



SERVING THE COUNTIES OF KANDIYOHI,
MEEKER, RENVILLE
AND YELLOW-MEDICINE

December 2007

Full Collaborative Meeting will be held Wednesday,
December 12th at the Kandiyohi Co. Health & Human
Services Building in Willmar
PLEASE RSVP to Shawna (320)235-8938 or email
shawna.steffen@co.kandiyohi.mn.us

PACT 4 NEWSLETTER

PACT 4 Executive Board Elections

The following positions will be voted on for three-year terms at the December 12th Full Collaborative Meeting:

School Administrator

Mental Health Administrator

Parent (need not be a parent of a child with SED)

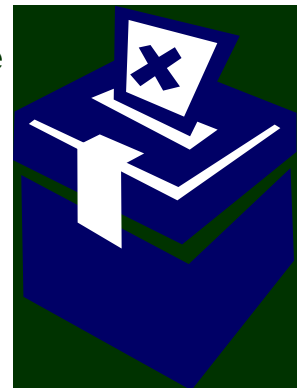
Since we need to have a representative from each of our four counties, the School Administrator and Parent positions on the board will need to be filled by someone from **Meeker** and **Yellow Medicine** Counties.

If you are interested in applying for one of these positions please notify me at your earliest convenience.

Sincere thanks,

debb_s@co.kandiyohi.mn.us

(320) 231-7036



Loren Hacker, Canby School District
Serves through 2007-2nd Term
(507)223-7226 /lhacker@canby.mntm.org

Debi Brandt, Heartland CAA Agency
Serves through 2009-1st Term
(320)235-0850 /
debib@heartlandcaa.org

**Carmen Clementson, KC
Family Services**
Serves through 2008 - 2nd Term
(320)231-7811
carmen_c@co.kandiyohi.mn.us

Jill Bruns, RC Public Health (Chair)
Serves through 2008 - 2nd Term
(320)523-3723 /
jill_bruns@co.renville.mn.us

Deb West, KC Probation
Serves through 2008 - 1st Term
(320)231-6218 /
d_west@co.kandiyohi.mn.us

**Gerald Brustuen, Renville County
Human Services**
Serves through 2009 - 2nd Term
(320)523-2202 / jerry_b@co.renville.mn.us

**Arliss Stenger, Parent (Meeker Co)
(Vice-Chair)**
Serves through 2007 - 2nd Term
(320)453-8153/ a.stenger246@yahoo.com

Eugene Bonyng, Woodland Centers
Serves through 2007 - 2nd Term
(320)235-4613 /ceo@woodlandcenters.com

Becky Romosz, Parent (Kandiyohi Co)
Serves through 2009 - 2nd Term
(320)235-2204 /
becromosz@yahoo.com

**Val Mersch, Fiscal Agent
(non-voting)**
val_m@co.renville.mn.us

**Debb Sheehan, Director
(non-voting) (320)231-7036 /
debb_s@co.kandiyohi.mn.us**

Chief Elected Officials

**Dick Larson, Kandiyohi County
Amy Wilde, Meeker County
Jane Remiger, Yellow -Medicine County
Bob Fox, Renville County**

PACT 4 Families Mission

“As a collaborative we will work together to reduce duplication and provide a family-driven continuum of quality, innovative, and cost-effective services for children and their families. These services will be culturally sensitive and strength-based.”

Director's Corner

I would like to thank everyone involved in planning, preparing, or attending the Brain Conference this year. The sixth iteration of this annual event was a very successful afternoon and evening learning about working with complicated kids, a wide array of breakouts on depression, and discovering how to energize ourselves in our complicated world. The feedback received from those in attendance shows that this was perhaps our most successful event ever—until next year!

Keynote speaker, Charlie Appelstein, focused his concluding talk on the need to take care of yourself so you can take care of all the “others” in your life. This is especially true in our challenging fields of human service. A recent study showed that among professions, incidence of depression was highest among caregivers to the young and very old. Charlie talked about keeping yourself the center of all the people, activities, and responsibilities in your life and that each of these areas could either provide support or act as a drain. By adding up all the positives and negatives, you may have a sense of whether or not you have more positive or negative supports in your life. How you measure up may be the difference between experiencing unbearable and life-shortening stress or a sense of challenge and moving forward vigorously toward difficult goals. Attitude ultimately bears on altitude: whether one ends up down in the dumps or soaring like an eagle.

Of course, parents of “at risk” kids face additional complications. Not only do these children have their own list of needs, but their parents invariably start out with many negatives on their support continuums. In the best of situations, having a child with complicated needs is very difficult for parents. But given the fact that financial, medical, school, household and even family concerns may be more of a drain than a support, it is no wonder that parents may be stretched to their limit when they have a child that requires a lot of energy and patience. Like a bridge that has too great a load imposed on its struts or beams, collapse may result. A large part of our work as professionals involves identifying stressors and shoring them up—to prevent catastrophes that are the human equivalent of the stress-failure of the 35W bridge last summer. Needless to say, we need to make sure that our own supports are in place before we can successfully take up some of the burdens weighing down others.

As we rapidly move into the holiday season, the notion of supports and stresses is especially timely. Children and adults are better served and healthier when we work towards keeping our lives in balance (just like a bridge again!) But why do some people suffer physical and mental breakdowns when faced with overwhelming stress while others seem to thrive? Salvatore R. Maddi, Ph.D. has completed a landmark 12-year study on stress and has concluded that people that thrived during trying circumstances turn adversity into advantage by using commitment, control, and willingness to challenge established attitudes. According to an article published by the American Psychological Association, the commitment attitude led these resilient people to strive to be involved in ongoing events, rather than feeling isolated, detached, and helpless. The control attitude led them to struggle and try to influence outcomes, rather than lapse into passivity and powerlessness. The challenge attitude led them to view stress changes, whether positive or negative, as opportunities for new learning.

So, instead of trying to create a perfect holiday, hopefully we can enjoy the experience by focusing on those people and activities that add to our sense of support and to turn those stressful situations into opportunities for growth. They are truly those for whom we have much reason to be thankful.

I encourage you to do what it takes to make this a positive and supportive holiday for yourself, your families, and those you work with.

Wishing everyone in the extended PACT 4 family a warm and wonderful season! And thanks for your support,



debb_s@co.kandiyohi.mn.us

Celebrating Excellence Award

Emily McGonigle, a children's mental health case manager from Yellow Medicine County Family Services, was recognized for the work that she has done using the principles of Wraparound. Emily was nominated for the award by a co-worker.

Committee Re-Structure

Rick Loseth gave an overview of the new committee structure. The Executive Board made changes in the committee structure to make them more streamlined. There are basically six committees. Two of them are new: the Elementary/Middle School-Age committee and the Adolescent Services committee. Each has a PACT 4 staff member on the committee, who will act as a liaison between the committee and PACT 4. The hope is to have a more direct information flow between the Board and the committees, and to empower committees to have more grass-roots involvement. Each committee has a charge and a list of tasks. In addition to the six basic, there are several other working groups/committees that are tied to grants and have a more direct focus or are event-focused, such as the Brain Conference planning committee. There are committees that PACT 4 supports but aren't run by PACT 4, like the Bridge Builders committee. Each of the basic six working committees has been asked to use a particular reporting format for Full Collaborative meetings, and today is the first time these committees met under this structure.

"Helping America's Youth" Conference Highlights

As part of the SHARE grant, representatives were invited by the White House to attend this conference held in the Twin Cities. It is part of the President's initiative called "Helping America's Youth". Jill Bruns and Janice Madden, two of those who attended, said that it was a very good conference and the presenters were all dynamite. Clips from the speakers that they saw were shown. "Relationship-based practice was the overall message of the conference, just chipping away at one child and one family at a time, making a difference in someone's life", said Jill. The hotel that our representatives stayed in was a half mile from where the bridge collapsed, and Jill crossed it just two hours before it went down. Video clips from the conference are available on the web at www.helpingamericasyouth.gov.

