

**Otter Tail Family Services Collaborative**

Working Together...

Serving Families

...Improving Lives

**Collaborative Coordinator's Report**

**Prepared by Jane Patrick, Collaborative Coordinator**

**October 3, 2011**

**Partnership Matters**

As the coordinator for the Collaborative, it is important that I regularly obtain feedback from you, both collectively and individually, as to how organizations both benefit from collaborative efforts; and how organization leaders can see opportunities for improvement. The individual part of this question will hopefully be answered by you within the biennial evaluation of the coordination contract which will be administered by the Planning and Evaluation Work Group later this winter. However, I would like to entertain a short discussion today regarding the second question: ***How can the Collaborative do a better job of meeting the needs of partners as they work to improve the lives of children and families in Otter Tail County?***

**Annual Collaborative Report**

The Annual Collaborative Report was due and completed by August 31<sup>st</sup>. In addition to all the great things that partners had to say about our continued collaboration and collaborative efforts which went in to the report, we are also asked to calculate a dollar value for partner in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions include staff meeting time, travel time, mileage, room facilities and many other things which partners contribute to our collaborative efforts, and for which they are not financially compensated. This year's annual report showed the following summary for in-kind contributions:

<b>2010 In-kind contributions report summary</b>	
Total Number of Hours Contributed	4,024.5
Total Number of Miles Contributed	15,762
Total Value of Hours Contributed	\$ 164,205
Total Value of Mileage Contributed	\$ 7,385
Total Value of Meeting Room Space	\$ 2,100
Other in-kind contributions	\$ 776,437*
<b>Total value of in-kind contributions</b>	<b>\$ 950,127</b>
Total in-kind by County	\$ 217,166*
Total in-kind by Schools	\$ 344,918*
Total in-kind by Non-profits	\$ 388,042*

**\*NOTE: The number of staff hours and miles contributed are very consistent with the 2009 numbers. The amounts for "other" contributions show a significant increase over last year's report, and this is likely due to improved reporting of in-kind cash and third party revenues used to support school-based mental health programming.**

## Local Collaborative Time Study (LCTS) Updates

If you haven't already hosted training at your school site this fall, I will be contacting you soon to schedule refresher training for all involved staff. We seem to have a rash of "non-responders" so far this fall, causing me concern and also causing us to have a few "missed" random moments☺ Thankfully, when I receive notices in time, school site contacts have been very helpful in tracking down "delinquent" responders and helping to get them back on track☺

## Opportunities for Collaboration

- State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP) - updates on current happenings in Perham; and discussion of future RFP and who would be interested in participating (Diane Thorson)
- Update on state and federal budget cuts; consequences and impact to programs and services to families; and potential opportunities for collaboration to offset losses. (Davis)
- Bullying – The Children's Mental Health Local Advisory Council has been working on the issue of bullying over the past two years. It has organized presentations in the Fergus Falls schools, developed some web-based resources, and during their work plan this year, they intend to identify evidence-based curriculum to recommend to schools. Coincidentally, in a recent discussion with both Dean Soutor from Henning, and with Todd Cameron from New York Mills, it became apparent to me that this issue, sadly is thriving and is causing a great deal of concern for school administrators all across the county. In communications with Todd Cameron, he said, "I was thinking about character education – anti-bullying education and if the collaborative would ever look at an opportunity to provide a consentient curriculum/training for our county. I don't see bullies as a single school issue, but as society issue. It can and will become a school and community issue without interventions. Are there some best practices that schools are using now that can duplicated county wide? I'm not looking for one day workshops or speakers, but rather a curriculum or program that can be implemented district wide where we can document and show results of improved behavior, respect for others and self and being more positive and helpful to others. I'm looking to be proactive than reactive to poor choices." I would therefore like to entertain a discussion today to find out what partners can contribute to this discussion which has been initiated, and how we might move forward as a Collaborative to address this topic. (Jane)

## Children's Mental Health Local Advisory Council (LAC)

In addition to addressing the topic of bullying, the group recently met with the ***Suicide Prevention Work Shop*** Committee organized under the Lake Region Hospital. There is a well-planned informational event being held at the Fergus Falls M State Campus on ***Wednesday, October 12<sup>th</sup> from 6 - 9 p.m.*** Please share the attached flyer regarding this important event with agency staff and with families. The group will also be purchasing resources for school and public libraries throughout the county.

