



A meeting of the *Granby Early Childhood Council* (GECC) was held on Monday, April 6, 2009 at the Farmington Valley YMCA Community Room. In attendance were:

In Attendance:

Judi Cosgrove,	GECC Co-Chairperson
Sheri Litchfield	GECC Co-Chairperson
Mary Tabb	Early Childhood Consultation Partnership
Jenn Russell	Parent
Melien Lavoie	Parent
Alicia Newton	Nutritional Consultant
Cindy Guerreri	Graustein Memorial Fund Community Liaison
Joan Rogers	Discovery and GECC Coordinator

The April 6, 2009 meeting began at 6:35 pm in the community room of the YMCA. Sheri welcomed everyone and asked for introductions since there were several new faces in attendance. Mary Tabb of the Early Childhood Consultation Partnership (ECCP) gave an overview of ECCP. The ECCP is a mental health consultation program, developed to meet the social and emotional needs of children birth through age five. The ECCP is designed to build the capacity of caregivers by offering support, education and consultation to both home-based and center-based providers, at no charge. Mary indicated that she has already sent information about the ECCP to the home-based providers in Granby, and Joan will provide the overview handouts that Mary Tabb handed out to all the Granby preschools and Linda Marshall since Birth to Three Programs can also refer children to the ECCP.

Sheri asked if there were any additions, deletions or revisions to the minutes from the February 2, 2009 meeting, since the March meeting was canceled due to a snowstorm. A motion was made to accept the minutes by Jenn Russell, and seconded by Melien Lavoie. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Sheri Litchfield reported that there was no Treasurer's Report this evening due to Dot's absence during her maternity leave.

Sheri asked to amend the agenda to include a discussion regarding the Federal Stimulus dollars coming to Granby. Sheri asked the Discovery Grant Community Liaison, Cindy Guerreri, to speak to this topic. Cindy explained that the intended purpose of these dollars is to get cash out into the economy. These dollars can't be used to supplant state dollars. They are intended as a one time expenditure. Superintendents have been meeting as a group to discuss the requirements around these dollars. Any programs that the dollars are used for must be "shovel ready." Cindy suggested contacting Beth Bye to discuss her ideas on how Granby could use these dollars.

Sheri reported that for quite sometime Janet Ford has been indicating her desire to step down as GECC Co-Chair, after over 2 years of serving in this leadership role. Sheri indicated that it is time for the GECC to honor Janet's request, and she asked if there were any other nominations for Co-Chair. Having none offered, Sheri nominated Judi Cosgrove to serve as GECC Co-Chair. The nomination was seconded, and by a vote of consensus, Judi Cosgrove was elected to serve as the new GECC Co-Chair.

Sheri provided an update on the Early Learning Groups (ELGs) scheduled to begin on May 1st. She stated that the YMCA has donated space on Fridays for the ELGs. The classes are designed for two different age groups – ages 1-2, and ages 3-4. Both classes filled even before the Drummer came out in print with the ELGs registration in it. This confirms what the GECC feasibility study indicated – that more early learning opportunities are needed for young children in Granby. Parent Melien Lavoie suggested offering more groups at the same time with another teacher, and suggested that the town look at any space that could be available for these early learning opportunities. She also suggested that the GECC communicate to the BOE that the Federal Stimulus dollars be used for these types of early learning offerings.

Sheri reported on a recent meeting between a few GECC members and the directors and owners of all the Granby center-based preschools. During this meeting, all preschool representatives expressed a strong desire to have an ongoing relationship and a “connection” with the primary school, and in particular with the kindergarten teachers. Following this meeting, a few GECC members met with Superintendent Addley to share this information with him. As a result, Superintendent Addley has invited the directors and owners of all the Granby preschools to meet with him, the Principal of Kearns School, the District Outreach Coordinator and the Director of Curriculum on April 13th to discuss ways to improve the preschool connection to the public schools.

