Greetings!
February is here and that means we are one month closer to the beauty of a Missouri spring! At the CCRB, we recently announced the winners of our Community Art Contest for local high school students. See the article below to learn more!

In outside news, February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness month and February 22-28, we recognize National Eating Disorder Awareness Week. Dating violence and eating disorders can have a traumatic effect for our youth and it is not isolated to just young women. Young men can also be affected by these serious events. We have reached out to our partners at ThriVe Best Choice to provide us with some insight into their Date Safe program and to a clinician at CHADS Coalition for Mental Health for ways to support a child who is showing signs of an eating disorder.

To learn more about CCRB-funded services, follow us on Facebook or visit our website.

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Learn more about our monthly Board meetings here.

County Youth Win Community Art Contest

The CCRB is pleased to announce the selection of Minnie Adams, a senior at Francis Howell North High School and Sebastian Bierhals, a freshman at Lutheran High School as co-winners of an art contest for St. Charles County high school students. As winners, both students will recreate their concepts on canvas and the finished artwork will be installed at the CCRB office in May 2021. The art contest

In October 2020, students from all area high schools, alternative programs, and homeschool students were invited to submit a conceptual piece to be considered for display in the CCRB’s office. The contest theme was “St. Charles County Youth & Community,” intended to reflect youth perception of St. Charles County or issues relevant to their lives. The CCRB was impressed by the level of talent shown in all
was sponsored as a creative way to bring in youth voice to the CCRB office and to recognize talented young artists. Inspiration for the project came from service providers who use art therapy and other art-based programs to help youth living with mental health conditions. Submissions, making it difficult to narrow down the selection. Adams and Bierhals were chosen for their skill in interpreting the theme, as well as their artistic vision.

Adams’ work is titled, Sushi in St. Charles, and features youth together at a table. Bierhal’s work is titled, “Masking Our Feelings” and represents youth who mask feelings of depression and anxiety caused by bullying and cyberbullying.

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Supporting a Child Showing Signs of an Eating Disorder

by Faith R. Ehrhard, MS., PLPC., NCC. Family Support Clinician, CHADS Coalition for Mental Health

February 22-28 is National Eating Disorder Awareness Week, a time to spotlight eating disorders by educating the public, spreading a message of hope, and putting lifesaving resources into the hands of those in need. According to (Rome et al., 2003, e99) “the recognition of individuals at risk [of an eating disorder] with early intervention can prevent the development of full-blown eating disorders”, which points to the importance of identifying what type of behaviors to look for in kids who may be experiencing the onset development of a serious eating disorder at a younger age, as well as what best practices and approaches is best for parents and caregivers. As a mother of two young girls, ages 8 and 10, it comes naturally for me to empathize with the idea of how scary it can feel that a child is suffering with the ramifications of an eating disorder. Add to that the doubt and lack of support or knowledge to help us understand what behaviors to be mindful of or how to help them. The feeling is powerlessness and helplessness, and there is no worse feeling when it comes to the well-being of our kids. As a Therapist, I believe that it is important to never assume anything about

**Eating Disorder MYTH**

"I caused my child's eating disorder."

**FACT**

Eating disorder researchers and clinical experts believe that eating disorders are caused by both environmental and genetic factors. People’s genes put them at risk to develop an eating disorder, and then different social pressures may cause them to develop the disorder.

Source: [https://www.hopkinsallchildrens.org/](https://www.hopkinsallchildrens.org/)
anyone, and instead act as an unbiased person of interest, coming from a place of acceptance for all human experiences and existence. Nobody wants to feel judged, and the same goes for our own kids who may be struggling with an eating disorder. When kids feel that we are a safe-place for them, they are more likely to open up about tough topics such as their relationship with food and the way they view themselves. The basis for eating disorders is most often rooted in low-self-worth and a fear of losing control over their relationship with food, as well as poor body image.

Some warning signs, which I like to call “invitations to ask”, may sound like self-deprecating remark’s or behaviors which indicate that the child doesn’t feel good about how they look or who they are. For example, if a child says “I hate the way I look”, or “I can’t eat that because I don’t want to feel fat”, those may be invitations to ask what that means to them. As a parent or caregiver to this child, our natural impulse may cause us to want to “fix” the problem or look at that remark as a defect that needs to be taken care of immediately.

Taking our time with our kids regarding such delicate matters, requires intentional patience as well as an openness to receive what they are experiencing and feeling with a non-judgmental and unconditional regard. If we begin to notice our child say self-deprecating remarks, it doesn’t necessarily mean that they are suffering from an eating disorder however, it can be just as important that the child feel heard, seen, and loved just as they are.

At the end of the day, it all boils down to relationship. The relationship we have with our kids is by far the most fundamental pillar of support that promotes a healthy sense of self and self-worth. If we notice that our child has developed an unhealthy relationship with food, such as over-eating or restricting their food, it is important we address these concerns with them in a non-confrontational manner; set time aside to build up that conversation by allowing time for one-on-one relationship-building. Those times we spend with our children do not have to always come out of a place of concern, its best practice if spending one-on-one time becomes something to look forward to, where conversation can just flow naturally, as well as set the stage for us as their caregiver to freely express our concerns.

If you have serious concerns that your child may be experiencing symptoms of an eating disorder, please reach out to a licensed mental health professional and allow for them to diagnose them accordingly. Sometimes, the best medicine is connection, understanding, and unconditional support and love. You can find 24/7 support with the BHR Youth Connection Helpline at 314-819-8802 or Text BHEARD to 31658. Additional resources are available at https://moeatingdisorders.org/.  

available resources to help each child reach their full potential.
The most challenging aspect of Catherine's time with the CCRB has been learning how deep the mostly unseen needs of at-risk children run, even in our county. She appreciates the sense of teamwork between the Board and agencies in solving real world problems while wisely managing taxpayer funds.
During her time on the Board, Catherine hopes to continue to work cohesively with community partners to meet and lower the demand for educational, therapeutic, and social services among County youth.

Best Choice Teaches Teens to Date Safe

by Madronica Malone, MA, SRAS, Best Choice Co-Director, Best Choice LIFE BUILDER Lead Facilitator

Relationships can be hard for anyone at any age - but ESPECIALLY for a teenager. Sadly, they can also be dangerous. Relationships in the age of Netflix, Instagram, Tik Tok, and 24/7 communication can come with high risks. With so many mixed messages bombarding youth, it can be difficult to identify what healthy and unhealthy relationships look like in real life. That's where Best Choice steps in!
Statistics show 1 in 3 young people will be in an abusive or unhealthy relationship. Best Choice empowers students with the education and tools to prevent teen dating violence by facilitating conversations and encouraging critical thinking about topics related to relationships:
- Self-respect→ begins with self-value & self-worth
- Boundaries→ can protect you physically and emotionally
- Communication→ learning how to speak up when warning signs are present
- Consent→ a clearly communicated “yes” without manipulation or force
- Media influence→ addressing misconceptions and identifying healthy/unhealthy “relationship goals”

As part of the Best Choice program, ThriVe offers **Date Safe**: a two-hour program that speaks directly to dating violence prevention and includes a free one hour self-defense session.
It’s important for youth to recognize that dating violence can be physical, emotional, and/or psychological abuse. Oftentimes, red flags are subtle at the beginning, but they can quickly escalate to violence. Recognizing the use of guilt tripping, intimidation, victim blaming, isolation, and other forms of psychological manipulation are a key factor in preventing dating violence. The bottom line is that nobody deserves to be stuck in an unhealthy relationship. Everyone deserves
News from the Field

The Saint Louis Crisis Nursery is very pleased to announce that it distributed over $280,000 to Crisis Nursery families this holiday season in rent payments, utility payments, food, and necessities. Over 900 families and nearly 2,500 children were helped! The over $280,000 was given to families currently involved with the Crisis Nursery in the form of payments to landlords and mortgage holders to help with past-due balances, ensuring families can remain in their homes. Payments were made to utility companies to prevent services from being discontinued, which would endanger the children in the home. In addition, the Crisis Nursery provided credit to stores that have a presence in the neighborhoods of the people served by the Nursery, including Aldi, Target, and many others.

"Thanks to incredibly generous people in the St. Louis area, people who believe in what the Crisis Nursery has been doing, and is able to do, we were blessed with the chance to assist more Crisis Nursery families than ever in a time of increasing need," said DiAnne Mueller, CEO of the Crisis Nursery. "So many families have been thrown into such desperate situations in 2020 that requests for help far exceeded any previous year. We are very, very grateful for the help from our donor community that has allowed us to support kids and families in this way."

Ready to renew your license plates? Select a Missouri’s Children’s Trust Fund license plate for $25 per year and the fee goes to prevent child abuse in the county you register in.

About $15,000 annually is generated for St. Charles County. Funds are granted annually to organizations working hard to keep children safe and healthy in Missouri. ctf4kids.org
The CCRB is funded by a dedicated fund for children’s mental health services in St. Charles County. Through a local sales tax, over 70,000 children and youth receive prevention education and mental health supports annually. The CCRB is proud to administer these funds, ensuring our youth and their families have the resources they need to realize a brighter tomorrow. All funds stay in St. Charles County for County residents.