

Youth Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday

May 28, 2024

12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

The Center – Youth Opportunity Hub

Meeting Facilitator: Melissa Bias, Executive Director of Region 2 Workforce Investment Board

Present: Chairman Charles Shaw, Melissa Bias (Executive Director Region 2 WIB), Region 2 WIB Staff: Heather Merritt, Malissa Dishman, Adam Warden, and Affiona Brown. Region 2 WIB Youth: Jasmine Green. Christina Walters and Isabel Pino (The Center), Rachel Patterson (DoHS), Bradlee Jordan (One-Stop/HRDF), Katlan Maynard (MCTC), Angela Saunders (MURC/COE/PEP), Julie DaMattie and Bekah DeMattie (Golden Girls Group Home), Addison Staats and Aleya Goodman (Golden Girls Program Participants/R2 WIB Youth Participants).

Call to Order: Pastor Charles Shaw – Youth Chair

Prayer: Pastor Charles Shaw

Minutes: A motion to approve the April 2024 Minutes was made by Bradlee Jordan and seconded by Katlan Maynard.

Executive Director Report:

- **Melissa Bias** welcomed everyone and had introductions of all the partners present at the meeting.

Youth Supervisor Report/Career Planner's Presentations:

- **Heather Merritt** introduced our Guest Speakers:
 - **Christina Walters- Harmony House/The Center- Youth Opportunity Hub:** Data from 2018 showed the national average of disconnected youth experiencing homelessness, ages 16-24 years old, was 7%, but in our area of Huntington, WV, the average was 12%! Thus, The Center- Youth Opportunity Hub got started to provide a safe space for everyone. Since then many programs and resources have become available to the our youth. Anyone can donate clothing and snacks or meals to The Center.
Christina.Walters@HarmonyHouseWV.com www.facebook.com/thecenteryoh

- **Angie Saunders-(PEP):** PEP is a community coalition. It is centered around Youth Empowerment. Everything PEP does is designed to reach and empower our youth. They have a County Teen Summit funded by PEP. They have a zoom call for the teens, “What’s up Wednesday?”, that began during Covid. PEP trains youth to train other youth and to be the mentors. The youth also wrote a book, Dragon’s Adventures; there’s also a little stuffed animal dragon with a t-shirt on that the youth created. There is a youth sub-committee of PEP youth who work for Marshall University through a contract program by signing a “MOU”; their newsletter is: “The Voice of the Youth”. Youth who become leaders in the PEP program have opportunities to earn a scholarship.
- **Julie Epperson- Clinical Director at Golden Girls Group Home:** Julie has been staffed at Golden Girls for 29 years. Golden Girls is a Residential Treatment Facility and has been around for 40 years. Every participant in Golden Girls has gone through the Court System and can be anywhere from 12 to 21 years old. Their program is designed so that it can help the girls whether they stay a short time or a long time. All of the activities at the group home have a treatment component that focuses in a positive way for adults to touch the youth’s lives.

Heather Merritt- Youth Supervisor: Heather spotlighted some of our R2 WIB Youth. Angelea Sexton, not present, graduated Penn Foster High School and received her High School Diploma; Leah also is currently in a Work Experience Contract at R2 WIB. Jasmine Green, present, is currently making great progress on her Penn Foster High School and also working with us at R2 WIB on a W. E. Contract; Jasmine is a referral to us from “right here at: The Center”.

Upcoming Events:

- **The Center:** Resource Fair- July 20th.

Adjourned at 2:16 pm

Respectfully Submitted by: Malissa Dishman