

PACT 4 FAMILIES
COLLABORATIVE

THE NEXT FULL
COLLABORATIVE
MEETING WILL
BE:

Wednesday, Sept. 9

Kandiyohi Health &
Human Services Build-
ing in Willmar

11:45 to 1:45 pm

Cost: \$5.00

RSVP requested:

(320) 235-8938 or

Email:

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PACT 4 NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2009



Whether their summer was jam-packed with activities or filled with complaints that they were bored and had nothing to do, kids often have a tough time making the back-to-school transition.

Battling the Butterflies

As with any new or potentially unsettling situation — like starting school for the first time or entering a new grade or new school — allow kids time to adjust. Remind them that everyone feels a little nervous about the first day of school and that it will all become an everyday routine in no time.

Emphasize the positive things about going back to school, such as hanging out with old friends and meeting new classmates.

It's also important to talk to kids about what worries them and offer reassurance: Are they afraid they won't make new friends or get along with their teachers? Is the thought of schoolwork stressing them out? Are they worried about the bully from last year?

Consider adjusting your own schedule to make the transition

smoother. It's especially beneficial for parents to be home at the end of the schoolday for the first week. But many working moms and dads just don't have that flexibility. Instead, try to arrange your evenings so you can give kids as much time as they need, especially during those first few days.

To help ease back-to-school butterflies, try to transition kids into a consistent school-night routine a few weeks before school starts. Also make sure that they:

- get enough sleep (establish a reasonable bedtime so that they'll be well-rested and ready to learn in the morning)
- eat a healthy breakfast (they're more alert and do better in school if they eat a good breakfast every day)
- write down the need-to-know info to help them remember details such as their locker combination, what time classes and lunch start and end, their homeroom and classroom numbers, teachers' and/or

bus drivers' names, etc.

- use a wall calendar or personal planner to record when assignments are due, tests will be given, extracurricular practices and rehearsals will be held, etc.
- have them organize and set out what they need the night before (homework and books should be put in their backpacks by the front door and clothes should be laid out in their bedrooms)

Although it's normal to be anxious in any new situation, a few kids develop real physical symptoms, such as headaches or stomachaches, associated with the start of school. If you're concerned that your child's worries go beyond the normal back-to-school jitters, speak with your child's doctor, teacher, or school counselor.

This information was provided by KidsHealth, one of the largest resources online for medically reviewed health information written for parents, kids, and teens. For more articles like this one, visit KidsHealth.org or TeensHealth.org. © 1995-2009. The Nemours Foundation. All rights reserved.

"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

Mental illnesses affect five to nine percent of American children and adolescents each year. That means, on average, that one or more students in every classroom could be affected.

Obviously, the impact of children's mental health on schools, teachers, classrooms, students, and staff can be significant. But so can the impact of school practices that promote mental health. Across the Nation, schools that promote mental health report::

- Higher academic achievement;
- Lower absenteeism; and
- Fewer behavior problems.

Students who once might have been expected to drop out and fail have graduated and gone on to lead active, productive lives.

This past month, we have seen the results of the 2009 SHARE survey taken by 2,740 students in fourteen school districts in grades 7, 9 and 11. While many categories of greatest concern seem to be leveling off, they remain at very high rates overall: 7.6% of these youth report having hurt someone badly in the last 12 months, 17% of students report having had a drink in the last 30 days, and 12.8% of respondents noted they had made a plan in the last year to kill themselves.

Another, more hopeful event emphasized the need for prevention activities that anyone who works with children and youth can use. The Connectedness Conference held August 18 underscored evidence that simple ways of connecting with students can provide powerful protection from a wide range of at-risk behaviors and even mental illness symptoms. Dr. Robert Blum pointed out that the power of **relationships** is not just coincidental; it has been shown through longitudinal research to be the cause of reduced substance use, deviant behavior and emotional distress including attempts of suicide. Teachers and others in the schools can do many things to create connectedness in their classrooms. Dr. Michael Blum noted the following as examples: * Know each student's educational strengths and weaknesses so as to maximize strengths. * Use assignments to encourage students to share stories about themselves. * Establish a regular time at least

weekly for students to share thoughts and concerns. * Ask questions and spend time listening.

According to our recent speakers, school connectedness is defined as:

- A sense of belonging, being part of school
- Liking school
- Perceiving teachers as supportive and caring
- Having good friends at school
- Being engaged academically
- Experiencing fair and effective discipline
- Participating in extra-curricular activities

Perhaps parent Karen Hocker sums it up best in her report to the Ohio Legislative Forum on Mental Health and School Success: "My children have benefited from school-based mental health supports. My daughter, Sheena, was able to attend and graduate from high school because of a nurturing classroom with teachers who understood mental health issues could give the support she needed to learn and be academically successful."

As a new school year begins, my hope is that each and every young person whether in kindergarten or high school, or some grade in between, can experience what it means to be "connected" at school.

Debb Sheehan, Director

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Wraparound

Wraparound Fidelity

I had the opportunity this summer to attend a six-day Wraparound Fidelity training in Monticello, presented by one of the pioneers of Wraparound, John VanDenBerg. Among other things, the training focused on facilitation skills, integration at the systems level, and what research and experience tells us about Wraparound.

Wraparound has been around long enough now to have a research base. It was affirming for me to hear that Wraparound is being implemented in all 50 states, and in several different realms besides Children's Mental Health (Child Welfare/Protection, Juvenile Justice and Corrections, and even in a nursing home).

But by far the most intriguing example to me was Prison Wraparound in the State of Oklahoma. There is actually a "Wraparound Prison," where offenders are transferred six months prior to their scheduled release date. Every staff person in this prison is trained in Wraparound, and all of the facilitators are former prison guards who are experienced in dealing with inmates. After several years of implementing this program, Oklahoma's recidivism rate has dropped to 4%. Their research has led them to the magic number of

27 months: when a released offender reaches 27 months without re-offending, the chances of continued success are almost 100%, based on their own Wraparound research and experience. Why is this? Why does this work? They cited several things:

- The offender now has a say in determining his or her needs. He/she has been paying a debt to society (and rightly so) according to what has been mandated by the legal system. This philosophical shift is dramatic, and they respond to it.
- Natural or informal supports. Involving the offender's family and friends has taken real creativity and perseverance, as many have burned out their informal supports. Often their offense was at the expense of a family member. The facilitators have had to negotiate with family members, asking "What do you need in order to be invested in this team?" They negotiate with them until an agreement is reached, as they know that having these informal supports in place is KEY to their success.
- The offenders leave with an integrated Wraparound plan in place, which is reviewed for many months. All of the involved systems are



included in Wraparound, but whenever possible there are more informal supports than professionals on the team.

- Self-efficacy. The constant theme is: "How can you make it without us when you are released?"

I left the training feeling that we are on the right track here in our PACT 4 community. As I continually keep record of who is attending Wraparound meetings, I see that more and more entities are sitting on teams. Undoubtedly this is leading to increased collaboration and integration of services, which in turn should lead to greater success for families.

Char Erickson, Wraparound Coordinator
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Greater Minnesota Family Services



13th Annual Training Event

Children with Autism and Asperger's Diagnoses

Presented by:
Dr. Elizabeth Reeve

OCTOBER 15, 2009; 9:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.
REDWOOD FALLS, MN

Elizabeth Reeve, MD

Dr. Reeve takes a special interest and has exceptional expertise in children with autism, brain injuries, and developmental delays. She is the medical director of the HealthPartners Department of Psychopharmacology Research. Dr. Reeve provides child and adolescent psychiatric diagnoses, therapy and psychopharmacology services with HealthPartners Regions Behavioral Health in St. Paul, MN.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION:

Thanks to a PACT 4 Discretionary Grant, registration is \$35.00 per person if you live/work in the counties served by PACT 4. If not, the fee is \$70.00 per person. Registrations must be postmarked on or before Monday, October 12, 2009. Registration fee includes a lunch and snacks. Registrations received on or after Tuesday, October 13, 2009 will be \$80.00. We recommend early registration as conference space is limited. Brochures are available at www.greatermnnesota.org.

Renville County Chemical Health

RAPAD

Renville Alliance for the Prevention of Alcohol & Drugs—Annual Report

The RAPAD Coalition was established in August of 2006 through a grant from the MN Department of Human Services-Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division to PACT 4 Families. The overall goal of the Coalition is to reduce youth alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use and access within Renville County. The grant runs through June 2011.

Year 3 Accomplishments:

- *Project Northland Curriculum*—available to all students in grades 6-10 at the BOLD, RCW, and GFW campuses.
- *Positive Community Norms Campaign*—all 7-12 grade students at RCW completed their second MOST of Us ® survey in February to gather data related to ATOD use about the behaviors and perceptions of the youth. The campaign focuses on changing social norms in the community and celebrating the positive aspects of the community.
- *Alcohol Compliance Check Training*—designed for law enforcement officers to implement check systems for establishments that sell or serve alcohol. Current research shows that effective and regular compliance checks help decrease alcohol

sales to minors and reduce underage drinking.

- *Responsible Beverage Server Training*—Education for owners, managers, servers and sellers of alcohol about strategies to avoid illegally selling alcohol to underage youth or intoxicated patrons.
- *ZAP (Zero Adult Provider) Training*—reduce youth access to alcohol by identifying and charging the illegal providers of alcohol.
- *Alcohol Prevention Youth Groups*—sending positive messages to their school-mates and community that alcohol and teens do not go together.
- *Town Hall Meetings*—designed to alert and empower the community to increase understanding of underage drinking and its consequences. This arrangement is a positive arena for communities to discuss how they can best address this issue.
- *Monthly Coalition meetings*—anyone interested in the health and safety of their community is welcome to attend the monthly meetings.
- Youth trained as project leaders promoting environmental and community-wide approaches to prevent underage alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use.
- Collaborate with local law enforcement, judicial system, and local government to prevent underage alcohol use and access.
- Get the word out about underage drinking laws.
- Work with sponsors of community events to help them reduce underage alcohol access and in doing so, reduce alcohol use by minors at these events.
- Narrow the gap between the number of Renville County youth who use alcohol and the perception among youth as to how many of them use alcohol.
- Help communities promote alcohol-free activities where teens can gather.
- Work to enhance Renville County policies to effectively prevent underage alcohol access and use.

Year Four Goals:

- Provide an avenue for community discussions around alcohol and drug use

Annie Tepfer, RAPAD Coordinator
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21st Century Community Learning Center

Buffalo Lake/Hector Discovery Works Program

Summer brought several exciting opportunities to the Discovery Works students at Buffalo Lake/Hector. We had 75 students in grades 3-10 participate in the summer program. As many of you know, summer is so **BUSY**, and we greatly appreciate that our students and families have continued to support the Discovery Works summer program. The coordinators and staff members at Buffalo Lake/Hector have worked hard to create fun and unique learning experiences for students of all ages.

In June, 45 elementary students and 19 junior high students participated in an "Overnight Animal Encounter" at the Minnesota Zoo, where they participated in hands-on educational sessions related to animal care, conservation, ecosystems, and marine life in and around the coral reefs throughout the world. Students enjoyed private

sessions with the dolphins, sharks and sting rays. They ventured out on a behind-the-scenes tour of the zoo's kitchen, where they were able to see how zookeepers plan and prepare food daily for THOUSANDS of animals. At the end of the night, the students enjoyed sleeping next to the shark and dolphin tanks where they were able to watch the animals in their habitats until they fell asleep. The students were extremely appreciative of the experience and parents reported that their children came home with a wealth of knowledge to share with their families and friends.

In July, 71 Discovery Works students enjoyed participating in the Titanic Exhibit at the Science Museum of Minnesota. Students started their expedition with the Omnitheater production of "Titanica," which showed the actual shipwrecked site of the Titanic, resting 3-miles below the surface of the North Atlantic Ocean. The film set the stage for the artifact exhibit, where the students were given a

boarding pass with the name of an actual passenger of the Titanic. With this boarding pass, they were able to see and feel what life was like aboard the Titanic in 1912. The students viewed over 200 original artifacts recovered from the ship and learned about the scientific data and theories behind the unfortunate demise of the Titanic. Students enjoyed being a part of the history and legend of the Titanic.

We hope that our students are able to share the information and knowledge that they learned this summer with their family members and friends. Buffalo Lake/Hector wishes everyone a safe and happy back-to-school!

Michelle Melberg
BLH 21st Century
Secondary Site Coordinator



Full Collaborative Highlights-July

School Connectedness DVD—The DVD is something that the Elementary/Middle School-Age Committee has been working on, and is funded by SHARE dollars. It was made primarily at Gibbon/Fairfax/Winthrop School District. All PACT 4 partner school districts have a copy of the DVD, and it is also available on PACT 4's website.

Jason's Journey – Linda Hocum; Linda, who has been an active member of the Parent Advisory Committee, used to serve on the Community Evaluation Team and is co-chair of the Local Advisory Committee for children's mental health, spoke about her son Jason's journey through the mental health system.

Committee Reports:

Executive Board – the Board will be having a daylong retreat in September and will be discussing how to impact the legislative system. The audit by the State of Minnesota is going well. Three grants are wrapping up their year and submitting reports to the state.

Adolescent Services – the second “crisis card” printing is done and cards will be distributed to parents in the fall with the back-to-school packets that are sent out by school districts. At the next meeting, future projects/agenda items will be discussed.

Early Childhood – discussed the theme for the annual brain conference (The Healthy Brain) and the keynote speaker – Esther Sternburg. An ad has been posted for a two-day per week coordinator position for the birth to five grant. Will next meet on August 19th to continue discussing the grant.

Elementary/Middle School-Age – brainstormed ideas on how to boost registrations for the School Connectedness conference.

Mentors – discussed collaborative summer activities for all the programs, other funding sources, and community garden participation.

Wraparound – discussed how the Signs of Safety philosophy is similar to Wraparound, and youth surveys on Wraparound.

Parent Advisory –watched the Wraparound DVD and talked about partnering with the Resource Center Program.

Grant Reports:

Restorative Justice – the steering committee is examining expanding Circles in Kandiyohi County, potentially using them with Prairie Lakes Youth Programs as part of a youth transition plan from out-of-home placement back into the community; and with Kandiyohi County Family Services as a tool to use with truancy-involved youth.

SHARE – there are three months left of the grant, final bills are being submitted and paid. The Coordinating Council will meet on August 19th to learn final results of the SHARE surveys.

21st Century CLC – summer programs are going strong in sites. Year two of the grant ends June 30th. Year-end reports are being prepared for the State, and will be shared at a future Collaborative meeting.

Guia – staff will present the Creating Lasting Family Connections curriculum to the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee meeting on July 17th in Alexandria. Year one has finished and a final report to the State is being compiled. The first year has been a learning experience and staff learned what worked and what didn't, leading to changes and adjustments in programming.

Chemical Health Coalitions – both coordinators are at a MOST of Us® training institute in Bozeman, Montana. Year end reports for both grants are finished and have been submitted to the State.

Next Meeting:

September 9th at the Kandiyohi County Health and Human Services Building in Willmar. We will be conducting a “speed-netting” exercise. All agency/school representatives are to bring brochures or other materials from their agency to help facilitate the process of learning about each other.

"...the moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; those who are in the shadows of life; the sick, the needy and the handicapped. "

~ **Last Speech of Hubert H. Humphrey**

SEPTEMBER				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
	1 ■ Bilingual RJ Circle; 4:30-6:00; Lakeland Ctr	2	3 ■ Raymond RJ Circle; 5:30-7:00; St John's Lutheran Church	4
7 LABOR DAY—PACT 4 OFFICE CLOSED	8 ■ Brain Conference Planning Comm; 2:00-3:30; #2057 ■ New London RJ Circle; 5:30-7:00; Peace Lutheran Church	9 ■ PACT 4 Comm. and Full Collaborative meetings-KCHHSB; check website for details on committee times ■ Willmar RJ Circle #1; 5:30-7:30; Lakeland Ctr	10 ■ Restorative Justice Steering Comm; 12:00; The Oaks at Eagle Creek; Willmar ■ Willmar RJ Circle #3; 5:30-7:00; Lakeland Ctr	11
14 ■ Executive Board Retreat; PWELC ■ Parent Advisory Mtg; 5:30-7:30; YMCA	15 ■ Bilingual RJ Circle; 4:30-6:00; Lakeland Ctr	16 ■ Restorative Justice Volunteers Mtg; 12:00; #2055	17 ■ Raymond RJ Circle; 5:30-7:00; St John's Lutheran Church	18
21 ■ Willmar RJ Circle #2; 5:30-7:00; Lakeland Ctr	22 ■ 21st CCLC Advisory Comm; 8:30-10:30; #2057 ■ New London RJ Circle; 5:30-7:00; Peace Lutheran Church	23 ■ Willmar RJ Circle #1; 5:30-7:30; Lakeland Ctr	24 ■ Willmar RJ Circle #3; 5:30-7:00; Lakeland Ctr	25
28	29	30 ■ PACT 4 Coordinators Mtg; 8:00-10:00; #2057	1 ■ Raymond RJ Circle; 5:30-7:00; St John's Lutheran Church	2

OCTOBER				
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
5 ■ Willmar RJ Circle #2; 5:30-7:00; Lakeland Ctr	6 ■ Executive Board; 11:30-2:00; #2055 ■ Bilingual RJ Circle; 4:30-6:00; Lakeland Ctr	7 ■ 21st CCLC Site Coordinators Mtg; 9:00-12:00; #2055	8 ■ Restorative Justice Steering Comm; 12:00; The Oaks at Eagle Creek; Willmar ■ Willmar RJ Circle #3; 5:30-7:00; Lakeland Ctr	9
12 ■ Parent Advisory Mtg; 5:30-7:30; YMCA	13 ■ New London RJ Circle; 5:30-7:00; Peace Lutheran Church	14 ■ PACT 4 Comm. and Full Collaborative meetings-Project Turnabout in Granite Falls; check website for details on committee times ■ Willmar RJ Circle #1; 5:30-7:30; Lakeland Ctr	15 ■ Raymond RJ Circle; 5:30-7:00; St John's Lutheran Church	16
19 ■ Willmar RJ Circle #2; 5:30-7:00; Lakeland Ctr	20 ■ 4-County ATOD Professional Networking Group; 9:00-11:00; #2045 ■ Bilingual RJ Circle; 4:30-6:00; Lakeland Ctr	21 ■ PACT 4 All-Staff Mtg; 8:30-12:00; MPR—OFFICE CLOSED ■ Restorative Justice Volunteers mtg; 12:00; #2057	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 RJ Circle #1; 5:30-7:30; Lakeland Ctr	29	30
<i>All Willmar meetings are held at the Kandiyohi County Health and Human Services Building unless otherwise noted.</i>				

2009 Executive Board

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
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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.

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED