St. Joseph’s Orphanage Restorative Inquiry

Second Gathering of Former Children from the Orphanage, January 10, 2020

Hopes and aspirations for children currently in the care of the State:

*“There’s gotta be love.” (Maura LaBelle)*

* Kids in state care should be checked in on a regular basis.
  + Safety is a must.
  + Children’s emotional and physical wellbeing must be continuously evaluated.
* Children should be listened to and believed.
  + Don’t discount what the child says.
  + Be accessible to the child.
  + Get to know the child as a person, not just a file.
  + Every child in foster care should have guardian ad litem.
* The State must select and support foster families with great care.
  + State staff selecting foster families need extensive training
  + Foster families (and adoptive families) should have thorough background checks.
  + Training is essential for foster families, including in child development.
  + People who are caring for children need to know the difference between discipline and abuse.
  + Foster family compensation should be raised.
  + Institutions (religious and otherwise) require very careful oversight if they are providing care for children.
* Instead of taking kids from families, invest in supporting the family to care for their children.
  + Whenever possible, children should be placed with their extended family.
* There should be transparency and accountability from all parties.
  + Authority/responsibility should be shared and not concentrated in one agency or institution.
  + Case worker caseloads should be reasonable.
* Access to records is very important. The state should seek ways to allow children access to their records when they reach adulthood.
  + People deserve information and support in accessing records.