



Caring for Kids

Fall 2006, Volume II

CHILD SUMMIT CONVENES AREA LEADERS

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Concern for the welfare of at-risk children and youth in the St. Charles County community prompted area health and social service agencies, parents, and concerned citizens to brainstorm ideas that will lead to better and more comprehensive services for families at risk of child abuse and neglect.

The Child Summit first convened in late June to identify unmet needs in the community and specify attainable goals. Over 20 individuals in the County discussed community strengths and weaknesses and outlined a proposed agenda that included focusing in on issues related to services to young parents (support groups for dads), child care, parent education, and baby supplies and equipment.

Among questions asked the participants were:

- “How do we as a community ensure that young women have healthy pregnancies, safe deliveries, and healthy children?”
- “Do we provide them with enough supports so that they can be successful in school, in employment and in parenting so as to reduce any risk of child abuse and reduce the incidence of welfare?”

At the first session of the Summit, participants identified community strengths and weaknesses related to teen pregnancy and related topics and how well St. Charles County responds to these issues. Opportunities that could be explored to help significantly reduce instances of child abuse include the following:

- Expansion of Volunteers in Medicine
- Creation of a Community Health Clinic
- Development of one central crisis line
- Involvement with the faith community
- Involvement with the corporate/business world
- Disbursement of information (through food pantries and other sources that young mothers use)
- Participation with hospitals
- Identification tags/useful telephone numbers
- Community Baby Shower

At the July meeting of the Child Summit, participants decided to focus on three specific issues (noted below) and will begin developing committees that will address these problems.

- Marketing/Messaging/Resources ~ Do young parents know who to call and where to call if they need help and they have no place or anyone to turn to? What kind of information is being disseminated throughout the County? This committee will look at the messages that have been delivered as well as enlisting the media’s help to expand understanding of the Child Summit’s mission.
- Identifying Barriers for Teen Parents/Distribution of Information ~ What educational/social meetings are available to young parents that help them become better and more responsible parents? The Child Summit participants will look at what services are currently offered to young parents and how can the community better help these youth.
- Young Father’s Initiative ~ What is currently available for young fathers to become a more responsible father with a life-long commitment to his child? This committee will initiate the design of a program that will fit the needs of this community’s young fathers.

The Child Summit is also planning to host a spring Community Baby Shower and all participants will be working on this project over the next several months. Donations and baby gift items will be sought from the community that will be distributed to area child-serving agencies providing assistance to young parents receiving services in St. Charles County.

THE SHOWER OF LOVE - Community Baby Shower

DID YOU KNOW? New parents can spend as much as \$12,550 the first year they have a child, according to government statistics. Imagine the impact that this cost may have to young parents who have very little resources available to them. Young families find themselves struggling every day.

The CHILD SUMMIT participants are planning the first “SHOWER OF LOVE” community-wide baby shower for monetary donations or donated items (diapers, formula, clothes, bottles, blankets, cribs, playpens) that will help to ease the burden faced by young families. This “Shower” is the first of its kind in the St. Louis metropolitan area!

The community baby shower will begin organizing in January 2007, culminating in an April “Shower of Love.” Volunteers are being sought to help secure items and initiate corporate and business support. Contact 636-939-6200 to inquire about becoming a volunteer for the community-wide baby shower.

APPLICATIONS

Applications for the 2007 funding cycle are due at the Children and Family Services Authority (C&FSA) by 2:00 p.m. on Friday, September 29, 2006.

The 2007 grant program funds child and youth-serving agencies providing services related to temporary shelter, respite care, family and community-based services, teen parent services, psychiatric services, substance abuse treatment, school-based prevention programs, transitional living, counseling, and crisis intervention services.

“The agencies that received funding in 2006 will be given first consideration for continuation funds,” says Jan Lewien, Grants Administrator for the C&FSA. “When we began funding these services in 2005, following the passage of the Proposition 1 initiative, the Board of Directors resolved that on-going funding would be provided to our community partnering agencies that are helping our most vulnerable youth. We do not want to see new programs begin that provide valuable services to children and youth just to wither away within a few years time because on-going support is not secured. Authority Board funds are designed to help secure services over the long haul, and that just creates win-win situations for everyone involved - the child, the family, the service agencies and finally, the whole community.”

Any funds available following distribution to on-going contracts will be distributed according to need.

MISSION: Maximizing community resources to build and sustain a comprehensive system of services for children and families in need



Youth In Need's "Safe Place"

Youth in Need Adds Project Safe Place



Youth in Need has announced that it is now the Project Safe Place Coordinator for the St. Louis region, providing further opportunities for outreach to distressed young people across the metropolitan area. According to April Klutenkamper, Marketing Director, the national Safe Place program coordinates with local businesses and non-profits to provide youth-friendly locations with the ability to provide a "safe place" and resources to children and teens in crisis.