Committee Reports

- a. Executive Board – Jill Bruns reported that at the October meeting, the Board approved bills, received grant updates, and spent the majority of time on mission, sustainability, logo design, committee response forms, and started work on the 2008 budget.
- b. Early Childhood Committee – Diane Winter, Reporter
Outcomes: Sustaining books to distribute to children at early childhood screening and after newborn visits.
Timelines for accomplishing: will devote November meeting to brainstorm funding options, and assign tasks.
Networking and other discussion points: the value of "reflective consultation"; Incredible Years classes; utilizing coalitions for opportunities to partner and share ideas.
- c. Mentors Committee – Lynn Kuehn, Reporter
Outcomes: Be a supportive network to each other; look for joint funding to enhance, expand and sustain mentoring in the PACT 4 area. *Timelines for accomplishing:* network - ongoing; funding - 12 months, October 2008
Networking and other discussion points: ECHO Charter is investigating options for funding; will share mentoring funding opportunities; youth criteria; mentor coordinators will share information from the Minnesota Mentoring Conference.
- d. Adolescent Services Committee – Loren Hacker, Reporter
Outcomes: media influence/interaction/usage; suicide prevention-younger children; self-mutilation; parental awareness of media-parental time and value; what's going right: school activities/EPIC Center/YMCA/Christian Community Center/The Connection. *Timelines for accomplishing:* ongoing. *Networking and other discussion points:* youth on committee (input); parents on committee (input); have lunch with kids; Survey Monkey; Lions; Rotary Projects
- e. Elementary/Middle School-Age Committee – Tammie Knick, Reporter
Outcomes: promote school connectedness; conference with Dr. Blum; make brochures about school connectedness
Timelines for accomplishing: brochure-three months; conference-end of school year. *Networking and other discussion points:* how our culture affects connectedness - e.g. cell phone usage in schools.

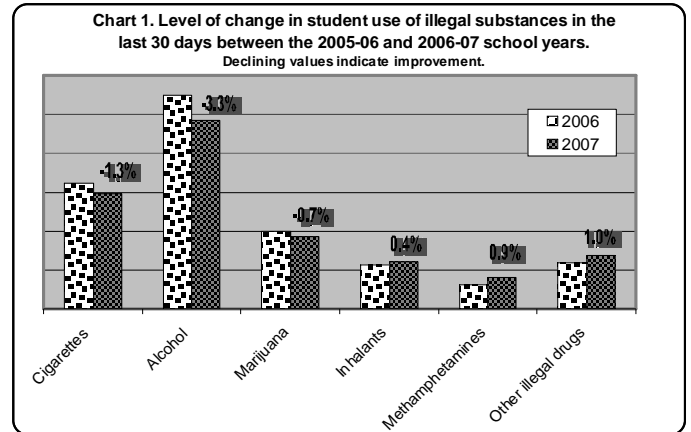


Evaluation Update

I would like to continue with SHARE reporting this month in the area of student Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug (ATOD) use. Students in grades 7, 9, and 11 were surveyed last spring. There appear to be trends of improvement in this area, however slow, to provide encouragement to our school districts. Trends of improvement can only take us so far. It is also important to look at the actual student numbers to get an idea of how to focus prevention efforts. As we have discussed in previous articles, this year's survey underwent a filtering process in which we were able to filter out response sets that indicated untrue responses to a series of questions. Since the data up until this year has not been filtered, we need to use unfiltered data to make year-to-year comparisons. However, the filtered data is useful for examining the real happenings among our students.

Year-to-Year Trends

Chart 1 shows the level of change between the 2005-06 and 2006-07 school years in student use of illegal substances at any time of the day in the last 30 days. Bars that get shorter indicate improvement.



We see that the greatest amount of change between the two school years is the improvement in the rate of alcohol consumption by 3.3 percentage points. There are also small improvements in cigarette and little change in marijuana use. There are small declines or little change in inhalant, meth, or other drug use. But what kind of picture does that paint for us? Not much of one unless we know usage rate values.

What's Happening Now?

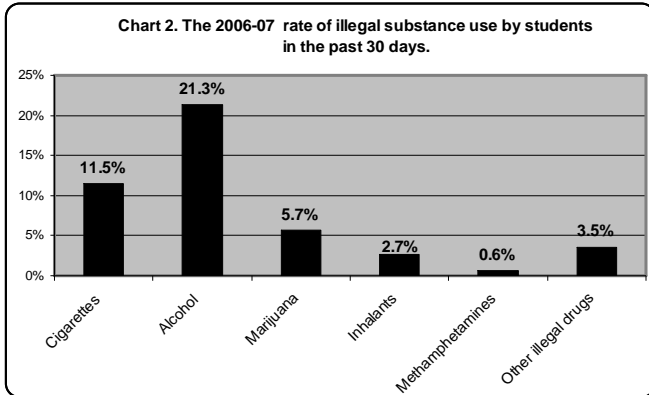


Chart 2 shows the actual usage rates of ATOD substances. These values are from our filtered data set.

Although alcohol use had the greatest improvement, it also has the highest usage rate at 21.3%. Likewise, cigarette use is the second highest used substance in our survey (11.5%), and shows the second biggest improvement between the two school years. Although usage of these substances is higher than we'd like, it is continuing to decrease each year. It appears that our prevention efforts are focused on the issues of greatest concern.

Student Attitudes

When asked how wrong it would be if their friends drank alcohol, smoked cigarettes, or smoked marijuana:

- 504 (16.5%) students feel it would not be wrong at all for their friends to drink alcohol. This is a 1.1% improvement from the previous year.
- 339 (11.1%) students feel it would not be wrong at all for their friends to smoke cigarettes. This is a 1.6% improvement from the previous year.
- 169 (5.5%) students feel it would not be wrong at all for their friends to smoke marijuana. This is a 0.7% improvement from the previous year.

Again, the greatest level of acceptance is for alcohol use, followed by cigarette use and marijuana use. If we look at the breakdown of student attitudes for any of the substances, we find that student tolerance is least among 7th graders and greatest among 11th graders. Since we have actually seen some improvement from last year, we might assume that prevention efforts that focus on the younger students may have a greater impact on their level of tolerance as they get older. Only time will tell, but for now, it seems that we are moving in the right direction.

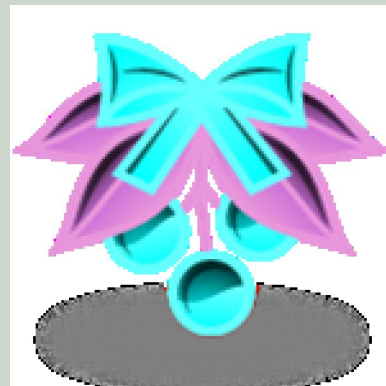
Chemical Health Coalition Updates

Yellow Medicine County

The Yellow Medicine County Coalition has a new coordinator, Ann Orren. She replaces Renee Brandt, who is now the Regional Prevention coordinator at Project turnabout. Ann comes to PACT 4 from Western mental health.

Upcoming Activities

- Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol (CMCA) training on December 11th for adults and the morning of Dec. 12th for youth. To register call Ann Orren 320-669-1460.
- Responsible Beverage Server Training in February.
- Zero Adult Providers (ZAP) - planning meetings beginning in 2008.
- Social Norms campaign for next summer and fall.



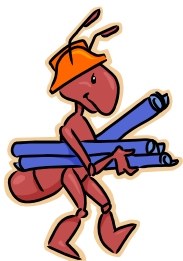
Renville County—RAPAD

The Renville County coordinator, Alicia Spencer, has resigned her position to pursue work in Washington D.C. Interviews have begun for a new coordinator. RAPAD continues the efforts outlined in the strategic plan.

Upcoming Activities

- Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol (CMCA) Dec. 12th for youth and Dec. 13th for adults. To register call Rick Loseth 320-231-7079.
- Sticker Shock Campaign winter/spring of 2008.
- Responsible Beverage Server Training in February.
- Development of Social Norms campaign for summer and fall.