## School-based Mental Health Work Group

School-based mental health (SBMH) staff and supervisors from Fergus Falls, Perham, New York Mills, Parkers Prairie and Battle Lake/Underwood Schools met on September 19<sup>th</sup> to share information about their respective experiences. Since many of these staff are "lone rangers" in their schools, they have been meeting each fall to share and discuss resources, information and challenges they are facing. Staff are also given updates about the Collaborative's other projects and resources, and are asked to give input into the SBMH Work Plan tasks delegated to them.

In addition to meeting to share experiences and resources, the staff collect and report consistent data each quarter. Reports completed through June 30<sup>th</sup> show that 272 students with an ED or SED diagnosis are being served, with 40 students closing out of services and showing improved functioning. 89 diagnostic assessments have been completed at the school sites, and 862 students at the school site who did NOT have an ED/SED were served by SBMH staff. A combined total of 968 students had been served by the program at the half way mark in the year which is a significant increase over this same time period last year.

**Early Childhood Work Group**

The work group has started their year with a focus of truly identifying what their overarching responsibilities are in serving as the advisory council for the Caring Connections home visits and child care provider visits, the Parent Support Outreach Program, and the Nurse Family Partnership Program. The group hopes to develop specific guidelines for each of these unique programs to ensure that they are effectively identifying and meeting the needs of families served by them.

In addition, on October 12<sup>th</sup> the work group will be meeting with Lyn Johnson and Kay Brown, both of whom oversee early intervention screening and referrals for Otter Tail County families. Lyn Johnson is employed by the Fergus Falls Area Special Education Cooperative and screens young children in the Battle Lake, Fergus Falls, Pelican Rapids and Underwood school districts. Kay Brown is employed by the Freshwater Education District and screens children in Henning, New York Mills and Perham. Parkers Prairie is served by the Runestone Education District in Douglas County.

The purpose for this meeting will be to help identify the processes for each of the districts and educate the work group on how to most effectively and efficiently handle referrals. Ultimately, the group hopes to prepare an outline describing the two processes and create a best practice guideline for all early childhood staff to follow when considering and/or making early childhood referrals for suspected developmental delays.

**Parent Support Outreach Program Summary Year-to-date:**

<b>Caring Connections - Parent Support Outreach Program Report</b>				
<b>Jan. 1 - Sept. 30, 2011</b>				
<b>Total Number of Families Referred</b>	<b>Total Number of Children Served</b>	<b># of families accepting services</b>	<b># of families declining</b>	<b>Rate of Acceptance</b>
21	30	14	7	66%
<b>Families Assigned by Agency</b>				
<b>ECFE</b>	<b>Public Health</b>	<b>Head Start</b>	<b>PSOP</b>	
7	1	0	6	
50%	7%	0%	43%	

## Truancy Work Group

School administrators have been busy hiring and organizing efforts to enhance attendance clerk duties at each school site. As usual, schools have been creative in stretching these valuable funds to get the most “bang for the buck” out of this new Collaborative funding. In some situations, schools have combined this funding with other funds in order to create more sustainable, full-time positions.

Schools have also been busy identifying the students whose attendance they will track closely over the course of this school year. In addition, they are pulling baseline data on student attendance, both individually and district wide, student grades and overall district-wide graduation rates. It is the hope that by honing in on these specific trends, the group will accurately and effectively prove their theory that increased attention to attendance does make a difference in terms of student outcomes.

