

PACT 4 NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2010

PACT 4 FAMILIES
COLLABORATIVE

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PACT 4 Annual Meeting
Thursday, April 8th, 2010;
The Oaks at Eagle Creek

Featuring:
Dr. Read Sulik, Assistant
Commissioner for DHS Chemical
and Mental Health Services

Featuring Guest Speaker:
Dr. Read Sulik, Assistant Commissioner
DHS Chemical & Mental Health Services

3:00 pm—5:00 pm Chief Elected Officials Board Meeting
5:00—6:00 Social Hour & Registration
6:00 Dinner

(Guest speaker and program will follow dinner)

Payment and registration requested in advance
Cost: \$15.00 per person

RSVP's required. Forms can be found on the website: www.pact4.org

SAVE THE DATE:

May 6, 2010—Training provided by PACER:

At Risk Youth in the Juvenile Justice System

Two sessions: professional-focus and parent-focus; Kandiyohi Co. HHS Building in Willmar

More information in next month's newsletter

*"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 the Psychiatrist In?

Being married to a psychiatrist I sometimes wish I could clone him to cover the need for this medical specialty in our rural area. The needs are so huge and the services so limited. Recently, I attended a state collaborative directors' meeting and was introduced to fishbone diagram on cause and effects of the insufficient availability of psychiatric services for children. A planning team from the Douglas County Collaborative used this analytic approach to look at the issue with a creative perspective. Rather than consider the problem as one of too few psychiatrists, they decided to frame the issue as "what do we need to look at to decrease the need for psychiatric services?" They began to break down the concern by identifying that without sufficient availability of psychiatrists there was:

- No process for parents to share concern about their child's social-emotional well-being with their primary care provider;
- An inadequate number of mental health professionals to complete diagnostic assessments;
- No process to collect and share data among providers to generate concern about the scope of the problem.

While not framed exactly in that way, PACT 4's Early Childhood Committee has been analyzing the issue of how to best identify kids in need and provide resources for very young children in our four counties. They have developed a model that is being implemented through the assistance of our DHS funded Birth to 5 mental health grant. This group of talented early childhood professionals has helped to develop a network of resources to support parents through screening for social/emotional development of their child using the ASQ-SE (Ages and Stages Questionnaire–Social Emotional). If concerns are identified, a number of possible resources might be engaged to help the parent address their concerns. One of those resources might be a mental health professional. If so, Woodland Centers and Lutheran Social Service

are both equipped to work with these young children. It is exciting to see the process unfold for an initiative that is both prevention and intervention focused.

One of the topics discussed around early screening with state wide collaborative directors was that it is often very difficult to get family doctors and pediatricians involved in having children universally screened for potential mental health concerns. I am once again impressed by our local physician groups who have provided input prior to our applying for the grant and have been involved during our first year of implementation. They have expressed interest and are investing time to become trained themselves and have their staff trained in the screening process. These physicians are important links to guarantee parents are listened to and children are responded to at the earliest point possible.



With all that is being done in our four counties to assure we are meeting the mental health needs of children from birth on, there may be a time when we do not need to worry about having too few psychiatrists. On the other hand, I hope we do not need to do away with them entirely!

*Debb Sheehan, Director
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Would you like to receive this newsletter in full color via email? Please contact Shawna at (320) 231-7030 ext. 2961 or shawna.steffen@co.kandiyohi.mn.us to request your PACT 4 newsletter be delivered via email.

Yellow Medicine Co. Chemical Health Coalition

Remember the days when it wasn't "normal" to wear your seatbelt? When no one knew that paint with lead in it was harmful? When parents didn't think it was "necessary" to put their kids in car seats? When smoking in public places was allowed? Of course, there are still those that don't think some of these changes are necessary, but by and large these changes have been adopted by our society. These are just recent changes that have been made, but they have made a big impact on our lives.

Maya Angelou once said "We did what we knew how to do, and when we knew better, we did better." My hope is that the adults in our communities will understand the dangers of alcohol consumption by teens and will make every effort to ensure it doesn't happen with their kids.

There are so many reasons why teens and alcohol are NOT a good idea:

- The human brain doesn't fully develop until the age of 24 or 25.
- Alcohol affects the adolescent brain differently than adults. A teen that begins drinking before the age of 15 is five times more likely to become

dependent on alcohol later in life, compared to those who began drinking at the age of 21.¹

- Alcohol decreases inhibition and is often a factor in teen crime, violence, and sexual assaults.
- Alcohol impairs coordination, slows reaction time, and impairs vision and judgment.
- It's illegal!

The Chemical Health Coalition is working toward reducing underage use and access in Yellow Medicine County through a grant from the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division and PACT 4 Families. If you would like to learn more about the coalition or join us, please contact Ann Orren at 507-829-2241 or at annorren@frontiernet.net.

Yellow Medicine East

74% OF YME HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS THINK THAT PARENTS SHOULD TALK WITH THEM ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF NOT USING ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

MOST OF US®

Chemical Health Coalition of Yellow Medicine County

343 YME STUDENTS TOOK THE MOST OF US® SURVEY IN FEBRUARY 2009

Grant Funded By Minnesota Department Of Human Services, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division/ PACT 4 Families Collaborative
MOST of Us® is a registered servicemark of Montana State University.

¹ Age of Drinking Onset Predicts Future Alcohol Abuse and Dependence. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)

BOLD PUBLIC SCHOOLS—SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS IMPLEMENTATION

At BOLD this year we have implemented school connectedness efforts for the 2009-10 school year. Two of our high school teachers—Katie Bahl and Heidi Gross—as part of their masters program, decided to work on school connectedness. Not only did they spend several hours and days researching and studying School Connectedness, they attended the school connectedness conference that was held in August of 2009 to gain some additional resources. They have surveyed all of the staff and kids and found out how many students had connections and to which staff. As a part of that survey, some students were identified as having very few connections. BOLD's staff were then asked to pick students from the list and to start trying to make connections with those students. At the end of the year, the students will be surveyed and we will see if we have improved our students' feelings of being connected to school. As a part of that idea, Heidi and Katie developed a student packet that was given to all new students that come to BOLD. The packet included a letter from the superintendent, an activity coupon, a copy of school policies and rules, maps of the school, class information, etc.

All of BOLD's staff have purchased t-shirts that say BOLD Staff on them that can be worn on Fridays and at BOLD public functions so that the community and kids can see that the school staff are involved in community and kid activities. Heidi and Katie also developed a tic-tac-toe game for staff. There are various student activities listed in the spaces on a tic-tac-toe board. Staff are to attend the activities and try to get three in a row. As soon as one gets a tic-tac-toe he/she turns the sheet in to become eligible for a prize. It is a fun thing that gets our staff involved in our student activities. Thanks to Heidi and Katie, BOLD is trying to take a very active approach in helping to keep kids connected to school and hopefully getting some new kids connected as well.

Tom Kroes, PACT 4 School Social Worker at BOLD School District





21st Century Community Learning Center—EV/W School

21st CCLC programming in Eden Valley/Watkins has been causing a ripple of excitement throughout our school district. With the newest edition of our elementary site serving over 40 youth in grades three through six, our programming hasn't gone unnoticed.

With the assistance of wonderful teachers and paraprofessionals at both our elementary and secondary sites, parents and the teaching staff have commented on the progress they are noticing with the youth in the our program. Focus areas for the youth are life skills, communication, team building, and responsibility. Along with academic-based enrichment activities (which are ultimately helping them with their homework) youth are also learning about interaction with their peers and authority figures.

One of the "Hands on Learning" experiences was a workshop from ReadNex Poetry Squad in the beginning of March. Our youth had so much fun learning a bubble concept on how to understand, and acknowledge their feelings by putting them down on paper.

This hip hop approach was a real connection with our youth. They were intrigued and amazed on the poems they were able to create within a few minutes. We hosted a Family Night for our youths' families where they all had the opportunity to see ReadNex per-

form. Three of our youth read their poems on stage alongside the ReadNex Poetry Squad. "Read Poet!"

The following is a small article from one of our eighth grade participants in the secondary program:

"I love 21st Century, it's amazing and a great program. I think a lot more kids should be in this after school activity. Us kids have had a lot of fun in here. Here are some reasons why. We get to work with a lot of different teachers throughout the year, like Mrs. Bulau, Mrs. Spohn, Mr. Novak, and many more. We also get a time for homework or Study Island. The reason I like 21st Century is you get to hang out with your friends and other people you've never met. It gives you a chance to open your mind to new things, like acting or working on articles. You don't do just one thing, you do many things. Like a couple of weeks ago we met the ReadNex Poetry Squad and they rap with poems. We also get helpers to work with the kids when they're having some trouble with homework. I think 21st Century rocks and so would any child; it doesn't matter if they're in third grade or ninth grade."

-----By Maddison Moyer, 21st CCLC Participant

It's hearing comments like these that make our programming so special. One of the many rewards is witnessing the growth of our participants as they continue to strengthen their academics, develop healthier social interactions with their peers and adults while making better choices and gaining the sense of being a part of a group.

We are excited to continue these wonderful opportunities this spring and summer. Thank you again PACT 4 for making this all possible!

Denise DeJuliannie
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.



Pictures are from our ReadNex Poetry Squad workshop at both sites.

Birth to 5 Mental Health Grant

Week of the Young Child is
April 11—17

During April 11-17, the Week of the Young Child will be celebrated across the country and in our four counties. This week is set aside to honor young children and all those who make a difference in children's lives.

This year's theme is **Early Years Are Learning Years®** with an emphasis on literacy. However, from a mental health perspective, the early years are also a time for children to learn about their emotions and how to respond to them in a positive way.

Thankfully our four counties have many early childhood resources

for parents and caregivers to receive help when they see a concern in their child's behavior or inability to do the following social-emotional skills:

- Self-regulate and express their emotions appropriately;
- Form strong relationships and attachments;
- Interact with and explore their environment.

On behalf of PACT 4, thank you to all early childhood professionals in our schools, maternal and children public health nurses, county social workers, child protection

and mental health professionals. You are playing an important role in our children's lives and making a difference in our communities.

Linda Mathiasen, Grant Coordinator
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Kandiyohi Co. Community Circles

Circle members who work with youth are continually asking: are we making a difference in the life of this youth? Is the youth learning skills and values to make lasting change? Often these questions go unanswered. Rarely do we get immediate feedback that what we are doing is making a difference.

Recently, a Circle youth successfully completed the process. During the time he spent in Circle it was apparent to Circle members that he had repaired the damage caused by his crime and had displayed behavioral changes. But we didn't know if any one of us had really made any difference. Prior to his celebration Circle we encouraged him to think about the Circle process, what he liked, didn't like, what we could change to make the process better in the future, etc. The following is

what this youth wrote for his Celebration Circle. It was one of those rare moments where we could acknowledge that we really are making a difference.

"When I started Circle I didn't know why I should have to go to it. I thought it was a waste of time and I did not know how it was going to help me. Back then I had a bad attitude, I was cocky, I didn't want to listen to anyone, especially people I didn't know, telling me what to do.

At the beginning, I did not like anyone at Circle. I now realize that they were not in it to screw me over, they were there to help me. If it wasn't for Paul I would probably have been tardy for school most of the week

Tom, you got me to want to read more; Marnie, I always felt like you were being

protective over me.

The biggest thing I learned in Circle I learned to think before my actions, take responsibility for my mistakes, and not blame others. I also learned to be self-reliant and not count on my mom to do everything for me.

I want to thank all of you for encouraging me and especially Tricia for giving me this opportunity to be in Circle."

Tricia Buggs, Coordinator
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March Full Collaborative Highlights

ReadNex Poetry Squad — the majority of the meeting was spent listening to this talented group, who performed and then were available to answer questions.

Committee Reports:

Executive Board – no report—has not met yet this month; will meet March 8th.

Adolescent Services – Angie Matesky from Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota attended the meeting to give an update on their various youth programs. The committee also worked on Services Resources and Analysis form.

Early Childhood – completed the Services Resources and Analysis form, received on update on the Birth to Five Mental Health grant, heard about the computerized Somali ASQ-SE pilot in Kandiyohi County, discussed sustainability of Incredible Years and where current classes are being held.

Elementary/Middle School-Age – worked on the final steps of getting out the six-month evaluation survey of the school connectedness conference attendees. Once responses are received, they will be shared at the May meeting.

Wraparound – worked on the Services Resources and Analysis form.

Parent Advisory – has not met yet this month; will meet March 8th.



Guía Program

Talking circles are one of several components offered by the Guía Program. Circles are a Native American practice used by a group to discuss a topic in an equal and non-confrontational manner. In March, the Guía Program held its first two Circles. The topics of the Circles were guidelines, expectations, and nutrition. Our Circle differs from traditional Circle because prior to it the youth either listen to a presenter or participate in an activity based on the needs of the youth in the Circle. After the presentation or activity, the group transitions into the Circle process, and the Circle Keeper sets the pace with an opener, such as a poem. After the opener, discussion in the Circle is based on the topic or the activity, in order for the youth to think, reflect, and learn from what they are experiencing. We have

dedicated volunteers who participate in the Circle process by sharing their stories and experiences, and they help the youth by offering them guidance in their learning. The Guía Program Circles meet the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 5:30 to 7:00 pm, in different locations depending on the presenter or activity.

If you or someone you know is interested in being a Guía Circle volunteer please contact coordinator Gwenn Garcia (320) 231-7030 ext. 2968 or gwenn_g@co.kandiyohi.mn.us.

April				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
5 ■ Willmar RJ Circle #2; 5:30-7:00; Lakeland Ctr	6 ■ Executive Board Mtg; 11:30-2:00; #2055	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 ■ Family Fun Night & Resource Fair; 5:00-7:30pm; Ridgewater College in Willmar	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 ■ 21st CCLC Site Coord. Mtg; 9:00-Noon; MPR	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 ■ PACT 4 Coord. Mtg; 10:00-Noon; #1010 ■ Willmar Transition Circle; 5:30-7:30; Lakeland Ctr	29	30

May				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
3 ■ Willmar RJ Circle #2; 5:30-7:00; Lakeland Ctr	4 ■ Executive Board Mtg; 11:30-2:00; #2055	5 ■ Office Staff Mtg; 1:30-2:30; #2057; OFFICE CLOSED DURING MEETING	6 ■ PACER Trng; MPR (more info next month)	7
10 ■ Parent Advisory Mtg; 5:30-7:30; YMCA	11 ■ New London RJ Circle; 5:30-7:00; Peace Lutheran Church	12 ■ PACT 4 Comm. and Full Collaborative meetings-Olivia; Early Childhood meets at 10:00 and all others at 10:30; check website for details on committee times (RSVP) ■ Willmar Transition Circle; 5:30-7:30; Lakeland Ctr	13 ■ KC Community Circles Steering Comm; 12:00; The Oaks at Eagle Creek; Willmar ■ Willmar RJ Circle #3; 5:30-7:00; Lakeland Ctr	14
17 ■ Willmar RJ Circle #2; 5:30-7:00; Lakeland Ctr	18	19 ■ 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	20	21
24	25 ■ New London RJ Circle; 5:30-7:00; Peace Lutheran Church	26 ■ Willmar Transition Circle; 5:30-7:30; Lakeland Ctr	27 ■ Willmar RJ Circle #3; 5:30-7:00; Lakeland Ctr	28
31 MEMORIAL DAY HOLIDAY	1 ■ Executive Board Mtg; 11:30-2:00; #2055	2 ■ Office Staff Mtg; 1:30-2:30; #2057; OFFICE CLOSED DURING MEETING	3	4

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.

2010 Executive Board

Arliss Stenger, Parent-Meeker Co. (Vice Chair)
Serves through 2010—3rd Term
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Debi Brandt, Heartland Comm. Action Agency
Serves through 2012—2nd Term
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Gerald Brustuen, Renville Co. Human Svcs.
Serves through 2012—3rd Term
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Jill Bruns, Renville Co. Public Health
Serves through 2011—3rd Term
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Tammy Thompson, Meeker Co. Corrections
Serves through 2011—1st Term
(320) 693-5260 / tammy.thompson@co.meeker.mn.us

Debb Sheehan, Director (non-voting)
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Becky Romosz, Parent-Kandiyohi Co.
Serves through 2012—3rd Term
(320) 235-2204 / ellen_romosz@ymail.com

George Dubie, Greater MN Family Svcs. (Chair)
Serves through 2010—1st Term
(320) 214-9692 / gdubie@greaterminnesota.org

Greg Schmidt, MACCRAY School Dst.
Serves through 2011—1st Term
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Loren Hacker, Canby School Dst.
Serves through 2010—3rd Term
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Val Mersch, Fiscal Agent (non-voting)
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Chief Elected Officials

Dick Larson, Kandiyohi County; (320) 235-5805
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED