

Clay County Collaborative
Successful Partnerships building Successful Families
Program updates, Work Group updates and Coordinator's report
November 2006

Program updates: Project Work Groups

Family Support Model

Coordinator Aimee Griffin writes: Wraparound has been busy. We currently have 11 Wraparound teams up and running with several of them in rural Clay County. We are currently looking at hiring an additional facilitator to "jump start" these Wraparound teams. We have had a few requests for Flex Funds through the process. FGDM has also been busy. We just finished up 3 conferences and have gotten three more referrals in. Aimee just attended the DHS training for FGDM and also attended the quarterly regional meeting.

Reentry Services

The Reentry Services/Restorative Justice Joint Advisory Group held its quarterly meeting in mid-October. At that meeting, Shelley Ford made the group aware of a Federal grant that she is applying for on behalf of the program. At their October meeting the work group did some brainstorming on adjustments that could be made to the program to include more of an emphasis on mental health issues clients face. Shelley is meeting with the Children's Mental Health work group this month to get feedback from them on the grant proposal.

Restorative Justice

Coordinator Jill Wenger provided the following update on the Restorative Justice program: During this quarter the Restorative Justice Program served 52 juvenile cases (July – Sept 2006). Below is a quick snapshot of referred cases.

- 82.7% Male; 86% White
- Mean age 14.5 years
- 61.5% referred by Law Enforcement; 21.2% referred by Corrections
- Top two referred offenses were Damage to property and Disorderly Conduct
- 100% of agreements have been completed or are in the process of completion.
- 94% were satisfied with the restorative justice process
- 100% believed the agreement was fair and reasonable
- 87.5% were satisfied with the facilitator

History of Referrals – Number of New Referrals per Quarter

- 15.25 (FY 04-05)
- 26.25 (FY 05-06)
- 39.00 (FY 06-07) After 1 quarter

In response to the increasing amount of new referrals the Restorative Justice Program will be hiring a roster employee to assist on a more regular basis.

November 12-18 is Restorative Justice Week. We plan to submit articles in all County newspapers.

Truancy Intervention Program

Program coordinator Alex Ishaug writes: Things for truancy are picking up now after the first month of school. We are busy sending letters and making contacts with families. The Village has developed a customer satisfaction survey for the students and families to collect feedback. We have our second County Attorney Mediation Program coming up and will have around 20 families invited to that.

Work Group updates: Systems Change Work Groups

Children's Mental Health – Churches United for the Homeless Family Case Manager

Karla Flisk reports that because of changes made by Social Services, fewer of the families she works with now qualify for Rule 79 case management. Fortunately, no families have been evicted because of the children's behavior so far in spite of the changes.

Children's Mental Health – Other projects

1) Respite

Tara Senne-Nelson from Lakeland Mental Health reports that currently seventeen kids from twelve families are receiving respite. There are currently seven respite providers.

2) Flex Funds

Flex funds continue to trickle out. The system that has been set up to disburse funds still seems to be working well.

3) Brown Bag Speaker Series

Because our November 7 speaker had to postpone her presentation, Restorative Justice coordinator Jill Wenger and Family Support Model coordinator Aimee Griffin agreed to step in to talk about the work they do in strengthening ties within families and communities through restorative justice, wraparound and family group decision making. The December Brown Bag will focus on coping with the increased stress many people feel as they prepare for and celebrate the holidays.

4) Children's Mental Health Fair

The sub-committee working on the 2007 fair has chosen healthy relationships as the theme and are in discussion with Dr. BraVada about the structure of the day.

IIIP (Individual Interagency Intervention Plan)

The overhaul of the IIIP website will be complete as soon as training materials are posted. Basic and advanced training is being held this week and next. Trainers are Carolyn Strnad, Rebecca Fee (Social Services) and Jackie Migler (Moorhead Public Schools).

School Age Disabilities

The Moorhead session on negotiating the funding maze had to be cancelled due to low registration numbers. Work continues on planning for parent education events. The group devoted part of their meeting time elaborating on its vision for building more inclusive communities.

Work Group updates: Collaborative Committees

The **Parent Involvement Committee** continued work on their plan for getting parent input. They will meet with Head Start's Policy Council in November and with the chairs of the Moorhead PTACs in January. In the meantime, they have decided to start a book discussion group. The first book on their list is "Do You Hear What I Hear?" a primer filled with ideas for how parents and professionals can work more effectively together.

Planning and Evaluation Committee: The group continues to work with Shawn Ginther on editing the baseline felt stress measurement tool he has created for us. The revision is nearly complete.

Work Group updates: Problem-solving Work Groups

Prevention & Early Intervention: Work continues on refining goals for the group for teen dads. A recruitment brochure is in the works.

Substance Abuse: Several work group members participated in the Class Action substance abuse prevention curriculum training.

Coordinator's report

I've written before that one of the most rewarding things about my job is to represent the Collaborative on other coalitions in the area. During the last week in October I attended four such meetings.

The first was with the Fargo-Moorhead Area Foundation's Women's Fund that is planning a series of community meetings on issues facing women and children in our area. I'm on the planning team for the first set of meetings to be held in late January on the topic of "Children in Need of Care." I'll be asking some of you to participate in the planning group as well as to participate in the meetings as expert panelists. Chairing the planning group on children is Becky Bakke, who is the closest anyone comes to being my counterpart on the North Dakota side of the river. It was a great pleasure to meet her and find out more about what she does. I'll send out information about the community meetings next week.

Next I attended a half-day planning retreat for the Moorhead Early Childhood Alliance. Deb Hengel from Grant County led the group through a series of questions that helped us shape our vision for the future of this alliance. We left the retreat with some direction as to next steps to take. I imagine you went through a similar visioning process in summer 2005.

Discussion at the Waking the Sleeping Giant meeting focused on a Human Services Legislative Forum that will be held on December 7. The purpose of the forum is to educate our local leaders on how Federal cuts will affect citizens in our area. You will receive more information on this event later in November.

Finally, I met with a group gathered by Penny Dale of U of M Extension to work on the Operation Military Kids initiative. This group is beginning to prepare for the return this spring of the Minnesota National Guard members who have been serving in Iraq. We anticipate that returning soldiers will face a myriad of readjustment issues. I am particularly interested in

mental health issues. Members of the group also feel that in some communities, children whose parents have been deployed for an extended period may be experiencing some challenges that are currently being overlooked. If any of you would like to discuss what your organization or community can do to assist soldiers and their families now or in the future, please contact me or Penny.

These meetings energize me for a couple of reasons. First, I enjoy connecting people and connecting *with* people who are working on similar issues to those we address. Second, attending other coalition meetings reinforces for me the importance of communicating with others to avoid duplication of effort and, more importantly, to rally people who have similar interests around common causes.

Last week Michael Redlinger scheduled me to do a presentation at a November Moorhead City Council meeting. As I began thinking about what I might say this year, I realized how much I've learned since I appeared before them last fall. I'm so very thankful to all of you, my teachers, who've patiently explained acronyms, programs, the politics of your systems, and much, much more to me. It is indeed a great privilege to work with you, your dedicated staff and our passionate parents on important issues that affect our communities.