Program staff train employees of partner businesses on how to best respond when a child or teen in crisis arrives at their store. While the store helps to make the youth comfortable, Youth in Need is contacted and staff dispatches an outreach worker to provide face-to-face counseling and referral services.

Safe Places are identified by a distinctive yellow and black logo, which is placed prominently in participating stores and community centers.

Upcoming Activities and Events

The following lists upcoming special dates for our partnering agencies:

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES - (Family Violence Council) - October 4, 2006 ~ Annual Candlelight Vigil Walk of Unity (6:30 - 8:00 p.m.. at the corner of Second Street and Jefferson in St. Charles). October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES - (Family Violence Council will benefit) October 5, 2006 ~ Annual O'Fallon Fall Fest 5 K Fun Run.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF ST. CHARLES COUNTY - October 17, 2006 - 8th Annual Community Networking Forum, Calvary Church, St. Peters, (no charge to attend)

THE CHILD CENTER - October 21, 2006 ~ First Annual Child Advocacy Award Benefit honoring Senator Chuck Gross, New Melle Lakes Banquet Hall, Wentzville, MO

CRISIS NURSERY - November-December 2006 Holiday Hearts Program, where individuals, families, groups and busiessses have the opportunity to "adopt" a family who otherwise would not be able to provide a holiday for their children. Sponsors supply special gifts for the children and household items for the family.

BRIDGEWAY COUNSELING SERVICES - February 17, 2007 - Annual Art and Soul Fine Arts and Sports Memorabilia Auction at the St. Charles Convention Center.

CATHOLIC FAMILY SERVICES CHANGES LOCATIONS

Catholic Family Services (CFS) moved in July to its new location at 255 Spencer Road, Suite 202, in St. Peters, Missouri. Dr. Jerry Marks, Executive Director for CFS, reports that the agency will continue to provide therapy and psychiatric care.

An additional CFS community-based service is the School Partnership Program that focuses on providing anti-bullying information to school-aged children and youth attending parochial schools in St. Charles County.

Lutheran Children and Family Services Renovates Space

Lutheran Family and Children's Services, located behind Our Savior Lutheran Church in St. Charles (2800 West Elm Street), sponsored an Open House on September 1st to allow the public the opportunity to view the newly renovated counseling suites. The agency offers child and youth counseling services and programs through its St. Charles based site, and serves approximately 50 children each year.

"We appreciate the support that we receive from the Authority Board, which provided us with the funds for our new equipment, furniture, and supplies," said Paulette Foerster, Vice President of Programs for Lutheran Family and Children's Services.

FRANCIS HOWELL INITIATES DRUG TESTING PROGRAM

The Francis Howell Board of Education unanimously approved a drug testing policy in May 2006 to help deter the use of drug by students in the school district. The random testing will be given to middle and high school aged students enrolled in extracurricular activities as well as though students who have an on-campus parking permit.

The district will contract with a laboratory to test randomly selected students each week. High school students who test positive will be removed from activities and have their parking privileges revoked for 10 days. They will attend a minimum four-week counseling program. The staff of Bridgeway Counseling Services have been actively working with the school district since January to build a drug counseling program designed to help the students and families with alcohol and/or drug related issues. At the end of the counseling program, the students will be re-tested and will have their privileges reinstated. Students who test positive will enter into a more intense intervention program.

VISION: Preparing all youth and families to realize a brighter tomorrow

MID-YEAR 2006 AGENCY REPORTS

Agencies receiving services funding from the Children and Family Services Authority have reported the following numbers of children and youth served during the first six months of 2006:

Home and Community Based Services: Four agencies work with children and youth with a serious emotional disturbance (S.E.D.) and their families in natural settings (home and school) and with families experiencing extreme stress because due to exigent circumstances.	537
Drug and Alcohol Treatment: Two agencies offer outpatient services, counseling, and school-based programs for youth undergoing substance abuse treatment.	78
School-based Prevention Services: Five agencies are providing school-based services to St. Charles County children and youth in the areas of bullying prevention, sexual abuse prevention, substance abuse prevention. Services are delivered in all five St. Charles County school districts.	34,478
Temporary Shelters: One agency provides emergency shelter for runaway and/or homeless youth for up to 30 days.	38
Respite Care Services: Three agencies offer respite care services for children and families who are at risk for child abuse and neglect (no more than three days shelter in the midst of crises).	510
Counseling: Three agencies provide individual, family and group therapy.	169
Psychiatric Services: Two agencies offer outpatient, nursing and medical services.	10
Crisis Intervention: One agency is funded to help children and youth in emergency situations.	10
Transitional Living: Housing services are available for homeless youth through one funded agency. Additional services provided include educational, employment and life skills support.	9
Services to Pregnant Teens: One agency provides pre and post-partum services to teen girls to ensure healthy pregnancies and deliveries and parenting support.	88
TOTAL CHILDREN, YOUTH, & FAMILIES SERVED (January-June 2006):	35,927

