

**MINUTES of Texas Children’s Justice Act Task Force**  
**Meeting date: September 9, 2010**

**Call to order:** A regular meeting of the Texas Children’s Justice Act Task Force, was held at the Texas Center for the Judiciary, Austin, TX on September 9, 2010. The meeting convened at 10:00 a.m., Fairy Rutland presiding.

**Members in attendance:**

Roy Block  
Audrey Deckinga  
Jon Evans  
Joe Gagen  
Denise Hyde  
Margaret Lalk  
James Lukefahr  
Chris Oldner  
Dan Powers  
Joy Rauls

Fairy Rutland  
Gerry Williams

**Members not in attendance:**

William Briley  
Kriste Burnett  
Cozette Bustamante  
De Shaun Ealoms  
Tom Gaylor  
Rolf Habersang  
Joyce James  
Randi King  
Valerie Milholland  
Daniela Ontiveroz

**Staff in attendance:**

Heidi Penix  
Ginny Woods

**Guests in attendance:**

Dan Capouch  
Tiffany Roper  
Randy Sarosdy

**Welcome and Task Force Business** by Fairy Rutland. Fairy Rutland welcomed members and guests and introduced Randy Sarosdy, the new Executive Director of Texas Center for the Judiciary.

Ms. Rutland requested any updates or announcements from Task Force members. Denise Hyde discussed the POV documentary *Off and Running* about adoption and identity. Texas CASA hosted a viewing on 09/07/10 and Joe Gagen can provide Task Force members with a copy of the program.

Gerry Williams announced the promotion of Joyce James to a new position to lead efforts to address disproportionality and disparities across all of HHSC.

**Approval of May 21, 2010 minutes:** Minutes from the May 21st Task Force meeting were emailed to members following the meeting and posted to the CJA website.

Motion was made by Judge Chris Oldner and seconded by Denise Hyde to approve the minutes of the May 21st meeting. Motion carried without opposition.

**Task Force Member and Officer elections** by Ginny Woods. Due to health concerns, Judge Thorne has resigned from the CJA Task Force. The Task Force expressed appreciation for Judge Thorne’s years of service to CJA both as a member and as its Chair.

Ms. Woods explained that the Task Force had three potential vacancies to fill – one in the federally mandated discipline of civil court judge. The two remaining vacancies were “at large”. In accordance with the requirements and restrictions set out by the federal program and the CJA Task Force bylaws, the Task Force’s Member Nominating Committee proposed the following slate of nominees:

The Honorable Dean Rucker, District Judge, 318<sup>th</sup> Family District Court, Midland, TX

Cathy Crabtree, Director of Chapter Development, National Children’s Alliance, Washington, DC (residing in Austin, TX)

Kristen Zingaro Foster, Associate, Henslee Schwartz, Houston, TX (residing in Austin, TX)

The Task Force had engaged in the voting process online prior to the meeting and all three nominees were selected for membership.

The Officer’s Nominating Committee put forth the names of Judge Dean Rucker and Cathy Crabtree as 2011 CJA Task Force Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. Ballots were distributed at the meeting and these selections were approved.

**Budget** by Heidi Penix and Ginny Woods. Ms. Penix reviewed the 2010 budget and noted that currently funded CJA projects were on target to expend funds as proposed.

Ms. Woods reviewed the preliminary 2011 budget noting the estimated available funding for grant projects was \$994,633.

**Conflict of Interest Forms:** Members completed and submitted Conflict of Interest Forms.

**Undoing Racism Update** by Judge Oldner. Judge Oldner updated the Task Force on his participation in the Undoing Racism workshop supported by CJA and held at the Texas Center for the Judiciary on June 24-26, 2010. The Task Force expressed interest in continuing to support these workshops as well as other efforts to address disproportionality in the child protection system.

**Review 2011 Grant Process & Approval of 2011 Grant Awards:** Ms. Woods reviewed the 2011 grant process which included strategic planning to revise the 2010 recommendations, the grant solicitation process, and the objective review and scoring process in which all Task Force members, as well as staff, participated.

The following grant projects were approved for CJA funding in the 2011 grant year:

*Training and Technical Assistance for Texas CACs –Children’s Advocacy Centers of Texas*

This project will provide MDTs and team members with specific and targeted professional development training, formal and networking opportunities, cross-training and technical assistance designed to enhance their professional skills and knowledge to support the

collaborative model of service delivery for child victims of abuse. The project will also provide additional support for forensic interviewers through regional and Spanish-language peer review offerings.

Motion to approve funding was made by Joe Gagen and seconded by Margaret Lalk. Motion was carried without opposition. Joy Rauls abstained.

