

Minutes of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee
March 9, 2018
Holland & Knight, 50 N. Laura St., Jacksonville, Florida

Present

Chairman Buddy Schulz, The Honorable Suzanne Bass, Jim Clark, the Honorable Brian Davis, Pamela Davis, Rory Diamond, Sheriff Nat Glover, Dr. Jeffrey Goldhagen, Shelley Grant, Marcus Haile, Gretchen Hamm, Elder Lee Harris, Bill Hodges, Alan Louder, Michael Meyers, Lara Nezami, Assistant Chief Deloris Patterson, the Honorable Jack Schemer, Nina Waters, Vicki Waytowich, Donna Webb

Committee is called to order at 9:07 a.m.

Meeting

SAO Juvenile Director Laura Lambert welcomes the room and calls the meeting to order. She introduces the first presenter, Ingrid Bowman-Thomas.

Ingrid Bowman-Thomas is a nationally certified site coordinator for Communities in Schools of Jacksonville, and holds a Masters in Education. Thomas shares her experience of having known a fairly normal, middle class life and then having been thrust into poverty and homelessness. In elementary school, she had her first encounter with mentoring via Big Brothers, Big Sisters. Although it took two different matches, her mentor changed her life by inspiring her, teaching Thomas her own worth and value, and encouraging her to pursue her dreams, no matter her circumstances. Thomas discusses the qualities of a good mentor and the impact a consistent mentoring relationship can have. (Refer to included PowerPoint file for specific information.)

A panel discussion is held regarding the attendees' organizational or personal experience with mentoring. Remarks are made by the following:

- Bishop John Guns, Operation Save Our Sons
- Sara Alford, Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Northeast Florida
- Kevin Carrico, Boys & Girls Clubs of Northeast Florida
- Lawrence Hills, 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project
- Sonya Young, The Malik Mentoring Program

Committee Discussion

- Questions for Ingrid Thomas about mentoring:

- Chair Schulz states he does not feel that he would be an effective mentor, and asks how he could be helpful in the mentoring scope. Thomas answers that anyone and everyone can be a mentor—be yourself, because there is a kid out there who will benefit from your mentorship, but finding the right match is important.
- It is asked if any of the children Thomas mentors have strong family support systems at home. Thomas answers yes, but that sometimes kids still need somebody, just one extra outside positive influence.
- Meyers asks if there is a structure for mentoring LGBT youth. Yes, sometimes children are referred to a different agency, like JASMYN.

- Questions for the panel about mentoring:
 - Elder Harris asks if any systemic improvement is seen as a result of mentoring. Bishop Guns replies that the level of improvement depends on different levels of commitment from the community.
 - General discussion about screening, the cost and funding limitations imposed by screening, and ideas about overcoming screening hurdles.
 - Alan Louder makes the suggestion that many males in the community want to help and mentor children, but cannot join a mentoring organization because they cannot pass background checks. He suggests a shadow or team-mentorship program.
 - General discussion about challenges or obstacles faced by mentoring programs, some of which are capacity limitations, funding limitations, staffing limitations, and legislative limitations.

Public Comment

No public comment.

Laura Lambert closes the meeting by thanking committee members, presenters, and visitors, and announces the date for the next meeting, on April 6.

Meeting is adjourned at 11:06 a.m.