

## Washington County Citizen Review Panel for Child Protection 2018 ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORT

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

Amy Berge	Jan Hayne (chairperson)
Teri Bottum	Dawn Hyland
Jennifer Daily *	Michael Laughton
Gracie George	LaJuan McIntyre
Key-C Green	

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

### **Meetings**

In general, our 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. We did not meet in April (excessive conflicts/limited attendance) or in July (our summer break). In November we met on the fourth Tuesday to accommodate Thanksgiving holiday conflicts. Several panel members attended additional meetings to represent the panel in other venues.

### **Overview**

In 2018, we added two new members to the panel and lost four current members (1-term limit, 2-other commitment conflicts, \*1-EOY health issue) bringing our total to 8 active panel members at the end of the year. We will be recruiting in the new year, looking for people with background/experience in: child protection, social services, legal, teacher/educator, and/or sexual health, and keeping in mind gender and ethnic diversity.

### **ACTIVITIES**

#### **Reconsiderations**

The panel members assisted with 7 child maltreatment reconsiderations for the County in 2018.

#### **Presentations**

1. January 2018 - Chris Murphy (CP Intake Supervisor) and Rorie Anders (Social Worker Intern) presented a final overview of the 2017 project and its findings. The CRP had a good discussion on a number of topics raised by the project, including the kinship worker's role, innovations in assisting clients with transportation (Uber gift cards), how the screening guidelines operate, how interstate compact placements occur, and how quality assurance reviews happen (with an older and a newer worker reviewing 7+ cases to identify gaps and share skills that engage families through an in-depth review of 18 items). The CRP might invite a kinship worker to a meeting in the future. We are one of the few counties with a kinship worker. In Washington County, we had a 50%+ rate of placement with relatives in 2017, higher than the State average of closer to 30%.  
*Note: The rate of kinship placement in Washington County increased to almost 70% in 2018.*
2. In June 2018, MN Department of Human Services Division Director, Jamie Sorenson, spoke to the CRP about the big picture issues in child protection. The system needs improvement, but is filled with talented workers who have heart. Minnesota is #5 in child well-being for some children. The main risk factors for families stem from mental health, substance abuse, having 5+ children, disabilities, and lack of transportation. Mr. Sorenson personally reviews all child maltreatment fatality cases. There were 22 fatalities in 2016, 4 with previous child protection involvement and

18 who were the first time in the child protection system, although they may have had contacts with the education system, health care system, or economic support system.

Since the Governor's Task Force, there has been a focus on child safety and a shift from wellness, permanency, early development, adverse childhood experiences (ACES), and what families need to stay intact. Some of the Governor's Task Force recommendations are unimplemented because of lack of funding.

There is still some uncertainty surrounding the new federal Families First legislation, including what programs will qualify for reimbursement funding through the new federal clearinghouse. Programs that are studied and proven may be funded, but there are also quality programs based on theory and experience. New programs will need to be accredited (such as through the Joint Commission) and provide trauma philosophy, family engagement, independent assessment, and discharge planning. We know removal of kids causes trauma to families so we need to work with families to keep them intact. We also need more information on why there are disparate outcomes for some children.

The main challenges facing the system include the number of children in placement, the disparate outcomes for children of color/Native children, the shortage of Guardians ad Litem, the rate of reentry into foster care, the opioid crisis and prenatal exposure, and workforce issues (right sizing caseloads and training/development). Mr. Sorenson's presentation ended with a Q&A session with panel members.

3. In August 2018, Sean O'Donnell, Director of Programs from The Steve Rummler Hope Network, talked with us about their work regarding opioid addiction and prevention. Hope Network is a 501(c)(3) funded by grants and donations. Their mission is to heighten awareness of the disease of addiction as it relates to the physical and emotional burdens of chronic pain and to improve the associated care process. Sean walked us through the history of opioids in the U.S., the current statistics surrounding the epidemic, Steve Rummler's battle with chronic pain and death to opioid overdose, Steve's Law, Penny a Pill proposed legislation, Hope Network's partnership with the University of Minnesota's School of Medicine, and current barriers including waiting periods and lack of available evidence based substance addiction treatment. Hope Network would like to partner with organizations in Washington County on overdose education, advocacy, and naloxone outreach, including hospitals, first responders, law enforcement, jails, libraries, and churches. He noted that Washington County had the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> highest rate of opioid deaths from 2000-2016 (99), with 11 deaths in 2016 alone. Overall Minnesota saw 256 opioid deaths in 2016 in the seven county metro area.

