

PACT 4 FAMILIES
COLLABORATIVE

THE NEXT FULL
COLLABORATIVE
MEETING IS:

(Note date change:
Wednesday,

March 3

Kandiyohi Co. Health &
Human Services Building

11:45 am to 1:45 pm

Cost: \$6.00

RSVP requested:

320-231-7030 or

Email:

shawna.steffen@
co.kandiyohi.mn.us

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PACT 4 NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2010

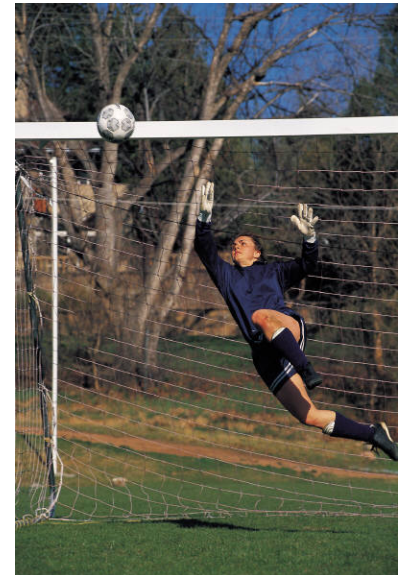
Advocating for the Children in our lives

Whether you have a child of your own with mental health needs or work with these children in some capacity, there is one thing we are all concerned about—helping them find the best treatment and to make the most of their talents.

According to the Surgeon General, one child in five experiences significant problems due to a mental health disorder. David Fassler¹ identifies a number of tips that are useful in advocating for these children. While he notes suggestions for parents, any advocate or professional working with children can gain a lot from his approach. He notes that while kids deserve the best possible mental health care, such services are often difficult to obtain. Parents and professionals can advocate for youth and children by “being informed, involved and persistent.”

Below are some Dr. Fassler’s advocacy tips:

- ❖ Get a comprehensive evaluation.
- ❖ Insist on the best.
- ❖ Ask lots of questions about any diagnosis or proposed treatment.
- ❖ Insist on care that is “family centered” and which builds on the child’s strengths.
- ❖ Ask about comprehensive “wraparound” or individualized services, geared specifically to the needs of the child and family.
- ❖ Be prepared.
- ❖ Feel free to seek a second opinion.
- ❖ Help the child learn about his/her condition.
- ❖ Know the details of your insurance policy, and learn about the laws governing insurance in your state.
- ❖ Work with the schools.
- ❖ Learn about the reimbursement and funding systems in your state.
- ❖ If necessary, consult a lawyer.



Advocacy includes working directly with legislators and policy makers, working with a school's administration to meet the unique needs of the child, appealing against the managed care company's denial of specific treatment or formulary approval, and educating and collaborating with primary care physicians. Three principles need to be understood: *change takes time, persistence is absolute, and compromise is inevitable.*²

¹Fassler, David. (2003). *Advocating for your child: 25 tips for parents*. NAMI, Retrieved from http://www.namidupage.org/images/site/advocacy/Advocating_for_Your_Child_FasslerResource.pdf

²Ptakowski, KK, *Advocating for Children and Adolescents with Mental Illnesses, Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America* Volume 19, Issue 1, January 2010, Pages 131-138

Director's Corner

"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."

Advocacy on a four-county level takes all of us!

AT PACT 4, we have been working to advocate for children and families since our inception. It is our mission to fill gaps and to initiate programming that may be tested for its effectiveness and cost-effectiveness. When the project or program meets these two criteria, we then look for ways that our partners can sustain it. Many of our state and federal grant initiatives have created opportunities to test out evidence-based programs in our rural Minnesota location. If these research-tested projects are effective in our communities, our children and youth may gain something significant for the short term. If they are truly cost-effective, then our counties and agencies can see benefits that are win-win in sustaining the efforts. Some examples of cost-effective programs that have been sustained include Circle Sentencing in Yellow Medicine County and Wraparound efforts in all four counties. Even when a particular program cannot be sustained on the level it was field-tested through a grant effort, some aspects of the grant can have long lasting impact, such as when training leads to higher skilled employees and when efforts can be implemented with little or no extra funding.

