**Minutes for Pinellas County Domestic Violence Task Force**

**March 21, 2017**

Chair: Bobbie Hodson- **Pinellas County Sheriff’s Office**

Vice Chair: Christine Warwick- **Retired (Haven)**

Location: Suncoast Hospice

The Gathering Place (room C)

5771 Roosevelt Blvd.

Clearwater FL

Time: 2:00 PM-4:00 PM

VISION:

To have a peaceful and just community;

PURPOSE:

1. To promote the prevention of domestic and sexual violence.

2. To enhance victim safety.

3. To hold batterers accountable.

GOALS:

1. To develop and implement primary preventative strategies.

2. To facilitate and implement a coordinated community response to domestic violence,

3. To provide ongoing education and assessment of the coordinated community response.

The Task Force agrees to use the principles of Trauma Informed Care in conducting our meetings by creating a safe, trustworthy, collaborative and empowering environment. This supportive culture of shared decision making and choices for all involved will enhance our advocacy efforts.

Bobbie Hodson called the meeting to order by reading the Vision, Purpose and Goals of the Task Force at 2:02 PM

Bobbie announced that minutes will be posted on the website and sent out electronically in the future. There will not be hard copies at the meetings.

There was discussion about corrections but the corrections had been made before the meeting.

D. Swindall proposed approval of the minutes and Maria Taylor seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.

1. **Primary Prevention Report** – Jennifer Saulpaugh

There are no hard copies of the **Coaching Boys to Men** curriculum yet but plans are being made to present it to the school board. The goal is to have coaches present this material to their teams.

The Prevention committee has put together a folder containing information outlining the vision and goals of the Task Force, along with information regarding raising children without violence, the effects of domestic violence and trauma on children and dating violence. These folders can be handed out at any of the prevention committee’s events or presentations.

Scheduled prevention events are:

On 4/1/2017. Largo Park

On 4/22 Suncoast will be hosting a 5K run from 8AM -12PM

On 6/25/2017 in St Petersburg the Pride Festival from 10AM- 6PM

Volunteers are needed to assist at the 5K run, the Pride Festival and upcoming events not yet scheduled. PTA’s and other school organizations are showing an interest in having teen dating violence presentations. So the hope is there will be many presentations in the near future. A power point and other materials will be provided if you are willing to help. Please contact Jennifer. Her information (and all the Committee Chairs contact information) is on our new website. **http://pinellasdvtf.weebly.com/**

1. **Fatality Review** –Frieda Widera, Chair

There was no meeting in March. On 4/16/2017 the committee will be reviewing a case from St Petersburg and Katie Gardner will discuss a webinar she recently attended.

The committee is working on The Fatality Review Report that will be completed and presented in May.

1. **BIP Committee Report** – David Swindall, Chair

The BIP Providers met with people from the State Attorneys Office, the Public Defender’s Office, Judges Grissinger and Helinger.

The purpose was to discuss the increase in batterers being court ordered to anger management classes.

A consensus was met with the State Attorneys, Public Defenders and Judges Grissinger and Helinger agreeing not to refer batterers to anger management. In the event the charge is pled down and 26 weeks of BIP cannot be ordered all agreed to refer to 12 weeks of DVIP and the BIP Providers will put these people in the BIP group with the hopes of them staying for 26 weeks. The understanding is this will be the exception and not the rule.

Gaby Lopez has finished the bookmark size flyer describing the difference between batterers intervention and anger management. The names and phone numbers of the approved providers are on the back.

We would like to have them laminated and give them to the State Attorneys, Public Defenders and Judges.

Possible funding sources will be approached to pay for the laminating.

1. **Advocacy Committee Report** – Sherry Clester

The committee is creating a flyer to be distributed to hospital social workers defining what services Crimes Compensation may be able to cover. They are starting a Victim Advocate newsletter that will come out in June and January. It will be educational, uplifting and honor heroes in the community who are helping DV victims. There will be information in the newsletter regarding yoga and self defense classes for victims or people working with victims. There will also be information regarding personal safety.

The committee is organizing people to attend trials of victims who may not have other support.

They are organizing a walk for domestic violence awareness in October.

They are also working on a handout for victims applying for Injunctions. It will be in Spanish and English and will inform victims they can ask for things like BIP, child support, neutral drop off places, and mental health or substance treatment.

1. **By-Laws Committee Report** – Gaby Lopez

The committee presented the updated by laws. The three main updates are that the trauma informed principles will be followed in all meetings and committees, ad hoc committees are more clearly defined, and all committees are to work toward a consensus in their undertakings. If for some reason a consensus cannot be reached, the committee can approach the Steering Committee. If a consensus can still not be reached, a resolution committee can be formed with three non biased members appointed by the Task Force Chair

Chris Warwick motioned to approve the amended bylaws and Denise Hughes-Conlon seconded. All were in favor. By Laws as amended accepted.

1. **Stats Committee Report** – Ruth Whitney

The committee report will be presented in July. This year there will be recommendations for BIP Providers, law enforcement and prosecutors.

The committee is developing training for the State Attorney’s Office with Alexis Upton’s input on intimate partner violence, working with victims, sharing how advocates work and the best ways to reach them. The training will be presented during Victim Rights Week and offer CLEs to attorneys.

Last year’s misdemeanor prosecution rates increased to 45%. This was up from 28% in 2015 and 24% in 2014.

Felony arrests were at 29 % in 2016, 28% in 2015 and 24% in 2014.

Misdemeanor non arrests were at 10% in 2016, 12% in 2015 and 1% in 2014.

Felony non arrests were at10% in 2016, 10% in 2015, and 2% in 2014.

These increases may be due to the diligence of this committee.

1. **Steering Committee Report**  – Alexis Upton

Alexis stated that a great deal of work was done on the By Laws andupdating them so they would best represent the operating procedures of of the Task Force. She also asked for members to become more involved in committees and volunteering for events. There is a great deal of work being down and it cannot continue without the help of all members. Please choose an area you would like to work in and contact the committee chair to lend a hand. Committee Chair’s contact information can be fund on the new website **http://pinellasdvtf.weebly.com/**

Alexis also thanked Katie Gardner for the work she has been doing with the State Attorney’s Office. Alexis believes it has been very productive.

1. **Chairs Report** – Bobbie Hodson

Bobbie commended all the committees for the work they are doing to make things happen in our County.

She has been invited to read offs at PCSO for the last six weeks and has also been invited in June to train new recruits and deputies regarding intimate partner violence, strangulation, trauma and interviewing victims.

ABC action news has asked Bobbie for a history of the Task Force to be used for a segment they are doing in October when they are covering The Yellow Dress put on by JAEDA and supported by the Task Force.

The Task Force recommended an editorial letter be written regarding the demeaning treatment and the victim blaming language used in describing the abuse, kidnapping and attempted murder of Alyssa Summers. Frieda Widera made the motion and Gaby Lopez seconded it. All were in favor. Bobbie agreed to write the letter.

1. **Announcements:**

Ellen Woll announced that JAEDA held their 4th Elder Awareness workshop on 3/13/17. The theme seemed to be awareness of ourselves and others. Ellen said it felt it was like our efforts in Being Better Bystander trainings.

If you have any requests for the education component in the coming months, contact Alexis or Bobbie.

DVTF has a new Website address:

**http://pinellasdvtf.weebly.com/**

Next Meeting: 5/16/17 @ Suncoast Hospice

5771 Roosevelt Blvd. Clearwater

Please contact Bobbie Hodson if you wish to be on the agenda

Meeting Minutes Submitted by: Denise Hughes Conlon