



PACT For Families Collaborative

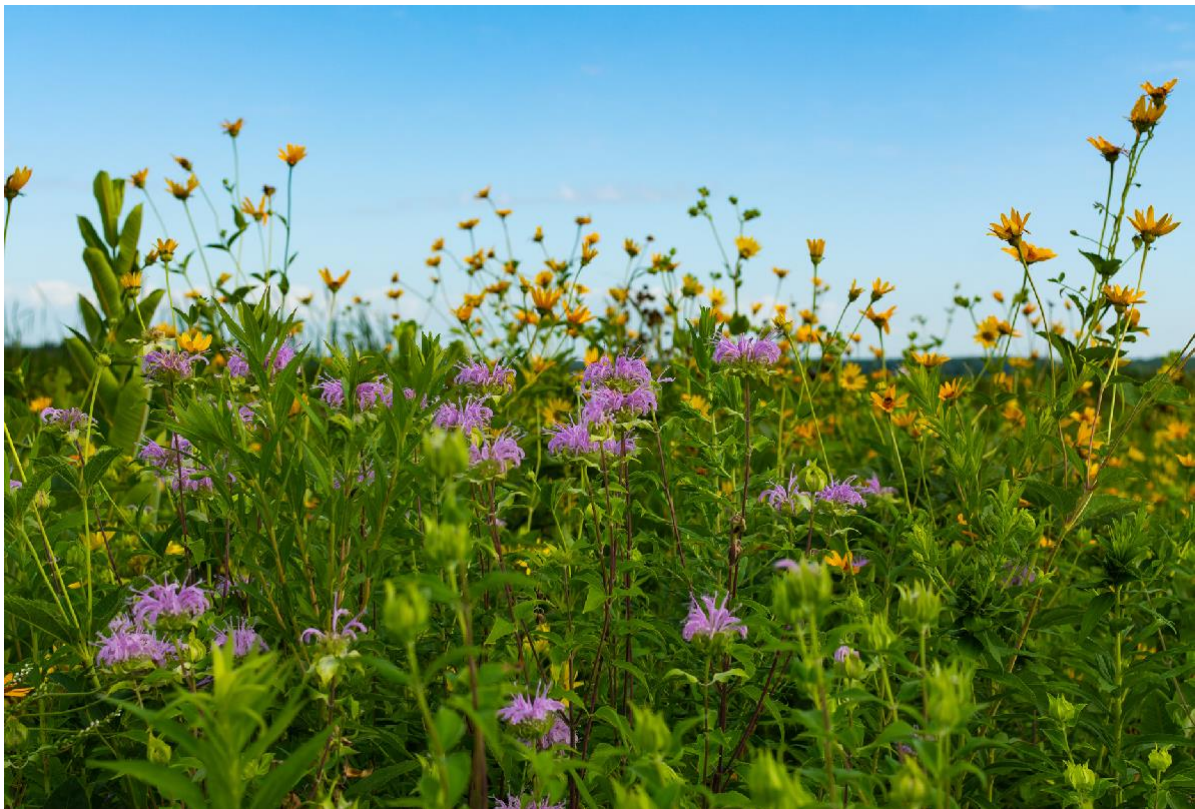


ANNUAL MEETING

2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

Partners working together to strengthen families and support children in achieving their highest potential.

Welcome to Our **ANNUAL MEETING**



I am excited to share all the great work of 2022, as reported by staff within each of our programs! Through the many changes this year, our PACT team and partners continue to pull together to accomplish great things in our five-county service area. As we continue to build relationships within our communities, we know that additional voices at the table will bring equity and understanding about the needs within our communities.

We look forward to creating lasting change and positive outcomes in 2023! Thank you for your continued support and collaboration!

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Welcome to our Director's MESSAGE



As the new director of PACT for Families, I am excited to share PACT's 2022 accomplishments and set the stage for 2023. The last two years have shown me that our collaborative partnerships are strong and that we can work together to continue the legacy of PACT for Families and create lasting change in our communities! Throughout 2022, PACT for Families Collaborative and our partners have held many conversations about the relevance of collaboration and our efforts. These conversations have increased our understanding of collaborative strength, shown us the history of our accomplishments, and increased our awareness about areas of continued need across our five-county service area. Being transparent and identifying areas for real improvement can be challenging. However, we recognize that shared vision and unified goals have been integral to creating positive outcomes for our families and communities.

Sarah Vonderharr
Executive Director

In 2023 we will celebrate 30 years of collaboration and will continue to evaluate the needs of our communities with renewed effort and growth in mind. I aim to continue nurturing our current partnerships while simultaneously developing new ties within our communities. As we renew efforts, we will work to establish goals and objectives that align to meet the needs of all children and adults within our communities. 2023 will be the year to be seen as we come together and rebuild the collaborative spirit that the COVID pandemic has diminished since 2020.

I look forward to getting to know each of our partners as the year progresses. I want to gain a better understanding of our collective mission as we prioritize our goals for the future and evaluate the effectiveness of our programs. We know we are stronger together, and I thank you for your continued effort and support as we celebrate 30 years of creating positive outcomes in our communities.

CHANGE IN 2022

By Sarah Vonderharr

Change is integral to creating environments that cause an organization to thrive, and PACT for Families, at its best, is uniquely positioned to create lasting positive change. As we celebrate 30 years of collaboration, one thing remains constant: our belief that the pooling of resources and power of collaboration is an effective way to meet the needs of our most vulnerable populations. In 2022 we engaged with community members to better understand how our prevention messages and services were received and perceived within our communities, with a renewed focus on conversations within our minority populations.

Some of our most significant accomplishments of 2022 include working with our cultural liaisons to hold these community conversations without language barriers. The discussions, guided by our GUIA coaches and essential PACT staff, have helped drive change in 2022 and continue to guide us in 2023! We continue to overcome language barriers and develop effective strategies to disseminate substance use prevention education, resources, and mental health messaging to our non-English speaking families and youth. We have changed how we communicate and engage with some of our largest minority populations and, in so doing, have begun to unravel some of the barriers to essential resources and services in our five-county service region.



