



The next Full Collaborative Meeting will be held Wednesday, December 10th at the Kandiyohi County Health and Human Services Building, Willmar 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm PLEASE RSVP to Shawna (320)235-8938 or email shawna.steffen@co.kandiyohi.mn.us (Minutes of past meetings are available at www.pact4.org)

# PACT 4 NEWSLETTER

**“Wraparound is a team-based activity that helps groups of people involved in the family’s life work towards a common goal.”**

*The Wraparound Process User’s Guide: A Handbook for Families*

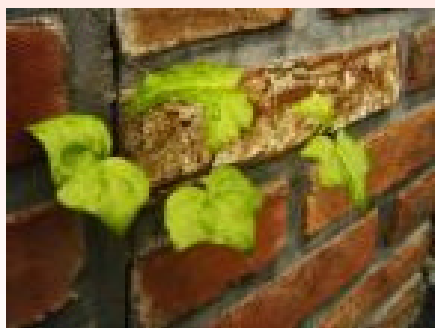
*A Product of the National Wraparound Initiative, 2006*

### PERSISTENT:

**The team is committed to working toward the goals in the Wraparound plan, despite challenges along the way.**

Among the values of Wraparound is the philosophy of being **persistent** as a team. In the past, this value was expressed as **unconditional**. This has been revised as stakeholders have realized that this is unrealistic – occasionally a team, for whatever reason, *will* fall apart. But being persistent as a team expresses the idea that the team is going to **keep instilling hope**, even when things are tough.

Just this past month, I saw this being carried out. There were several needs that were brought to a Wraparound team meeting: unresolved court issues, financial strain, emotional needs, safety concerns, and transportation needs. The team spent an hour brainstorming ways with the parent to meet these needs, especially in light of the upcoming holidays.



At the end of the meeting, it seemed necessary to ask, “What is going well that we can acknowledge and build on?” After a couple seconds of silence someone offered, “Mom smiled more at this meeting than last month.” (This drew another smile). Then more things were brought up that have changed since the last meeting: the depression medication has started to work, Mom has been able to get up in the morning, there have been only two calls from the school about behaviors, a neighbor has offered to help with transportation to work, and Mom has maintained very good contact with service providers and her Wraparound team. In fact, as someone thoughtfully expressed, this mom has maintained herself and her family despite one hard stressor after another.

Part of being persistent as a team is to keep brainstorming, and to continue to instill a sense of hope. Mom left that meeting with a smile on her face, indicating that she felt encouraged. The team had done its job.

*Char Erickson, Wraparound Coordinator  
char\_e@co.kandiyohi.mn.us*

## 2008 Executive Board

Arliss Stenger, Parent (Meeker Co)  
(Vice-Chair)  
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### 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

### Is there a simple formula for keeping our children healthy and our families strong?

If there was one thing we could do to reduce the risk of substance abuse and raise healthier children, wouldn't we all be signing up for the plan, and even get on a long waiting list just to be considered? What if that one thing was as available as our dining room table? Many recent studies have shown that something as simple as having meals together as a family can impact children in countless positive ways. Consider the following:

☞ Compared to teens who have frequent family dinners, those who rarely have family dinners are three-and-a-half times more likely to have abused prescription drugs or an illegal drug other than marijuana. <sup>1</sup>

☞ Girls who have five or more meals a week with their families are one-third less likely to develop unhealthy eating habits, which can range from skipping meals to full-fledged anorexia or abusing diet pills. <sup>2</sup>

☞ By eating with your children, it is more likely that meals will be healthier and more balanced. <sup>3</sup>

In our all too busy world, it sometimes seems impossible to coordinate everyone's schedule so families can sit down for a meal together, but eating with your children is one way to connect with them and be involved with what is happening in their lives.