Below is a summary for the Otter Tail County Connects for Youth program. 51 of the 59 letters sent by the County Attorney’s Office so far this year have been initial “reminder” letters putting students and parents on notice that “someone is watching” their attendance as students start the new school year. For next month’s report, we will break out the reminder letters so both initial letters and letters sent due to new attendance issues for this year can be tracked.

### **Otter Tail County Connects for Youth Summary of Activity as of: September 30, 2011**

<b>School</b>	<b># of students whose parent(s) received letters from Co. Attorney</b>	<b># of meetings held at the courthouse for student &amp; family</b>	<b># of parents attending meetings w/their child</b>	<b># of repeat referrals</b>
Ashby	0	0	0	0
Battle Lake	0	0	0	0
Fergus Falls Elem	0	0	0	0
Kennedy Secondary	31	0	0	8
Fergus Falls ALC	3	0	0	1
Henning	0	0	0	0
New York Mills HS	0	0	0	0
Parkers Prairie HS	5	0	0	5
Pelican Rapids Elem.	0	0	0	0
Pelican Rapids HS	19	0	0	6
Perham/Dent Elem	0	0	0	0
Perham MS	0	0	0	0
Perham HS	0	0	0	0
Perham ALC	0	0	0	0
Underwood	0	0	0	0
Outside Districts	1	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20</b>
				34%

## Service Coordination/CTIC

The first “Transition Tool Box” event of the year is being planned in November at the Underwood School. These sessions are FREE and open to anyone that is interested in learning more about transitioning from high school to adult living for individuals with special needs. The group is

hoping to host at least three sessions at schools throughout the county this year. If your community or school is interested in hosting this event, please contact Jane.

### **Chemical Health Work Group**

On September 1, the group was successful in completing and submitting the Strategic Framework Prevention Request for Proposals to the Minnesota Department of Human Services. ***The Work Group would like to sincerely thank each of the partners that provided letters of support, as well as those that contributed documentation and data to support the need for this grant funding.*** The group expects to hear by mid-October whether or not they were successful in securing this request.

Most of the activities of the \$50,000 UCare Foundation grant have now been wrapped up with a small \$2,400 balance remaining. The group will be requesting an extension of this grant to utilize the remaining funds to continue supporting the Safe Ride Program. OTC Public Health completed and submitted a second UCare Grant application in May. We were notified in late August that this second grant request was not funded☹

### **Safe Communities Coalition**

The Underwood and Battle Lake Schools both elected to host “Mock Crash” events as part of their fall Homecoming activities this fall. These events which are organized under the Safe Communities Coalition are used to help warn students of the dangers of drinking and driving, distracted driving, and inexperienced teen driving scenarios in general.

On Tuesday, October 4 at 10 a.m., the Safe Communities Coalition will work together with the Battle Lake Police Department, the Battle Lake Rescue Squad and Fire Department, as well as other community partners to present a Mock Car Crash at the Battle Lake School. This Mock Car crash is being presented to the 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students with the intent to show them the serious consequences that occur as a result of texting and driving. ***The event is open to parents and all members of the community who wish to attend.*** Individuals from the community are directed to arrive at the school no later than 9:45 A.M. and park their vehicles in the school’s south west parking lot. There will be yellow caution tape outlining the crash scene and an area will be set aside for non students to view the presentation. Should anyone have questions regarding the event please contact Police Chief David Magsam at 218-864-8989.

On September 22, four student actors and administrators from the Underwood School, along with individuals from the Underwood Fire and Rescue Squads, Ringdahl Ambulance, Life Link Air Ambulance Service, the State Patrol, the Otter Tail County Sheriff’s Department, Olson Funeral Home, Beyer Towing & Auto Body, and Guest Speaker Jerry Ness provided a sobering experience for students.



Performing in the mock crash in Underwood, Jasmine Richey watches as a bystander attempts to revive Collin Teich after being “thrown” from Richey’s vehicle. Underwood students played out a drunk driving crash to show the dangers of drunk driving. (Photo and caption courtesy of the Fergus Falls Daily Journal.)