Our community conversations and cultural equity work have been the first steps to understanding and addressing the root causes of various mental health challenges. We have become better at addressing issues of access to resources and necessary services. As the organization enters its 30th year of collaboration, I plan to continue this momentum by emphasizing the asset-based perspective gained through this engagement process. Drawing upon a strengths-based lens, I will lead PACT toward the broader promotion of mental health awareness by holding the line against stigma and generating a focus on strengthening youth and families through concrete action! As we continue to support existing partnerships and recruit new voices to the table, we will shape more resilient communities and enhance our ability to cope with adversity, enabling us to foster better mental health and well-being for all youth and families.

BRAIN CONFERENCE 2022

By Meghna Subba

On April 21st 2022, PACT for Families Collaborative hosted its 18th Community Conference on the Brain “Community Equity: Voices Shared, Voices Heard” at Willmar High School with keynote speaker Dr. Anton Treuer, Professor of Ojibwe at Bemidji State University and author of many books.

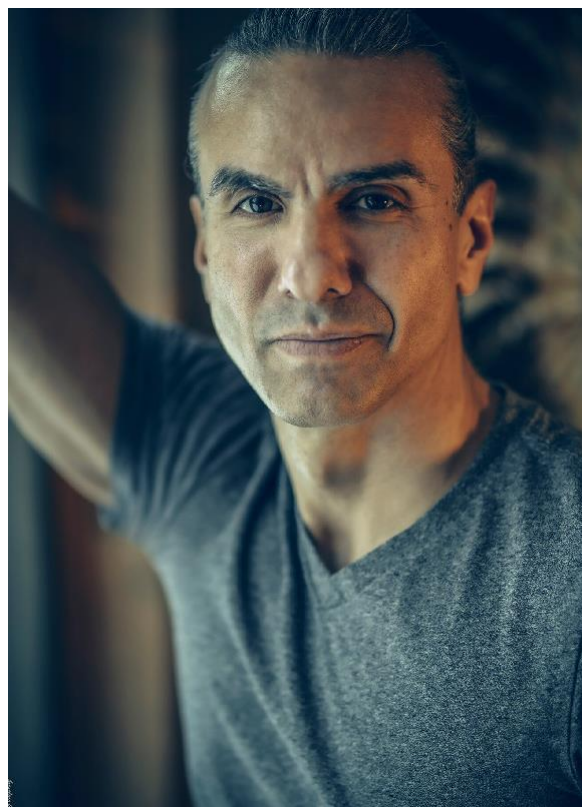
Brain Conference 2022 had been a tough one to plan and implement. Being the first hybrid Brain Conference, it had been a challenging year for sure. With no conference in 2019 due to a blizzard, no conference in 2020 due to COVID, and only a virtual conference in 2021, we were extremely fortunate for 2022 being in-person as well as virtual conference.

Our 2022 Community Conference on the Brain brought the information on challenges that diverse communities face and whose voices are left unheard. At the conference, there were five breakout sessions from diverse speakers, with talks ranging from culture to challenges on poverty, and connecting families with needed resources to supporting transition age children with mental health, emotional or behavioral needs.

The Brain Conference hosted breakout sessions from Morgan Ironheart, Wellbriety Group facilitator whose topic was “Native Culture, healing from addiction, benefits of talking circles to heal ourselves, family and community.” Angela Larson and Heather Jeseritz from United Community Action Partnership talked about “Poor Vs Poverty and the Challenge to Overcoming Both.” Renelle Nelson from PACER Center shared information on “Supporting Transition Age Children With Mental Health, Emotional or Behavioral Needs at School.” Ashley Hanson from the Link of Northern

Kandiyohi County and Foster and Adoptive Families Specialist conducted a session on “Connecting Families with Helpful and Needed Resources.” Lastly, Nate Erickson and Ben Larson from MNyou talked about the “Community Conversations: A Collaborative Approach to Strengthening Communities.”

The keynote speaker, Dr. Anton Treuer, presented on “Historical Trauma: What’s in the way and how do we overcome.” His session focused on practical tools applicable in our workplace and community for engineering healing and connection in response to trauma.



Dr Anton Treuer, Professor of Ojibwe

FINANCIAL UPDATE

By Jolene Lambert

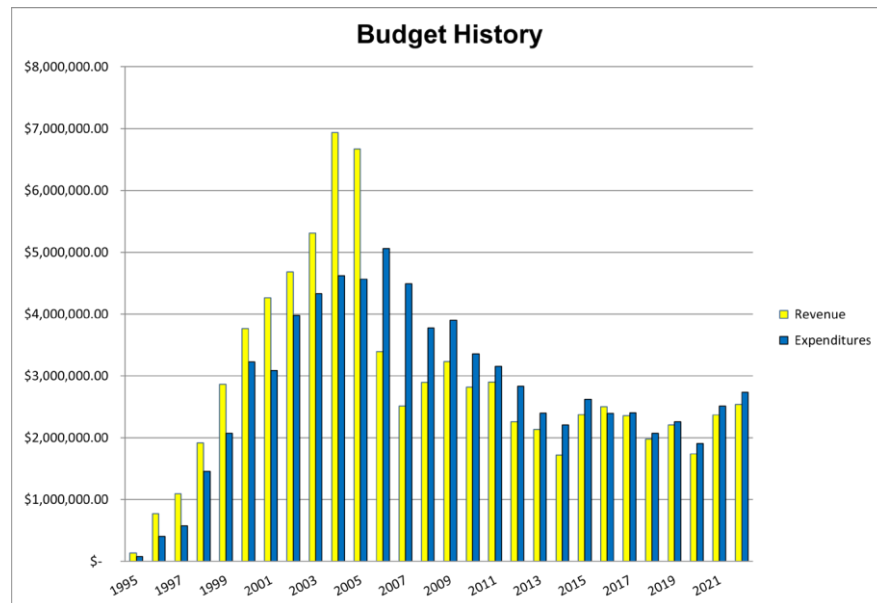
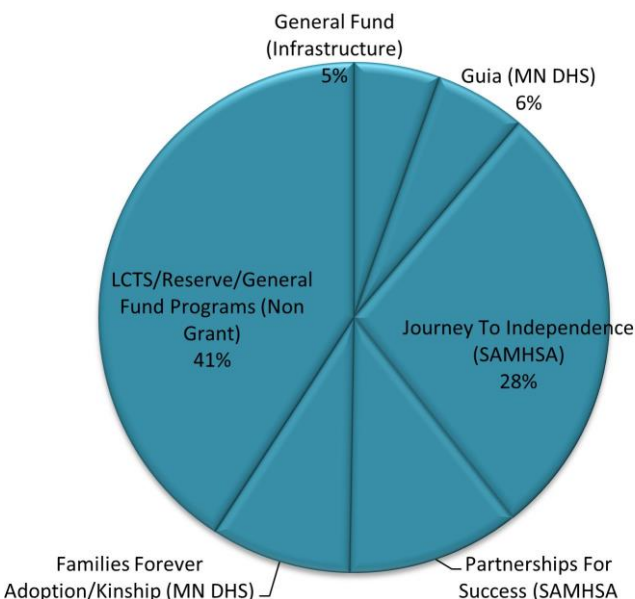
Since our development in 1993, PACT for Families has worked to assist our partners and deliver services that exceed our members' expectations. Guided by our Mission as well as our Vision and Values, our Chief Elected Officials and Executive Boards participate in an annual retreat to develop and adopt a strategic approach that points the directions of the Collaborative. PACT continues to look for ways to be more effective and responsive to members in order to remain vital and necessary. We have done this with changes and enhancements in the use of our personnel, infrastructure and technology.

The PACT for Families budget is determined by the dollars available through several funding sources, including state and federal grants, foundations, local dollars, and membership contributions.

These dollars are put into an Integrated Fund and are used to address the goals and programs that have been established by the Collaborative. The 29-year history of PACT for Families, combined with lessons learned thus far, have demonstrated that system integration does help to extend the resources that are in place and help to develop new resources. We have worked closely over the years with our partners to reduce duplication and maintain and expand services for families.

Each year PACT for Families undergoes an audit by the Minnesota Office of the State Auditor to assure that solid accounting principles are followed, and dollars are distributed correctly. The PACT for Families budget is developed by the Executive Board and approved by the Chief Elected Officials Board annually. PACT continues to set a standard of performance that distinguishes us from the other collaboratives in Minnesota.

2023 Budgeted Expenditures by Fund



MINNESOTA STUDENT SURVEY 2022

By Meghna Subba

Early in 2023 the Minnesota Department of Health released much awaited Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) 2022 data. The MSS 2022 survey reported healthier behaviors around commercial tobacco, alcohol, drugs and sexual activity in 2022 while at the same time experiencing an unprecedented amount of long-term mental health, behavior, or emotional problems.

The MSS 2022 showed the continuation of an upward trend, with 29% of students reporting long-term mental health problems compared to 23% in 2019 and 18% in 2016. Long-term problems indicated problems lasting more than six months. Students in 11th grade who identified as females reported an increase in mental health issues in 2022, with 45% reporting long-term mental health, behavioral or emotional problems. That was up from 35% in 2019, 27% in 2016, and 16% in 2013. Students in 11th grade who identified as males saw an increase, but fewer issues overall, in mental health issues in 2022, with only 20% reporting long-term mental health, behavioral or emotional problems. That was up from 18% in 2019, 13% in 2016, and 9% in 2013.

Despite the increase in mental health issues, the MSS 2022 reported a decrease in the rate of consumption of alcohol, marijuana, and commercial tobacco, including e-cigarette use. MSS 2022 reports that the student smoking rates have fallen to an all-time low across all

grades, with 2% of ninth graders reporting smoking cigarettes in 2022, compared to the historical high of 20% in 2001. Consumption of e-cigarettes, which had skyrocketed between 2016 and 2019, decreased to 14% of 11th graders reported using in the past 30 days, compared to 26% in 2019 and 17% in 2016. The survey also found that Marijuana use among 11th graders dropped to 12% in 2022 from 16% in 2019.

Although the data and information show low rates of youth substance use, the prevention workers still need to take in the information with a grain of salt. The MSS 2022 showed a decrease in participation in some school districts and a slight increase in other districts across the PACT service area. This change in sample size can make the data a little more challenging to interpret. This means, the data presented by the MSS 2022 from these counties decreases





the chances of effectiveness and impact of data and information. For instance, under the substance use category of grade 9, the sample size from Kandiyohi County decreased from 333 in 2019 to 298 in 2022. Similarly, there was only a slight increase in sample size from Renville County, from 77 in 2019 to 101 in 2022; Mcleod County, from 34 in 2019 to 31 in 2022; Meeker County, from 55 in 2019 to 34 in 2022 and Yellow Medicine from 89 in 2019 to 91 in 2022.

The decrease or slight increase in students participating in the survey creates a disadvantage in measuring the impact of prevention work in the community. We should encourage schools, students, parents, and the community to participate in the state-wide survey to ensure that we accurately picture our community and environment to create focused programs that meet the community's requirements.



Safety

83% of students say they feel safe at home, at school, in their neighborhood and going to and from school compared with 87% in 2019 and 90% in 2016.



Education

Female students are missing school at higher rates than male students because they felt very sad, hopeless, anxious, stressed or angry. Among ninth graders, 23% of girls versus 7% of boys had missed school because of these reasons.



Health

There was a notable increase in energy drink consumption, especially for female students.

“The results of the Minnesota Student Survey are a continued call to action for prioritization of children, youth, and families and coordinated budget and policy development across state government that advances the needs of each and every child and young person in our communities,” said Erin Baily, executive director, Minnesota Children’s Cabinet.



Program CONNECTING FAMILIES

By Becky Sook



The Connecting Families Program (CFP) is an arm of the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC). It serves families raising children with mental health needs, disabilities, developmental delays, social and behavioral concerns, sensory issues, or other life challenges. The Connecting Families Program includes:

Parent support networking groups: In 2022 we offered 3 groups that met monthly. One in each county of Kandiyohi, Meeker & Renville. The Kandiyohi group was facilitated by Becky Sook the first Tuesday of the month from 11:30-1:00 at The Goodness Coffee House in Willmar. The Meeker Parent group met in the summer at the Litchfield Lake Ripley Park Splash Pad. In the fall/winter parents met at Mimi's Café in downtown Litchfield once/month. There was expansion of CFP to Renville county with Janelle Schmoll facilitating the parent networking group. In the near future, it will expand to McLeod county as well. Parents connect for laughs, tears or whatever they are looking for in that season of their life. Some of the past topics include social stories and tips to help those with autism, anxiety & sensory processing disorder during the holidays, celebrating the graduation milestone & other accomplishments, resiliency, therapies, guardianship, shortage of staffing and PCA's,

diagnosing that's often delayed, schools, good resources and e-learning frustrations. There are guest speakers on various topics, including calming techniques, the Good Behavior Game & PAX tools. We also share resources available through our PACT programs. Parents do not need to feel alone in their journey. We are here for you!

Adventure Group: a new Peer group is offered for ages 8-15. They meet monthly for social opportunities, crafts, games & potlucks being together in friendship.

Special family events: During December 2022, we held Sensory Sensitive Santa Photos & Visits at the Hutchinson Mall. During the year we held Sensory Friendly Movies in Hutchinson & Spicer for families to attend a movie with low sounds and lighted isles. We averaged about 65 participants for each movie. In the summer of 2022 a Family Fun Event at Lions park in Willmar provided time to Meet & Greet the Willmar Stingers Baseball players, play yard games, & have a few treats on June 18th.

Mini grants for equipment, camps, etc.: Connecting Families awarded several mini grants in 2022 for summer camp experiences, Equine Therapy, sensory equipment, & safety equipment for the home. Over the 2022 year we have seen and heard what a great program this is for our families!

Program **FAMILIES FOREVER**

By Jessica Erickson



This year was a continuation of learning what the foster, adoptive, and kinship families in our 5-county area need for supports. In January we sent out a survey monkey to learn more about what was working, what wasn't working, and how we can best come along side families. As a result, we added support groups to include an offering every week with varying times of the day, in-person, and zoom options. We also knew there was a need for connection with other families and planned and organized monthly family gatherings. We went bowling, played mini golf and bumper boats, pizza making and eating, farm fun with animals and big slides, Earth Day festivities, swimming and gym time at the YMCA, picnic and games in local parks, ice-cream and splash pads in our communities. We witnessed families building connection!

We collaborated with the counties of Kandiyohi, Meeker, McLeod, Renville, and Yellow Medicine. Some of our collaboration was with county agencies. We were also able to do some collaborating with local organizations such as Foster Stitches helping families with clothing and needs for back to school, and United Way to get school supplies for several of our families. The kiddos were so excited when we delivered back packs full of stuff just for them!

By the end of the calendar year, we had grown our email list to 60 foster, adoptive, and kinship families with an additional 19 professionals that we worked to collaborate with and share our support group information and planned events.

Program PARTNERSHIP FOR SUCCESS

By Sarah Vonderharr



Much of our focus in 2022 was on program implementation within our tri-county service area. Our team successfully launched several positive messaging campaigns- including messages addressed to youth, parents, and others in the communities. We know that most of the youth within our communities are making healthy and safe choices regarding substance use. Using the Minnesota Student Survey and PACT’s SHARE Survey, our team analyzes substance use data to create messages that help youth and parents form accurate perceptions of youth substance use rates within our communities.

Messaging campaigns included posters, radio messages, summer yard signs, and the distribution of bottled water with various statements about vaping and alcohol. The messages state that most youth within the service region choose not to participate in substance use when hanging out with friends. We also promoted messages and videos from www.naturalhigh.org to encourage youth to explore alternative activities that could

give them that “Natural High” that comes from doing healthy and enriching activities. Part of our messaging campaign efforts included surveying students to create messages that would be relatable and effective. In 2022 we surveyed 316 youth to determine what messages they would see across our messaging platforms distributed throughout our communities and school. The pilot surveys helped determine what messages were preferred by our youth and used the most selected message for each campaign.

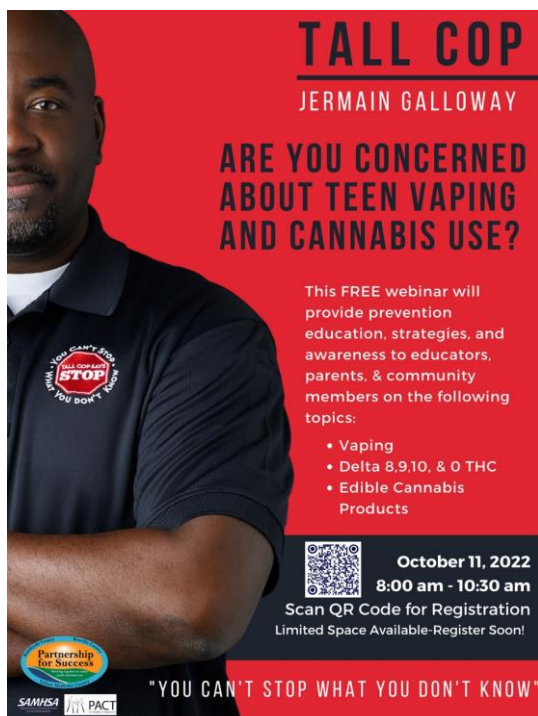
Our team utilized SAMHSA resources to raise awareness about youth substance use with parents, including the “Talk. They Hear You.”[®] campaign. We collaborated with PACT for Families GUIA coaches to create relevant messages for our Spanish-speaking parents and youth. We successfully launched a parent education and awareness campaign promoting talking to young people about substance use and the risks associated with substance use through the Univision Television Network. Univision MN provided us with a platform