Opioid use is in the top four concerns for families involved in the child protection system, along with methamphetamine, alcohol, and mental health. Substance use affects out of home placements which have skyrocketed since 2015. The annual child welfare report discusses substance abuse generally, but does not pull out by substance type. MN DHS is revamping their dashboard so we can see additional trends. Sean's presentation ended with a Q&A session with panel members.

4. In October 2018, Glynis Shea, from the School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota, did a presentation on "reframing." She helped us understand the concept of "reframing" to be more effective in our advocacy for children who need protective services. Our goal has been to be spokespeople in our daily conversations out in the community. We often read in the newspaper about negative media attention on child protection and want to share the good work we see going on by sharing more positive information about Child Protective Services in Washington County.

The words “child protection” pull up a host of preconceived notions in people’s minds and our positive message can get lost on the listener even before we start. Even strong data points won’t be successful in opening up the conversation.

One obstacle has been that government media releases are very controlled and there is a history of Child Protection’s goal to stay out of the press, not to use it to spread positive messages. In cases like this, it’s often helpful to have a partner involved with messaging if we can’t own our own space. Often the space is controlled by who funds an entity. CRP is not a legal entity ourselves, but a federally mandated group with some State funding reporting annually to the County Board.

Framing involves a process in the brain, where we use mental “shortcuts” that drive how we think and react. The concept is pioneered by psychologists, linguists, and cognitive scientists. We can intentionally choose our words to influence others to think differently. This is well understood by advertisers. For example, if we hear the word “spanking” we automatically think certain things. It’s similar to the idea of “don’t think of an elephant.” People will automatically think of the elephant, so we need to avoid mentioning the elephant in the first place. So don’t lead off by saying, “People usually think X, but that’s not true.” That will cause people to think about X, which is what we do not want to reinforce.

How do we describe who we are and what we do? Instead of talking about “child protection” which is automatically associated with bad parenting, talk about the amazing resilient families and the socioeconomic, racial, and environmental factors they have overcome. We need to move the conversation beyond the realm of the **individual/relational** where fault and responsibility lie on people to fix problems on their own. People automatically default to what someone did, not what economics, schools, public health, government, media, culture, food systems, etc., did to the person. We need to bring the conversation up to the **community/institutional/societal** level where there are factors individuals and families can’t control that affect them and they need our assistance to make the community a better place for everyone. Words trigger shortcuts and always trump facts. People will dismiss data or debate facts. Instead, we need to lead with a personal story or position that implicates our shared values. We need to be intentional with the words we chose. If we want a different result, we need to start the conversation differently. Stories that talk about these bigger factors are impactful.

We know environmental stressors affect child development which affects a child’s trajectory. Society/MN/Washington County is not as awesome as it could be because of these environmental factors that a child and family may face. Start with why we care, not facts that we have found compelling. Start with the community benefit to engage the community to join with us. In child protection, perhaps start with how our future prosperity depends on the ingenuity of workforce (shared benefit). We can pay now or pay later/return on investment. We all know we can support brain development. (category) The problem is toxic stress that leads to neglect or abuse that impedes brain development. (specifics) In this conversation, we can avoid the automatic framing of it’s a bad family or kids and they need be fixed. Instead focus on what we all can do to fix the situation, as there exist environmental factors beyond the family’s control that we all can impact (for example the mom with three kids and three jobs).

Check out the “Brain Builders” video at <https://vimeo.com/112360818>, which explains that to build a better future we need to build better brains, and its most cost effective to do this upfront by preventing abuse and neglect than trying to do repair work later.

5. In November 2018, Cheryl Jogger, Community Engagement Coordinator for **South Washington County Community Action Reaching Every Student (SoWashCo CARES)** came to our CRP meeting. SoWashCo CARES is a community led effort to assist kids in that community with food, school supplies, and whatever they need. SoWashCo CARES came about after the Feed my Starving Children event in Washington County. One in five children receives free or reduced meals in the school system. There are 200 homeless kids in their community and SoWashCo CARES connects schools to the resources available in the community. SoWashCo CARES has a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/SoWashCoCARES/> and the needs of the children in the community are posted on their Facebook site. Once a need is posted, replies come quickly from the community at large. The St. Croix Girl Scouts have set up a snack program for the schools. A lot of the work has been on hunger relief in South Washington County; SoWashCo CARES has partnered with Second Harvest to ensure children have three (3) meals a day. The CRP will consider how we can partner with SoWashCo CARES going forward and possibly help create a similar effort in another part of the County.
  
6. Also in November 2018, Reanna Jacobs, Indian Child Welfare Act Compliance Supervisor from the MN Department of Human Services, presented to the CRP. Reanna gave a background on the ICWA Systems, which started with boarding schools (1892-1953), then the adoption era (1958-1967). Courts used cultural bias regarding child rearing/neglect as justification for removal of Native children from their homes. Data confirms that Native children are investigated and removed from their homes at a higher rate than non-Native children. ICWA was passed in 1978, updated in 2016, and applies to children through age 18. MIFPA was passed in 1985, updated in 2015, and applies to young people through age 21. This Minnesota law has more/higher standards than ICWA. The ICWA unit where Reanna works originally had 2 staff, and now has 7 staff. ICWA has two (2) processes for compliance: complaint and review.

The Components of ICWA Compliance include:

- Inquiry - Is the child a member of a tribe or eligible to be a member of a tribe? Which tribe?
- Notice to tribe - Tribe notified of situation involving a Native child or children within 24 hours.
- Actions - In accordance with notice of MIFPA and ICWA.
- Active efforts - Ongoing work to locate placement that fits within tribal placement preferences (foster care/adoption)
- Qualified Expert Witness (QEW) - Person with knowledge of tribal perspective to testify in Out of Home Placement (OHP) and/or Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) decisions if necessary.

If these requirements are not met the parent or the tribe can invalidate the process.

In 2017 the MN legislature appropriated funding for OHP costs for counties placing Native children at the direction of the tribe. Discussion regarding the intersection of the federal, state and tribal jurisdictions followed Reanna's presentation. There are eleven tribes in MN and sometimes they work in concert with each other, although most of the time they have distinct perspectives. Two tribes, White Earth and Leech Lake, have taken complete responsibility for Child Welfare work for their tribes. Two others are interested in doing so. The requirements for tribal membership are determined by each tribe and vary – some are based on matrilineal or patrilineal inheritance, others on blood quantum or other specific identity definitions.

### **Ongoing Training**

1. Our two new panel members completed internal, County-specific training and MN DHS training.
2. Panel members participated in a number of child protection issue webinars during the year.

3. One panel member attended a World Café discussion along with the CRP County liaisons in March as part of the Child Welfare Disparity Grant. Child Protection has done 75 Individual Development Inventories (IDIs) with personal feedback sessions and engages Familywise for wrap-around services for those at risk for out-of-home placement. The team is now looking through policies and procedures with a multidisciplinary equity lens.
4. In April, one panel member attended a training by the Steve Rummeler Hope Network on the opioid epidemic and shared resources at a MN Council on Family Relations half-day conference.
5. In June, one panel member attended the Ramsey County Wakanheza training. The Wakanheza Project teaches individuals, agencies, businesses, and communities to use principles and strategies that prevent or de-escalate stressful situations and create more welcoming environments for children, young people, families and adults. Wakanheza is the Dakota word for child. Its English translation is "sacred being".
6. One panel member attended the June Connect Washington County meeting to learn more about homelessness in the County and available services for young people ages 18-26.
7. In August, one panel member attended a training on "Representing Minnesotans in Poverty."
8. In September, one panel member and one county liaison attended the Zero Abuse Project (ZAP) Conference sponsored by Mitchell Hamline School of Law. Renowned expert, Dr. Bruce Perry MD/PhD, from the Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University was the keynote speaker. The day of learning explored trauma and healing across the lifespan, building trauma-informed relationships, creating trauma-informed organizations, and implementing effective community services.

### **Update on 2018 Special Projects**

1. ***Social Worker/Staff Appreciation*** – In March, five panel members attended various child protection team meetings in the Cottage Grove and Stillwater offices. They brought treats and a nice thank you letter signed by all panel members.
2. ***Child Abuse Prevention Month*** – We piloted a contest where kids were asked to draw pictures of how to prevent child abuse. Hillside Elementary Kids Club in Cottage Grove agreed to participate. Pictures were completed in February. Kid pictures were then used for a display at the Park Grove Library in Cottage Grove in April, along with Parent Support Outreach Program (PSOP) brochures and a copy of the County Child Abuse Prevention proclamation for the month of April. Pictures were also used in a display binder at the Community Services table at the Washington County Fair in August. *\*See several picture examples as Attachments 1 and 2 of this Annual Report.*
3. ***Washington County Fair*** – Three CRP members each did a shift at the County Fair along with foster care recruitment staff. A long list of names was generated of people who would like more information about becoming foster care providers. A number of others took postcards with upcoming informational meeting dates.
4. ***CRP Brochure*** – To aid in recruiting additional panel members and for use at events such as the Washington County Fair, the Citizen Review Panel brochure was updated with fresh photos, updated bios and information, and to include all of our current roster of panel members. Copies were printed for future use. *\*See Attachment 3 for a copy of the brochure.*
5. ***Foster Care Providers Appreciation Project*** – Six panel members participated in this project during October and November to collect free pizza certificates and/or gift cards so that all 82 county foster care providers could take their families out for a pizza night in appreciation of the important work they do providing safe homes for children. A letter was drafted (*\*See Attachment 4*) explaining the project to potential pizza vendors. We broke the work down into areas:

Hugo/Forest Lake, Stillwater, Oakdale/Woodbury, and Cottage Grove. We had 22 pizza vendors county-wide participate, with approximately 160 pizzas donated. Thank you letters and participation certificates (*\*See Attachment 5*) were sent to vendors along with tax receipts for their donations.

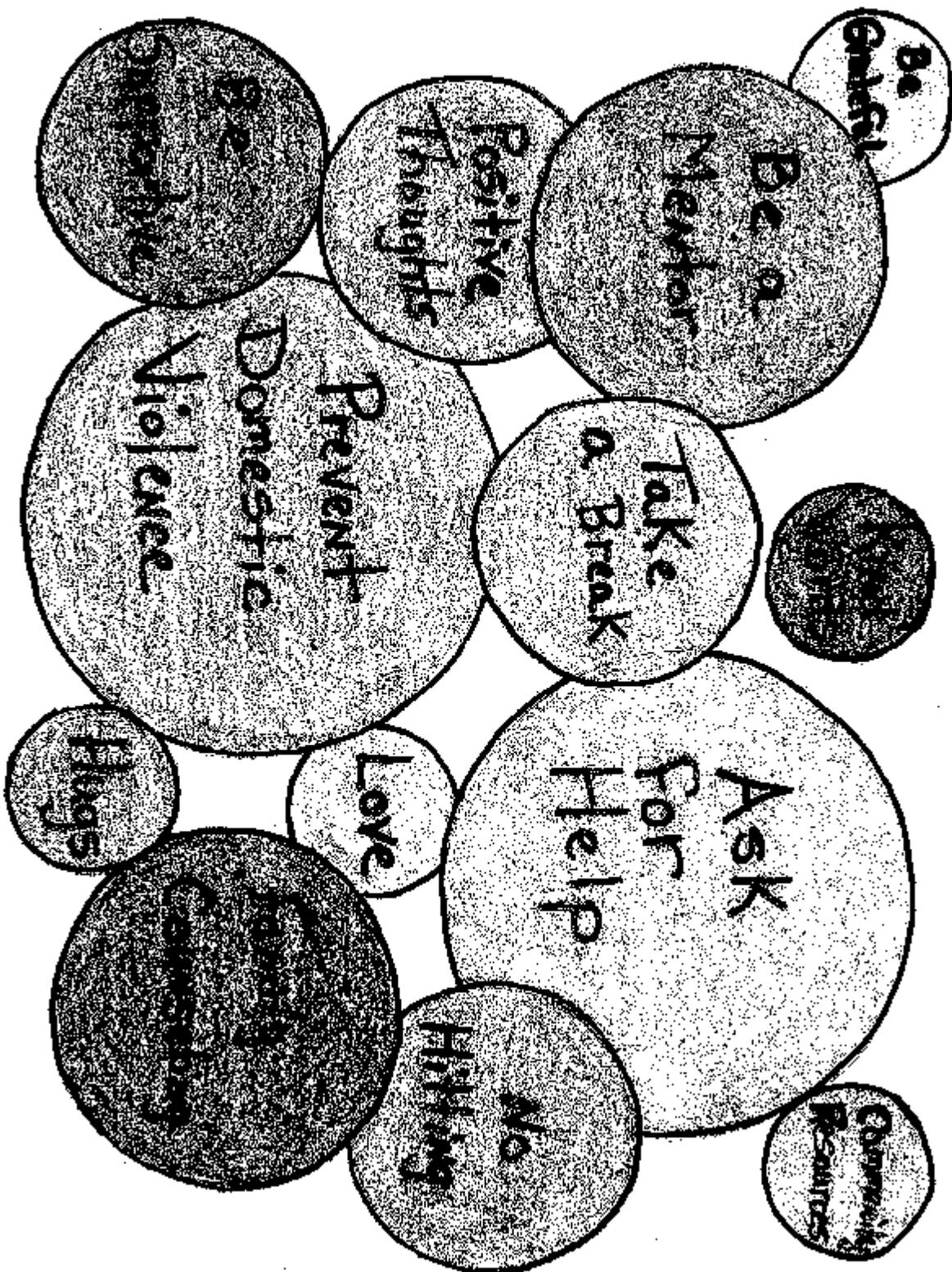
### **Planning for 2019 Special Projects**

