

**Whitecrow Life Session Subcommittee
Family/Peer Support Workgroup
Alaska FASD Partnership
January 9, 2012**

Present: Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus, Ardyce Turner, Trish Smith, Janet Daly, Jan Wagaman, Deb Evensen, Gayle Young, Jill Burke, Kee Warner, Teri Tibbett.

I. Help with this subcommittee

Jeanne asked for help with agenda and announcements for the subcommittee. Jan and Jill offered to help out. Teri will continue to take minutes and arrange the teleconferences.

II. Regular Meeting Time

A regular meeting time was set for the second Monday of each month at 1:30pm.

III. Expanding FASD Camps

Funding Opportunities. Need someone who will research funding opportunities and report back to the group. Jill will work with Teri to identify funding sources.

Identify locations for camps. The group decided to work on this later.

Discussion followed about whether we are attempting to blend Whitecrow LIFE sessions with the Volunteers of America (VOA) Family Camps or develop them separately.

Trish from VOA expressed concern about jeopardizing funding for the VOA Family Camps if the two are developed separately. She suggested VOA board and staff would likely be open to working with this subcommittee to develop LIFE sessions in Alaska alongside their VOA Family Camps. Jill expressed concern about ensuring that LIFE sessions are not watered down or blended with VOA's Family Camps, but that the integrity of Whitecrow model remain intact. Others supported this.

Kee suggested that family support needs to be ongoing, but there also needs to be support for professionals. All aspects of society need to be involved: teachers, parents, professionals, legislators, etc. There are differences between family camps and Whitecrow LIFE sessions, and both are necessary. A major difference between the camps and LIFE sessions, is that LIFE sessions are facilitated by adults with FASD – which shows the possibilities for success and specific strategies to youth, parents and professionals – things that can't be learned from a book or online but must be experienced. They are different programs and both pieces are vital, she said. Whitecrow has done a lot of training around Canada and the U.S. and has been successful enlisting the help of locals. They do a four-day training before the LIFE Sessions experience.

Deb expressed that they are two different directions, but both are important to pursue.

Teri asked the group to consider when designing the LIFE sessions in Alaska, who will be the pass-through agency for funding? Who will lead and carry out the efforts? Who will handle logistics and volunteers? Working with VOA may be advantageous because they have already developed the

mechanism and this would give the new effort an existing structure to work under. Kee emphasized that it is critical for anyone or any program working with LIFE sessions understands the importance of the peer-run approach and that it not be a top-down approach.

Discussion followed about what is needed to develop the LIFE sessions model in Alaska, including training for judicial personnel, youth and young adult participation, local volunteers, training, etc.

Jeanne: Where do we start? Do we bring Whitecrow group here to do LIFE sessions training, or do we send people to Whitecrow?

Answer: The project is to develop LIFE sessions for Alaska to include: 1) sending reps to participate at Whitecrow, and 2) holding trainings and LIFE sessions in Alaska. Teri and Jill will investigate funding options. The group will explore and discuss locations later. Whitecrow can be involved as much as they need to until Alaska gets it up and going on its own.

IV. Name Change

Jeanne asked what to call our project. Jill suggested Whitecrow is blueprint or a model, similar to the Montessori model, it's good to keep the name "Whitecrow" in what we develop.

It was decided to call it "Whitecrow LIFE Sessions" until it gets a life of its own in Alaska.