to disseminate messages that Latino parents and adults in our service region could view. GUIA coach, Jeanette Morales, provided educational information through a live interview featured in two Café Libre segments aired on the Univision network and YouTube channels. We also translated a positive prevention message into Spanish to promote a unified message throughout our service region. As we worked to be culturally responsive in our prevention efforts, we also worked with Jeanette to translate conversation starter card-stacks from English to Spanish. These English and Spanish card stacks were disseminated at the area County fairs and other locations to promote conversations between youth and adults in various settings like the car, at the dinner table, while waiting in line- or any location where discussions can take place! Please get in touch with a member of our Partnership for Success grant team or a coalition member if you would like a conversation starter card-stack!

Our work also includes education and training for our stakeholders and partners who aid our prevention efforts throughout the service region. This year we brought 280 of our partners and stakeholders together through a webinar series featuring the “Tall Cop.” The series provided prevention education, strategies, and awareness to educators, parents, and community members

regarding vaping, delta 8,9,10, & 0 THC, and edible cannabis products. Attendees of the second session also learned about current alcohol and drug trends, various concealment methods, and how to identify youth who are using or under the influence of alcohol and other substances- including vaping.

As we move into year four of the Partnership for Success grant, our team plans to work with community partners to develop a sustainability plan to allow the current efforts to continue post-grant. As our youth and families continue to struggle with mental health and substance use, we look to understand the value of our prevention efforts and how we can reach the most members of our communities. We continue to build stakeholder relationships and look for new opportunities to bring members from our diverse communities together to combat these important issues. We look forward to bringing more people to the table to hear how we can effectively promote prevention messaging and education! We invite you to join us by contacting your County’s Chemical Health Coalition – the Kandiyohi Drug-Free Communities Coalition, Renville County RAPAD Coalition, or the Yellow Medicine Chemical Health Coalition. You can also contact the PACT for Families Collaborative office staff for monthly meeting dates, times, and locations of coalition meetings!



TALL COP
JERMAIN GALLOWAY

ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT TEEN VAPING AND CANNABIS USE?

This FREE webinar will provide prevention education, strategies, and awareness to educators, parents, & community members on the following topics:

- Vaping
- Delta 8,9,10, & 0 THC
- Edible Cannabis Products

October 11, 2022
8:00 am - 10:30 am

Scan QR Code for Registration
Limited Space Available-Register Soon!

"YOU CAN'T STOP WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW"

Partnership for Success
SAMHSA PACT



TALL COP SAYS STOP
JERMAIN GALLOWAY

HIGH IN PLAIN SIGHT

Former Police Officer, Jermain Galloway, devotes most of his time educating professionals and communities on drug & alcohol prevention and enforcement. To date, he has trained more than 650,000 people nationwide and internationally. He has also conducted more than 8400 community scans at a variety of locations.

THIS FREE EDUCATIONAL WEBINAR WILL PROVIDE PARENTS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT THE ABILITY, KNOWLEDGE, AND CONFIDENCE TO HELP PREVENT AND QUICKLY IDENTIFY:

- ALCOHOL AND/OR DRUG USE AND ABUSE TRENDS
- INDICATORS OF POSSIBLE AT-RISK INDIVIDUALS
- PRODUCTS, STASH COMPARTMENTS, CLOTHING BRANDS, LINGO, MUSIC LYRICS, ETC.

Attendees will learn to identify concealment methods for alcohol and drugs in the home, classroom, or workplace, including vaping

NOVEMBER 1ST, 2022
10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

SCAN QR CODE FOR REGISTRATION
LIMITED SPACE AVAILABLE- REGISTER SOON!

Partnership for Success
SAMHSA PACT

Program JOURNEY TO INDEPENDENCE

By Jenn Pauff



The Journey to Independence (JTI) program is a program for youth and young adults ages 16 – 21 with a severe emotional disturbance (SED) or a severe pervasive mental illness (SPMI) residing in a 5-county area. JTI Transition Facilitators use the evidence-based TIP Model® to improve real-life outcomes for youth and young adults with emotional/behavioral difficulties. This model is designed for personnel serving transition-age youth, young adults, and their families. The JTI program is based on the System of Care approach, which focuses on achieving equity in mental health services for young people and their families.

During 2022, the JTI program received 19 referrals, which included: seven from Kandiyohi County, six from Meeker County, three from McLeod County, two from Renville County, and one from Yellow Medicine County. Of these referrals, 37% identified as male and 63% identified as female. Our Youth Peer Specialist
14 put on events nearly every month for the youth

which promoted socialization. At these events JTI staff would assist the youth in TIP Model® activities including goal setting, futures planning, and strength finding. These activities were paired with things such as a Stingers baseball game, cookie decorating, and gardening. Staff turn-over brought two new Transition Facilitators and a new Program Coordinator to the JTI family. These incoming staff were able to attend 15 hours of TIP Model® training via zoom.

Transition Facilitators continue to collect data on contact forms for PACT for Families to use in the development of a sustainable program. They also perform SAMHSA provided assessments at entry into the JTI, after six months of participation, and at discharge from the program. This information is then entered into the SAMHSA/ SPARS database by the Program Director. Both types of information collected assist the Program Director and Evaluators in quarterly and annual reporting for the federal grant.

Program **FAMILY LIAISON**

By Janelle Schmoll



As a Family Liaison, my role is to come beside families and support them, help them find and connect with community resources and navigate through some of today's family stressors such as: Children's Mental Health issues, parenting difficulties, financial struggles, chemical use, stable housing, transportation and other individualized family needs. In 2022 one of the unfortunate struggles for families has been to find stable housing. The availability of Section 8, Income based housing and rental housing has been very limited with long waiting lists.



