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County Executive

Darren M. Popkin
Sheriff

Domestic Violence Coordinating Council

May 11, 2017
Family Justice Center
600 Jefferson Plaza, Suite 500
Rockville, MD 20852

Meeting Minutes

Purpose of Meeting: Sixty fourth meeting to review the County's response to domestic violence and present committee reports. Councilmember Sidney Katz, Chair, convened the meeting at 5:30 PM.

In Attendance: The Honorable Sidney Katz, Chair (Montgomery County Council); Debbie Feinstein, Vice Chair (Montgomery County Office of the State's Attorney); The Honorable Rebecca Smondrowski (Montgomery County Public School – Board of Education); Angela Talley (Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation – Pre-trial Services); Teresa Bennett (Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services); Dorothy Fait, Esq. (Community Member); Resa Levy (Community Member); Eshigo Okasili, Esq. (Community Member); and Thomas Manion, DVCC Staff (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff)

via phone: Cheryl Kravitz (Community Member)

Guests: Lisa Mandel-Trupp (Office of Montgomery County Councilmember Sidney Katz); Michael Subin (Criminal Justice Coordinating Commission); Tina Michaels (Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation – Pre-trial Services); Mary Silva and Laurie Duker (Court Watch Montgomery); Mario Wawrzusin (Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services – Adult Protective Services); Kelly Davis (Montgomery County Office of the State's Attorney); and Edward Powell (Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services – Responsible Fathers Program)

Absent: The Honorable Karla Smith (Circuit Court for Montgomery County); William Sollod, (Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services – Parole and Probation); Assistant Chief Russell Hamill (Montgomery County Department of Police); The Honorable John Moffett (District Court of Maryland for Montgomery County); Sheriff Darren Popkin (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff); Nicole Drew (Montgomery County Commission for Women); Sheila Kamdar (Community Member)

I. Welcome and Introductions

Sidney Katz welcomed all members and guests.

II. Approval of March Minutes

The March 9, 2017 DVCC meeting minutes were reviewed. Rebecca Smondrowski proposed a motion to approve the minutes without revision. The motion was seconded by Eshigo Okasili and passed.

III. Announcements

Resa Levy reported that the MCFJC Foundation is hard at work planning the 8th Annual Benefit, which will be held on October 29, 2017. The MCFJC Foundation is also continuing with the already-successful teddy bear drive, and will be sending out an e-mail blast around Mother's Day to raise additional funds. Last week, the MCFJC Foundation partnered with the Montgomery County Department of Recreation and Radio One for the 'Send a Kid to Camp' radiothon. In the past, the Montgomery County Department of Recreation has offered free summer camp sessions to children in the Safe Start Program who have been exposed to domestic violence in their homes.

IV. Presentation: Elder Abuse and World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Mario Wawrzusin (Adult Protective Services, HHS) and Kelly Davis (Special Victims Division, SAO) gave presentations on elder/vulnerable adult abuse. Topics covered included elder/vulnerable adult abuse data, warning signs, and how the issue is addressed in Montgomery County. World Elder Abuse Awareness Day will take place on Wednesday, June 14, 2017 at Rockville Senior Center. All DVCC members are encouraged to attend and to spread the word about the event.

V. Presentation: Responsible Fathers Program

Edward Powell (Responsible Fathers Program, Child Welfare Services, HHS) gave a presentation on Montgomery County's Responsible Fathers Program, which provides education and support services to fathers and their children involved in Child Welfare Services in an effort to enhance the father/child relationship. These services include mentorship, referrals to relationship classes, referrals to economic stability classes, and referrals to individual counseling.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Education and Outreach Committee

Debbie Feinstein reported that this year's Choose Respect conference, which was held on April 2nd at Richard Montgomery High School, was a huge success. In all, there were nearly 600 students, parents, teachers, youth workers, public officials, and volunteers at the event. It was a very diverse crowd this year, representing more than 50 public and private schools. Debbie Feinstein thanked and recognized Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) for their incredible partnership in this event, and for being instrumental in promoting the entire Choose Respect initiative this year. The Conference Planning Committee will hold a full debrief on

June 7th at 3:30pm at the Family Justice Center to discuss successes and lessons learned from this year. Planning for the 2018 event will begin later this summer.

Debbie Feinstein also reported that final numbers for this year's 'Expect Respect' program, an interactive presentation on dating violence and healthy relationships that fits into a standard class period, was on par with last year's numbers. For next year, the committee will be working closely with MCPS to push this curriculum out into the schools on a larger scale.

Debbie Feinstein further reported that the committee is in the process of re-designing the FJC 5-language cards into a more compact, more concise card with more languages on it. A draft has been completed and committee members are currently providing feedback. The new design is smaller, and the language is more simplified. The languages used are based on the most common languages spoken in Montgomery County, per County Stat.

