



**Best Start Network
Summary Notes
Friday, June 19, 2015
1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Courtyard Marriott Hamilton**

Present: Debbie Myers, Jodi Guilmette, Karen Davis, Aisling Higgins, Brenda Bax, Cheryl Velenosi, Chris Borst, Colin McMullan, Don Jaffray, Grace Mater, Ivana Fortino, Jen Vickers Manson, Jessica Bryson, Judith Bishop, Karen Calligan, Lita Barrie, Lisa Kiriakopoulos, Maggie Inrig, Maria Agro, Marni Flaherty, Matt Goodman, Paula Forbes, Pauline Kajiura, Rachelle Moore, Ruth Doherty, Sharon Stephanian, Shirley McCoy, Wanda St. Francois

Guests: Tammy Findlay, Patti McNaney, Paul Spanier

Regrets: Bonnie Buchanan, Karyn Callaghan, Lorraine Robinson

	Agenda Item	Discussion/Decision	Action
1	Welcome/Introductions/ Review of Meeting Notes/Declaration of Conflict of Interest	Debbie welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced our newest member, Maggie Inrig, Director of System Operations at Lynwood Charlton Centre. A number of guests also joined us today - Patti McNaney from the Social Planning and Research Council (SPRC), Paul Spanier, City of Hamilton and Tammy Findlay from Mount Saint Vincent University. Round-the-table introductions were made. There were no declarations of conflicts of interest noted. If there are any modifications to the May 22, 2015 minutes, please let Joyce know.	
2	Group Photo	A group photo of the Best Start Network was taken.	
3	Tammy Findlay – ECD Community Governance Research Feedback	Tammy Findlay from Mount Saint Vincent University made a report to the Network on her findings of her research study. The BSN was involved in the study several years ago. The following comments were made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grace stated it is the 10th Anniversary of Hamilton Best Start this year. After the first 5 years, an accomplishments report was completed, however, the last 5 years has been more of a holding pattern as there is uncertainty as to whether or not the Best Start demonstration funding would continue. • Without strong resources and government involvement, there are limitations to collaboration. • It would be helpful to circulate the Report to Ministry officials. 	Please see the attached Power Point slides for information presented.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to look at issues more holistically, for example, child poverty is often because the child/ren are living with their single parent mom. • Report is a good tool for conversation with the upcoming Federal Government elections. 	
4	Basic Needs Committee Update	<p>Don Jaffray, Chair of the Basic Needs Working Group presented an update providing highlights of the Group’s accomplishments. Grace is Co-Chair of the Working Group. The Working Group came together in 2012. Approximately, 20 percent of children in Hamilton come from families that struggle with basic needs. Don shared information on one of the key initiatives - the Canada Learning Bond. Approximately 24 percent of eligible families are accessing the initiative in Hamilton, although in some neighbourhoods the participation rate is as low as 19 percent.</p> <p>Paul Spanier, City of Hamilton outlined the findings of the pilot evaluation where front-line staff helped families access resources at a centralized community location (Beasley Neighbourhood Centre). Although the pilot was successful (60% success rate), one of the main reasons families did not access the supports was due to language barriers. The plan is to expand the project and offer the language supports needed to families.</p> <p>The Basic Needs Working Group is looking for endorsement regarding the following possible action items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify what would be deducted and what wouldn’t be from the OW/ODSP cheques as families are afraid to lose what they presently receive and are eligible for. 2. Develop a post card to communicate information to families. 3. If we want to affect change, we need to communicate beyond our regular channels. Who are the organizations that are conducting budgeting workshops and could incorporate information into their connections with parents? 4. Offer free income tax clinics. Bring information to families at specific events such as the Housing AGM. 5. Have a discussion with the Poverty Roundtable to identify possible ways they can support the initiative. 6. Use the media to promote the financial benefits to bring awareness of the initiative to families. 7. What can each of our organizations do to bring this information forward? Collective efforts can make a positive impact. 	<p>Please see the attached Power Point presentation for additional information.</p> <p>The inventory of financial services that was developed by the Basic Needs Working Group will be forwarded to the Network electronically. Network members are encouraged to provide feedback or offer information on any other financial services available to families that aren’t identified on the inventory.</p> <p>If your organization has a success story to share, please forward to Joyce and a list will be compiled to help inspire others.</p>

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		<p>There is a need to advocate to governments to design these types of initiatives so families can easily access them. It calls for public policy changes. Through the Neighbourhood Action Strategy and neighbourhood teams people start to become better connected and have a better understanding of what is available in the community.</p> <p>Other suggestions made by Network members included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting data from other communities on ways they are accessing supports for families. • Having information available to families on Parent/Teacher nights. • Using the School Parent Involvement Committees as a way to share information with parents. • School Boards are mandated to provide financial literacy as part of the curriculum. This is a way to educate children/youth on supports available. • Build relationships with families so the information comes from a trusted person the family has a rapport with. • Having parents share the information with other families. <p>There was support for moving forward with the action items.</p>	
5	Best Start Marketing and Branding	<p>Jodi indicated that as Best Start is celebrating 10 years, a company has been hired to refresh Best Start. We want Best Start to represent Hamilton, the city landscape, diversity of people, etc. The new look will be evident in the creative direction of the Best Start magazine. The magazine will be in French and English this year and have a Hamilton feel highlighting Hamilton kids and locations. They will be creating a video to support Best Start which will be showcased at the 10th Anniversary Celebration on October 8th.</p>	
6	Community Hubs	<p>Once a date has been arranged to have the Advisor to the Premier come to Hamilton, we will develop an agenda for the visit i.e.: tour, discussion, etc.</p>	
7	Election of Chair/Vice-Chair of Best Start Network	<p>Jodi indicated this is an election year for the Chair and Vice-Chair positions. The positions are a 2-year term. Debbie and Karen will continue on as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively for the next 2 years. A thank you was extended to both Debbie and Karen for their work on behalf of the Network.</p>	
8	Celebrating our Successes	<p>Karen Calligan indicated that the new Child Care and Early Years Act will be replacing the Day Nurseries Act effective August 31st. The Ministry of Education will be hosting a webinar on June 23rd at 1 p.m. If you are unable to participate in the webinar at that date/time, it will be available online.</p>	

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		<p>Lita shared that the Hamilton Public Library is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year. One of the ideas they are promoting is 125 wonderful books to read before you go to kindergarten. The books reflect Canadian content (authors/illustrators). The library summer reading program (birth to 18 years) is already underway and is a good way for children to work on reading skills over the summer. The reading program is promoting physical literacy as well.</p> <p>The graduates from St. Martin’s Manor were highlighted in the newspaper recently.</p>	
9	Adjourned	<p style="text-align: center;">Please note the meeting location.</p> <p>The next meeting is scheduled for:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Friday, September 18, 2015 Courtyard by Marriott (Upper James St.) 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.</p>	