Sheri and Judi reported on progress with the planning of the GECC fall fund raising event entitled, “Are You Smarter Than a Granby student?” They stated that this event is an opportunity to bring awareness to the community about the work of the GECC. Simsbury Bank and the YMCA have already stepped up as sponsors of this event. Judi stated that when a small committee met with the principals from Kearns, Kelly Lane and Wells Road Schools, the idea of this community/school/family event was very well received. Sheri expressed thanks to parent Kate Bogli for her outreach work on making the business community aware of this planned fall event. Sheri also thanked Becca from the Y for her efforts and connection of this event to the Granby Round Table project that she is facilitating. And, she gave special thanks to parent Gary Ebersole who conceived of this fund raising idea for the GECC to host.

Sheri gave an update on the work of the Kindergarten Transition Institute. She explained that the K Transition Institute is an opportunity offered by the Center for School Change to all Discovery Communities. Eight communities including Granby are currently involved in the Institute. The Institute facilitates communities in their development of a community transition plan or process that will be used to ensure that all kids arrive at school ready to learn. Sheri stated that in between the four meeting modules that take place in Hamden, there are also “homework” sessions where the community transition team meets locally to further work on a needs assessment which will drive its transition plan. The first “homework session” with the K teachers and Principal Kim Dessert is scheduled for next week.

Sheri informed the membership that she has been attending meetings of the 225th Anniversary of Granby Planning Committee. Community groups have begun to work together to define activities to celebrate the 225th anniversary of the community in 2011. That committee is asking other organizations to go back to their memberships and inquire as to how they can contribute to the event.

Sheri stated that the Granby Chamber of Commerce has asked the GECC to participate in Celebrate Granby once again this June. The GECC hopes that providers and parents are interested in participating once again this June in this great event at Salmon Brook Park. If interested, please contact Joan.

Joan gave an update on the work of the Granby Round Table (GRT). The GRT is the result of research conducted by Becca Polglase of the YMCA. Becca initiated research concerning the relationship between the YMCA and the Granby Community. The research included interviews with leaders in the community, a focus group with YMCA staff who are also residents of Granby, and 1000 surveys sent to random households in Granby. Research results had three main themes:

1. People in the community do not feel that there is enough for teenagers to do. Interviewees and focus group participants noted that teens complain of nothing to do and that on half days, for example, the center of town is overwhelmed with teenagers. Survey responses supported this.
2. People in the community feel that overall, organizations do a good job meeting the community's needs, however they are not as successful at collaborating as they could be because they simply do not have the extra time or resources to seek out collaborators. (this point is the origin of the Granby Round Table)
3. People in Granby feel that the YMCA is valuable to the community but does not have the appearance of a non-profit, charitable organization.

The first GRT meeting took place on February 26, 09. Present were representatives from the YMCA, Holcomb Farm, Granby Social Services, the Granby Public Schools, the Granby Chamber of Commerce and the GECC. "Next steps" were discussed, and subsequent meeting dates were established.

Sheri stated that the April GECC workshop is entitled, "**Reading, Writing...Ready?**" - **presented by Granby Kindergarten Teachers.** Also, the Membership Medley for May is "A Spring Fling" for young children. Everyone is encourage to share their favorite Nature..., Earth Day..., Gardening..., Recycling..., or Spring ideas with the group. Ideas don't need to be original; they can be activities, stories, songs, etc. that you do in your classroom, at home, or you have seen at a workshop, in books or on the Internet. This is an opportunity for each of us to share, discuss and bring home new ideas that can make quality learning possible for all children in our community.

Sheri then introduced Alicia Newton, a nutritional consultant, to discuss the Membership Medley topic this month of nutrition. Alicia provided an extremely informative overview on concrete ways that parents and child care providers can help children establish healthy eating habits. Alicia indicated that the three worst food ingredients that children and adults can ingest are artificial sweeteners, hydrogenated oils and high in corn syrup by products. Alicia engaged

meeting participants in a question and answer session. At the conclusion of Alicia's presentation, Sheri thanked her for her time in coming to the Council meeting this evening.

Meeting adjourned at: 8:04 PM

Respectively submitted,

Joan Rogers, GECC Coordinator and Acting Secretary



The core value that directs the work of the GECC is to ensure that “All children arrive at school healthy and socially and emotionally prepared for academic success and life-long learning.”

Funded by the Discovery Grant from the Graustein Memorial Fund