Debbie Feinstein lastly reported that Rebecca Smondrowski is actively recruiting volunteer attorneys and paralegals for an event on June 15th to assist immigrant families with legal documents, power of attorney, etc. This is the second part of a 2-part program, the first of which is an information session on May 24th. For more information, contact Rebecca Smondrowski.

B. Victim Services Committee

Tom Manion reported that he was recently approached by the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) regarding a proposed expansion of the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP). The new LAP is being developed for use by court personnel. MNADV would like to partner with domestic violence service providers around the state for the purposes of data collection. Tom Manion affirmed his desire for the FJC to be involved in any expansion of the LAP, but will have to learn more information before moving forward. A more detailed update will be available at the next meeting.

Tom Manion also reported that the FJC is down to only four Client Assistants. The Sheriff's Office is working rapidly to hire new staff as soon as possible. In the meantime, protocols are in place for the FJC to handle its normal caseload despite the less-than-ideal staffing numbers. Additionally, Smita Varia has accepted the DVCC Program Manager position. Her first day will be Tuesday, May 30th. Tom Manion will begin handing all DVCC-related duties over to Ms. Varia once she starts.

Tom Manion further reported that, in an effort to provide additional support to the limited number of Client Assistants the FJC currently has, FJC

Program Manager Ngozi Obineme hired 5 interns for the summer semester. Four of them will be Victim Services Interns, and one will be a Legal Services Intern. They are a diverse, multi-lingual, talented group and the FJC is excited for them to begin working.

Tom Manion lastly reported that the FJC has had some preliminary discussions with the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (JCADA), House of Ruth, and DVS Legal Services regarding bringing JCADA into the fold of FJC legal services. Currently, House of Ruth and DVS work together to accommodate FJC referrals for legal representation, while JCADA's interactions with the FJC are strictly on the counseling/clinical side. Tom Manion stated that since JCADA is already an on-site partner for therapy services, and they have a separate Legal Access Program, it seems like it could be a good fit. Discussions are still ongoing, and a more detailed update will be available at the next meeting.

C. Offender Program and Policy Committee

Angela Talley reported that the Offender Program and Policy Committee will be taking its next several meetings "on the road." After a thorough examination of the recommendations from the Offender Program Roundtable discussion, the Committee decided that it needed to take the recommendations to multiple agencies/programs for discussion. Therefore, rather than meeting at the FJC each month, the committee will set up meetings with each agency/program relevant to the recommendations. The goal is to address each of these recommendations in turn over the next 6 months.

Teresa Bennett reported that HHS is moving forward with the supervised visitation/monitored exchange center. Budget numbers, estimates, and plans are still in flux at the moment, but a final contract will be ready soon. The goal is to have the contract executed on July 1st and begin accepting referrals for safe exchanges in October. In the interim, the contractor will be moving into the space, making security preparations, hiring and training staff, etc. The goal is for supervised visits to begin in early 2018. The reason visits must begin later is due to the training requirements for visitation observers.

D. Legislative and Policy Planning Committee

Dorothy Fait gave the 2017 Legislative Report:

-HB428: The Rape Survivor Family Protection Act failed to pass. This bill would allow the court to terminate parental rights of an individual convicted of nonconsensual sexual conduct against the other parent that resulted in the conception of the child. This is the 9th year the bill has been introduced in the General Assembly.

-HB318/SB467 failed to pass. This bill would add antique firearms to the list of regulated firearms that cannot be possessed if an individual is convicted of a disqualifying crime, including Respondent's in Protective Orders. This bill was proposed in response to the shooting of Shadé Adebayo by Donald Bricker in the Target parking lot in Germantown a few years ago.

-HB498/SB562 passed. This bill prohibits certain individuals from serving as a surrogate decision maker or health care agent for the purpose of making health care decisions for a patient if they are the subject of an interim, temporary or final protective order for that patient or if the individual is the spouse of a patient with a separation agreement or who has filed for divorce.

-HB294/SB224 passed. This bill ensures that people who have received a Probation Before Judgment (PBJ) in a criminal court case for second degree assault for a domestically-related crime cannot retain their firearms.

-HB293/SB274 passed. This bill allows the admission of a protective order as evidence in a divorce case. The bill also allows a court to consider compliance with a domestic violence order as grounds for granting a decree of limited or absolute divorce.

-HB429/SB217 passed. This bill establishes that evidence of physical resistance by a victim is not required to prove that a sexual crime was committed.

-HB1/SB230 passed. This bill will require employers with 15 or more employees to allow the employees to earn a certain number of annual paid sick and safe days, including earning a maximum of five days per year. The safe time component requires employers to allow survivors of domestic abuse or sexual assault to use paid sick leave to care for their health after these incidents or seek legal protections or new housing.

VII. Adjournment

Councilmember Sidney Katz, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 6:50 PM

**The next DVCC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 13, 2017 from 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM
at the Family Justice Center**



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