

DATE: 2/4/11  
TO: CWAC Future Issues Work Group  
FROM: Ruth Taylor

Leah Hall had worked as a Parent Mentor for four years – meeting the criteria for this unique position; a minimum of two years in recovery and previous involvement with the Child Welfare System due to her addiction which resulted in her daughter being placed temporarily in foster care. She is now committed to a life of sobriety, positively parenting her daughters and son in a healthy environment. Leah has over seven years in recovery and is an outstanding young Mom who overcame some enormous challenges while in her addiction. She now has the opportunity to give back to the very community who helped her in her darkest hours. By courageously sharing her story she inspires other Moms beginning their journey to recovery, and has an incredible ability to connect with these Moms who are in despair, unable to believe that a life of recovery is possible and that they can ever be healthy and successful parents. Leah offers parents a message of hope and a belief that regardless of their circumstances, they too can be successful. Her motto is - "If I can do it - you certainly can".

As a Parent Mentor – Leah typically works with 10 to 12 Child Welfare involved Moms. She brings compassion, empathy and motivation to parents, and believes in parents until they can believe in themselves. She never doubts the love parents have for their children, regardless of addiction and multiple failed attempts at recovery and she goes above and beyond to motivate and support them in completing all the requirements of the child welfare and criminal justice system and be successfully reunited with their children. She role models what recovery looks like and helps parents learn how to advocate for their families. She attends Court hearings with parents and practices with them how to advocate for themselves before Judges and Caseworkers and supports them during these stressful times.

Leah is a confident public speaker and in turn, has utilized this skill to do numerous presentations to community partners, lawyers and judges on how to effectively engage parents impacted by addiction. In 2009 Leah was promoted to the position as "Court Liaison" in addition to her role as a Parent Mentor. Leah is at Juvenile Court three afternoons weekly to meet when parents attend Preliminary Hearings and offers them support, compassion and resources and encourages them to participate in mentoring services. She has been recognized by the Juvenile Judges for her dedication and skills in this additional position and has been asked by the judicial officers of the court to facilitate the daily Parent Orientations at Juvenile Court Preliminary hearings

Leah was a member of the Multnomah County Child Welfare Advisory where she provided a report on trends and challenges for DHS involved parents. She is a trainer for the Parent Mentor program, providing quarterly Core Caseworker training for new Child Welfare Caseworkers and also provides training to Social Service Assistants.

Leah is one of the 2010 recipients of the Skidmore Prize, awarded to young people who do great work for non-profit organizations. She has recently returned to college with the goal of gaining a bachelors degree

Leah will do an outstanding job of representing the parent voice on the State Child Welfare Advisory, and can provide a consumer perspective on services (or lack of services) available and how these impact families. I believe she would be a valuable asset to CWAC.