

CONEJO COALITION FOR YOUTH & FAMILIES

MEMBER AGENCIES

Conejo Recreation & Park District
Conejo Valley Unified School District
City of Thousand Oaks

Susan Holt, Conejo Recreation & Park District
Conejo Coalition for Youth & Families Chair

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Community Conscience
Many Mansions

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, March 24, 2021, 10:00am
Meeting Held via Zoom Video Conference

Public Access for Zoom Video Conference:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81869570529>

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Holt at 10:04am.

2. ROLL CALL & INTRODUCTIONS

Present

Susan Holt, Conejo Recreation & Park District
Cindy Goldberg, Conejo Valley Unified School District
Claudia Bill-de la Peña, City of Thousand Oaks

Rochelle Callis, Conejo Recreation & Park District
Rebecca Cook, Conejo Valley Unified School District
Francine Sprigel, City of Thousand Oaks
Robin Britt, Community Conscience

Stacy DeWitt, Executive Director, James Storehouse
Lilian Mendoza, President, Adelante Comunidad Conejo
Lynda Karl, Co-Vice President, Adelante Comunidad Conejo
Carole Shelton, Co-Vice President, Adelante Comunidad Conejo

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

4. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

A. Update from James Storehouse

James Storehouse is a grassroots non-profit in Newbury Park working to break the generational cycle of abuse, neglect, and poverty. Since 2012, the

organization has served youth in Ventura County through referrals from social workers, the County, and other agencies. The organization serves youth from “cribs to college,” including children in foster care, youth who have aged out of foster care, and children who have been sexually exploited. In 2020, the non-profit served over 8,700 children. James Storehouse also works to determine what can be done to wrap-around families and strengthen them, so children do not need to be removed in the first place.

The James Storehouse resource center has three free boutiques which provide essential goods such as clothing, shoes, backpacks, school supplies, toiletries, diapers, bedding, dishes, and more; anything a family who receives a foster child would need. In-kind donations and monetary donations are received at the resource center (gently used and new items), with \$1.75m received in 2020. In addition, Life Skill Classes are offered to youth at the resource center, two per month: one for teen parents in foster care, and the other for teens rescued from sex trafficking. The classes help with interview skills and job placement, along with personal finance.

Program highlights include apartment setups for youth who age out of the foster system, baby showers for expecting teens, work experience and job skill training, transportation (bike, helmet, and lock; car donation for those working; savings and matching program), transitional housing, and mentorships

Cook will connect DeWitt with the school district’s liaisons for foster youth.

B. Update from Adelante Comunidad Conejo

For three years, Adelante Comunidad Conejo (ACC) has been working to bring Latino families’ voices into important conversations in the Conejo valley community, regardless of income and immigration status. The group is run entirely by volunteers, currently working out of the United Methodist. More information is available on their website regarding volunteer opportunities.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought devastating challenges for the families served by ACC, particularly those were not already equipped for distance learning. Many families lost jobs or experienced reduced income, and many frontline workers contracted COVID-19. ACC provided additional food and support during this time, giving daily lunches to over 100 CVUSD students. A community center was also converted to a food pantry known as the Adelante Shadows Pantry open on Wednesdays and Fridays from 5:30-7:30pm.

ACC also partnered with Food Share and ran a weekly drive-thru distribution center at either Conejo Elementary and Glenwood Elementary (alternating weeks) from 10:30-11:30am where donations from Trader Joe’s, Panera Bread, and Target were made available to families.

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In the future, ACC wants to continue to build a stronger community by building bridges between families and agencies who offer meaningful services. The needs of Latino families in our community include advocacy, information, food, household goods, and friendship. Adelante is hopeful that organizations like CRPD can provide unique services including nature walks in Spanish, little libraries, tutoring and literacy clubs, water safety classes.

Britt will connect ACC to the 13 nonprofits located at Community Conscience who offer services in Spanish to anyone regardless of citizenship status.

C. Safe Passage Youth Foundation Update

Safe Passage has relocated from the 850 Warwick Apartment Complex to the Conejo Community Center. The Conejo Recreation & Park District, Conejo Valley Unified School District, and Ventura County Sheriff Department all met with families recently to assure them that services will still be provided.

5. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Approval of February 24, 2021 Meeting Minutes

It was moved by Bill de-la Peña, seconded by Goldberg, and carried 3-0 to approve the minutes as presented.

6. AGENCY REPORTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Britt shared information about Lasagna Love, a service which delivers one freshly cooked lasagna once per month to any family in need. Dietary restrictions are adhered to. She will e-mail the flyer to the group.

Another organization would like to setup a free community fridge and is looking for a host location. Community Conscience is not able to host but is working to connect them with someone who can.

Callis shared updates to the Conejo Coalition web page, including links to video recordings of each special presentation made during the meetings.

Bill-de la Peña reminded the group that the City is taking nominations for the Community Commitment Award.

7. ITEMS FOR SUBSEQUENT AGENDAS

Sprigel suggested Raising Hope as a potential guest speaker for the next meeting. Cathi Nye from the County Office of Education offered to present. Callis expressed interest in having the Ventura County Sheriff Department come to discuss child trafficking; how are local agencies coordinating to help youth. She will reach out to Chief Fryhoff.

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8. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 28 at 10:00am.

9. ADJOURN

It was moved by Goldberg, seconded by Bill de-la Peña, and carried 3-0 to adjourn the meeting at 11:21am.