A Family Liaison is a no cost, voluntary program. The family liaison meets with parents to form a trusting relationship and listens to the needs, questions and concerns of the family. A Family Liaison helps set family goals and connects families to community resources to support their needs. Family Liaisons respect families where they are and empower them.

I enjoy watching the families I work with become empowered by improved communication with community resources and service providers and gain the confidence needed for self-advocacy.

Program

FAMILY LIAISON

JOURNEY TO INDEPENDENCE

By Debbie Gerrety



Journey to Independence, a program to help youth ages 16-21 transition to adulthood, has a two pronged approach. There is the Coach (transition facilitator) who works with the youth, discovering strengths and setting goals that the youth has identified. The parent component involves the family liaison, who works with the parents or other identified adult support of the youth.

As the family liaison, I work with the family to identify goals they may have for themselves, youth or family. I'm there to support the parent, help them to find resources and navigate systems such as children/adult mental health, school, social services and judicial. At times it can be overwhelming trying to parent a youth with mental health issues. To qualify for the Journey to Independence program the youth must have a SED (Severe Emotional Disturbance) statement in their Diagnostic Assessment or if over the age of 18 SMI (Severe Mental Illness). As a parent who has been down this road in raising my children

with mental health issues, I feel as though I can offer the parents hope and the knowledge that they are not alone in this parenting journey.

Coach Jackie and I worked with a family where the youth had some legal trouble and was on probation through the juvenile justice system. There were times when it was beneficial to have everyone around the table in a team meeting so we all got the same information to help the youth complete their probation and be discharged successfully.

PACT for Families has been utilizing Family Liaisons for over 20 years, giving parents hope, a voice at the table and empowering them to better parent their children with mental health issues. In addition to the Journey to Independence Family Liaison, PACT has two half-time "general" Family Liaisons who work with the families with children under 16. Under the Families Forever grant PACT also has two Liaisons working with adoption, foster and kinship families.

Program GUIA

By Jeanette Morales



In the 2022, GUIA with PACT for Families Collaborative has been dedicated to its mission by being the driver of the GUIA grant via the Minnesota Department of Human Services. The grant currently serves two counties, Kandiyohi and Renville, as there is a high percentage of Latino youth residing in those counties. PACT has impacted the health and well-being of Kandiyohi and Renville County youth, from ages 14 to 24. As an employee of PACT and coach, I continue to make meaningful connections in the Latino and Somali communities. As a GUIA Coach, my goal has been to help youth and their families live healthier lives through the use of resources they can tap into. I wholeheartedly serve my community through communication and understanding their requests and needs. Through effective communication we can further navigate resources and productively take further steps in meeting their goals as individuals and a family unit. I work alongside and promote healthy lifestyles such as accessing exercise, modeling positive behavior, teaching to let go of negative imbalances in life, manage healthy foods, being proactive with health care, and building strong family bonds through the access of support systems. The goal is to restore healthy minds, body and well-being altogether and one step at a time.



In 2022, I had the opportunity to work with over fifteen families. Each family operates within their own individual space making progress with the support of GUIA and PACT staff. Through GUIA, families effectively communicate and build trusting relationships as the course of their lives continue to change and we collectively collaborate.

GUIA services continue to be offered in 2023. Referrals can be made through school personnel, parents, Kandiyohi County Health and Human Services and other support services in the counties.

Program

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

By Sara Nelson

Working with teenagers is exhausting and rewarding. As a School Social Worker for the past 12 years, I have observed many changes with our youth and families. We can name many factors that have gone into creating these changes. The good news is we continue to see incredible resilience and awesomeness in our youth every day!

After listening to other educators at our school, I have noted some trends and observable changes:

1. Students tend to be more easily dysregulated. This may look like less ability to stick with something that appears difficult or challenging and getting frustrated or giving up the conflict management and the ability of getting along with others. This seemed particularly true after coming back to school after Distant learning.
2. Students want a sense of power and self determination which can look like “push back” and questioning of adult authority.

It continues to be important to establish healthy patterns of learning and school engagement.

Our staff has been trained in utilizing restorative practices which are used to build healthy relationships, create community in school, develop a positive school climate, prevent bullying and harm, and help repair harm.

As a society we continue to struggle with the use of technology and cell phones. We believe it may be reshaping brains and interactions. In school, we continue to struggle to find the right balance of technology time and use. Our students are at risk of “screen addiction” and limiting the use can be



very challenging. It can also be difficult for students to stay with one tab open vs multiple screens (gaming while listening). These are relevant and challenging concerns.

Another shift is a trend in our students’ awareness and willingness to talk about mental health needs, concerns and the impact of trauma on brain development. It will be important to continue to listen, learn, shape and support our students in these areas.

We have also seen some shifts around parenting. We have maybe heard terms like “Helicopter parenting” or “Snow plow parenting.” What does that look and sound like? It is when parents want to swoop in to cushion their kids from failures, struggles or life’s blows. The truth is, not only can



kids deal with failure, they need to experience it in order to develop the determination that will serve them throughout life, where success isn't guaranteed. We can model "I am here to support you and we can work through this together." Growth mindset also helps in this area. Growth mindset is a belief that our brains are malleable and we can always improve ourselves through effort, learning, and persistence.

I'm so thankful for the connection and collaboration I have with PACT for Families. Being able to refer and connect students and families with the relevant resources is an important part of my job. In this past year, referrals and connections have been made with the GUIA program, Wraparound support, Family Liaison and we have also utilized the Pact for Families mini grant. These referrals have been life changing for our families in helping them make positive steps forward in their lives!

Program

FAMILY GROUP

DECISION MAKING

By Char Erickson



From early 2014 until June of 2022, PACT for Families participated in the DHS Family Group Decision Making grant. Partnering with four of our five counties (McLeod County already contracted with another entity), PACT provided facilitation, overhead, quarterly reports, limited evaluation and some follow-up for FGDM. County-led safety meetings also fell under the umbrella of Family Group Decision Making.