6th Annual Brain Conference a Success




The Community Conference on the Brain featured keynote speaker Charlie Appelstein, MSW. His keynote was titled “Guiding Complex Kids in a Complex World, The Glass Ain’t Half Full, Heck It’s Overflowing!” The theme was the importance of using a strength-based approach in working with challenging kids. His presentation provided a number of useful insights and hands-on applications of moving philosophy into practice. His humorous and energetic presentation style left you with ideas to take back to work the next day. Seeing the glass as half full is not a new approach—the concept has been around for years. The last ten years have seen a dramatic change in how we apply that concept to our work with kids and families. I think for me, he summarized it well when he talked about how our attitude and expectations set the tone for our work with kids, not matter what the setting or situation. How each of us approach a situation influences what we say, how we hear what is being said to us, and how we ultimately respond to any situation. This is really more than a technique or approach to use with a specific child, it becomes a core philosophy for our work. It is not asking to overlook issues of significance, but rather to look at ways we might effectively develop a solution to a behavior or problem situation. I think this philosophy extends to changing work environments as well funding reductions and uncertainty continue to challenge us each day. Attitudes and expectations do make a difference in the larger system issues as well. I encourage all of us to look at what we can do each day to work from the half -full perspective and see what a difference it can make in the lives of kids, families, schools and communities we work with. Check out the PACT 4 website www.pact4.org for Charlie’s handouts and his website for more information: www.charliea.com. A collection of his books are available for checkout at the PACT 4 office.

Rick Loseth

rick_1@co.kandiyohi.mn.us

December 2007

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
3	4	5 PACT 4 Staff meeting; Office closed for meet- ing.	6	7 Wraparound 101 Training: 9:00—12:00 PM; #2055
10 ■ Parent Advisory Committee meeting; 6:00- 8:00 pm; YMCA in Willmar	11 ■ Executive Board meeting; 11:30-2:00 pm; #2055	12 ■ Committee Meet- ings-see below; ■ Full Collaborative; 12:00-2:00 pm;	13 Restorative Justice Advisory Mtg: Noon at the Blue Heron	14
17	18	19	20	21
24 Office closed at noon 	25 Christmas Day Holiday Office Closed	26	27	28
31 New Year's Eve				

KCHHSB = Kandiyohi County Health & Human Services Building

9:00 am—Social Services Directors Meeting, #2055

10:30 am—Adolescent Services Committee, MPR

10:00 am—Chief Elected Officials Board, #2055

10:30 am—Mentors Committee, MPR

10:00 am—Early Childhood Committee, #2045

10:30 am—Elementary/School Age Committee, #1010

10:30 am—Wraparound Committee, #2075

*All meetings are held at the Kandiyohi County Health and Human Services Building unless otherwise noted.
(MPR = Multi Purpose Room)

Full collaborative Minutes continued from page 3

f. Wraparound Committee—Jon Marchand

Outcomes; getting more neutral facilitator; evaluation or wraparound; progress tool; information the community by holding meetings and taking the initiative of each Individual to get this gong; get a DVD made of wraparound panel. *Timelines for accomplishing*; ongoing. *Net-working and other discussion points*; thoughts voiced on reasons for wraparound interest; work with families and getting agencies to talk about the process; help families with positive aspects; Wraparound Handbook; refresher training panel participants

g. Parent Advisory Committee—Julie Slaughter

Outcomes: establish email network among parents for support and exchange of information; have a successes full parent retreat; assist in assuring that there is a working LAC in all four counties; be a positive voice of parents to our partners; be positive agendas of change— not complainers; have good representation from all counties; explore and communicate the need of kids with special needs not qualifying for certain programs. *Timelines for accomplishing*; parent retreat—by April 2008; everything else— ongoing *Networking and other discussion points*; upcoming trainings of interest; broke into fundraising, mission and parent retreat planning committees. *Continued on page 7*

