

## Washington County Citizen Review Panel 2016 Annual Committee Report

### Submitted by the Following Panel Members (listed in alphabetical order):

Teri Bottum	Michael Laughton
Jennifer Dailey	LaJuan McIntyre
Deborah Eckberg (chairperson)	Ralph Pennie
Jan Hayne	Bonnie Treacy
Dawn Hyland	Julia Welter
John Kiedrowski	Nancy Zupfer

**Mission Statement:** Citizens partnering with child protection services, advocating to keep children safe.

### Meetings

With the exception of July, the monthly meetings were held on the third Tuesday of the month from 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm at the Washington County Service Center in Woodbury. (In December we met on the second Tuesday to accommodate holiday conflicts). Several panel members attended additional meetings to represent the panel.

### Overview

In 2016, we were pleased to have met our goal of recruiting new members. We added five new members to the panel in 2016, and did not lose any current members, bringing our total up to 12 active panel members. We are thrilled with the increased energy that these new members bring to our group.

### Activities

#### Reconsiderations

The panel conducted 21 reconsiderations for the county in 2016.

#### Presentations

1. Nissa Knutson presented a full training in January to educate the panel about the specifics of child protection work in Washington County.
2. In August, the panel heard a presentation from Bikers Against Child Abuse, a group to which one of our panel members belongs. The panel was very moved by the presentation, and hopes to partner with this group on projects in the future.
3. In September, the panel heard a presentation from Becky Barnhardt, licensing supervisor for foster care in Washington County. This was meant to help the panel determine how to get more involved in foster care recruitment.

#### Ongoing Training

1. New panel members completed internal, county-specific training in May, and state of MN training in November.

2. Jon Pederson from the Minnesota Department of Human Services came to the August meeting to train the panel on the state's child protection dashboard and available data.
3. Panel members participated in a number of webinars regarding child protection issues during the year.
4. One panel member attended a training regarding child protection issues specific to the American Indian population in Minnesota.
5. Two panel members attended the Child Welfare Disproportionality Tool workgroup in June.
6. One panel member attended the Child Welfare Advanced Studies in Child Welfare School Engagement Conference in August.
7. The panel reviewed and discussed a journal article entitled *Perceptions of State Child Welfare Administrators Regarding Federal Mandated Citizen Review Panels*, published in the Children and Youth Services Review.

### **Outreach to Social Workers**

1. To recognize Social Worker Appreciation month in March, one of our panel members drafted a letter of thanks to the Washington County Social Workers for all the wonderful work that they do on behalf of children. Sarah Amundson, Division Manager for Washington County Community Services, presented this letter to the social workers. (See Appendix for the letter).
2. During Child Abuse Awareness month (April), the panel ordered and dispersed blue ribbons to all Family and Children's staff to wear.
3. The panel supported a decision from the county board to proclaim April Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention month in Washington County, and recognize the work of county social workers in providing safe environments to children. (See Appendix for a copy of the proclamation).
4. In May and June, panel members brought breakfast treats to all the social work teams and sat in on their team meetings. This was to create more of a connection between the panel volunteers and the social workers, and also to thank the social workers for all their efforts toward keeping children safe.
5. In May, June, and July several of the panel members "shadowed" social workers, going with them on their calls for one day. This was to enhance panel members' education and understanding of the work that social workers do every day and, according to the panel members who participated, was an extremely rewarding experience.
6. The panel officially thanked the outgoing Director of Washington County Community Services, Dan Papin, with a retirement card, as he was responsible for starting the Citizen Review Panel in Washington County.

### **Community Outreach**

1. The panel updated the brochure that we created last year, in order to include the pictures and biographies of all the new members. (See Appendix for a copy of the brochure).
2. During Child Abuse Awareness month (April), the panel organized displays in county libraries that included positive parenting topics/ activities and blue ribbon distribution (see #2 above in Outreach to Social Workers).

### **Special Projects and Donations**

1. Duffel bags: The panel continued to collect donations and supply duffel bags for children who are abruptly removed from their homes. This was a project that began in 2015, but the panel sees as ongoing as needed by Washington County.

2. Courthouse bookshelf: The panel collected books for a courthouse bookshelf, so that children who come to court can read them to pass the time. We decided to structure the shelf as a lending library, whereby children can take the books home if they wish. We started with books for children 10 years and older, and then expanded to books for younger children as well.
3. Alarm clocks: One of the panel members donated alarm clocks to truancy workers who said it would be helpful for getting kids to school on time.

## **Planning for 2017**

The panel is currently considering the following projects to focus on in 2017:

1. Help with foster care recruitment. Two panel members have volunteered to serve on the task force for foster care recruitment. Once the task force begins meeting, they will update the panel about further needs to help with these efforts.
2. Foster care re-entry project/file review. This would be an update of a project that the panel completed in 2012.
3. Permanency guidelines file review.
4. Develop a resource list for youth mentorship programs.
5. Panel members have offered to serve on the Safe Harbor workgroup regarding sex trafficked youth.

The panel is currently awaiting information about the scope of each of the above projects so that we can make a decision of how to prioritize them. We will most likely divide into smaller workgroups to tackle as many of these as possible.

**Attachment 1: Thank you letter to social workers, in recognition of Social Worker Appreciate Month (March)**

**Attachment 2: Proclamation for Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention month (April)**

**Attachment 2: Newly updated Washington County CRP brochure**

## **Appendix 1: Thank You Letter to Social Workers on Behalf of the CRP**

*As I walked along the seashore, this young boy greeted me.*

*He was tossing stranded starfish back to the deep blue sea.*

*I said, "Tell me why you bother, why you waste your time this way.*

*There's a million stranded starfish, does it matter anyway?"*

*And he said, "It matters to this one. It deserves a chance to grow.*

*It matters to this one, I can't save them all I know.*

*But it matters to this one, I'll return it to the sea.*

*It matters to this one, and it matters to me."*

Thank you! Like the young boy in the poem, you overcome challenges to intercede with skill, dedication and hard work to make a difference in many a young person's life. Because of you, children have a chance to grow and become healthy and productive adults.

On behalf of the Washington County Citizens Review Panel, thank you! What you do does matter.

**Appendix 2: Proclamation for Child Abuse and Neglect Awareness Month**

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
WASHINGTON COUNTY, MINNESOTA**

**RESOLUTION NO. 2016-036**

**DATE April 5, 2016**

**DEPARTMENT Community Services**

**MOTION  
BY COMMISSIONER Bigham**

**SECONDED BY  
COMMISSIONER Wick**

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Proclaiming April, 2016 as  
Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month in Washington County

**WHEREAS**, child abuse and neglect is a complex and ongoing problem in our society, affecting many children in Washington County; and

**WHEREAS**, every child is entitled to be loved, cared for, nurtured, feel secure and be free from verbal, sexual, emotional and physical abuse, and neglect; and

**WHEREAS**, it is the responsibility of every adult who comes in contact with a child to protect that child's inalienable right to a safe and nurturing childhood; and

**WHEREAS**, Washington County has dedicated individuals and organizations who work daily to counter the problem of child maltreatment and to help parents obtain the assistance they need; and

**WHEREAS**, our communities are stronger when all citizens become aware of child maltreatment prevention and become involved in supporting parents to raise their children in a safe and nurturing environment; and

**WHEREAS**, effective child abuse prevention programs succeed because of partnerships among families, social service agencies, schools, religious and civic organizations, law enforcement agencies and the business community; and

**WHEREAS**, all citizens, community agencies, faith organizations, businesses will work to increase their efforts to support children and families by reporting child maltreatment.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOVED**, that the Washington County Board of Commissioners hereby proclaims the month of April 2016, to be the CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION MONTH in Washington County.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Washington County Board of Commissioners finds that this proclamation compliments the proclamation of April as National County Government Month as well, and recognizes the role of county employees in providing services to children and families throughout the county to ensure every child has a safe environment in which to live and grow.

ATTEST:

*M. J. O'Brien*

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

*Tom Hain*

COUNTY BOARD CHAIR

YES

NO

MIRON  
KRIESEL  
WEIK  
BIGHAM

X  
X  
X  
X

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## **Appendix 3: Updated CRP Brochure**