According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), *“the facts are on the table: eating dinner together every night keeps the doors of communication open. It's the perfect time and place to reconnect and to show your kids that they are your priority. Sitting across the table is where and when you can find out more about your children's likes, dislikes, and daily life. Having this information can help you direct your children toward positive activities and behavior, reducing the likelihood that they will get involved with alcohol, tobacco, and/or illegal drugs.”*

Of course, just being in the same place at the same time is not enough—we need to have meaningful dialog, which is often harder than it appears. Parents sometimes get stuck on what to discuss, or even meaningful questions to ask. SAMHSA has some suggestions here too:

- ☞ Ask everyone to share their favorite part or biggest challenge of the day.
- ☞ Plan and then let the kids pick tasks for the next day's menu, preparation, and cleanup.
- ☞ Exchange memories about your favorite family pastimes.
- ☞ Discuss an activity the family can do together and then put it on the calendar.
- ☞ Talk with your children about a book they are reading or a movie they have seen. It might turn into a family book club or a regular movie and popcorn night!
- ☞ Ask the kids about their classes, homework, teachers, and upcoming assignments. Find out if they would like your help or want to brainstorm on an assignment.

As we move in to a new year let's resolve to keep the holiday family spirit alive by sharing dinner on a regular basis.

Wishing all of you and your families the best of the holidays and a family-centered 2009!

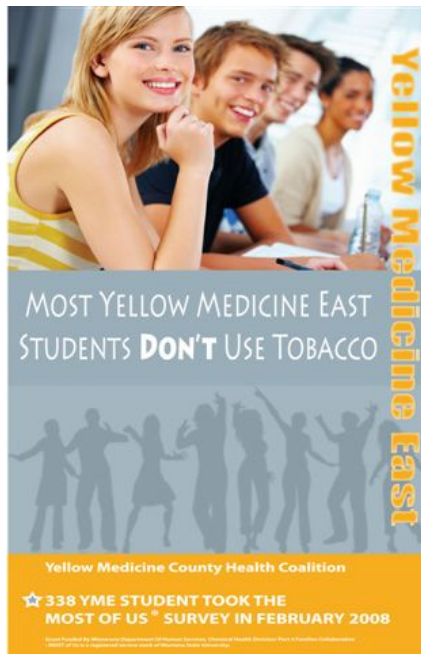
Debb Sheehan  
debb\_s@co.kandiyohi.mn.us

<sup>1</sup> The Importance of Family Dinners IV, The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University, September 2007.

<sup>2</sup> University of Minnesota School of Public Health, Project Eating Among Teens (Project EAT), January 9, 2008. Project EAT

<sup>3</sup> American Dietetic Association. Making the Most of Mealtime, last referenced January 31, 2008.

## Chemical Health Coalitions



The Yellow Medicine County and RAPAD coalitions are using the Positive Community Norms Marketing to produce new posters and newspaper ads to explain the results of the Most of Us@ survey that was conducted at YME and RCW.

## The Guía Program

*Chemical Health Intervention for Hispanic/Latino Youth—Working with one youth at a time to positively impact our communities.*

- ?? **New Staff:** The Guía program has hired two coach/liaison positions: Danielle Aasen and Rosa Eddy.
- ?? **Project Steering Committee:** On November 18<sup>th</sup> the Guía program held its first steering committee meeting of the quarter; 24 partners and staff participated in this meeting.
- ?? **Training:** Creating Lasting Family Connections, a week-long training, was attended in November by 13 individuals. This powerful and intensive training will be implemented by the staff and PACT 4 partners that are collaborating with the Guía program to assist families.
- ? **Referrals** are requested and can be made by visiting the PACT 4 website [www.pact4.org](http://www.pact4.org) and clicking on Programs.

The Guía Program is funded by a grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Chemical Health Division to PACT 4 Families Collaborative which serves youth and their families in Kandiyohi, Meeker, Renville, and Yellow Medicine Counties.

The program is offered in collaboration with West Central Integration Collaborative.

## Mental Health Parity Legislation Passed!

October, 2008— Congress gave final approval to the Paul Wellstone-Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 as part of the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act (HR 1424). President Bush signed the bill into law.

According to NAMI Minnesota, “The parity law becomes effective one year after enactment of the bill. This will mean that group health plans will no longer be able to impose limits on inpatient days or outpatient visits or require higher deductibles or cost sharing for mental illness or addiction treatment that are not also applied to all other medical-surgical coverage.”