January 2008



Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
	1 New Year's Day <i>Office closed</i>	2	3	4
7	8	9 ■ Committee Meet- ings; KCHHSB ■ Full Collaborative; 12:00-2:00 pm; KCHHSB; MPR	10	11 ■ Wraparound 101 Training; 9:00- 12:00; KCHHSB- #2055
14 ■ Parent Advi- sory Committee Mtg; 6-8pm; YMCA	15	16	17	18
21 Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday <i>Office closed</i>	22	23 ■ ATOD Networking Comm; 9:00-11:00 am; KCHHSB; #2055	24	25
28 ■ 21st Century Grant Site Coord Mtg; 1:00-3:00; KCHHSB; #2055	29 ■ 21st Century Advisory Comm Mtg; 8:30- 10:30am; KCHHSB; #2055	30	31	

KCHHSB = Kandiyohi County Health & Human Services Building

Full Collaborative Minutes continued from page 6

9. Grant Reports

a. Restorative Justice/Circle Sentencing—Kenny Turck reported that there are currently three youth involved in Kandiyohi County circles. Each circle meets with one family at time now, rather than collectively. Kenny also put out a call for more volunteers.

b. SHARE—Janice Madden reported that she has been concentrating on the budget and is waiting for the approval of it from the Federal project officer. The Coordinating Council meets after the Full Collaborative meeting. Their focus this year is on sustainability and looking at which programs or activities that are provided through the grant can be sustained. Two additional schools will be trained in Strengthening Families-Cedar Mt. and Willmar. Strengthening Families is basically an Incredible Years-type program geared for middle school age kids. The Advisors and Liaisons will meet next month before the Full Collaborative meeting. Janice is also in the process of completing the annual performance report to send in to the federal project officers.

c. Chemical Health Coalitions—Renville/Yellow Medicine Counties- Rick Loseth reported that coordinators and coalition members are at a program Sharing conference in St. Cloud. The coordination position for Yellow medicine county has been filled by Ann Orren. There will be several trainings for each grant occurring the next couple of months.

d. 21st Century Learning Community Center—Sarah Wennerberg reported that the eight schools that are involved in this grant are in the process of completing fall NWEA testing. Referrals to the programs will come out of those results. Activities at the schools should be kicking off later this month or in in November.



**SERVING THE COUNTIES OF
KANDIYOHI, MEEKER,
RENVILLE
AND YELLOW-MEDICINE**

If you have any questions regarding the content of this newsletter or would like to be included on the mailing list, please call (320) 231-7030.

**We're on the Web!
www.pact4.org**

It is the policy of PACT 4 Families to provide equal employment opportunity for all, without discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation, or age.

21st Century Update *Funding for the PACT 4 Families*

Collaborative 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant program is provided by the federal government through the No Child Left Behind Act and is administered by the Minnesota Department of Education.



Our area 21st Century Community Learning Center sites are bustling with exciting after-school programming for elementary and secondary learners. Local coordinators have graciously volunteered to share a snapshot of their after-school programs with us via the PACT 4 newsletter. This month's contribution comes from Pat Jacobson, E.C.H.O. Charter School's co-coordinator.

Sally Belgum-Blad sally_b@co.kandiyohi.mn.us

E.C.H.O Charter School's 21st Century Grant After-School Program is off and running! Forty-two students in grades three through ten attended the fun and exciting Kick Off on October 11 where we made pizzas, had an introduction to the after-school program, participated in a "Marshmallow and Toothpick Construction Competition" and ended with Banana Olympics (messy, but fun!).

In the past month, we have been amazed at the enthusiasm kids have after being in school all day. Each Tuesday an Thursday afternoon, students begin with getting homework done, building skills with *Study Island* in the computer lab, and playing board games with staff. We enjoy a snack together before students move onto their "choice" classes. Our theme of "Know Your World" has been woven into classes such as: *Hands on Science Fun*, *cooking with Kay*, *Making and Awesome Power Point*, and *Woodworking*.

Response has been great from students, staff and parents. We are already seeing progress in the goals that have been set for the kids and we are looking forward to supporting them as they broaden their horizons!

Pat Jacobson, E.C.H.O. Charter School

PACT 4 Families Collaborative
2200 23rd Street NE, Suite 2030
Willmar, MN 56201

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED