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**STATE OF HAWAII
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

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YOUTH SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, September 18, 2018

3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Princess Ruth Keelikolani Building
830 Punchbowl Street, Director's Conference Room 321
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

MINUTES

ATTENDEES:

Ian Kitajima, Committee Chair, Director of Corporate Development, Oceanit
Winona Whitman, State Director, Employment & Training, Alu Like, Inc.
Troy Sueoka, DOE – Career and Technical Education
Steve Sue, Chair, Bizgenics Foundation
Regina Jacobs, Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN) and Facilitator for Hawaii Interagency State Youth Network of Care (HI-SYNC)
Danny Wyatt, Coordinator, Leeward Community College Waianae-Moku
Dani Ruiz, Foster Parent and Social Worker for 20 years
Malia Malufau, UH Law School, Foster Youth Facilitator with Family Court, Youth Partner with EPIC Ohana Inc., former foster youth
Jessica Tarralva, Counselor, Family Tree Project
Brig. Gen. (ret.) Bruce Oliviera, Hawaii Department of Defense, Office of Community Services

STAFF:

Maria-Elena Diaz, Employment Analyst, Workforce Development Council

I. Call to Order.....Committee Vice Chair, Winona Whitman

The meeting was called to order at 3:15 p.m. by Committee Vice Chair Whitman. Vice Chair Whitman welcomed everyone and started with introductions by name and organization.

II. Approval of Minutes

A. August 7, 2018 Minutes

A motion to approve the May 17, 2018 minutes was made by Steve Sue. The motion was seconded by Danny Wyatt. The motion was approved unanimously.

III. Overview of Toxic Stress: Risk Factors and Implications for Youth as presented by Jessica Tarralva, MSCP, NCC, Family Tree Project

Jessica Tarralva discussed the relationship between adverse childhood experiences, brain functioning, and the behavior of individuals experiencing toxic stress. Toxic stress is common among the clients she deals with through Youth Challenge. Many neither feel safe nor experience stability, and these are necessary first steps before clients can move forward.

When considering adverse childhood experiences (ACES), Tarralva argues that risk factors may be internal (nature: genetic, congenital) or external (nurture: what happens in a youth's environment). External adverse childhood experiences include abuse, neglect, poverty, substance abuse, exposure to substance abuse or parent with mental illness, deportation, domestic violence, bullying, discrimination, loss of parent or significant family member, incarcerated parent, and divorce.

Tarralva discussed how ACES affects an individual through brain functioning. When stress overload occurs in the brain, brain capacity can be reduced to 25% of healthy functioning and antisocial behaviors are more likely to emerge. Continual overload leads to toxic stress. ACES also contribute to physical and mental health disparities, as demonstrated by research.

In working with youth and helping them overcome ACES, Tarralva emphasizes the importance of investing time in building rapport and trust, teaching youth coping skills, empowering them, providing resources, and making a support system for them to address their internal needs. Addressing external needs requires family counseling, creating a safe and stable environment, changing their environment when necessary, and providing structure and a support system to help traumatized youth become future-oriented in their thinking. Mental health counseling addresses both internal and external risk factors.

IV. New Business

A. Discussion on prioritizing focus of youth services program elements

1. Members to share which target audiences they work with and issues that they face

Regina Jacobs with Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN) and program coordinator for Hawaii Interagency State Youth Network of Care (HI-SYNC)- HYSN is a network of youth services organizations (such as Child and Family Services, EPIC) that supports agency collaboration and provides training. HYSN works with the social service industry, runaways and homeless youth, and teenage pregnancy prevention. HYSN was contracted to provide administrative support to HI-SYNC. HI-SYNC also works with public and private agencies that support youth. HI-SYNC was created as the result of a court decision, the *Felix Consent Decree* (1994), which required the state to provide services to youth instead of sending them away. The state-level group is policy-oriented and addresses cases in crisis. High-level representatives from state departments meet through HI-SYNC. Counties have local representatives that meet through HI-LYNC (Local Youth Network of Care). Issues are forwarded from HI-LYNC to HI-SYNC when challenges cannot be met at local level. Organizational structure, challenges, and solutions are complex.

Steve Sue, Bizgenics Foundation- Bizgenics is a 501c(3) non-profit organization that provides creativity and innovative challenges to K-12 youth. Creativity challenges include hack-a-thons, project-based learning, STEM programs, Lemonade Alley (culinary contest with building of lemonade stands that includes design-thinking and construction). Sue shared his beliefs that at-risk students thrive through creative expression and working with their hands, like in project-based learning, to achieve a goal.

Sue's group is partnered with Elemental Accelerator which is a sustainability non-profit organization. His programs track profit, impact on people, and impact on the planet. Related to workforce development, Sue's organization has launched an accelerator for application development. At-risk youth can be trained to be coders, designers, or managers of coders. Sue's group is starting a Fellows program with Elementals, and they will be funding chairs for youth.

Another project is Project Lemon Tree, which is based on the fact that lemon trees are the best sequesters of carbon dioxide. Sue decided to give away lemon trees to any school who would dig a hole.

They also have funding for STEM-based curriculum on the planting of lemon trees and the construction of trellises, which is relevant to the design and construction sectors of Hawaii's workforce. Sue welcomes connecting with youth service providers to offer his programs.

Troy Sueoka, Career and Technical Education, Department of Education- Formerly vocational-technical education, CTE is now career-focused. Primarily CTE works with students who wish to work right after school, or who need certificates or 2-year degrees to start working in their desired fields. College-bound students also benefit from CTE in DOE. Sueoka manages state and federal CTE funds. His office focuses on occupational skills training. Through CTE, students participate in career pathways. An important issue is the lack of soft skills when students go into work-based learning experiences. His office is working on developing more work-based learning experiences and career exploration services for students, even in the middle school, to better prepare them for satisfying careers.

Chair Kitajima asked Sueoka if he was involved with NEPRIS, an application that brings professionals into the classroom to help students find the right career pathway. Sueoka said that he is and talked about Kauai's public schools piloting the use of NEPRIS, which brings representatives of industries into the classroom. NEPRIS is beneficial especially in isolated locations. Diaz asked Sueoka if career pathways is the way forward for all DOE students. Sueoka said that CTE is now preparing all students for careers in the workforce.

Winona Whitman, Alu Like- Whitman described her organization's focus, issues, and challenges. She works in employment and training with about 800 14 to 24 year-olds each year who are Native Hawaiian, Alaskan, or American Indian in Oahu, Maui, Kauai, Lanai, and Hawaii. Target populations include low-income youth, high school drop-outs, those who are basic skills deficient, offenders, homeless, runaways, youth with disabilities, and foster care youth. Youth program elements that *Alu Like* provides include alternative secondary education services or drop-out recovery services. In partnership with Kamehameha Schools and *Kinai 'Eha's* alternative school program, *Alu Like* provides stipends when youth are learning in the classroom-training portion, and wages when in construction-portion, of the program. Work-based experiences are additional elements important to Whitman's organization. These include summer employment, pre-apprenticeships, internships, and more. Other important elements are occupational skills training and leadership development. Her organization also provides supportive services and financial literacy education. Whitman's organization provides soft skills through a culturally relevant, work readiness program.

Ret. Brig. Gen. Bruce Oliveira, State Department of Defense, Community Programs Director- Oliveira described the youth programs under his supervision. First is Youth Challenge, a residential program for high school drop-outs. 75% federally funded, 25% state funded. This is a 5 ½ month program in a quasi-military-like environment in which students earn an alternative high school diploma, currently C-Based but working on implementing HiSET. Youth Challenge is focusing more on 17-18 year-olds so that they can get help setting up in their careers. Many of their youth come from environments that aren't conducive to school or career development. After graduating and returning home, youth seem to lose what gains they made. Oliveira is setting up programs to provide his graduates training at community colleges. Youth are also assisted with ASVAB to enter military or a 4-year college and scholarship applications if that is what they wish to do.

A second program is KOA, an acronym for *kokua, ohana, and aloha*. First-time juvenile offenders receive three weekly sessions with their parents to help them stay out of trouble. Working with Family Tree Project, funding comes from the Department of Health. The biggest challenge is that three sessions is not enough. He is looking for additional funding to provide more assistance. A third program on Hawaii Island is called Starbase, a STEM program working with 5th graders. Many students are Native Hawaiian and socioeconomically disadvantaged. A challenge is to find a way to sustain interest in STEM and getting an education once students have been through the program. In the planning phase is another program with the Office of Veteran Affairs Services. A veterans' home is being built in Maui, near the Maui High School. Teenagers can take courses and complete internships at this facility.

Malia Malufau, In-Court Youth Facilitator- Malufau grew up in foster care system with a court-appointed guardian. Malufau developed her current position based on her own experiences. This is the first position in the state, and the second in the nation. Hired through the UH Law School, her office is in Family Court. Going on her 3rd year, Malufau works part-time and works to make the court experience more comfortable for youth. She helps them pass the time and speaks to them about their civil rights. She is also with *Imua Kakou* Court, a specialty court for youth that are 18-21 and aging out of foster care system. She also serves on Permanent Teen Court, that works with teens under permanent custody. Family Court also has a Teen Day, twice a year, for youth 14-18 years old, in which Malafau participates. In addition, Malafau sits on a committee for “*Ohana is Forever*,” an annual statewide day-long conference for current and former foster youth, and she has an on-call care position with Epic *Ohana*. In this organization, she works with youth who are likely to reunify with their parents.

Dani Ruiz, Social Worker and Foster Parent- Ruiz works with juvenile offenders, but she is not formally representing Child and Family Services where she currently works. Nonetheless, she has many decades of experience as a social worker and foster parent, including working with aging-out youth. An important challenge is allowing foster youth to leave when they get older and to keep the doors open when they need help or are ready to return. Aging-out youth often have multiple traumas, including mental health issues, but still wish to be out on their own as they become legal adults. The needs of aging-out population include one stable care-giver that young people can turn to when they need help.

Danny Wyatt, Coordinator, Leeward Community College Waianae-Moku (LCCWM)- At LCCWM, a counselor started Access-to-Education (ATE) program. This program serves formally incarcerated youth, foster care youth, and those who are in treatment. Originally it received money from University of Hawaii Foundation for books, laptops, and other supplies and support. Now general funds are used to keep the program going. Wyatt tied ATE into G2FO (Going to Finish On-time) program. This is a cohort program where students start and take classes together, and it has a high success rate. G2FO is federally-funded for another year-and-a-half and supports ATE. On the West Coast, the Early College program has been growing, especially with veteran instructors working with students. Also, one high school is experimenting with work-based learning experiences in hospitality, which didn’t do very well, and seaweed production. The latter project is highly profitable for the school. LCCWM also offers courses that help students get ready for college and focused on what they want to do.

Chair Kitajima spoke about the Workforce Development Council, the Youth Services Committee, and the evolution of the state economy. Referencing a study by James Koshiba, Chair Kitajima discussed challenges in Hawaii, such as homelessness, flat median incomes, and high home costs. He talked about possible future high-value companies that may create higher-income jobs that don’t yet exist, so that people can continue to live in Hawaii. He pointed out that we need to engage students and help them become problem solvers. He also noted that kids that struggle the most are usually the most creative ones. Sue shared that in his experiences with his entrepreneurial contest suggest that at-risk kids are not disadvantaged in the creative process. He asked the group to consider, how do we create initiative in people, regardless of their backgrounds, that will last a lifetime?

Sue then asked about the mission and goals of the committee. Diaz responded that this is what we are currently working toward: choosing priorities related to the requirements of WIOA and that supports the Title I youth programs. The next meeting will begin the discussion of the committee’s priorities.

V. Schedule Next Meetings

A. October, November, December, January, February

VI. Adjournment

Chair Kitajima adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.