



## **Minutes – Collaborative Meeting, Friday, February 9, 2024**

The meeting of Fannin County Family Connection Collaborative was held Friday, February 9, 2024, at 11:30 a.m. In Attendance: Jeff Milway, Tom Niswander, Chris Martinez, Sherry Echelberger, Mark Snoddy, Kirk Cameron, Margery Dallas, Hope Burns, TC Dillard, Vicki Smith, Mark Knowles, Heather Wysocki, Anita Hardy, Sue Blakeman, Becky Goodman, Brian Higgins, Jordan Vanhorn, Tara Cantrell, Victoria Turner, Bonnie Villeneuve, Megan Beavers, Caroline Hernandez, Flor Mendoza, Sherry Lang, Amy Miles, Teresa Ross, Lesa Johnson, Robert Gleadall, Melaine Davis, Jason Turner, Jeanie May, Elizabeth Carrillo, Mandi Hyde, and Sherry Morris.

Sherry Echelberger, FCFC Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:03pm a.m. Introductions were made by those present. Attendees were asked to look over the minutes from January 12, 2024, for approval. After a motion to approve the minutes and seconded the minutes were approved without correction.

The speaker for today's meeting was Tara Cantrell, Social Worker for Fannin County Schools. Tara went over the McKinney Bento homelessness program that the school has. Homelessness can be more than just not living in a home but also living with and in the home of a relative, in a motel, RV, vehicles, shelters, abandoned buildings, couch surfing, and in businesses that are open 24/7. There are about 163 in this program at the time of the meeting. These students get to attend school at their school of origin even if they live out of that area. They receive free lunch and can participate in any activity they would like at no cost to the family. Tara mentioned that there are several students that have lunch overages and if anyone would like to help pay on them to contact Martha Williams at 706-632-3771. The Back to School Bash will be held July 27, 2024, for the next school year. More information to come.

Sherry Morris spoke next at the meeting. She went over some of the numbers on school attendance and the dropout rate for Fannin County compared to the state of Georgia. Students out 15 days and over in Fannin – 35% and GA – 24%. High School drop out rate in Fannin 11% and GA – 4%. You can get more information at GAFCP – Kids Count. Sherry also spoke about ALICE – Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed which is people that earn just above the Federal Poverty Level but less than what it costs to make ends meet. Fannin County has about 43% that are considered an ALICE.

### **Upcoming Community Calendar events:**

February 17<sup>th</sup> – Blue Ridge Fire & Ice Event in downtown Blue Ridge

March 6<sup>th</sup> – UNG – Blue Ridge Campus – Community Engagement Fair

May 11<sup>th</sup> – The Craddock Center – Mini Golf Tournament at Cohutta Cove Mini Golf

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:21pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Morris