Traditional Family Group Decision Making allows families to come together with their supports and providers who work with them to create an important plan for their family. Family Group Decision Making conferences are intended for families who are involved with Child Protection or Child Welfare. Often, decisions need to be made that are difficult and emotional in nature. Parents and family members need to be full participants in this process, and are given the opportunity to consult first with provider input, and then with the family group only. Then the family group creates the plan. As long as it falls under the bottom lines defined by county and legal requirements already in place, the plan is accepted by the group. Court systems have recognized the value of family-driven planning.

Safety meetings are led by county staff. While there are some similarities between Family Group

Decision Making and safety meetings, the process and outcomes may be different. Safety meetings come out of the Signs of Safety model, and have their own language, format and tools to use.

Before PACT's partnership in the grant came to an end in June, we were able to report 88 traditional conferences and safety meetings for 2022. Four of these were traditional conferences and the rest were safety meetings.

I am most grateful for the opportunity to facilitate Family Group Decision Making conferences during the tenure of this grant. Family Group Decision Making (including safety meetings) has provided a unique forum for families to make important decisions and plans. It has supported a healthy partnership between social service agencies and families. It has opened doors for more communication between family members. Parents have been empowered. Children and youth have been given a voice when appropriate. Despite challenges of technology/virtual meetings and complicated family histories, feedback from parents and family members has been overwhelmingly positive.

It has been a privilege to facilitate such a rewarding process!

SOME COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS

FROM PROVIDERS:

- “The worries/concerns were discussed in a respectful manner and everyone was able to participate”
- “This was an excellent turnout for a Family Group Decision Making meeting”
- “Both parents came together in the best interests of their children, and both did very well”
- “Participants were respectful and supportive to one another”
- “Family members have stepped up with genuine offers of help”

FROM FAMILY MEMBERS:

- “I think we came up with a really good plan and I know my supports will hold me accountable and be there for me”
- (To parent): “I’m so proud of you. I have never seen you put in this much work into something before”
- “People were able to talk openly and were listened to”
- “I felt it was an open/fair meeting and directed to find the best solution for the family and kids”
- “I liked all the positive things that were said about my changes”



Program WRAPAROUND

By Char Erickson

As I write what is my last Annual Report for PACT for Families, I am reflecting. For over twenty-two years I have had the opportunity to facilitate wraparound teams in our five counties and consider myself privileged to have done so. What a satisfying job! What a great privilege to pull together a group of people and help them blend into a team!

Looking back, there are some teams and experiences that just stand out:

The mom who walked into the first wraparound meeting feeling very intimidated, very unsure, and very skeptical. We watched her relax as time went on and could visibly see her start to trust the team. By the time we disbanded, she had already shared in front of a large group of people how wraparound helped her.

The mom who broke down at a wraparound orientation as she shared how her team supported her when she felt so beaten down by life.

The mom who felt so safe with her wraparound team that she shared something she had never before shared with anyone – and it led to a new trajectory of services for her and healing. (Wraparound is not therapy, of course, but it led to a new therapeutic intervention).

The mom who went with me to a Systems of Care conference and shared on stage in front of a whole crowd of people about Wraparound – and helped me find my words when I got nervous.

The mom who showed up at PACT for Families about five years after her wraparound team disbanded to let me know she and her daughter are still doing well.

The many Wraparound parents who have become involved in the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) and/or other committees and have contributed so much to our Collaborative.



There are more, but these memories all warm my heart and remind me how much we all need to feel supported and not alone in our journeys.

In 2022, I had the privilege to facilitate twenty-seven teams. Some were shorter-lived than others and some have been meeting for years. Because Wraparound is an individualized process, the length and duration of team meetings varies according to need and desire. Most teams met monthly; some met more frequently for a period of time and some met bi-monthly. The stories and experiences of these families are all different but there are similar themes: needing support, needing to feel everyone is on the same page, and needing to feel a sense of teamwork. Wraparound provides an opportunity to have a central place for networking, exchanging updates, resourcing, and offering support. There are times, for example, when the team needs a common crisis intervention – so everyone is using the same verbiage, the same strategies for the child when he/she is in crisis. There are times when a parent’s therapist has attended meetings so he/she can get the bigger picture and offer suggestions. There have been times when a therapist has educated the team about trauma so each can understand how to intervene. And there are times when the parent has taught the team about their child’s diagnosis or about something else that is important to them. In short, there is a great deal of effective collaboration happening in Wraparound!

A Wraparound Orientation was held on August 12, 2022, attended by 32 participants. Three parents shared about their positive Wraparound experiences – clearly the highlight of the morning!

Wraparound funds were available in 2022. Always tied to team goals and always a team decision, Wraparound funds help fill gaps and address barriers. Below is a summary of how funds were used in 2022. The greatest needs were related to housing, with children’s activities and equipment not too far behind. Transportation was a key issue in 2022 as well (such as paid bussing for kids who live too close to be on a bus route but might be too young to walk safely).

Housing and Household Needs	\$1,172.63
Children’s Activities	806.00
Transportation Needs	198.00
School Needs	50.00
Clothing Needs	50.00
<hr/> TOTAL Wraparound Funds 2022	<hr/> \$2,276.63

I am eternally grateful to PACT for Families for the wonderful opportunity to facilitate so many wraparound teams, to meet so many people, to learn from so many parents, to have a part in helping parents find support. I have appreciated this opportunity more than can be expressed. Thank you to each and every one of you who has taken time to participate in a wraparound team, click on a zoom link, make a referral, and/or support a family in this process.

GRANT APPRECIATION



COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT GRANT

Community spotlight grants from Lakeland Broadcasting - KWLM Radio and West Central Sanitation are awarded to organizations in West Central Minnesota. A different organization or program is selected for each month. In 2022, we again received a month-long radio advertising campaign to be aired throughout our listening area. We were able to share the history of PACT, where we serve and what we are all about. We were incredibly fortunate to have these daily spots in 2022. Each of the Chemical Health Coalitions with the Partnership for Success Grant program also received one month of funding for targeted messaging to parents and youth, equaling four months of ads to our service region! Thank you, Lakeland Broadcasting, for helping raise awareness about mental health and the risks associated with substance use.