On a statewide level, the children's mental health subcommittee is recommending that services be expanded for transition-aged youth modeling their recommendations on the coaching approach used in the PRIDE-4 program. Executive Board member Becky Romosz sits on this subcommittee and supported this very effective model for assisting transition-aged youth. With the foresight of the subcommittee embracing this model, there is at least a possibility that grant efforts initiated in our four counties may have a wider impact throughout the state.

Advocacy for kids with mental health needs comes at an individual, local, collaborative, and state level. At PACT 4, we begin with the

needs of one individual who may be as young as a few months old, continue through their school years and extend until their early twenties. We are trying to support at-risk children, youth and families. We are an organization that provides the conduit for all the critical services and interventions our partners provide. And, while we are not considered an advocacy organization, without really holding the needs of children and families in our sight line, and trying to find interventions that make a difference, we are rudderless. Likewise, we need the input of our membership to identify the needs and the resources so we can further these efforts. We need you to speak up, to participate in our committees and to help us help the kids.



Through advocacy we are ultimately looking for change. In her work on advocacy Kristin Kroeger Ptakowski, quoted in the cover article, notes that *change takes time, persistence is absolute, and compromise is inevitable*. To this, I would add that advocacy requires all of us. Unless we can stand up for those who are most at risk, we cannot do our jobs – whether it is within the schools, government, mental health care, corrections, public health or any number of helping agencies, we need to work together on behalf of “our constituents.” Let me end with words from Margaret Mead -- one of my favorite quotes: “A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

Debb Sheehan, Director

debb_s@co.kandiyohi.mn.us; (320) 231-7030

Would you like to receive this newsletter in full color via email? Please contact Shawna at (320) 231-7030 or shawna.steffen@co.kandiyohi.mn.us to request your PACT 4 newsletter be delivered via email.

Renville Co. Chemical Health Coalition

UNDERAGE ALCOHOL USE poses important public health and public safety risks. This should be of concern to professionals, policymakers, parents, and others who are attempting to reduce the negative consequences of underage alcohol use.

A majority (53.4 percent) of current alcohol users aged 12 to 20 drank at someone else's home the last time they used alcohol, and another 30.3 percent drank in their own home.

Location of the most recent alcohol use in the past month among past month alcohol users aged 13 to 20, by age:								
Location	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Own Home	36.1%	37.4%	30.9%	24.9%	23.8%	25.2%	32.0%	36.5%
Someone Else's Home	45.3%	47.6%	57.0%	63.6%	61.0%	56.3%	49.9%	46.2%
Car or Vehicle	6.9%	5.1%	6.6%	10.1%	6.3%	5.7%	4.6%	3.2%
Park, Beach, or Parking Lot	10.0%	7.9%	8.0%	8.1%	7.1%	3.4%	3.4%	1.9%
Restaurant, Bar, or Club	6.1%	3.7%	2.8%	4.2%	3.7%	9.3%	14.1%	15.0%

Source: National Survey on Drug Use & Health conducted by the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration Nov. 08

Underage Drinking Myths

Myth: "Alcohol is a relatively harmless drug compared to illegal drugs."

Fact: Compared to youth who wait until they are 21, youth who drink before age fifteen are 12-times more likely to be unintentionally injured while under the influence of alcohol, 7-times more likely to be in a motor vehicle crash after drinking, and 10-times more likely to get in a physical fight after drinking. There is a strong correlation between youth alcohol use and violence, risky sexual behavior, poor school performance, and suicide. Evidence shows that adolescent drinking can inflict permanent damage on the developing brain. Early onset drinking is associated with greater levels of alcohol problems in adulthood.

Myth: "Alcohol use is rite of passage to adulthood."

Fact: Not all adolescents drink, and many who do drink in high school or college choose to drink less as they enter young adulthood, suggesting that both developmental and contextual factors contribute to alcohol consumption during adolescence.

Myth: "Underage drinking is inevitable, and it is safer if it occurs in a controlled, residential setting."

