



## COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

### Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board

### Summary of Subcommittee Meeting

**Subcommittee:**

Foster Alumni and Youth Community Empowerment Subcommittee (FAYCES)	6:00 -7:30 pm
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**Date:** Thursday, December 15, 2022

**Location:** 5560 Overland Avenue, Room 171  
San Diego, CA 92123

**Facilitator:** Stephanie Heying

**Meeting Staff:** Emily Lay

**Foster Alumni and Youth Community Empowerment Subcommittee Summary:**

**16 attendees took part in the Subcommittee.**

Advisory Members Participating: Jessica Heldman, Simone Hidds-Monroe, Stephen Moore

Stephanie Heying opened the meeting and recapped that the meeting is a subcommittee of the larger Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board. Stephanie encouraged participation via the chat and raise your hand feature for those participating via Zoom. She also reminded current foster youth to turn off their camera for confidentially purposes. Stephanie then turned it over to Simone Hidds-Monroe, who reviewed the goals of FAYCES.

**Results of the SPA Student Experience Survey**

Stephanie opened the item and turned it over to James Hidds-Monroe. James shared the initial findings from the SPA Student Experience Survey. He shared the data presented is based on 200 completed surveys, with 15 surveys from current SPA students and 185 surveys from alumni and past SPA students. James then shared the following survey results:

- Demographics:
  - Gender: 70% female, 26% male
  - Ethnic Identity: 31% Hispanic/Latino/Spanish, 26% Black/African American, 20% White/Caucasian, and 14% Biracial/Multiracial
- Siblings:
  - Approximately 81% of respondents have siblings that also entered foster care.
  - Approximately 54% of respondents have a sibling who was also placed at SPA.
- Previous Placements:
  - Approximately 41% of respondents had 0-3 placements before SPA.
  - Approximately 33% of respondents had 4-7 placements before SPA.
- Housing:
  - On average, those surveyed lived at SPA for 3.5 years.
  - 33% of alumni respondents have utilized alumni housing.
  - Approximately 70% of respondents lived in 1-2 housing units.

- Approximately 30% of respondents lived in 3-4+ housing units.
- Approximately 91% of respondents had house parents in their housing units.
- Regarding overall household safety and learning, 66% of the responses fell under the “often/almost always” category.
- Education:
  - 79% of respondents attended school on campus, with 20% of respondents having attended both on campus and off campus schools.
  - Of the 185 alumni and past SPA students surveyed, 71% obtained their high school diploma or GED.
  - Regarding overall frequency of academic support and confidence, 54% of the responses fell under the often/almost always category.
  - Regarding overall satisfaction with education and academic resources offered on campus:
    - 47% of responses fell under the “very/extremely satisfied” category
    - 24% of responses fell under the “somewhat satisfied” category
- Employment:
  - 79% of respondents had or obtained employment while at SPA.
  - 53% of respondents were employed on- and off-campus.
  - Regarding overall agreement with work readiness and financial literacy, 52% of responses fell under the “agree/strongly agree” category.
- Relationships:
  - Regarding overall satisfaction with relationships, 57% of responses fell under the very/extremely satisfied category.
  - The top 5 most important relationships include:
    - House parents
    - Peers on campus
    - Housemates
    - Off campus relationships (friends, biological family, etc.)
    - SPA grandparents
- Health, wellness, and safety on campus:
  - Regarding overall frequency of health, wellness, and safety, 63% of responses fell under the often/almost always category.
- Permanency at SPA:
  - 32% of respondents were removed from or left SPA.
    - Approximately 30% of those who were removed/left SPA returned to SPA after leaving.
    - Reasons for leaving SPA:
      - 26% turned 18-years-old
      - 26% chose other
      - 23% chose to live at a different placement
      - 18% were either kicked out or reunited with their biological families
- Overall impact:
  - 73% of respondents said SPA had a positive impact on their life.
  - 14% of respondents said SPA had no impact on their life.
  - 83% of respondents shared interest in being an active part of a SPA alumni community.
- Questions and comments on the presentation:
  - Stephen Moore asked if there are any plans to discuss the results of the survey with Rite of Passage (ROP). James clarified that they are working with ROP and other interested parties to share the results of the survey, but a date for this meeting has not yet been determined. Stephen questioned if there was a correlation between the overall impact

of SPA on students and the years in which they were students at SPA. James responded this data is based on initial findings, and further analysis will be conducted to determine any correlations. Stephen inquired what percentage of the population of students at SPA during the years in question participated in the survey. James shared a challenge they are experiencing is identifying who has lived at SPA and what years they lived at SPA and that further data would be needed to determine that information.

- Simone Hidds-Monroe commented there are aspects of SPA that could benefit from further exploration and collaboration, such as financial literacy and education. She shared her surprise that only 33% of SPA alumni utilized alumni housing and wondered why so few alumni utilize this benefit. James suggested the numbers may be skewed due to underreporting from SPA alumni.
- A participant commented there was a high percentage of overall satisfaction, but there was a distinct lack of satisfaction surrounding education.
- Simone Hidds-Monroe commented the data on relationships was interesting, as peers on campus was ranked as the second most important relationship to SPA students, but only 49% of responses were very/extremely satisfied with their relationship with peers on campus. She suggested there are opportunities to support peer to peer relationships on campus.
- A participant shared there was high turnover at SPA and there could be a correlation between educational dissatisfaction and principals who were present during the high turnover period. He suggested there is a need to navigate post-secondary educational aspirations with credit recovery.
- A participant asked if the survey was broken down by consecutive years or if the questions applied to all years a youth was on campus. James clarified that the questions were setup as “check all that apply.”

### **Update on SPA**

Stephanie opened the item and turned it over to Valesha Bullock. Valesha shared that ROP has submitted their application for license. She mentioned Child Welfare Services (CWS) is working with ROP to setup a date to get on campus to start learning more about SPA and the youth on campus. Valesha commented ROP is ready to engage with any partners who are involved with SPA and are using this time before the transition to hire additional staff. She shared there have been many events at SPA to help prepare the youth for the holiday season.

- Questions and comments on the presentation:
  - A participant asked which current SPA staff will transition with ROP and how FAYCES recommendations on staff are considered in the process. Valesha stated CWS is not involved in ROP’s hiring process and does not have input on who is or is not hired.
  - Simone Hidds-Monroe asked who to follow up with regarding the Alumni and Youth Advisory Board listed in the request for proposal (RFP). She also asked for information regarding current youth on campus: how many are on campus, are the numbers increasing from previous years, etc. Valesha suggested following up with ROP regarding the Alumni and Youth Advisory Board and mentioned ROP would likely share the information with CWS after consulting with current youth on campus to see what they would like to do. She shared she believes there are approximately 50 youth on campus, but she will clarify that information.

### **System Improvement Plan (SIP) – FAYCES Recommendations**

Stephanie opened the item and turned it over to Simone Hidds-Monroe, Aaron Adkins, and Caitlin Radigan. Nikki Kelsay of CWS provided a brief overview of the SIP and reiterated the main goal of the SIP is reunification within 12 months. Simone shared the intention of FAYCES on the SIP is to contribute lived

experience and expertise, provide youth-centered solutions, and advocate for a community-based approach to support system-involved youth and families.

- FAYCES Recommendations for SIP Strategies:
  - Probation Strategy 1: Build effective relationships and individual plans and responses to maximize the opportunity for youth success
    - Connect youth with Lived Experience Coach.
    - Develop trainings to include child/adolescent development, communication skills, etc.
    - Have youth complete aptitude tests to explore with Lived Experience Coach.
    - Have youth complete the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Quiz within the first week of arrival.
    - Recognize mental wellness and offer therapy to youth.
  - Probation Strategy 2: Match youth with the most appropriate services to support permanency in a timely manner and reduce re-entry into care
    - Youth/Lived Experience Coach's develop the youth's growth plan.
    - Provide a pipeline to services that are inclusive of youth's disabilities, mental health needs, crime-related experiences, etc.
    - Develop an incentive/reward for good behavior and progressing in their growth plan.
  - CWS Strategy 1: Increase prevention services
    - Include aptitude tests for children/families to incorporate in goal setting and action plans.
    - Develop listening/communication training that focuses on active listening as a foundational relationship practice.
    - Partner with diverse resource providers that are culturally representative of the population and selected by the children/families.
    - Invest in resources for children/families to have the means to live sustainably in San Diego County.
  - CWS Strategy 2: Improve parent-child interactions
    - Provide transportation assistance to increase visitations.
    - Formalize a partnership with community-based organizations to encourage and support father engagement.
    - Offer neutral, culturally, and demographically appropriate therapy to help children and families heal and communicate.
  - CWS Strategy 3: Strengthen social work engagement practices
    - Implement paid, Lived Experience Coaches involved with CWS.
    - Develop/implement standards for case file documentation that is trauma informed, and clearly written and accessible for children and families while engaging with CWS.
    - Implement a digital communication platform that is shared for case file notes, meeting dates, and important documents.
    - Develop cultural competency for rapport building between youth and social workers.
  - CWS Strategy 4: Implement Prevention Hub
    - Offer operating hours beyond the traditional business hours.
    - Operate by community-based organizations to reflect a community approach.
    - Have support and resource available in real-time (i.e., crisis intervention, counseling services, etc.)
    - Include private rooms for confidential conversations.
    - Provide onsite childcare for families who apply for and utilize the resources

provided.

- Questions and comments on the presentation:
  - A participant commented the strength-based and relationship-based nature of the recommendations will be beneficial to all the youth and families involved. He shared a Lived Experience Coach would be a great resource if they are given the tools to deal with the work that needs to be done.
  - Stephanie Heying commented the FAYCES recommendations align well with the new therapeutic model within the Probation department. She shared San Diego County Office of Education and local community colleges have funds to aid justice-involved youth with secondary education. She mentioned Probation is in the process of developing a behavioral incentive program both inside and outside the facilities.
  - Nikki Kelsay shared the FAYCES recommendations have been shared to departments and groups within CWS that might be better equipped to handle some of the specific recommendations. She commented some of the recommendations will be easier to establish, and others might take some time to develop and implement.
  - Simone Hidds-Monroe asked if Probation would be interested in participating conversations to implement these recommendations. Nikki clarified the SIP is one report, but each department provides and implements sections of the report within their department.

**Date of Next Meeting** – February 16, 2023, at 6:00pm