UCARE/ ALIA

In 2021 the UCare Foundation provided generous funding that brought Alia, a Minnesota-based national nonprofit organization, to work with partners across our five-county service region. In 2022 mental health and social service partners came together to increase their awareness about mental health and well-being in the workplace and how our work environments and practices affect outcomes for the children, youth, and families we serve. Thank you, UCare Foundation and Alia, for providing funding and training to improve our service delivery systems and outcomes!





WILLMAR WOMEN'S FUND

In 2022, the Willmar Women's Fund from the Willmar Community Foundation again awarded PACT grant dollars to offer Trust Based Relational Intervention® training for additional members of our communities. We held two one-day General TBRI sessions in Willmar a total of 135 attendees. We were also pleased to offer Early Childhood sessions geared for birth to age five. We had one full day session and an additional evening session so our area daycare providers could attend. A total of 60 individuals were in attendance for these Early Childhood focused sessions. We are grateful for the Women's Fund and their commitment to support trauma informed practices in our communities.



MARDAG FOUNDATION

The Mardag Foundation supports Minnesota nonprofits to remove barriers and create opportunities for low income or traditionally marginalized children, youth, and families; older adults with barriers to living independently; and to build capacity of organizations supporting the arts and humanities. PACT was very grateful to receive funding for our mini grants within the Connecting Families program. We understand the barriers that families can face to meet the unique challenges in their daily lives. The funding we received from Mardag will allow us to continue to provide weighted blankets (68 blankets were made for children and families in 2022), therapeutic resources, and camps and learning materials to families that otherwise have no other options. In 2022, we were able to serve 26 families through our Connecting Families mini grants. We are grateful for the Foundation that recognizes the barriers rural families can face.



2022 PACT Discretionary Grants

Discretionary Grants are meant to provide funding for new, unique, or one-time programs or services to partner agencies. Applications for discretionary funds are accepted anytime during the year and can be requested through a brief application process available at the PACT office or through our website- www.pactforfamilies.org

In 2022 there was \$56,946 in discretionary funds disbursed for various projects listed below. These funds were provided through dollars generated by the Local Collaborative Time Study (LCTS) and allow for creativity and vision in meeting the needs of children and families. These funds will continue into 2023 to assist in meeting the needs in our communities.

LCTS Funds Disbursed in 2022

Kandiyohi Health & Human Services:

- Reflective Supervision (family services)
- Reflective Supervision (public health)
- TBRI Training DVD's (family services)
- Reflective Supervision

Meeker Co Partners in Prevention:

- MAPP Scavenger Hunt

New London Spicer Schools:

- Social Skills Group Room / Flexible Seating

Kandiyohi County Community Corrections:

- Client Community Engagement

Hutchinson Public Schools:

- Breathe for Change

Yellow Medicine Co. Family Services:

- Incredible Years

Eden Valley Watkins Public School:

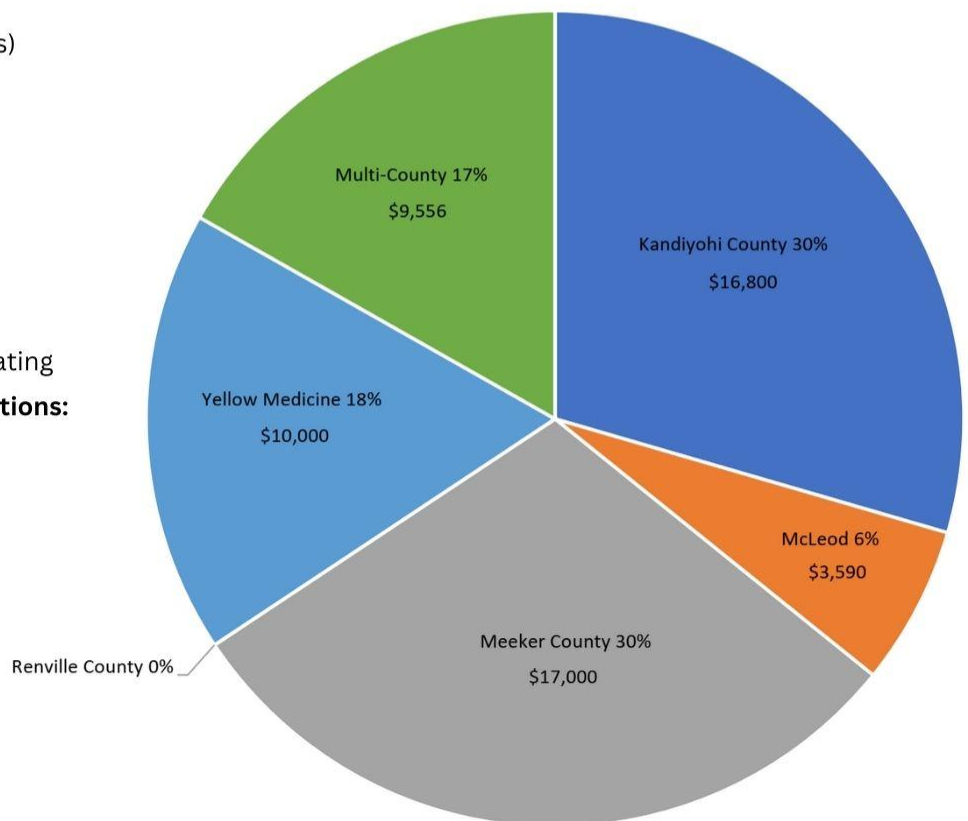
- Calming Resources

Yellow Medicine Co. Family Services:

- Bridging the Gap

LAC Committee:

- LAC Winter Wellness



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Office Based	Grant / Program Based	School Based
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THE END

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