

The Community Partnership 2010 Annual Report



CYD Staff - Back Row: Marilyn Newkirk, Amy DeLuca, Bruce Wade, Ina McKune, and Gale Westerman. Front Row: Robyn Wolfe, Nancy West, and Rose Drain.

COMMUNITY & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Robyn Wolfe, Director

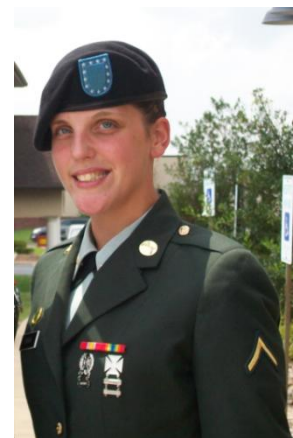
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FY10 was the first full year of operation for the Community and Youth Development Department (formerly Caring Communities and Youth Development). As the largest department at The Partnership, we have five full-time and three part-time staff that are covering eight different program areas. Though there is never a dull moment in this department, the staff clearly love working with the

participants we serve and improving their lives.

After several policy changes, new staff positions, and an increase in participants, the department is going strong. Though it seems as though something is always changing in the CYD department, I am highly excited about and confident in the people we have working here – I have no doubt that FY11 will be a great year.

My favorite story this year comes from one of our Independent Living Program participants. This young lady has had a hard life. She has been with our program for nearly three years. During that time we have seen her evolve right before our eyes. Initially, she had been in and out of residential placements. She struggled with drug use and with authority issues as a result of her family situation. However, once she was enrolled in ILP and found a loving foster home, she found structure and security for the first time. She was actively engaged in the program – always wanting to learn more and build her skills. She became involved with our local Advisory Board as well as with the State Youth Advisory Board for foster youth, on which she served as an officer. This past spring after being released from custody, she enrolled in the Army and she just graduated from boot camp. She is headed to Hawaii for her first station assignment on her way to becoming a part of the Military Police. She credits this program and the people she worked with at The Partnership as some of her strongest influences on putting her life back together and reaching her goal. We could not be more proud, as her story reminds me of exactly why we do the work we do!



Former ILP youth graduates from Boot Camp

CHAFEE INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM (ILP)

ILP is designed to provide ongoing training and support for older foster youth so that they may be successful and independent upon exiting care. This is accomplished through life skills training, leadership opportunities, and financial assistance.

The Community Partnership 2010 Annual Report



Area Youth Board member gives back by walking dogs at the Humane Society

The highlight of this year was definitely seeing many of the youth we serve succeed in reaching their goals. This year we had three new members selected to be part of the State Youth Advisory Board that influences policies and procedures regarding foster care in the State of Missouri. In their effort to be positive role models, this year the Area Youth Board focused on giving back to the community by participating in service projects such as bell ringing for the Salvation Army and walking dogs for the Humane Society.

Though we have sent several youth off to college and are extremely proud of their accomplishments, one individual stands out. This young man has struggled in school in the past – mainly do to placement changes and lack of motivation. However, he had enormous potential. After nearly flunking out his Junior year, he managed to earn straight A's his senior year and just recently enrolled in College of the Ozarks in Branson, where he is participating in the work study program. His goal is to become an attorney – which we have no doubt he will do. He is very determined and likes to learn. When he came into the program he couldn't even make toast – now he regularly prepares meals such as spaghetti and others that he finds in cook books.

In our 2010 Fiscal Year we served 147 different foster youth aged 14-21. Some of our results include:

- 99% of youth identified that they have a caring adult in their lives
- 100% of youth served had an increase in life skills knowledge
- 100% of youth believe that they make a contribution to their family or community.
- Reached 154% of yearly goal for client contacts (1696 actual vs. goal of 1100)

COMMUNITY WORK SUPPORT (CWS)

The Community Work Support Program works with clients that are currently receiving TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) who are not participating in work requirements and have had their TANF reduced/sanctioned. We work with these individuals to identify the barriers keeping them from work (lack of transportation, lack of childcare, etc.) and help them overcome them.

Our favorite CWS story for this year involves a 21-year-old mother with a one year old son. Upon the client's initial assessment, she had just left her husband who was abusive; she was staying with her parents, but had no idea of what to do or where to go. She had signed up for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, but had not gotten a check yet because she was still under exemption. To



A MOTOR Client signs her car loan

The Community Partnership 2010 Annual Report

help her in the mean time, she was referred to the Young Parents Program. After her son turned one year old, she entered the Career Assistance Program and was now eligible for CWS services. She had already found a part time job but the job was not enough for her to begin thinking about self-sufficiency. This program was able to help her with obtaining a car loan, pay back taxes of which her husband had promised to do, help her with registration, licensing, and getting insurance for her car.

This young lady is now doing very well and is well on her way to self sufficiency. She is current on her car payments; working almost full-time and loves her job, and she is supposed to be getting her TANF reduced to TEP in July. Her family is still very supportive of her and continues to encourage her. She would like to start classes at Drury University in the fall of 2010 to work on a bachelor degree in music.

In our 2010 Fiscal Year we served 98 different families (245% of our goal). Some of our results include:

- 40% of families had their sanction lifted or case closed
- We completed 7 MOTOR loans (117% of goal)

FIT PHELPS



Students water the Rolla Head Start garden

Fit Phelps is a countywide project aimed at educating people in the community on the importance of increased fruit and vegetable consumption as well as regular exercise in hopes that they will adopt healthier habits. The ultimate goal is to reduce childhood obesity.

The highlight of this year was seeing our broad based efforts pay off. Through Fit Phelps initiatives this year, a child attending Head Start could tend a garden and eat the produce from it while her older brother jumps rope in a school fitness contest. Their mother could participate in a

worksite wellness competition and their grandmother could enjoy a senior adult walking event. Fit Phelps helps the entire family know about healthier eating and living and gives opportunities to do it.

The highlight for this year is that Fit Phelps has gone global! Brewer Science requested to be a part of our Energizer Buddies/Business Challenge program, and we have set them up with a walking for fitness plan. They have over 100 employees in Missouri, England, and Germany participating. After only one week they had logged 3,961,864 steps or walked over 750 miles!

In our 2010 Fiscal Year we served approximately 2000 youth and community members with our programming. Some of our results include:

- 1253 youth in Rolla and Salem participated in fitness competitions
- 96% of youth demonstrated an increase in physical activity and 93% of those reporting indicated an increase in knowledge of healthy lifestyle choices.
- Hosted 20 community health and wellness events including “Volksmarch” and “Family Play Day”

The Community Partnership 2010 Annual Report

FOSTER CARE SUPPORT (FOSTER PARENTS AND CASE WORKERS)

The Community Partnership works closely with Children's Division in many of the programs we offer. As a result, we have seen first hand the difficulties that case workers and foster parents endure. This program was created to show foster parents and case workers in the 25th circuit that outside agencies appreciate and value the service they provide to young people by offering regular appreciation and support events, as well as serving on various committees for Children's Division.



Foster Parent Appreciation Picnic

The highlight of this year was the Foster Parent Christmas Party. The event was a huge success, as parents from across four counties drove to St. Robert for the celebration. The party included dinner and dessert, crafts, and goodie bags for nearly 130 parents and their foster youth. This year's event was even kicked up a notch with an appearance by Mr. and Mrs. Claus, beautiful decorations, and a concert by a local folk band.

In our 2010 Fiscal Year our Foster Care Support program served parents and case workers of the 25th judicial circuit. Some of our results include:

- 75% of foster families in the circuit attended at least one of our appreciation events
- 12 new foster parents, 10 new kinship families, and 15 new relative families received licenses in 2010 for a total of 130 homes in the circuit

LINKING HEARTS

This is a fun, relaxed, and unique event designed to bring together youth eligible for adoption and potential families. The day is designed so that youth may feel special and hopefully find permanent homes.

The highlight of this year was the incredible turnout of volunteers for the event. We had Missouri University of Science and Technology students from the Interfraternity and Panhellenic councils put in over 600 volunteer hours at

this one day event. Volunteers served as buddies, served food to the attendees, and operated carnival booths. This was the largest event ever, with the number of children in



A Linking Hearts attendee looks through his "wish bag" with his MS&T Buddy

The Community Partnership 2010 Annual Report

attendance almost doubling in size. The event was a huge success as many children had inquiries from families which led to long term foster and adoptive placements.

In our 2010 Fiscal Year over 500 people attended the event. Some of our results include:

- 63 adoption eligible children attended from 24 different counties
- 600+ volunteer hours
- 64 potential foster and adoptive families in attendance

TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE GRANT (TAG)

The Transportation Assistance Grant program is designed to aid in reunification of families by allowing parents to visit and/or meet needs of their service agreement through the removal/reduction of travel expenses. TAG has directly contributed to the reunification of at least 22 families since the start of the fiscal year on July 1, 2009, with as many as four more reunifications expected before the end of the term.

TAG is funded by money issued through the Office of the State Courts Administrator, and participants are reimbursed for travel at the rate of 20 cents per mile. Since the beginning of the fiscal year, 328 trips have been funded at a total of 67,728 miles. On average, about \$1,368 per month is used to help families offset travel expenses. Overall, quicker reunification amounts to savings because the state spends about \$3,000 per month for each child in its care.

This program has been highly successful. DYS workers are seeing reunifications happening more quickly, and they also feel that when children are reunified they are more connected with their families and have a more hopeful outlook for the future because of the regular visits.

In our 2010 Fiscal Year we served 90 different families across the 25th circuit with this program. Some of our results include:

- 22 families were reunited (with many more to soon follow) as a result of the program
- Funded 363 assistance requests (302% of our goal)

YOUNG PARENTS PROGRAM

The Young Parent Program provides youth ages 14 – 21 resources and education that will support them as they progress through the challenging times of pregnancy and parenting. Participants can earn diapers, clothes, cribs, etc. through the use of the Baby Bucks incentive program. In addition to these resources, the program also offers group meetings, home visits, training classes, and mentoring – with the ultimate goal of reducing child abuse and neglect.



One of our young families at the Splash Zone celebration

The Community Partnership 2010 Annual Report

The highlight of this year was the return of two of our past participants when they moved back to the area. This couple has taken a number of steps in the past several months to make life happier for them and their baby. They moved back to Rolla after a four month separation, with the hope that the couple could make their relationship work and their baby could benefit from being raised by both parents. Within a week of returning to town, the young mom found a job and six weeks later she and the father were able to move into their own place---having a home of their own for the first time since their son was born in the fall of 2008. On June 5, he took the G.E.D. test, was awarded the diploma on June 14 and enjoyed receiving an incentive check from the YPP the next week for achieving his written educational goal. He plans to enlist in the military in December. Both parents have reconnected with their mentors this spring. Our young mother's mentor commented at the end of May that "I feel she is coming along fine. I am so proud of both of them. They are great parents." By getting together frequently with their mentors both of these young adults have benefited from the mentors' emotional



A young mom with her baby
and her mentor

support and help in working out problems. The couple eagerly participates in the education provided by the Young Parents Program by attending classes, coming to monthly meetings and scheduling monthly home visits.

In our 2010 Fiscal Year we served 60 young parents – 46 moms and 14 dads. Some of our results include:

- 100% of youth attending classes demonstrated an increase in parenting skills knowledge.
- Zero repeat teen pregnancies
- Zero cases of child abuse and/or neglect

MENTORING

Mentors are matched with participants in the Young Parents Program to assist in preparing youth for personal success in employment, education, healthy lifestyles and self-sufficiency.

This year was both challenging and rewarding in the world of mentoring. We lost several of our long term mentors because their youth aged out of the program and they opted to stay with them (which is a great thing). However, even though we lost some of our terrific volunteers, we also were able to recruit several new ones to take part in the program.

The highlight of this year comes from a mentor/mentee relationship that almost never happened. In the beginning, their relationship was rocky at best in that the mentor constantly struggled to communicate with the youth, but got little response. The mentor grew frustrated, but after encouragement from the staff that her mentee was just testing her, she decided to stick it out – and it is a great thing she did! These two individuals now have one of our closest mentor/mentee relationships and truly demonstrate the purpose of the program. The young mother has had numerous obstacles to overcome in her life such as an unstable family situation, a second grade education level, hearing impairments, and spinal back curvature problems. Through her mentor's encouragement she has been able to get out of her

The Community Partnership 2010 Annual Report

brother's house and get a place of her own. She comes to every class and tries to learn as many skills as she can to be a good parent. Her mentor has taught her to find her inner strength by just thinking about raising her son the best she can. This mentor went on to become this year's recipient of the "Above and Beyond" Mentor of the Year award.

In our 2010 Fiscal Year we had 24 Mentors take part in the Young Parents program. Results include:



"Mentor of the Year" award winners, Sharlene Morgan and Delbert Day, pose with staff at the Mentor Recognition Reception

- 100% of mentors were trained and supported with monthly contacts and 10 training sessions
- 100% of our mentors believe that the Young Parents program has given them the support needed to be a good mentor.
- 1087 contacts were made with existing mentors (411% of goal) and 52 efforts were made to recruit new mentors through community presentations, one on one meetings, and special events (144% of goal).
- Trained 11 new Community Mentors (183% of goal)

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SKILLS PROGRAM

This program was designed to give youth the opportunity for employment training and mentoring support. The program helped youth further their education and trained youth to become productive employees.

This was a disappointing year for the Youth Employment Skills program. Though it had been one of our longer running programs, we decided that due to declining numbers, uncertainty regarding ongoing state funding, and the Coordinator's departure, it would be best to dissolve the YES program and throw all of our MMP energy into the Young Parent's program. There were several key elements involved in this decision, including the poor economy and lack of jobs, a decrease in our referral base, and those mentioned above. We ultimately felt that we could no longer garner the type of results we are accustomed to seeing and felt that we could best utilize our resources in projects that had the potential for to have a greater impact.

In our 2010 Fiscal Year we served 61 clients. Some of our results include:

- 100% of matched youth reached at least 30 days of mentored employment and 82% of matched youth reached 180 days of mentored employment
- One of our YES participants was awarded a MoSci scholarship to pursue engineering studies at the University of Missouri Science & Technology.