Fact: Underage drinking parties represent an unusually high-risk setting for youth alcohol problems, including alcohol-related traffic crashes, other forms of injury, sexual assaults, and other forms of violence. Providing alcohol to adolescents explicitly indicates approval of underage alcohol use, while disregarding underage drinking may lead to future substance use or abuse. When parents provide alcohol to teenagers at parties, there is a significantly greater likelihood of regular and binge drinking by youth. These behaviors are also strong predictors of alcohol use and misuse in later life.

Sources: *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility*, Schulenberg, J., O'Malley, P., Bachman, J., Wadsworth, K., and Johnston, L. (1996). *Getting Drunk & Growing Up: Trajectories of frequent binge drinking during the transition to young adulthood*. *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*.

Annie Tepfer, RAPAD Coordinator; (320) 523-3845; annie_t@co.renville.mn.us

New Phone Extensions for PACT 4 Office Staff:

Kandiyohi County has installed a new phone system, and with this new system come changes in phone numbers for all employees in the county buildings. Our main office number will remain the same, as will our fax number (320-231-7033). To reach a PACT 4 staff member, dial 320-231-7030 (or 800-960-PACT) and enter the extension listed below.

Char Erickson—2960
 Danielle Aasen—2967
 Danielle Johnson—2970
 Debb Sheehan—2965
 Ed Downey—2977
 Greta Smolnisky—2969
 Gwenn Garcia—2968
 Jennifer Mendoza—2971
 Jill Meyer—2962

Jolene Borka—2966
 Linda Mathiasen—2972
 Polly Peters—2973
 Rick Loeth—2976
 Sally Belgum-Blad—2974
 Shawna Steffen—2961
 Tricia Buggs—2975

(You will also be able to search the county directory by first name)



21st Century Community Learning Center—BL-H School

WINTERY GREETINGS TO all of you from Buffalo Lake-Hector Schools! The “Discovery Works” program is in its third year of programming at BL-H and things are running smoothly. Since the beginning of October, we have served consistent numbers of students in both the elementary and high school buildings. In the elementary we have 60 students that participate on a regular basis; in the high school we have 35-40. We are extremely pleased with these numbers and we enjoy receiving positive feedback from students, parents, and teachers.

Throughout the past year the students have participated in several academic and enrichment activities in the areas of math, science, and reading. In December, both buildings collaborated with the Renville County Veterans Services and produced approximately 200 hand-made Christmas cards for local soldiers stationed overseas. The students received several thank yous from the soldiers along with goodies such as ice cream sundaes, stickers, and window clings.

In the elementary building the students painted a wall mural. They chose to do a “jungle” theme, and each week they have been working on making their creation come to life. The mural is a great addition to the school and provides a unique atmosphere for the students. They are very proud of their artistic abilities and the idea that they contributed to such a large-scale project. Many students were excited to “show-off” the mural to their parents during parent-teacher conferences.

Our next big adventure is hosting the highly acclaimed “ReadNex Poetry Squad”, which is a group of four artists, who perform underground “hip hop” and spoken-word poetry. The group has performed on over 300 stages across the United States and has made over 12 television appearances. This opportunity would only be possible through the 21st CLCC grant and we are fortunate to have them visit our school!

Michelle Melberg,

BL/H High School 21st CCLC Site Coordinator



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.

Juvenile Justice/Mental Health Planning Grant

WE ARE MAKING good progress in the four counties with PACT 4's Juvenile Justice / Mental Health planning grant. We have surveyed service providers, stakeholders, families, and youth about available services, as well as gaps in services and their ideas for additional programming. Participants have formed planning committees in each county that have met and continue to meet regularly (as weather has permitted!). At each county's first meeting I presented a list of factors that individuals from the respective counties identified as positive (what each county was doing right, what strengths exist within the communities, what resources are available, etc.); negative (what problems exist, what resources are needed, what obstacles need addressing, etc.); and neutral (factors neither positive nor negative that may bear on the issue of improving services for corrections-involved-youth with mental health and co-occurring

MI/CD concerns).

Currently, committee members are generating potential programming options and defining the youth population most in need of that programming. Each committee has also elected members to a single four-county steering committee.