HEADS UP -

Applications for the 2007 Children's Trust Fund (License Plate Fund) will be available on-line after October 1, 2006. Agencies wishing to apply for funding have until December 31, 2006 to fill out the application and return to the Children and Family Services Authority.

Programs eligible for funding must support, develop, implement and evaluate child abuse and neglect prevention programs and services in St. Charles County. Find out more information on line or call 636-939-6200.

CHECK OUT

Our web site, stcharlescountykids.org, has been expanded to include the Authority Board's Service Manual, board meeting minutes, financial information and funding applications and guidelines.

"We want to ensure that residents in our community can see how the Proposition 1 dollars are being put to use," says Bruce Sowatsky, Executive Director. "Our partnering agencies are providing excellent care for St. Charles County children and youth and their families, and we want citizens in our area to know how efficiently these funds are being managed."



C&FSA JOINS CHILD ADVOCACY ORGANIZATION

The Children and Family Services Authority joined the Citizens for Missouri's Children organization in July. The organization is a nonprofit, nonpartisan public interest organization with its primary purpose being to advocate for public policy that puts Missouri's children first.

Priority issues of the organization are child protection, early care and education, health and mental health care, and youth development. Citizens for Missouri's Children also monitors the state budget and revenue tobacco tax proposals, and pushes for adequate resources to finance needed children's services.

"We look forward to working with Citizens for Missouri's Children and other member organizations as we explore opportunities to help build a policy agenda for Missouri's children," says Bruce Sowatsky, Executive Director. "For many years, Missouri scored low on national ranking in areas related to child welfare, and it has only been in the last decade that we have seen changes for the better. This organization works very hard for the Missouri's children, youth and families."

A Partnership for Children and Youth ~ A Collaboration of Community Resources

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This past January, the Authority Board embarked upon its first ever Strategic Plan, completing the process in July. The Board solicited input from the public and from various social service agencies in order to develop our priorities over the next three to five years. Along with the updated Needs Assessment for children's services, the Board looked at both service and building priorities.

Utilization rates of our partnering agencies continue to grow as the demand for services grows, and the Board looked at services that need to be expanded. The goal is to spend on services what comes in as revenue. In addition, the Board felt it was important to offer cost of living adjustments (COLA) to current partners with the hope that salary increases for staff who work with families would reduce the risk of staff turnover. As revenues have increased somewhat from last year, the Board is also interested in evaluating new program proposals, as long as they fit within the parameters of the State statute.

Building priorities were also based on service demand and the need for more temporary bed space. Without additional bed space, service capacity has been limited. To that end, the Board would like to fund an additional respite home, a runaway shelter and an adolescent maternity home.

Additionally, the Board revisited its mission and vision so that they would more accurately reflect the work of the Authority. Our new mission and vision can be located on our newly reconstructed website: www.stcharlescountykids.org.

Our thanks go out to those people who provided input into the Strategic Plan. We look forward to partnering with organizations and the community for years to come.



Bruce Sowatsky

Senator Jim Talent Tours Bridgeway Counseling Services



Senator Jim Talent speaking with Bruce Sowatsky, Executive Director of the Children and Family Services Authority, and Janet Lewien, Grants Administrator.

Senator Jim Talent visited Bridgeway Counseling Services on Friday, June 23, and toured the agency's drug treatment programs. Talent is seeking \$20 million for family-based treatment centers that treat pregnant and parenting women offenders addicted to methamphetamine. "One of the worst things about methamphetamine is what it does to kids and families. Family-based treatment centers, like Bridgeway Counseling Services offer programs that help addicted moms and their kids as a unit, and it works," says Senator Talent." Speaking before a group consisting of representatives from mental health and substance abuse agencies, family members, and community residents, Talent praised Bridgeway's leadership in designing family-based therapies. He also reported that Bridgeway's programs are examples of the best practices available nationally for recovery from substance abuse.

Senator Talent introduced the Noble family, participants in the Bridgeway program. The Nobles met with legislators earlier this year while speaking in Washington, D.C. before the House Committee on Finance. Senator Talent remarked that the family exhibited tremendous strength in acknowledging their addictions and addressing their problems before others in hopes of helping individuals suffering from substance abuse issues.

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