To read a summary of this legislation by the American Psychological Association check out: <http://tiny.cc/ujIS6>



## 21st Century Community Learning Center Update

**Discovery Works**, the after-school program at Buffalo Lake-Hector Schools is off to a fantastic second year! Since the last week of September, roughly 65 students in grades 3-9 have been attending academic assistance opportunities followed by enrichment activities in math, reading, and science.

On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, BL-H **Discovery Works** students and their families, along with Title I and Title III families were invited to the first of two Family Nights. Over **200 participants** attended a taco-in-a-bag supper. Students had the opportunity to participate in **EXPLORADOME** presentations that were given by the Minnesota Planetarium. The **EXPLORADOME** was also presented to all students in grades 3-6 earlier in the school day. While students were busy learning about the planets, constellations, and space, parents were provided easy and fun math games that can be played at home with their children. Time was also set aside for parents to ask questions about the many different programs offered at Buffalo Lake-Hector schools. At the end of the night, each child that attended the Family Night received a free book.

October 30<sup>th</sup> was our extended Enrichment Day for all students involved in **Discovery Works**. The day was filled with activities that focused on harvest and Halloween. Students had the chance to attend three stations throughout the day: Pumpkin Math, Creative Holiday Writing, and Holiday Trivia using technology.

We are looking forward to next month's activities that will focus on the **Season of Winter** and **Winter Safety in Minnesota**.

Jody A. Weis  
BL-H Elementary



BL-H *Discovery Works* students participate in October after-school events: EXPLORADOME presentations, an extended Enrichment Day, and after-school enrichment activities.

*Funding for the PACT 4 Families Collaborative 21<sup>st</sup> 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.*

### 2008 Brain Conference – Another Successful Event!!

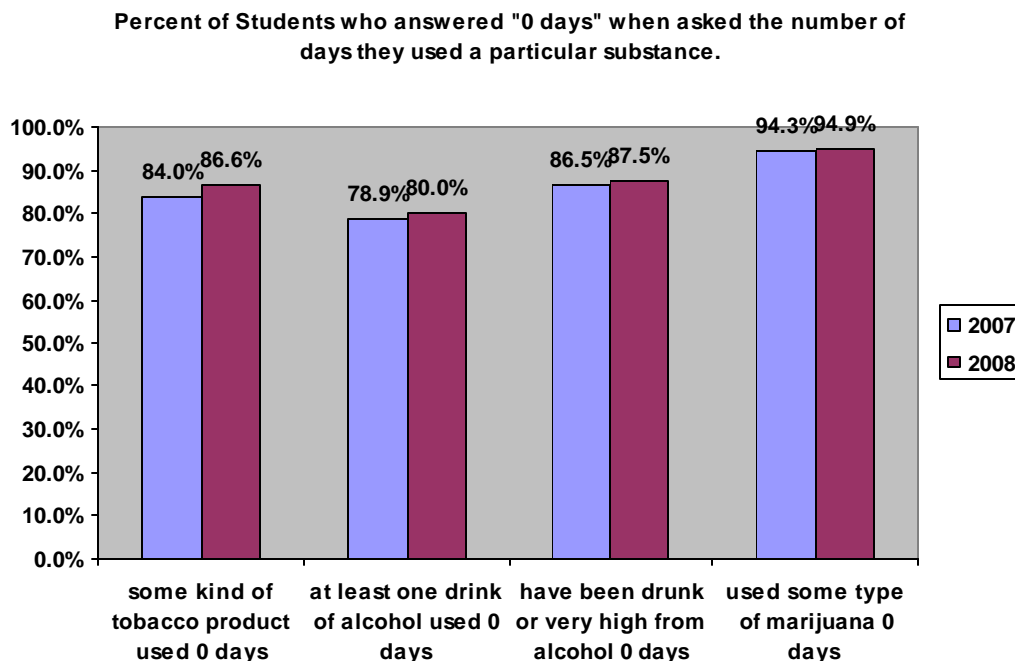
The 2008 Community Conference on the Brain had 301 participants. The presentations covered a range of topics about brain development and the implications for behavior. Dr. Ken Winters, professor at the University of Minnesota was the keynote presenter of the evening. His presentation provided insights on the impact of alcohol on the developing adolescent brain. Seven breakout sessions featured healthy brain development, brain injury, the impact of chemicals on the brain, and subsequent behavior from maternal alcohol use. Evaluations indicate very positive comments for each of the presenters and the keynote.

This conference began seven years ago through the efforts of Project SUCCEED. Its intent is to bring new and cutting edge information about brain development to the PACT 4 area. Research continues to show both the significance and the mysteries of how the brain influences individuals thoughts and behaviors. PACT 4 intends to continue to have local experts and others from around the state come and keep us informed on the latest brain information. Thanks to all who attended, the presenters, and all those who helped make the event a success. Handouts from several presentations are on the PACT 4 website at [www.pact4.org](http://www.pact4.org).

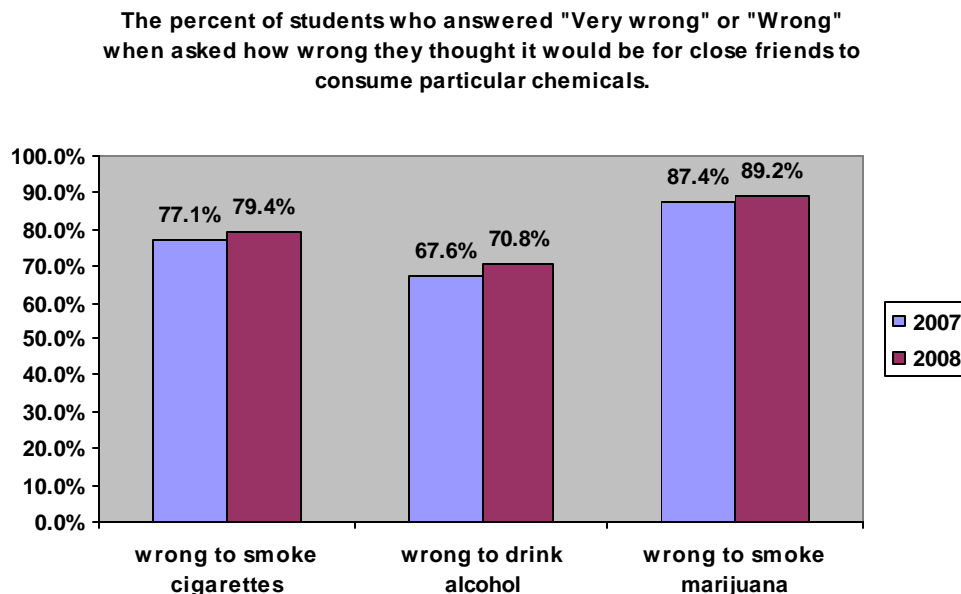
Rick Loeth  
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## Evaluation Update by Dr. Ed Downey; ed\_d@co.kandiyohi.mn.us

In October we began reporting data from the Spring 2008 SHARE Survey, comparing the results to the 2007 data. Sarah Wennerberg wrote about bullying behavior and related the data to the number of years specific schools have been involved with the Olweus Anti-Bullying Program. This month I will provide some data about illegal chemical consumption. The first chart shows the number of students who reported that they did not use illegal chemicals in the last month. Taller bars indicate less use (higher frequency of zero-use) and shorter bars indicate more use. All four categories show modest improvement, ranging from 2.6% for tobacco to 0.6% for marijuana. For the latter, the change is understandably small because the usage rate is low to begin with. It is interesting that the reported use of alcohol is higher than that of tobacco.



The second chart shows the percent of students who reported that they think use of chemicals by their close friends is wrong or very wrong. The rate of change on the percentages related to these "attitude" questions is higher than the "usage" questions in the first chart. In fact the rate of improvement on the second chart is statistically significant for all categories in contrast to no category in the first chart. It should also be noted that students report the least concern about their friends using alcohol and that level of concern is reflected in the high alcohol usage depicted on the first chart.



It is great that we can see improvement in the levels of consumption and attitudes about usage. The efforts of SHARE and the tobacco and chemical health coalitions are paying off. It is also obvious from this data that there is still a lot of room for improvement. This is particularly true for changing attitudes about alcohol consumption.

I think most youth are beginning to understand the dangers of smoking. But we are now starting to learn about the detrimental impact that alcohol has on the still developing adolescent brain. Dr. Ken Winters, the keynote speaker at PACT 4's November Brain Conference, has been studying this impact. If you missed his presentation, check out: [www.drugfree.org/teenbrain](http://www.drugfree.org/teenbrain).

## ***Full Collaborative Highlights—December***

The Wraparound DVD that was made to help agencies learn more about Wraparound was shown. A copy has been given to each county social service agency and is also available to check out from PACT 4.

A Celebrating Excellence award was given to Heidi Winter of Woodland Centers, for her service to families and dedication to the values of Wraparound. Heidi was nominated by a parent.

Kim Hanson from Woodland Centers presented on two new initiatives. An 18-month grant was received to provide a Youth Mobile Crisis Center, available Monday through Friday from noon until 8:00 p.m. The Mobile Crisis Center serves: Chippewa, Kandiyohi, Lac Qui Parle, Meeker, Renville and Swift counties. The Mobile Crisis offers an alternative to the residential crisis center for those parents who would like their child to remain at home but need assistance in dealing with their child's current crisis situation. Woodland Centers also received a three-year grant for a school-linked mental health initiative. This grant will provide school-based mental health services in RCW, BOLD, YME, Lac Qui Parle, Montevideo, NL/S, MACCRAY, ACGC, Litchfield, and Willmar school districts.

Debb Sheehan presented an overview of the 2009 budget, which was ratified by the Chief Elected Officials Board today. The completed budget with amounts will be distributed at the December Collaborative meeting.

### Committee Reports:

Executive Board – approved a fiscal host contract with Renville County; received and approved the personnel committee's recommendations regarding insurance and salary increases; discussed Board positions up for election at the next Collaborative meeting.

Adolescent Services – discussed putting resources for each of the counties on the PACT 4 website; learned that the mental health crisis cards have been distributed to Minnesota West and Ridgewater College campuses.

Early Childhood – learned that Prime West would not be granting large amounts of money this year, so other sources of funding for Incredible Years are being explored; talked about how to make the transition from early childhood to kindergarten easiest for children and their parents; still looking for funding for mental health books given out at early childhood screenings; received updates on the two early childhood coalitions, one in Willmar, one in Litchfield, run by the Southwest Minnesota Foundation.

Elementary/Middle School-Age – working on the school connectedness conference with Dr. Bluhm, scheduled for next fall. This conference will address what staff – school staff in particular – can do to promote school connectedness. The video project is still progressing with plans for kids and school staff to be interviewed.

Mentors – talked about the first annual mentor/mentee celebration in conjunction with National Mentor Month in January.

Wraparound – a Wraparound handbook was brought to the meeting and will be posted on the PACT 4 website. A new observation worksheet that was created was shared with the committee. Discussed forming a youth panel for future Wraparound trainings.

Parent Advisory – decided to use fundraising dollars to provide scholarships for parents to attend children's mental health trainings.

### Grant Reports:

Restorative Justice – there are three Willmar Circles running (one of which is a bi-lingual circle), and one in New London; hoping to get one started in Raymond; still looking for future funding, as the PACT 4 funding will run out at the end of June.

SHARE – the budget received final approval from the federal project officer. Dollars will be used for mental health case consultation and assessments in those schools not included in Woodlands' school-linked grant; \$10,000 will be provided to each county for Incredible Years; each school will receive extra dollars for preschool tuition; evaluation and social marketing dollars were cut. Advisors and Liaisons met this morning and gave an update on what's going on in their schools. Their next meeting is at 9:00 on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

Chemical Health Coalitions – Renville County has been running local radio spots and newspaper ads and was featured on the Open Mike show on KWLM. A youth training that was facilitated by the Wilder Institute was attended by 38 youth from RCW. Yellow Medicine County has also been running a media campaign and is working with local law enforcement to conduct alcohol compliance checks. YME Schools will do a series of parent forums starting in January, which will cover new laws in youth driving, the impact of kids and adults who drink and drive, technology-disadvantaged parents who need to learn more about internet-related situations, such as multiple email accounts, My Space, Facebook, etc.

21<sup>st</sup> Century CLC – all sites have begun programming except for BOLD. BL/H and BOLD hosted Exploradome in October; 21<sup>st</sup> Century staff will attend a training this month – “Managing Difficult Kids: Keep the Kids, Lose the Problems” in Willmar.

Guía – the Creating Lasting Family Connections training was held, and the implementation process will begin next month. The first Guía grant steering committee meeting will be held in November. Eleven referrals have been received, most of them coming from the schools.

## December 2008

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
<b>8</b>   MN Restorative Justice Mtg; 10:00-12:00; #2057   Willmar RJ Circle #1; 5:30-8:00; Lakeland Ctr	<b>9</b>   Guía Steering Comm; 3:00-4:30; #2045   New London RJ Circle; 5:30-7:30; Peace Lutheran Church	<b>10</b>   Committee meetings and Full Collaborative Meeting; Willmar (see website for full list)	<b>11</b>   Restorative Justice Advisory Mtg; Noon; The Oaks at Eagle Creek	<b>12</b>
<b>15</b>   Willmar RJ Circle #2; 5:30-8:00; Lakeland Ctr	<b>16</b>   Bi Lingual Circle; 4:00-6:00; Lakeland Ctr	<b>17</b>   PACT 4 Staff Meeting; Office closed until 1:00   Restorative Justice Volunteer Mtg; 11:45-1:00; #2075	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>22</b>   Willmar RJ Circle #1; 5:30-8:00; Lakeland Ctr	<b>23</b>   New London RJ Circle; 5:30-7:30; Peace Lutheran Church	<b>24</b>   Christmas Eve <b>Office closed at noon</b>	<b>25</b>   Christmas Day <b>Office Closed</b>	<b>26</b> <b>Office Closed</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>		

## January 2009

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
			<b>1</b>   New Years Day <b>Office Closed</b>	<b>2</b> <b>Office Closed</b>
<b>5</b>   Willmar RJ Circle #2; 5:30-8:00; Lakeland Ctr	<b>6</b>   Bi Lingual Circle; 4:00-6:00; Lakeland Ctr	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>12</b>   Parent Advisory Mtg; 5:30-7:30; YMCA	<b>13</b>   New London RJ Circle; 5:30-7:30; Peace Lutheran Church	<b>14</b>   SHARE & Committee meetings and Full Collaborative Meeting; Willmar (see website for full list)	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>19</b>   Martin Luther King Jr Day— <b>Office Closed</b>	<b>20</b>   Bi Lingual Circle; 4:00-6:00; Lakeland Ctr	<b>21</b>   PACT 4 Staff Meeting; Office closed until 1:00	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>   New London RJ Circle; 5:30-7:30; Peace Lutheran Church	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>

**PACT 4 FAMILIES  
COLLABORATIVE**

**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.**

**If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please contact [shawna.steffen@co.kandiyohi.mn.us](mailto:shawna.steffen@co.kandiyohi.mn.us)**

*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.*



From Dr. Robert Blum's *School Connectedness – Improving Students' Lives*:

“Research has taught us that second only to family, school is the most important stabilizing force in the lives of young people.” To help students feel connected to their school and classroom, *say hello and use the student's name*. The PACT 4 Elementary/Middle School-Age Committee has partnered with the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Grant (SHARE) to create materials that highlight school connectedness strategies. School connectedness is the belief by students that adults in the school care about their learning and about them as individuals (Blum, 2003). Students who feel connected are more successful in their schools and in their communities. Please look for monthly highlights of school connectedness research and strategies on email and in this newsletter.

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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**