

**TULARE COUNTY COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION**

MINUTES

The Tulare County Community Advisory Committee for Special Education met
April 7, 2011 in the Downstairs Conference Room of the Tulare County Office of Education,
2637 West Burrel at 1:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cyndi Ward, Connie Acevedo, Tim Perrotta, Gary Kenny, Stephanie Caldera, Joyce Nunes, Amy McMahon, Tiffany Stark, Filomena Rocha

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dana Collins, Randi Kestner, Blanca Florez, Claudia Garcia

OTHERS PRESENT: Norma Erwin, Parent Liaison / Tulare County Office of Education; Guest Panel Presenters: Leigh Mosconi / Special Olympics; Leslie Gardner / Happy Trails; Michelle Fitzgerald / Visalia Parks & Recreation Dept; Linda Hess / Visalia's Finest / ARC Bowling / Ritchie Barn Dances;

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS: Tim Perrotta, Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all members including the panel of presenters.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no comments from the members of the public present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The motion to approve the March 3, 2011 CAC minutes was made by Filomena Rocha and seconded by Cyndi Ward. The minutes stand.

REPORTS:

1. **DOSE Report:** Joyce Nunes, DOSE rep reported that no meeting was held in April.
2. **Guest Panel Presenters:** Tim Perrotta thanked the panel members for their participation.
 - a. **Leigh Mosconi / Special Olympics;** Leigh provided the committee with a history of Special Olympics. It began in 1958 when two parents approached Eunice Shriver after their special needs kids were turned away at kids' camps. The camp was first called Camp Shriver and included a wide variety of activities. It was discovered that kids responded well to sports. Today there are three million kids in 180 countries who participate in Special Olympics on different levels; local, regional, state, world games, winter games and summer games. Tulare County Special Olympics started with swimming teams and today hosts a variety of sports at no cost to participants. Tulare County students have trained and traveled to regional, state and international levels. Leigh Mosconi recited the Special Olympics Oath: "Let me win, but if I cannot win let me be brave in the attempt." This year, Special Olympics will be held April 29, 2011 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Bob Mathias Stadium. Volunteers are always needed. CAC members expressed interest in helping out. Leigh Mosconi invited the members to report to the volunteer's table at 8:30 a.m. for instructions.
 - b. **Leslie Gardner / Happy Trails;** Leslie introduced the Happy Trails Riding Academy as a premier accredited riding center that offers Therapeutic Riding, Equine Assisted Therapy and Interactive Vaulting. The riders are set up for success as expressed in the "core

purposes” of the center: 1) to provide an environment where riders can realize their potential through empowerment and independence; 2) to foster and encourage the therapeutic value of the unique bond between horses and participants; 3) to support the development of therapeutic riding. In 2010, Happy Trails Riding Academy partnered with Tulare County Mental Health and Tulare Youth Service Bureau in which children in the foster care system take part in Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy. Happy Trails now has a covered arena which makes it more possible for the riders to receive lessons without triggering seizures. Last year 1800 therapeutic lessons were provided and volunteers logged in 6000 hours. The cost is \$25 per lesson and requires a completed application and a doctor’s prescription. The classes are 12 week sessions and are normally held after school.

c. **Michelle Fitzgerald / Visalia Parks & Recreation Dept;** Michelle provided the Community Advisory Committee with a listing of all Spring Fitness Programs available at different parks throughout the city for all family members. Michelle also advised the committee about upcoming free events: 1) The 6th Annual “Eggstravaganza” will be held at Riverway Sports Park for children up to 9 years of age from 10 - 12 a.m. 2) The 20th Annual “Dia del Nino Kids Festival” will be held May 14th from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Summers Park, 247 W. Ferguson. 3) “Summer Night Lights” will feature outdoor movies at the Riverway Sports Park.

d. **Linda Hess / Visalia’s Finest / ARC Bowling and Ritchie Barn Dances;** Linda Hess informed the Community Advisory Committee about bowling and dancing activities available for high school and older students. Activities are parent driven and parents are engaged in all games. Bowlers advance from local to regional and state levels and everyone receives a trophy. Bowling is held at “Visalia Lanes” and “Porterville Ten Pins” weekly. Games start at 1 p.m. on Saturdays and are 7.50 per game.

Dances are held on the third Monday of every month at the Ritchie Barn located at 16338 Ave. 308 in Visalia. Parents are responsible for the dancers. Special dance events include a costume dance in October, a Valentine Dance in February and a dinner/dance at the Elks Lodge in December. Dances go from 7 - 9 pm. The cost is 4.00 per dancer but free for chaperones. Refreshments are provided and the Clarence Ritchie Band plays. Wheelchair dances are also accommodated. Dances are open to all and there is no need to register.

e. Visalia Miracle League presenter was unable to participate.

3. Review of CAC By Laws and Discussion on Proposed Needs and Goals:

The Community Advisory Committee reviewed and discussed the SELPA policy and CAC By Laws and goals for the next school year. Norma Erwin recommended that an accurate phone number be reflected in the By Laws. Tim Perotta recommended a “url” link to the CAC website also be inserted for more information. The committee agreed and offered no further changes to the By Laws. The CAC offered the following goals for next year: a) continue all present activities and projects; b) promote regular school attendance in the CAC calendar perhaps by way of a “Parent Tip” for each month; c) include a parent link on the CAC web page to promote regular school attendance and other helpful “Parent Tips.”

4. **Discuss Annual Joint CAC, DOSE, & SGC Luncheon Updates:** Norma Erwin directed the committee members to the invitation in their folder and asked for each member’s lunch choice. Norma Erwin reported that most logistics have been completed such as invites sent, floral center pieces ordered, programs designed, and awards ordered and Tim has signed the letters to the honorees but there are a few remaining items to discuss:

a. **Parent Award nominations:** Norma Erwin informed the committee that four honoree names had been submitted for special recognition and so far no parent nominations

have been received for the Linda Hess award yet. Norma Erwin presented Amy McMahon's suggestion to allow CVRC to make the nominations as they are connected to many parents who do a great job. The CAC discussed the merits of the idea. It was the consensus of the committee that CVRC or CAC can make recommendations to the local DOSE but the local DOSE would need to give the final approval for parent names submitted.

b. Select Sub Committee: Tim Perotta suggested and the members agreed that Norma Erwin should forward electronically all parent nominations approved by DOSE to all CAC members. CAC members will vote on the recipient of their choice for the Linda Hess Award.

c. Cookie Presentation & Selection: The CAC sampled the cookie assortment provided by the VUSD TCOVE/ROP class at El Diamante. Three cookie favorites were selected to be given as luncheon favors.

d. Entertainment Report: Norma Erwin informed the CAC that the Creative Arts Center would be unable to participate due to a conflict with their "Tech Week". Members discussed other ideas. Any other ideas should be sent to Norma Erwin.

e. Member Luncheon Responsibilities: Norma Erwin presented the duties and members agreed to participate in all parts of the program; set up, clean up, hosts and hostesses, assistance with the table registry, presentation of awards and reading the bios. Connie Acevedo and Stephanie Caldera volunteered to assist with the presentation of awards.

5. Discuss 2012 CAC Calendar Project: Committee members reviewed and discussed the list of previously proposed themes for future calendars. Two themes were deleted due to not having a student focus. Members proposed the theme "Where are they now" and updating previous students in the calendar drawing a parallel between their abilities then and now. Members suggested the focus be on abilities such as "Communication or PECS, Technology, Bowling, Special Olympics, etc. An example might be a skill the 3 year was working on that now at 30 years of age he or she has further developed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: 1) Norma Erwin passed around a listing of upcoming sensory friendly films. Joyce Nunes announced that Galaxy theatres had offered a special showing for students during the day. 2) Filomena Rocha reported on the Positive Parenting 2011 - "Growing Healthy Children" conference she attended. Filomena Rocha said three speakers were featured and learned a lot from each one; a) Robert Brunson M.F.T. discussed how to meet the 5 critical needs of children and how to become the best parent you can be, b) Victoria Boutenko, author of "Green For Life" discussed how to make tasty "green smoothies" that influence child development and behavior, c) Carol McLellan discussed health education and therapy.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Annual Joint CAC, DOSE and SGC Meeting: Tuesday, May 10, 2011