes and then made the motion to approve the revised minutes. Ms. Laura Coyle seconded the motion. The revised minutes were approved.

**Agency Update**

Ms. Lisa Merkin reviewed the agency’s data for December 2023.

As anticipated, there has been an increase in referrals and reports of abuse due to school referrals. Out-of-home placements continued to be stable even with the increase in referrals. Out-of-home placements can be avoided with the provision of in-home services.

<b>Data Element</b>	<b>Aug. 2023</b>	<b>Sep. 2023</b>	<b>Oct. 2023</b>	<b>Nov. 2023</b>	<b>Dec. 2023</b>
<b>Assessment</b>					
Number of calls to Screening Unit	698	950	1194	1032	902
Reports of Child Maltreatment (referrals)	473	678	790	731	648
Number of new Alternative Response (AR) investigations	44	72	76	89	56
Number of new Investigation Response (IR) investigations	50	61	83	65	51
New non-CPS cases	66	63	81	75	68
Number of completed IR investigation findings – allegation indicated	37	32	44	44	35
Number of completed IR investigation findings – allegation unsubstantiated	18	20	31	20	22
Number of completed IR investigation findings – allegation ruled out	23	16	30	50	31
<b>Out of Home</b>					
Number of new out of home placements (entries)	7	9	7	6	14
13Total children who left care (exits)	4	12	13	14	6
Total out-of-home children in care at month's end	334	331	325	317	325

<b>Placement</b>					
Number of children in foster care	210	214	212	208	218
Number of children placed with relatives	71	69	70	60	58
Number of children in residential placement	53	48	49	49	49
<b>Length of Stay</b>					
Average (mean) length of stay in foster care (months)	33.8	34	34	34	34
Median length of stay in foster care (months)	27	26	27	28	28
<b>Resource Homes</b>					
Number of licensed regular foster homes (does not include restricted/relative homes)	125	125	124	122	122
Number of newly assigned regular home studies	1	0	0	1	1
Number of recruitment inquiries	32	54	34	33	31

Ms. Merkin advised that there was nothing unexpected in the data. Decreases were expected as there are fewer court dates over the holidays. The increase in out of home placements related to a sibling group.

Ms. Merkin also reported that the agency is in the final stages of developing a videotape to help in the recruitment of resource homes. There will be two versions of the videotape – commercial/ad length version and a longer version that can be used in presentations. The agency involved three resource families in the development of the videotape and hope to have the videotape finished within the next couple of weeks. The videotape will be placed on the agency and county websites as soon as finished. The agency is working on a plan for further distribution, which will be impacted by available funding. Ms. Coyle asked if a Spanish version of the videotape will be available. Ms. Merkin will check and report back.

## **MCCRP Committee**

### **Resource Home Recruitment and Retention Sub-Panels**

#### *Helping Resource Families to Deal with Grief and Loss at Reunification Subpanel*

Ms. Coyle reported for the subpanel. The spreadsheet of potential resources is close to finalization.

#### *Targeting Untapped Communities and Strategies for Emergency Placement Homes Subpanel*

Subpanel members are reaching out to the groups identified. For example, Ms. Akinshola shared the recruitment letter with her pastor and is awaiting a response.

At a previous meeting, a question was asked about the possibility of putting the approved correspondence language on agency or county letterhead. Ms. Merkin advised that the subpanel members could not use letterhead.

## **Other Business**

A question was asked about planning for the 2024 Spring Forum. Ms. Merkin advised that she had not heard anything yet. She will reach out to the Diane Lininger of the Mental Health Advisory Committee to check on the status of the planning.

Ms. McNeely advised that Montgomery County is updating the Community Connect portal, which can be used by the public to access information and services. The County is looking for volunteers to test the update. Ms. McNeely will share with the MCCRCP members the correspondence she received that provides information on volunteering to help with the testing.

#### Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on February 13, 2024.

The meeting adjourned.