Program supervisor Ed Downey and I are attending the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program Grantee Orientation in Washington, D.C. February 24-25, 2010. We hope to return with many ideas for the planning committees as they realize their objectives for programming and move toward implementation.

*Greta Smolnisky; (320)231-7030
greta_s@co.kandiyohi.mn.us*

Evaluation Update

WHEN THE SHARE Project ended in the fall of 2009, the participating schools agreed that we would continue with a shortened version of the SHARE survey with 7th, 9th, and 11th graders completing the entire thing and 3rd and 5th graders answering questions about bullying and school safety. At this point we have revamped the survey and put it on Survey Monkey.com so that schools can do all surveying electronically if they wish. We will soon be making available the URL that can be pasted into the internet browser on each computer being used for the survey. Before we launch into this post SHARE phase of data collection, I thought readers may be interested in a last look at the data collected through SHARE. The following is an excerpt from the section of the Final SHARE Report that summarizes the data collected over the four years of the project:



**Safe Schools
Healthy Students**

The SHARE Project as measured by the data was successful in many areas and less successful in others.

We met our objective of reducing the number of weapons that are brought to school. We met the target for reducing the consumption of alcohol and marijuana, although there is plenty of room for further improvement and there are schools in the consortium with much higher rates than the total group. We made gains in the reduction of tobacco consumption although not to the level we targeted. We decreased the percentage of students reporting extreme sadness or hopelessness but not quite at the targeted level. We reached our target of reducing the number reporting suicide attempts. We more than accomplished our objectives of increasing early childhood mental health screening, of increasing public health home visiting services, of involving parents in school activities, increasing the referrals for mental health services.

We fell short of our target for reducing the amount of bullying but, as noted above, the results varied greatly across districts. We fell short of our target of increasing school attendance rates but we knew this was going to be a difficult objective to accomplish because our initial rates of attendance were very high. The attendance rates for the three grades measured at the end of year four were on average across the schools over 95%.

Most of the improvements accomplished by SHARE were incremental and not dramatic. It would appear that in addition to the accomplishments of the project coordinators, liaisons, and steering committees, a great amount was accomplished simply because we called attention to issues that needed addressing. Smoking, drinking, and bullying behaviors are all in need of improvement but by putting the data reported by students out in front of people, it becomes impossible to not pay attention. At the end of the project the student data for all of these issues had improved.

We need to keep in mind that schools are very busy places and teachers are very busy people. It is difficult to add another activity, another curriculum, or data collecting event to their schedules. This busyness factor impacts the number of surveys completed, parents contacted, etc. It is not surprising that we saw the number of completed surveys decrease over the years of the project. But it is also quite remarkable that we were able to collect as much data as we did. This busyness factor may also have been part of the reason that the bullying efforts were less effective in some settings.

In the end we were very fortunate to have had the SHARE project. Without it we would not have had as many youngsters referred for mental health services, we would not have reduced the consumption of illegal chemicals, we would not have reduced the bullying behaviors, we would not have improved the safety of our school buildings, we would not have improved the coordination of services between mental health and schools. Schools have been doing more with less for many years. In rural Minnesota declining enrollments and changing demographics have had a huge impact on services. The SHARE project has allowed some activities that clearly would not have occurred otherwise.

Dr. Ed Downey, Evaluator; (320) 231-7030; ed_d@co.kandiyohi.mn.us



February Full Collaborative Highlights

Legislative Letter Writing Campaign — Rhonda Otteson from Heartland reviewed “best practices” when writing an elected representative.

Goodwill/Easter Seals Transition Grant—Shelly Huseby spoke about the grant received by Goodwill July 1st, 2009, ends December of 2011 and is for youth ages 16-24. The largest portion of grant funds goes towards paying youth that work at area partner businesses to help them gain paid work experience. Partners include home/business cleaners, grocery stores, schools, and the Humane Society. They have had 38 referrals, have 25 youth activity involved, and one has graduated to supported employment.

Committee Reports:

Executive Board – discussed committee, grant, and LCTS updates; mission and sustainability.

Adolescent Services – identified a representative to the Recognition Committee and worked on the Committee Services and Resource Analysis.

Early Childhood – discussed goals for 2010 and upcoming ASQ-SE trainings.

Elementary/Middle School-Age – worked on a 6-month follow up of school connectedness conference and the Committee Services and Resource Analysis.

Wraparound – worked on the Committee Services and Resource Analysis and discussed the upcoming Wraparound Orientation training.

Parent Advisory – February’s meeting was cancelled due to the weather.

Grant Reports:

School Social Work Program—PACT 4 (via LCTS funding) has partnered with schools for the past 14 years in providing social workers in school buildings, with the overall goal of supporting kids and families in the school setting. In 2009, PACT 4’s 12 social workers worked with 2200 students, and had over 29,000 contacts. Schools with a PACT 4 social worker are: ACGC, BL/H, BOLD, Canby, Cedar Mountain, ECHO, Litchfield, NL/S, RCW, and Willmar (3).

Renville Co. ATOD—Annie Tepfer, Coordinator, has been focusing grant efforts on using environmental strategies to influence groups, town hall, and parents to help youth make positive changes in their lives and reduce underage alcohol and other drugs consumption.

Wraparound—Tix for Tots provides opportunities for families in our communities.

MANY OF YOU are familiar with Tix for Tots, and some of you are on the listserv to receive notifications of available tickets. The mission of the metro-based Tix for Tots is to provide children in need the opportunity to attend community events. PACT 4 has been a partner of Tix for Tots for several years.

Here is how it works: Tix for Tots receives donations from businesses and corporations for various events, including professional sports games and theater productions (mostly in the Twin Cities area). Notifications are sent by e-mail to all partners; at PACT 4 the notification comes to me as the Wraparound Coordinator. I forward the e-mail to those on my listserv, and those who hope to secure tickets on behalf of families will ask me to request them. The automated response is contingent on several things, including our rate of using past tickets we have received.

While we do not receive all the requests we put in, in 2009 PACT 4 Families received **224 tickets**, with a recorded face value of **\$4,082.00**. Children and families in the PACT 4 community have been able to attend:

- Gopher hockey games (2 tickets)
- Vikings football games (2 tickets)
- Gopher wrestling matches (14 tickets)
- Twins baseball games (95 tickets)
- Lynx basketball games (8 tickets)
- “Best Christmas Pageant Ever” performances (24 tickets)
- “I Like Me” theater performances (8 tickets)
- Children’s Museum (27 tickets)
- Timberwolves basketball games (2 tickets)

The kids/youth who attend these events are encouraged to write thank-you notes, which are sent to the donors. One young man was a foreign exchange student from Austria who wanted to see a Minnesota Vikings game, but was surprised and dismayed how expensive the tickets were!

He said in his thank you note:

“I could not sleep the night before the game. We had tickets in the end-zone...I could see all the formations and the plays very good...my heart was beating fast during the whole game...I did not want to leave the game! I am learning how friendly Americans are and that they volunteer much more than our country. Your tickets show how you give. This will be a memory for me forever.”

Many other thank you notes have come from children, youth and even parents who had never before attended a professional sports game, or been to the Children’s Museum. Clearly Tix for Tots is providing opportunities for many children and families that they would not otherwise have.

If you would like to be included on the Tix for Tots listserv, contact Char Erickson at (320) 231-7030 or by e-mail: char_e@co.kandiyohi.mn.us

Wraparound Orientation

An Introduction to the Process and Philosophy of Wraparound

For: Potential facilitators, team members, and anyone interested in learning about Wraparound!