The panel is currently considering the following projects to focus on in 2019:

1. March – Social Worker Appreciation Month thank you letter
2. March/April - KIDS Club art project in Stillwater Area Schools
3. April – Child Abuse Prevention Month, declaration, library community outreach displays
4. October/November – Foster Care Pizza Project
5. Assist with SoWashCo CARES projects or similar in other parts of County
6. Framing project/child protection positive media messaging
7. Some kind of data collection and/or data review project for child protection staff

The Citizen Review Panel members are currently discussing information about the scope of each of the above projects so that we can make a decision on how to prioritize them in the year ahead. We will most likely divide into smaller workgroups to tackle these projects.

ATTACHMENT 1 – Kid Picture from Child Abuse Prevention Month Project



ATTACHMENT 2 – Kid Picture from Child Abuse Prevention Month Project

Focus on the Positive \* Be Grateful \* Be a Mentor \*

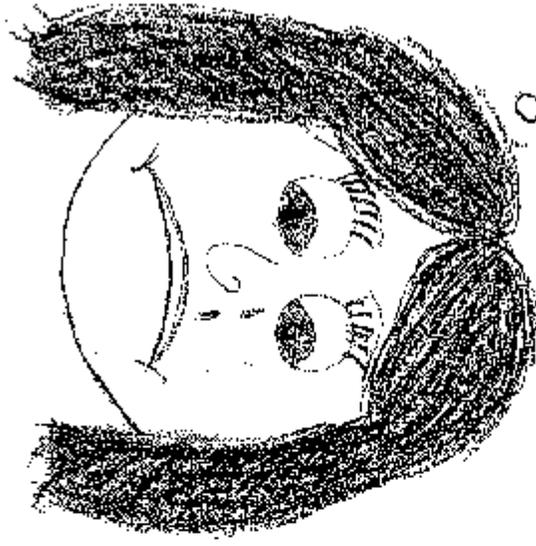
Ask for Help \*

\* Take a Break

\* Counseling Help

\* Be Supportive

\* Prevent Domestic Violence



I don't know what to do. I'm so frustrated!



Don't be afraid to ask for help. Do you need help?

Be Supportive

\*

Prevent Domestic Violence

**ATTACHMENT 3 – Updated Citizen Review Panel Brochure  
(If viewing electronically, double-click on the image to see the full brochure.)**

*Washington County  
Child Protection  
& DHS Panel Members*



The Citizen Review Panel for Child Protective Services receives guidance and input from county and state advisors. Sarah Amundson, LICSW, is a Community Services Division Manager who provides both oversight as well as vital updates regarding county child protection. Nissa Knutson, Children's Services Supervisor, oversees the day to day operation/coordination of the panel and provides county updates. Mary Doyle is a Human Service Program Representative 2 with the Department of Human Services (DHS). She serves as a support and liaison to the panel from the state, and assists the panel in meeting federal requirements.

