



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Commission on Juvenile Justice

Marc Elrich  
*County Executive*

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*Director*

**Commission on Juvenile Justice Meeting**

**Tuesday, October 21, 2025**

**Virtual Meeting  
Minutes**

**CITIZEN MEMBERS PRESENT:** Kimberly Alfriend, Trina Anglin, Jaimie Aguilar, Clinita Atangwa, Kathleen Ayuk, Shereika Chin, Jeanily Cruz, Jaye Espye, Juan Fung, Gerda Gallop-Green, Melissa Goemann, Sincere Harris, Frederick Hawkins, Paul Margison, Debra Martin, Tara Mobley,

**AGENCY MEMBERS PRESENT:** Joanna Bonner, Francha Davis, Elizabeth Emen, Kathy Estrada, Susan Farag, Shakirra Haynes, Brett Lonker, Steve Neff, Nathaniel Tipton, and Carlotta Woodward.

**ABSENT MEMBERS:** Andrew Messick, Elizabeth Pentecost

**EMERITUS MEMBERS:** Carole Brown.

**GUESTS:** Pamela Abramson, Stefan LoBuglio

**SPEAKERS:** Olusina Adebayo, MPA, Executive Director, Rainbow Place Shelter and Alex Cartagena, Program Manager, Tree of Hope Association.

**STAFF LIAISON PRESENT:** Diane Lininger

- I. **Welcome** – Melissa Goemann, Co-Chair and Carlotta Woodward Co-Chair  
Melissa called meeting to order at 7:00 and welcomed everyone, including many new members. Melissa introduced the first speaker.
- II. **Speaker** - Olusina (Olu) B. Adebayo, MPA, Executive Director, Rainbow Place Shelter will be speaking on homeless LGBTQ youth and services being provided to them.

Mr. Adebayo brought a PowerPoint to discuss Rainbow Place Shelter's (RPS) plan to expand. Historically RPS has been a hypothermia shelter serving women. They also offer case management services to help women access Montgomery County's continuum of care. They have recently identified the need to offer services to young adults, specifically LGBTQ young adults. Mr. Adebayo shared Voices of Youth Count statistical information, from a survey conducted in 2016 and 2017 that highlighted the need. An April 2024 survey of MCPS students showed there were 421 youth experiencing homelessness. After that survey there was a huge jump a month later that showed 1,768 unstably housed students, 610 in high school, and many "couch surfing" or doubled up, i.e., living with other families. Montgomery Village/Germantown and Silver Spring are high pockets of unhoused youth.

RPS will be opening a new facility to serve homeless youth, provide shelter, meals, case management and facilitate permanent housing placement. Currently surveying youth to identify

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what services youth want. Also, RPS is creating partnerships within the County to help them be able to connect with their clients. Currently RPS is running a capital campaign to raise funds for a new facility. RPS is also looking at the State of MD Dept. Housing and Community Development for funds.

**Questions:**

1. What kind of work they are doing with MCPS and how we can help. MCPS has provided data and helped them identify needs of young people? Rainbow Place will look at MCPS for referrals.
2. How is RPS planning to include young adults who have been incarcerated and are transitioning back to the community. Mr. Adebayo stated they will serve those young people as well as young people aging out of foster care. There was a follow up question about what services are offered as young people transition out of their program. Rainbow plans to offer alumni support and to follow up with guests once they leave.
3. How many young adults will you be able to serve if you get the funding requested? Looking at serving about 30 young people a quarter. We want to make sure individuals don't leave until they are ready to be successful.
4. Is there insight regarding the driving force of increase in homelessness. Evictions increased. Many young people forced out because of LGBTQ+ issues, also mental health issues. Wide array of reasons.
5. Is there a vision for partnerships. Mr. Adebayo describes their vision for their services as an incubator. RPS hopes to give guests employment skills so potential employers as partners, also hope to partner with various service providers, depending on each young person's interests/abilities.
6. How youth can receive services, including youth who are leaving the foster care system. RPS currently receives referrals from the Montgomery County DHHS Center. RPS is looking to provide different referral access points so they can work with youth where they are. RPS has had discussions to figure out how to best identify youth aging out of care who don't have housing.
7. What are the criteria used to select young people. This will be low barrier, meeting the guests where they are.
8. How do they manage food insecurity at work and in shelters? This will be a huge undertaking, but they have a huge number of supporters. Will also hope to have stakeholders who help prepare and even serve food.
9. Does the agency serve young women who are pregnant? Not currently but there are other resources.

- III. **Speaker** – Alex Cartagena, Program Manager, Tree of Hope, shared his PowerPoint about Tree of Hope Association (THA). THA is a recovery-based community center in Rockville. Their programs depend heavily on peer support. Many of the staff are in long-term recovery. Offer peer coaching/mentorship, peer groups, social events. Discussed community center where there is a computer lab, Narcan training, referrals to treatment, transportation to treatment, general practitioner available, and they offer bus passes. Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous groups meeting at the Center. THA trains and certifies people to do peer support. THA just opened a Clubhouse last July. The Clubhouse is a supportive environment for youth that is open on weekdays and Saturdays. The Clubhouse offers individual support, group sessions, field trips and fun activities to build community. THA

generally expects to work with youth for 6 months to get them stabilized in their recovery and connected to their community. They get referrals from many sources. Referrals come through an online portal. THA operates within MCPS to work with peer groups conducted weekly at schools. THA serves guests aged 12-21 (if still in school). THA also works with parents including individual peer support, a parent support group, and connecting parents to other resources.

THA also runs a crisis program called STEER. They are on call 24/7 for emergency situations and will go directly to hospital emergency room.

THA also a listserv of over 500 people to distribute info about resources in real time. THA also offers community/social activities and retreats.

**Questions:**

1. What community resources would you like to see? Residential treatment. There is a lack of residential treatment programs in the state, so many need to go out of state to access residential treatment.
2. What is your engagement with DJS? Currently, we are working with DJS and support DJS kids.

**IV. Old Business**

- a. Update from Stefan LoBuglio CJCC on report. Stefan updated the Commission on CJCC report submitted in June. As recommended, new Committee established, led by County officials. The Committee is looking at how Montgomery County can take a bigger role in DJS locally. There are currently 240 Montgomery County youth under DJS supervision. The committee is looking at what role Montgomery County can play with local youth involved with DJS. Stefan will send the report to Diane to share with Commission members.

**V. New Business**

- a. Mental Health Advisory Committee (MHAC) is having a virtual forum with Council President Kate Stewart for all Health and Human Services BCC's on November 4<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. They are asking for a Chair or vice chair to attend the meeting and give their top three mental health priorities for the community that your BCC serves. Melissa has agreed to attend.
- b. Need a liaison for the Mental health advisory committee. We are looking for a liaison to attend the monthly meetings. MHAC meets the first Tuesday of every month except August and December from 7pm-9pm virtually.
- c. Melissa and Carlotta are attending the annual Health and Human Services committee of the County council to provide CJJ priorities for FY-27.

**VI. Upcoming Meetings**

Motion to adjourn was made and seconded. Meeting Adjourned at 8:25pm