Hear a parent success story ~ learn what research tells us about Wraparound

FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 2010 9:00 am – 12 noon
RSVP to Shawna, 231-7030

<h2>March</h2>				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
1 ■ Willmar RJ Circle #2; 5:30-7:00; Lakeland Ctr	2	3 ■ PACT 4 Comm. and Full Collaborative meetings-Willmar; Early Childhood meets at 10:00 and all others at 10:30; check website for details on committee times (RSVP) ■ Guia Talking Circle; 5:30-8:00; #2057	4	5
8 ■ Executive Board; 11:30-2:00; #2055 ■ Parent Advisory Mtg; 5:30-7:30; YMCA	9 ■ New London RJ Circle; 5:30-7:00; Peace Lutheran Church	10 ■ 21st CCLC Site Coord. Mtg; 9:00-12:00; #2055 ■ Office Staff Mtg; 1:30-2:30; #2057; OFFICE CLOSED DURING MEETING ■ Willmar Transition Circle; 5:30-7:30; Lakeland Ctr	11 ■ KC Community Circles Steering Comm; 12:00; The Oaks at Eagle Creek; Willmar ■ Willmar RJ Circle #3; 5:30-7:00; Lakeland Ctr	12 ■ Wraparound Orientation Trng; 9:00-12:00; #2055 (RSVP)
15 ■ Willmar RJ Circle #2; 5:30-7:00; Lakeland Ctr	16	17 ■ PACT 4 All Staff Mtg; 8:30-11:30; MPR; OFFICE CLOSED AT THIS TIME ■ KC Comm. Circles Volunteer Mtg; 11:45-1:00; #2057 ■ Boundaries Trng; 1:00-4:00; MPR (RSVP) ■ Guia Talking Circle; 5:30-8:00; #2057	18	19 ■ ASQ-SE Trng; 12:30-3:30; Renville Co. Office Bldg. #1116
22	23 ■ New London RJ Circle; 5:30-7:00; Peace Lutheran Church	24 ■ Willmar Transition Circle; 5:30-7:30; Lakeland Ctr	25 ■ Willmar RJ Circle #3; 5:30-7:00; Lakeland Ctr	26
29	30	31	1	2

<h2>April</h2>				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
5 ■ Willmar RJ Circle #2; 5:30-7:00; Lakeland Ctr	6	7 ■ Office Staff Mtg; 1:30-2:30; #2057; OFFICE CLOSED DURING MEETING ■ 21st CCLC NPASS-2 Trng; 4:30-7:00; MPR	8 ■ KC Community Circles Steering Comm; 12:00; The Oaks at Eagle Creek; Willmar ■ CEO Board Mtg; 3:00-5:00; The Oaks; ■ Annual Banquet; 5:00-8:00; The Oaks ■ Willmar RJ Circle #3; 5:30-7:00; Lakeland Ctr	9 ■ ASQ-SE Trng; 12:30-3:30; #2057
12 ■ Parent Advisory Mtg; 5:30-7:30; YMCA	13 ■ New London RJ Circle; 5:30-7:00; Peace Lutheran Church	14 ■ Willmar Transition Circle; 5:30-7:30; Lakeland Ctr	15	16 ■ ASQ-SE Trng; 9:00-Noon; Meeker Co. Courthouse
19 ■ Willmar RJ Circle #2; 5:30-7:00; Lakeland Ctr	20	21	22 ■ Willmar RJ Circle #3; 5:30-7:00; Lakeland Ctr	23
26	27 ■ New London RJ Circle; 5:30-7:00; Peace Lutheran Church	28 ■ Willmar Transition Circle; 5:30-7:30; Lakeland Ctr	29	30

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.

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.

Would you like to receive this newsletter in full color via email? Please contact Shawna at (320) 231-7030 or shawna.steffen@co.kandiyohi.mn.us to request your PACT 4 newsletter be delivered via email.

2010 Executive Board

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Serves through 2010—3rd Term
(320) 453-8153 / arliss_stenger@yahoo.com

Debi Brandt, Heartland Comm. Action Agency
Serves through 2012—2nd Term
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Serves through 2011—1st Term
(320) 693-5260 / tammy.thompson@co.meeker.mn.us

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Serves through 2012—3rd Term
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George Dubie, Greater MN Family Svcs. (Chair)
Serves through 2010—1st Term
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Greg Schmidt, MACCRAY School Dst.
Serves through 2011—1st Term
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Loren Hacker, Canby School Dst.
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PACT 4 Families Collaborative
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Willmar, MN 56201

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED