

Ministers and Employers Minutes
December 11, 2006, 11:30 – 1:00
Department of Labor

- I. Ben Rivers offered the opening prayer followed by group introductions.
- II. Update from previous meeting:
 - a. Jobs for Life- Ben Rivers read report from Rev. Batts.
 - i. Classes are going well. There are 8 dedicated students and ABH recently covered the program. Thornton Brothers and Noramco have been guest speakers.
 - ii. Will there be a plan to continue? Yes. There is a waiting list and a new class will start after this cohort is done on January 11th. Active recruitment can also happen.
 - iii. Lessons Learned- it would be helpful to the employers to hear what the expectation is from ministers regarding how JfL graduates could be hired and supports maintained into employment.
 - iv. Currently there are 4 employers involved in the program- when program ends, those employers should go out to the community to recruit other employers to be involved- need to know what to market.
 - v. Need to have a seamless transition into the 2nd class of students- not just for the people on the waiting list, but also for employers. Employers want to know what classes their scheduled to or could teach into the future.
 - vi. Make sure there is accountability built in so that being a “graduate of JfL” means that you’ve only had one absence and/or you’ve completed x number of units, etc.
 - vii. Are pastors following up with students, having them come in or check in by phone, between sessions to find out how things are going and see if they’ll be at the next class.- Need to formalize.
 - b. Transitioning Felons-
 - i. Stanley Johnson said that TOPPSTEP is working with Deborah Gowen at Athens Justice Project.
 - ii. They’re looking at DCA’s Reentry Housing Project that offers \$600 per month for 2 months to anyone who is willing to house someone who is reentering the community.
 - iii. Stanley has been working with Holiday Inn and they have hired 5 people in the past month and a half. These 5 are still employed and doing well.
 - iv. Red Petrovs asked about Life Coaches, a program in Illinois. Good Will has this and DFCS has it through Good Works. UPS has been a key employer and has helped with training.
 - v. Could TOPPSTEP refer people to JfL - need multiple options so that people have a non-denomination choice.

- vi. Athens Tech has applied for a grant to also help with reentry through their Fatherhood Programs.
- vii. There is a need to get all of the agencies together to share resources since many agencies are doing similar work.
- viii. There is a need for a one-stop approach to services. DoL has representatives from other agencies housed in its office. There are, however, structural barriers that need to be overcome to fully realize this vision.
- c. Adult Education- Jerry Barrow gave update.
 - i. In January, the State has said it will pay for the Work Ready Certificate assessments and will profile companies who are hiring new employees for free. There is still confusion about “new” and how many. And, about where the State will come up with the money to reimburse for the assessments.
 - ii. Assessment is computer based. If you don’t make a score you want, you can use gap training which will most likely use the WIN Keytrain program. This program is also good for preparing for the GED except in the area of Social Sciences.

- III. Childcare- Jean Gowen, Director of Child Care Resource & Referral of Northeast Georgia at Athens (706-613-1603) presented.
 - a. High Quality Child Care is more than babysitting- it promotes development in intellectual, social, emotional, and physical areas
 - b. HQ Care reduces poverty by promoting higher workforce performance for current parents and for developing future employees.
 - c. HQ Care reduces turnover, tardiness, training/recruitment costs, and absenteeism. It increases morale, commitment, and productivity.
 - d. HQ Care leads to school success- studies show that low income children who receive HQ Care have higher scores on school-readiness tests, better language, skills, higher reading and math scores, higher H.S. graduation rates, are more than twice as likely to attend a 4 yr college, exhibit fewer behavior problems in school, much less likely to engage in violent crimes as juveniles, less likely to become chronic offenders as adults, more likely to pay more taxes, less likely to require public assistance
 - e. HQ Care is so effective because there is rapid brain development during first 5 years, number of connection in brain doubles from age 2 to 3, brain development for “soft skills” begins in infancy (impulse control, etc)
 - f. TLC important- endorphins increase brain development, cortisol (stress chemical) reduces brain development
 - g. Number of words heard directly affects vocab size which affects IQ
 - h. Number of encouraging words vs. discouraging words heard leads to higher IQ
 - i. Every \$1 invested in HQ Care yields a return of \$7 to the public
 - j. Types of State certified child care in ACC- Private (Family child care homes- up to 6 children, Group child care homes- up to 18 children, Child care centers- 18 or more children) and Publicly funded programs (free if

eligible and there is an opening- Early Head Start- birth to 3yrs, Head Start- 3 and 4 yrs, Pre-K- 4yrs and no income restrictions but space constrictions, Even Start- included GED, ESOL, parenting classes and child care)

- k. Some but not enough affordable HQ Care spaces available in ACC- 40% of parents don't find child care due to lack of quality or cost, Early Head Start, Head Start and Pre-K programs have waiting lists. Even Start is slated to be shut down in 2007 due to cut in Federal funds.
- l. How can Churches help:
 - i. Provide space and support for a child care center
 - ii. "Adopt" a child care center or home
 - iii. Provide Hope for Babies scholarships for child care
 - iv. If have a child care center, waive fee for families using child care subsidies
- m. How can Businesses help: (See attached document)
 - i. Support a local child care center or home
 - ii. Support emergency and back-up care; holiday and sick child care
 - iii. Provide vouchers for child care
 - iv. Offer Dependent Care Assistance Plans
 - v. Make in-kind contributions to child care
 - vi. Sponsor near or on-site child care center
 - vii. Take advantage of Georgia Child Care Tax Credit- get tax credits for providing funds for childcare or by building a childcare facility
- n. How can we all help
 - i. Educate the community about the importance of high quality child care
 - ii. Advocate for increased funding for:
 - iii. Child care subsidies (CAPS funding)
 - iv. Early Head Start and Head Start
 - v. Georgia Pre-K classrooms
 - vi. Lobby to reinstate Even Start
 - vii. Advocate for policies that support affordable high quality child care
- o. Athens Tech wants to build a Child Care Center at the Athens Campus to provide care and train Child care workers- like the Center at the Elberton campus which is also a Center of Distinction. (Athens has 1 Center of Distinction- Champions for Children)
- p. Tender Care in Greensboro is a good example of a care center for sick children

IV. Next Meeting- January 8, 2006, 11:30-1pm, location to be announced.
Possible guests- Burton & Burton on their company supported child care program.

V. Adjourn

Child Care Options for Employers

Sponsor near or on-site child care center(s)

A center can be owned or operated by the company, owned by the company and managed by a third party, or owned and operated by a subcontractor or grantee. The center is primarily for the employees of the sponsoring company.

Support a local child care center

Through a grant or contract, a local child care center can accept funds from a company or a group of companies (as in a consortium arrangement) in exchange for priority enrollment/reduced fees for employees of the contributing company.

Create or support a family child care network

Provide funds to a body representing a group of family child care homes who will provide slots to employees' children. This is particularly helpful to firms whose employees work evenings or weekends, or who have infants.

Create or support after-school care

An employer can help start a program in the community or schools to serve the needs of 6 - 13 year olds before and after-school.

Create or support a vacation/ holiday program

Make a program available that serves children when school is out, including summer vacations.

Create or support back-up or emergency care

Make a program available that serves children when their regular care arrangements have fallen through or when there is an emergency.

Create or support a sick child care program

Make a program available for mildly-ill children, either as part of an existing child care center, a hospital, a free-standing program near work or in the community, or as an in-home program where qualified people are sent into the child's home.

Parenting seminars

Organize informational meetings on parenting issues and child care concerns.

Caregiver fairs

Arrange for local service providers to distribute information about their programs.

Vouchers

The employer pays for a portion of child care expenses.

Discounts

The employer arranges for employees to be charged a reduced rate at programs of the employer's choosing.

Dependent Care Assistance Plans (DCAPs)

A mechanism that allows for employees to pay for their child care with pre-tax dollars. There is a savings to the employer, although the subsidy is actually paid for by the government.

Corporate Funds

A corporate set-aside for making grants to local organizations that agree to provide access to employees. These are not philanthropic dollars.

Corporate Contributions

Grants to local organizations to generally improve the supply or quality of child care at the local, state, or national level.

In-kind contributions

With the donation of equipment, supplies, or expertise from the company, local child care services can receive much-needed support.

Public education

The use of corporate clout can help bring attention to important child care issues. Employer representatives can serve on community-wide task forces, testify at hearings, and publicize child care issues at professional meetings.

Connect employees with resource and referral services

Tell employees about the local Child Care Resource and Referral who can educate them about their child care choices in the community and provide referrals to programs with openings.

Child Care Resource & Referral of Northeast Georgia at Athens 3708 Atlanta Highway,
Suite i Athens, Georgia 30607 (706) 613-1603 1 (877) 877-1275
Adapted from Families and Work Institute document.