

**CORAL GABLES SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE**  
**University of Miami's Center for Autism and Related Disorders**  
**(UM CARD)**  
**5665 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, Room 502**  
**Coral Gables, Florida**

MEMBERS	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul. 24	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	APPOINTED BY
Ruth Martinez				P	-	E	E	P	P	P	P	P	Mayor Cason
													Vice Mayor Quesada
Aileen Ortega				P	-	A	P	P	P	P	E	P	Commissioner Keon
Samuel Joseph				P	-	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Lago
David Bianchi				P	-	P	P	P	P	A	P	E	Commissioner Slesnick
Nan Markowitz				P	-	P	P	E	P	P	P	P	City Manager Swanson-Rivenbar
Dana Peterson										p	P	E	Commission-as-a-whole

A = Absent  
E = Excused Absence  
P = Present  
- = No meeting

**STAFF:**

Naomi Levi, Government Affairs Manager

**GUESTS:** Craig Leen, City Attorney, Dr. Michael Alessandri

**RECORDING SECRETARY:**

Jeanmarie Gonzalez, Executive Assistant to the City Manager  
Naomi Levi, Government Affairs Manager

*The following represents a summary of the items discussed during the Committee meeting.*

**- MEETING AGENDA -**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 8:42 am.

## **II. ROLL CALL**

David Bianchi and Dana Peterson both had excused absences. A quorum was present.

## **III. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

**Nan moved to approve the minutes from February 19, 2016 and Ruth seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.**

## **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. MDCPS Compact Recommendations**

- If there are any additions or edits, send to Naomi prior to the next meeting.

### **B. MDCPS/Public School Issues Discussion Follow-up**

- {Tabled}: Sam asked the committee to email the commission member who appointed them to discuss their thoughts about making a statement regarding MDCPS' homework policy.
- Board members were asked to be prepared to discuss their responses at the next meeting.

## **V. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Host Site Greeting & Presentation by Dr. Michael Alessandri**

- Sam introduced Dr. Alessandri.
- Brief summary about the Special Needs Initiatives (SNI) planning meeting that took place on Tuesday, March 1, 2016A.
- Special thanks goes out to the Chamber, Miami-Dade County Public Schools and the City of Coral Gables.
- The minutes and notes were handed out from the SNI meeting.

### **B. SIP Report: Special Needs Initiatives (SNI)**

- Nan had questions: How early are you able to detect if your child has a special need...is it from birth, pre-birth or when they are not hitting milestones? A pediatrician does not always recognize that a child has a special need. They are dealing with children who develop at different stages and cannot always detect a birth defect.
- From 0-3 years old, Early Steps at the Mailman Center is available to parents. Miami Dade mandated by law "IDEA" – so children will receive free public education.
- Parents can come into CARD on their own.
- Insurance is available for Autism and recently for Down's syndrome.

### **C. SNI Planning Meeting Debriefing**

- Craig Leen discussed different resources for children with Autism.
- Miami Dade County Public Schools are currently serving 35,000 special needs students (approximately 15,000 with learning disabilities, 4,000 with Autism).
- Coral Gables is now serving 700 special needs students (approximately 300+ with learning disabilities, 74 with Autism).
- We have the need here in Coral Gables and we don't know the exact number of children in Coral Gables because some go elsewhere for help.
- Craig discussed how the City of Coral Gables has the autism wallet card program with the police department, their collaboration with Crystal Academy, The Youth Center for Independent Living housed there, and School and Community Relations Committee and commission-approved school improvement projects.
- The Coral Gables Parks and Recreation Department will be adding "Aging Autism" and Craig will get the information to Fred Couceyro.
- Sam spoke about the future partners and how the YMCA of South Florida is definitely committed especially for after school and buddy programs. He says that he will be contacting Best Buddies and the "Parent to Parent of Miami" who are advocacies for all disabilities.
- SNI is pushing to establish a Special Needs Academy at SCRC School by the 2016-17 School Year
- If anyone has any ideas for Partners and programming, send them to Naomi. Bring proposal and specify the needs. Sam asked Mike for summer camp guidelines.

### **D. ANNOUNCEMENTS/NEWS/REMINDERS**

- Ruth, member of the Coral Gables Women's Club, stated that there is a dental clinic available for free for low income families, and working parents of children aging from 6 years old to 18. She said that Dr. Iris Torres is the Director and it is open to all of Miami Dade County.
- Sam would like to have the open seat filled by Vice Mayor Quesada.
- Discussions regarding designing a web page to include information/data and meeting minutes.
- Community Education is advertised once a month in the neighbor's section of the Herald. We should recommend the App be ADA accessible.
- Parents are asking what school grades mean "A" v. "B". The schools seem to have dropped their ratings, and the parents want to know why. You should introduce yourself to the School's PTA and ask how you can help. Magnet

stream schools are not listed on the web. Advocate that they could get money for being a magnet school.

- Values Matter Campaign: Angeline Alvarez from Coral Gables Prep won the “kindness” award. When a fellow student’s house burned down and all was lost, she packed up her toys and brought them for her classmate. Cheli Cera, Principal of Coral Gables Preparatory also received an award and should be recognized. Aileen will be the lead.

#### **E. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 9:39 am.

#### **Next Meeting:**

Next meeting will be on April 15, 2016