*Child Abuse and Neglect Training for Law Enforcement – Training and Research Institute for Professional Law Enforcement (TRIPLE)*

This project will improve and update the current Child Abuse and Neglect Training curriculum for law enforcement as well as hold at least 50 classes and train at least 500 officers on the new curriculum.

Motion to approve funding was made by Margaret Lalk and seconded by Dan Powers. Motion carried without opposition.

*Child Protection Court Enhancement Project – Office of Court Administration*

This project will identify and develop one “model” Child Protection Court (CPC), continue to improve data collection processes and implement a continuous review process as well as provide support to the CPCs through legal research and resources related to best practices.

Motion to approve funding was made by Gerry Williams and seconded by Joe Gagen. Motion carried without opposition.

*Texas Alliance for Drug Endangered Children – Greater Dallas Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse*

This project will develop new and build upon existing local Drug Endangered Children alliances throughout Texas for a total of 39 alliances as well as maintain and promote existing alliances through a range of training and networking opportunities for multidisciplinary professionals.

Motion to approve funding was made by Joe Gagen and seconded by Gerry Williams. Motion carried without opposition.

*CASA Volunteer Development – Texas CASA*

This project will strengthen CASA advocacy through the provision of training, workshops, technical and media assistance initiatives and the activities of the statewide volunteer council. CASA will also increase the total number of CASA volunteers by improving volunteer recruitment and retention.

Motion to approve funding was made by Denise Hyde and seconded by Judge Chris Oldner. Joe Gagen abstained. Motion carried without opposition.

*Kids in Court – Children’s Advocacy Center of Smith County*

This project will provide comprehensive education on the judicial process to child victims and their protective caregivers. In addition, the Kids in Court Coordinator will inform child victims and their families about their impending criminal cases by providing case updates, scheduled hearings, and case information as well as providing information to clients about their rights as crime victims and providing support in the enactment of victim’s rights throughout the judicial process.

Motion to approve funding was made by Judge Chris Oldner and seconded by Dan Powers. Motion carried without opposition.

*FASD Online Training – Texas Office for the Prevention of Developmental Disabilities*

This project will provide online training to 800 judges and lawyers on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and how to respond to the special needs of children with the disabilities associated with FASD.

Motion to approve funding was made by Joe Gagen and seconded by Dr. James Lukefahr. Motion carried without opposition.

*Harris County Infants and Toddlers Court – Harris County*

Harris County Infants and Toddlers Court will host a regional conference on the topic of child abuse and the Courts to increase the visibility of the ITC and the notion of leadership from the bench. This project will also develop the use of technology to increase timely and transparent communication between ITC Team members.

Motion to approve funding was made by Joe Gagen and seconded by Judge Chris Oldner. Motion carried without opposition.

*Transitioning Youth Advocacy – CASA of Travis County*

This project will support a Transitioning Youth Specialist to provide specialized training and supervision to CASA volunteers on how to meet the needs of transitioning youth. It will also support the participation of the Transitioning Youth Specialists in the Transition Court pilot, a specialty docket for vulnerable youth consisting of longer, more frequent, and more informal meetings than typical CPS court hearings.

Motion to approve funding was made by Denise Hyde and seconded by Gerry Williams. Motion carried without opposition.

*Cultural Competency Initiatives*

In addition to these projects, the Task Force approved setting aside funds for two cultural competency initiatives - Fatherhood Roundtable events and Undoing Racism workshops.

Motion to set aside funding for these initiatives was made by Margaret Lalk and seconded by Gerry Williams. Motion was carried without opposition.

The total projected funding for the grant projects and cultural competency initiatives is \$989,611.

Task Force members expressed interest in pursuing a competitive grant process to address smaller organizations and projects that did not receive funding during this stage as well as providing scholarships to organizations and individuals to attend trainings. Once the funding picture for next year is finalized and the availability of additional funds is known, these options will be discussed further.

Margaret Lalk discussed the Texas Alliance for Drug Endangered Children project and expressed her reservations at its continuation without tangible evidence of its progress.

**Review of Next Steps/Future Meeting Dates/Adjourn:** The CJA Task Force meeting schedule for 2010/2011 is as follows:

November 5, 2010	9 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Texas Center for the Judiciary
January 28, 2011	9 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Texas Center for the Judiciary
April 22, 2011	9 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Texas Center for the Judiciary
July 22, 2011	9 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Texas Center for the Judiciary

The meeting was adjourned at **1:00 pm**

These minutes were approved at a Texas Children’s Justice Act Task Force meeting on \_\_\_\_\_.

---