

Wendy Hewitt O.U.R. Children's Safety Log

Questions in bold

August 4, 2009 – On June 18, 2009 I watched the abuse video at the National Leadership Conference. On June 18, 2009 I attended the Child Abuse & Neglect workshop at the Conference. The video was very informative and hard to watch. These things are happening by the minute and I like to live in my happy little world and pretend that things like this don't happen to kids everyday. Even kids that I know. As I sat in the workshop listening to Janet talk about her Log I thought maybe I should join the Pilot Project and step out of my comfort zone. Talking to people, other than close friends, about abuse is way out of my comfort zone. So I joined the project the last week of July. With our County Fair just getting over I now have time to get to work. This week I am preparing to train our Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices Board at our 3rd Annual Board Retreat on August 6 & 7. So the first big question is – **Can I do this?** We are going to give it our best shot. Today I reviewed the power point several times to prepare for the Board Training and looked over Janet's log. As I read through the outline I thought about my neighbor's daughter and the conditions she lives in. **Do I need to file report of neglect?**

August 5, 2009 – Today I made copies to hand out at my training. I hope I am ready.

August 8, 2009 – Yesterday I shared the O.U.R Children's Safety power point with 6 members of our Advisory Board and Board of Directors and my fellow Co-Director. The training and discussion lasted about 1.25 hours. Involved in the discussion were three parents, one of them works for DFS in her county, a CODA and Interpreter, a deaf adult and librarian for the D/HH Library, a SLP & member of the D/HH Outreach team, and a TOD. Five members of our Board were unable to attend. I was very nervous. But it went well. They provided a lot of discussion. The parent that works for DFS greatly added to the discussion and was able to provide insight to certain laws. Members shared stories of times when they reported, foster kids their families took in, and when they talked to their kids about abuse. We talked about the Good Touch/Bad Touch presentations that are given to the children in school in several, but not all districts in our state. Parents can preview the lessons or attend with their child. One member brought up how important it is for us to know the language they are using in the presentations to help us teach our children and to help them understand better. Because our d/hh kids usually need to hear it more than once. **One board member asked if you thought the incidence of CA/N in d/hh kids would decrease with the increased use of implants and better language. Another question they asked was if there is any information out there that is given to deaf parents to help them help their kids understand about CA/N.** I also gave them a handout on the 'Resources for Parents' that was given to us by Gennie Stults. The Librarian for the Wyoming D/HH Resource Library serves on our Board and she is going to work to get some of the books and videos on that list in our library.

August 12, 2009 – Well yesterday I got to deal with CA/N personally. I have so much on my mind that I hope I can put my thought down so it all makes sense. Remember in my first entry I mentioned that I wondered if I should file a report on my neighbor for neglect. First I will give you a quick history of their situation. We will call the mom Beth and the girl Ann, I chose short names for faster typing purposes. Beth is an alcoholic and has been for several years. She hasn't worked since before Ann started school in 2006. Her drinking has gotten worse over the years, her house is very dirty and Ann doesn't have clean clothes and 3 meals a day. In February of 2009 some friends took Ann and convinced Beth to get into rehab and she did. She came home at the end of May. Friends & family cleaned up her house and made some renovations. Beth did good for about a month then started drinking again and let her house go. She had a good job for about 3 weeks. At the time I wrote my first entry the mom & daughter were staying with someone out of town for a few weeks we will call him Sam. Well they came home Monday the 10th. At about 3:00 on the afternoon of the 11th Ann knocked on my door with Sam's phone number saying he told her to call him if her mom drank too much and passed out. She said she ran to my house which is about ¼ of a mile. So I called him and talked to him for a few minutes, and so did she. Ann told him her mom had been asleep all day and drank lots of beer before she fell asleep. He asked if she had

lunch or breakfast and she told him no. I talked to him again, and he said he really tried to help her while they were at his house. I know that a lot of people that have tried to help are frustrated and don't know what to do any more. I didn't quite know what to do, do I call the sheriff, do I take her home, what do I do? I called my husband at work and he called his friend that is sheriff. They felt I needed to make sure the mom was okay. So after feeding Ann a sandwich we went down to check on Beth. Just before we got there another friend of Beth's came and had woke her up. We will call her Sue. Ann told me a couple times that she was kinda scared because her mom was going to be mad because she had come up to my house. And her mom was mad. I believe that had we not been there Ann would have got some kind of spanking. As we were leaving my husband sheriff friend came down to make sure everything was okay. They talked to Beth for a few minutes and left. After that I talked to Sue told her about Ann coming to my house because her mom was asleep, and not being fed, etc. We decided to let family know what was going on. I considered calling DFS, but my husband felt that because we had reported to the sheriff's office that was the same. I called the Aunt and Uncle that kept Ann while her mom was in rehab. She was and has been concerned for a long time. She called DFS and then called me back and said DFS would be calling be to ask some questions. Within a short time later 2 different sheriffs were at her house, they were there for about 20 minutes. I was very stressed, because me and the kids were home alone, and I worried that Beth may drink a bunch and retaliate in someway because her daughter had come to my house and all the sudden 2 different set of sheriffs we coming to her house. But at the same time knowing that Ann was being neglected and in someway maybe physically abused. I am not the only one that feels she needs to get out of that house. Sue went down again later last night and said that either time she was there Beth would not let her past the front door. I have not received a phone call from DFS and if I don't, later today I will call them. It was way out of my comfort zone to go through that and feel like Beth would be mad at me, but she has made her choices with drinking and it is Ann that is suffering. It has helped to put the events and my feelings down on paper, so I hope this is not something that should not be put in our OUR logs. We will see what happens from here.

August 26, 2009 - Well it has been a few days since I have written in my log. The kids are in school now, so maybe I can keep up better. I will give a quick update about Beth & Ann. A few hours after I finished writing in my log on the 12th a family friend came and took Ann home to her house. Later the sheriff and DFS came to Beth's house. Beth was sited with neglect by DFS. On the 19th Beth was found not breathing and barely with a pulse from alcohol poisoning. She came home later that day from the hospital and Ann went home with her. Since going to the hospital Beth had to stay with family at night so they could make sure she got her detox meds, but she was home during the day. Family was trying to convince her to go back to rehab and I have not seen her at home since Monday. I am wondering if maybe she did go back. Hopefully there will be a happy ending for Beth & Ann.

I purchased a webcam last week and hopefully I will have everything set up and will know how to use it by the meeting on Monday. I have not been tracking technology in my log, but on my timesheet. I have sent emails to Janet and Jessica on July 27, August 3, 4, 8, 11, 17, 20, & 26 asking questions about the project and getting set up on wiki and my new webcam. I am not having any luck getting my name on the participants list in wiki, but have sought Janet's and Jessica's help in the matter. I got on to wiki on August 4 & 20 trying to get my name on the participants list and on the 26th looking at the discussion pages and also the resource page. We had such a great discussion at our Board Retreat I will be sharing some of these resources with our Board. I am very interested in the 'Talking to your child about abuse' information provided by Gennie, for my personal conversations about abuse with my kids. I am going to start with my oldest and only hearing child, then move on to the 2 younger ones that are d/hh. A big question for me is '**Am I going to be able to share this information with my kids in a way that they can learn and understand it?**' I downloaded Skype to my computer on 8/26 and tried to learn a few things about using it!

August 27, 2009 -Sent log to Harold.

September 18, 2009

As you can see I have been a slacker on this project since our August meeting, and our September meeting is less than a week away. Don't have any log entries, emails, visits to wiki, or conversations to report. My biggest excuse is that 2 days after our August meeting my Wyoming Families for Hands & Voices Co-Director informed me that she was resigning from H&V to take a full time job. So I have been busy working with the board to determine how we will restructure Wyoming's H&V. Also, we have been getting out our pen pal information for the 2009-2010 school year. So hopefully once things settle I can spend more time on O.U.R. I have thought about O.U.R a lot. The afternoon after our August meeting I turned to vacuuming, and came up with a pretty good question (I think) that I planned to post on wiki. Maybe I can get that done before Thursday. **Are people with disabilities more likely to grow up to become abusers? We talk about children with disabilities being more likely victims for abuse. Does that mean when they are older they are more likely to become abusers because they may not understand social norms and the difference between right and wrong as well?** Just a thought. I have a parent in mind contact for September, but haven't done so yet. I will be attending d/hh events in Wyoming on the 25th and 30th of the month so maybe I will have the opportunity then.

December 17, 2009

At the end of October (I am finally adding to my log) I was talking to a mom that was interested in applying for our Assistant Director position. We were also talking about the Fall Communicator. She said that she just read an article that scared her and she couldn't finish reading it. She said it just gave her one more thing to worry about with having a child with hearing loss. They have known of their sons hearing loss for less than a year and are still coming to terms with it. I tried to explain that it was not meant scare parents, but to make them aware and help them to know the signs of abuse. That same afternoon I also talked a little with my 9 year old hearing daughter about abuse and neglect. When we discussed sexual abuse I was able to work off what she had already learned in the 'Good Touch/Bad Touch' lessons they had in K-2.

Okay, I am working on my log again. I really felt motivated again after our meeting at the beginning of December. Especially when Janet said they don't want to lose anyone on the project because we may not feel like we accomplish anything some months. Things have been crazy busy with Christmas, trying to get the newsletter out early and getting our Assistant Director hired. So I was thinking about when I might have time to work on my log and do something for the OUR project. Today my kids have audiology appointments. When they are doing testing with the programs there is a lot of sitting time, so with 2 kids and 4 implants there is a lot of sitting time. Why not talk to the audiologist a CA/N? So I took my H&V laptop to the clinic with me. He wasn't sure that he had had enough training to identify CA/N unless there were visible signs such as bruises, cut, burns, etc. He also talked about an incidence of neglect. There was a child that came to her appointments with dirty face, dirty clothes and uncombed hair, and so did the mother. After sometime the mother was arrested for drugs and the child is now with foster parents. They had contacted him to possible testify in court about neglect, but he didn't feel that he could because the mother was coming to all appointments, having the child where the implant, and all the things he was asking her to do. He didn't feel that the child was being neglected in the areas of his expertise, so he didn't feel right testifying. His time with kids is limited to a couple hours a few times a years, so he may not really know their personalities enough to know if they are having a bad day or if their actions might be a sign of abuse. He was very interested in hearing about the project and thinks it is a great idea.

December 31, 2009 (Happy New Year)

Today I am updating my log and my time sheet. I also email Jessica about an ivisit account. Now I will not do any more OUR until next year! ☺

January 11, 2010

I am trying to get my password reset so I can post my updated log, before the meeting!!