*Jan Hayne, MA  
(Current Chairperson)*



Jan works to educate young people about the responsibilities of parenting and the challenges of parenting too soon, focusing specifically on the role of fathers. These challenges can contribute to some of the issues faced by families in the child protection system. Her work acknowledges family diversity and emphasizes

protective factors even when families might also have many risk factors. Involvement in the CRP is a way for Jan to bring her knowledge and experience to serve and strengthen her community.



*Citizen Review Panel for  
Child Protective Services*



The Citizen Review Panel for Child Protective Services was created with an amendment to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act in 1996. The Panel in Washington County is made up of citizen volunteers with the charge of evaluating the effectiveness of the county's child protection services

and enhancing the quality of those services whenever possible. After its evaluation, the panel is able to offer recommendations regarding changes in the child protection system to both the county and the state. Through policy evaluation, community outreach, and education, the panel's goal is to partner with Washington County Child Protection Services to keep children safe.

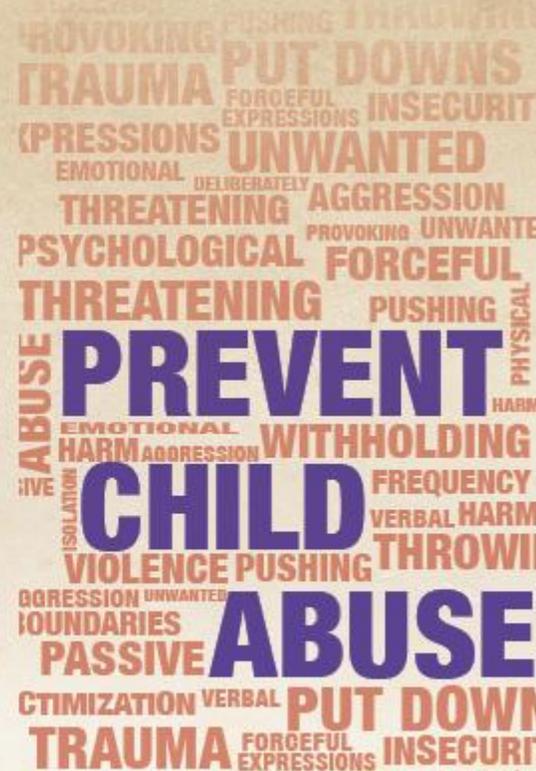
**MEMBERSHIP**

Each volunteer member serves an initial two-year term. Panel members must be sensitive to diversity, maintain confidentiality, and take special training related to various aspects of the child protection process. Panel members review records, gather information, provide insight, and report findings to the County Board. The panel is supported by county and state staff, who provide updates and guidance.

If you are interested in volunteering as a panel member, please contact Nissa Knutson at 651-430-4111 for more information.



citizen review panel



ATTACHMENT 4 – Sample Letter to Request Pizza Donations



Community Services

November 13, 2018

Dear Manager/Owner, \_\_\_\_\_

The Citizen Review Panel for Child Protection is a volunteer group comprised of Washington County citizens. Through policy evaluation, community outreach, and education, the panel works with County Child Protection Services to help families and children facing difficult circumstances as victims of child abuse or neglect. To do so, we partner with local officials, non-profits, and great local businesses such as yours.

There are currently 82 foster care providers in Washington County. We would like to send a special thank you to them all, as they have stepped up to provide safe homes for children and youth in need. We are asking for your assistance with this year's project.

This Thanksgiving holiday season, we are seeking **coupons/certificates good for one large, 2 topping pizza** to be donated to each of these foster families. Businesses across the County are being asked to make similar donations so that all of our foster families can enjoy a pizza night and feel appreciated.

I am currently seeking a total of (**17**) donations for families in the **\*Stillwater\*** area and will gladly accept whatever number you're comfortable donating toward that goal. Please let me know if you're interested in contributing toward this effort. We would like to collect coupons/certificates **by: Monday, November 19th**. I'm happy to take your donation now or I can return to pick it up at your convenience.

**\*You will receive a receipt from the County for your tax-deductible donation.**

Thank you in advance for any help that you can provide. Please feel free to call me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Jan Hayne, CRP Chair  
651-338-8386

On behalf of the Washington County Citizen Review Panel

ATTACHMENT 5 – Certificate of Participation



CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

*this certificate is awarded to:*

Business Name

*in recognition of*

Your Partnership with the Washington County Citizen  
Review Panel

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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