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Find us on Facebook: *All Our Kids (AOK)*



Stephenson
All Our Kids (AOK) Network Meeting
March 10, 2026
Time: 9:00 AM

In Person

Regional Office of Education

27 S. State Ave #101

Freeport, IL 61032

ZOOM LINK OPTION:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85300775757>

MINUTES

Attendees: Pamela Williams, Bekah Randecker (AOK) Layla Walker, Julian Vilchez (Parent Ambassadors), Suzanne Schoff, Stephanie Brock (Brightpoint), Jim Peterson, **Mary Kelley** (Youth Service Network), **Patty Monks** (Salvation Army), Rassney Homer, Sarah Kuhlemeier (ROE/ELA), Stephanie Jones (YWCA), Danielle Wittig, Linnette Carter (Mercy Health-FHN), Leslie Price (Rising Pretzels Academy), Barb Davis (Healthy Families Illinois), Nicole Karakas (Family Connects Illinois/ Doula), April Reed, Ashley Harms (Amity), Alicia McShane, Ahsley McKinney (SCHD), Toni Cummins (Believe in the Children), Tashara Grandy (U of I Ext.), Amanda Meyers (Freeport Public Library), George Vennalasseril (DCFS), Jennifer Rojas (Meridian Health Care, IL), Chelsey Owen (Head Start), Janelle Nelson (Hope Wins), Sherry Pearson (Hearts That Care). (29)

Welcome & Introduction- Pam began the meeting at asking partners to introduce themselves and share one service that is offered at their organization that they feel more people should know about.

Family Engagement Updates - Bekah shared many exciting things that are happening with the Family Engagement team. We had a wonderful collaborative event with the Freeport and Local Parents last month. We co-hosted "Love Bug Potluck" there were 48+ attendees present.

Upcoming Events:

- **Parent Café** – March 10, 2026 @ the Freeport Public Library 5:30-7:30
- **Blue Ribbon Week** – April 6th-11th Please contact Bekah @ rrandecker@stephensoncountyl.gov if you would like Swag, Pinwheels or signs. **Don't forget to place your CAP t-shirt orders by March 12th**
<https://aokgoesblue2026.head2toedesign.com/>
- **Families, Food and Connections** – (Stephenson County) – May 2nd at 11 – 1 PM at St Johns UCC. (RSVP REQUIRED) only 50 slots available. Each family will participate in hands on assembly/ cooking activities and parents will engage in cultural conversation. If you can help with this event, please let Bekah know that you are available.

Parent Needs Assessment Overview - Bekah provided an overview of the feedback that was gathered from our Parent Needs Assessment. Many of the keys issues are not new but shines a light that we have more work to do. Many of our initiatives are geared towards deducing these issues, so we need to keep working and

sharing collaboratively to meet the family needs. Click [LINK](#) to access results. (Assessment results will also be added to the local web site under the community data tab.

Workgroup Updates

Information and Referral- Pam shared that the workgroup recently completed the IRIS Referral System Standardized Onboarding Protocol for New Users [LINK](#). This link will be shared more thoroughly during our quarterly IRIS meeting and will be made available on our local website under the IRIS tab. Our next step is to update the Community Resource Directories. Please take a moment and update your agency's information, so that we ensure we have the most up to date information. [CLICK TO UPDATE CONTACT INFORMATION](#)

Developmental Screening- Suzanne Schoff informed the group that the workgroup has established some routines around Developmental Screenings. A partnership has been formed with our local Child and family connections. Gabby is in place to monitor on-going screenings/ submissions. An MOU and protocols are in draft form, so that we have things in writing to avoid future confusion about what is expected from any screener.

Mental Health Workgroup- Continues to develop mental health tool kits that will be distributed to 200 isolated families by June 2026. Some suggestions for places of distribution were shared during the meeting and will be passed along to Amy, our MH Workgroup Chairperson.

Crisis Nurse / Extended Childcare/ Resource Center Workgroup – This workgroup has been meeting over the past couple of months to explore the exciting possibility of creating a Family Center in Freeport to support families experiencing crisis, provide 2nd and 3rd shift childcare, and serve as a central resource hub for families in need and possibly provide specialized services. AOK believes that many of the challenges facing families in our community could be addressed or better supported through the addition of this center. While we recognize that bringing this vision to life will require significant effort and financial commitment from key partners throughout our community, we remain hopeful that, through collaboration and shared commitment, this goal can be achieved.

Hearts That Care – Collaborative Health/Resource Fair Workgroup – This workgroup is set to meet for its first meeting on **March 16, 2026, at Mt Calvary COGIC /420 Challenge St./ Freeport, IL 61032 at 9:00 AM**. This workgroup is an opportunity to discuss how we as social services professionals can collaborate and plan a quarterly community resource fair in partnership with our pantry with the goal of building engagement based upon evidence-based practices for increasing delivery of accessible services and resources. Contact Sherry for more information. spearson@geogroup.com

Partner Updates:

Salvation Army: The Salvation Army Pathway of Hope is a program that helps families with children move out of crisis and toward long-term stability. Through personalized case management, families work with a case manager to set goals, address barriers such as housing or employment, and connect with community resources that support self-sufficiency. To qualify for The Salvation Army Pathway of Hope program, families must have at least one child under 18 and be willing to work with a case manager to set and pursue goals that support long-term stability and self-sufficiency. Please see attachments with other supportive services offered.

Brightpoint: The **5th Annual Stuff the Bus** event, hosted by Brightpoint, is a community donation drive aimed at collecting essential items for families in need. Donations gathered during the event will help stock supplies for the Crisis Nursery from **April 2nd –4th**, ensuring that the nursery has the necessary resources to support children and families experiencing crisis. Community members, partners, and local organizations are encouraged to contribute items such as diapers, wipes, hygiene products, and other necessities to help provide a safe and supportive environment for families in the region. Flyers will be shared soon!

NOW HIRING-----Home visiting / Doula Supervisor. Please contact Stephanie B. for more information on how to apply or submit your resumes. sbrock@brightpoint.org

Hope WINS – Hosting a mental health awareness event on Memorial Day from 11AM-1 PM. Location/ Freeport Art Plaza. Those who are interested in participating should contact Janelle at hopewins.programdirector@gmail.com

Freeport Public Library – March 23rd 6-6:45PM / March 25th 10:30-11 AM. Enjoy a special story time with the one and only Pigeon! We will read some of his favorite stories and make a special Pigeon craft before meeting Pigeon himself. Many other fun activities can be found at [Upcoming Events | Freeport Public Library](#).

Stephenson County Health Department / Mercy Health- FHN – Collaborating to host its 4th Community Baby Shower. This event will take place on March 30th. RSVP is required for these events. More details can be found in the weekly community resources/ event guide.

https://www.canva.com/design/DAHDe5DpYVQ/letiGz7KU8JdDIzUk3wKg/edit?utm_content=DAHDe5DpYVQ&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton

Stephenson County Health Department - The Stephenson County Health Department will be celebrating its 60th Anniversary with a special community open house. Community members are invited to stop by, learn more about the department's programs and services, and enjoy light refreshments while celebrating six decades of serving the community. More details coming soon!

ROE / Early Learning Academy – Preschool Screening Schedules are available. Sarah wants to stress how important it is for families to know that they are still able to receive developmental screenings before or after scheduled events.

YWCA Childcare Solutions- The local early childhood community will celebrate with a Family Play Day on April 11, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at King Community Campus Gymnasium in Freeport. Organizations are invited to participate, with priority registration due by March 20. Registered participants can include marketing materials in family gift bags and have their logo featured on event posters. They are also asked to provide a kid-friendly booth activity and contribute a gift basket item for a prize drawing tied to a “Passport” activity. Set-up details will be shared before the event, and questions can be directed to Stephanie Siemens. [REGISTER](#)

Moving Beyond Depression –

- no waitlist for services-
- please send referrals for pregnant women or new moms experiencing depression to MBD-
- accepting referrals for English and Spanish speaking clients.
- Any questions- just reach out to Amy at apinkston@stephensoncountyil.gov

Meeting End: 10:10 AM

MISSION

AOK Network is committed to a community system that assures positive-growth and development of children 0-8 and their families by providing a framework to support initiatives that embrace this goal.

Funding provided by the IL Department of Human Services