







Following Our



Vision



PACT for Families Collaborative est. 1993 2020 Year in Review

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MISSION STATEMENT:

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



TABLE OF CONTENTS



Executive Director's Report	3
Grants	4-9
Evaluation	10-14
Family Group Decision Making	15-16 a
Family Liaison Transitions	16b-17
Guia-Somali Outreach	1 8a
Guía-Coach	18b-19
LCTS (Local Collaborative Time Study)	20
Connecting Families Program (CFP)	21
Reentry Ready	22
Food for Thought	23
PACT Staff List	24
PACT School Social Workers & Counselors	25
Trainings/Conferences	26
Wraparound	27-28
2020 Financial Information	29-33



Adapting and Continuing in 2020

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

It's been quite a year to reflect. It was the day after last year's annual meeting that the state shut down. Who would have known the journey of learning and adapting that would happen in 2020? We've had some difficult times for sure, but we have grown and learned beyond our wildest expectations. We applied for and received three federal grants and one state grant. We hired seven new staff for those grants. We implemented a new payroll/time management system. We started the conversion of a total cloud-based server for our organization and managed the challenges that the COVID pandemic created.

With managing day to day however, there were things that needed to take a back seat. To balance those challenges, we attempted to take care of the most important business as it arrived. Our attempt to fully utilize our webpage as a resource sharing page didn't come to fruition in the way we hoped, nor were the Newsletters the center of information and creativity. As things hopefully slow down in the coming months we will balance the needs and issues that arrive and continue to become an information sharing center for our communities. We will continue to listen, hear, and do our best to respond the best we can; and bring people together to help one another- the best we can.

Being the organization that fills gaps and responds collectively where other organizations can't was revealed in 2020. At the year end, CARES dollars were available for organizations to mitigate the difficulties surrounding pandemic. We received just over \$36,000 to purchase items to support families and schools in our region who are dealing with distance learning and telehealth needs. Of course, the window to apply for these funds was less than a week. The beauty of PACT is that we can connect with a large group of people very quickly to learn of immediate needs, write the grant and purchase items to help children and families in our community.

This year has not felt like any other. We have often felt out of touch or disconnected. We have had hardships thrown at us, but we have found new ways to work, relate to one another and respond to needs in our community. With Zoom meetings, collaborative attendance was up and not down. Our committees have shared and related to one another on different levels. We have learned to appreciate the people around us and the job they do. The staff at PACT have been more than nimble and adaptive to the needs put in front of us. We have supported one another as it seemed like there were daily changes to adjust to. We have learned to do things different and still get our jobs done. We will continue to put our best foot forward and be the organization that brings people together.

Thank you for all your support, encouragement, and teamwork in 2020!

Rochelle Peterson, Executive Director



GRANTS



Journey to Independence (JTI)

In September 2020, PACT for Families Collaborative began a four-year SAMHSA-CMHS federal grant to support a new program, **Journey to Independence (JTI)**. The JTI program will provide transition services for youth ages 16-21 who struggle with recognized SED/SMI or emerging mental health issues by utilizing the evidence-based Transition to Independence Planning *TIP Model®*. JTI programming will assist youth in developing greater self-sufficiency and independence while emphasizing the role of parents/guardians in guiding and supporting their youth through the transition to adulthood.

PACT was fortunate to hire three Transition "Coach" Facilitators and a Program Coordinator for the JTI team by the year end. During the month of December, Debbie Gerrity, PACT's long time Family Liaison, joined the team as the Lead Family Coordinator. The Coaches will be working with the young people with skill building and community resources while the Family Coordinator will support parents/guardians with enhancing their skills and their capacities, thus strengthening the growth of their youth. Using a wraparound approach, they will be provided one-to-one support sessions, education seminars and connection to community resources.

The team began competency-based training in December using the *TIP Model®* five domains of employment, education, housing, life skills and wellness. Continued training and consultation is scheduled in March and June of 2021.

JTI will include collaboration of key community members, mental health providers and policy makers by assembling a Sustainability Task Force to help not only build a system of care that is responsive to the needs of young people and their families but that can hopefully become sustainable and responsive after the federal funding is no longer available.

Cynthia Schumaier, JTI Grant Coordinator



Page 3 Page 4



GRANTS

Families Forever

Families Forever is a Department of Human Services 2-year grant that provides Adoptive, Kinship and Foster Families with a 1:1 Liaison, Support Groups and Family Activities. With this grant the ultimate goal is for family permanency, the fewer transitions and out of home placements a child can be in the better the outcome. Our goals include providing 1:1 support to families with home, school and community needs, adding monthly support group meetings as well as a planning a minimum of four family activities per year. Social Service agencies expressed the need for services for this population, therefore, we applied for this grant at the end of March. During the adjustments and changes do to Covid-19 we were awarded this grant in July, although we did not receive the formal contract until October. In October we hired two family liaisons to work under this grant.

The Liaison's first task was to complete some training as well as develop a referral form and brochure for the program. We also spent some time connecting with all five counties and their staff who work with adoptive, kinship and foster families, informing them of this new program and answering questions. Before the year ended we had our first referral and are looking forward to meeting and working with many other families in the coming year.

Sandy Hruby,

Social Services & Program Supervisor



Partnerships for Success



PFS: Transition from DFC

Youth living substance free is a vision of many of our communities. PACT wants to create a healthy, safe and drug free environment in which to raise our children and live with our families. Although the Drug -Free Communities funding ended in Dec 2020, PACT applied for and was awarded a new federal "Partnerships For Success" grant. This new grant will direct substance use efforts in Kandiyohi, Renville and Yellow Medicine Counties. Working in partnership with each county's public health department and the established coalitions, including the RAPAD Coalition and the Kandiyohi County Drug-Free Communities Coalition. These coalitions comprise volunteers representing the communities in which they serve. A new Prevention Specialist will be hired in Yellow Medicine to organize the momentum for prevention work there.

Over the last 14 years state and federal funding has afforded this dream to be the mission for Renville Alliance for the Prevention of Alcohol and Drugs (RAPAD Coalition). Renville County started out with a much higher than state average of 9th grade alcohol use rates. In 2004 MN- 27.8% Renville Co.-38.9%. Alcohol is the most frequently used substance and is associated with several adverse health and social consequences.

PFS: Evaluation



Grants are funny things. Organizations write with a plan in mind attempting to meet funder requirements while also merging those requirements into a program that fits an organization's clients and meeting community needs. Two primary questions must be asked of every applicant and their answers largely determine the funding outcome.

First, how do you plan to effectively measure the proposed plan's outcomes to ensure fidelity to the model and adherence to funder requirements? Second, funders almost always ask, "How will the efforts funded through this grant be sustained once grant funding has ended?" Both questions determine whether a grant application will receive funding.

The answer to the first question is supplied by choosing an evaluation methodology, applying it with fidelity, and then monitoring and evaluating processes and outcomes to ensure that by the sunset of funding, short-term and intermediate outcomes are met while long-term outcomes are on their way to being achieved. The focus on evaluating processes might not be a requirement of a grant funder but failing to monitor and reform processes over the life of a grant as lessons are learned and new data flows in would be a gross mismanagement of funds. Continuous Process Improvement ensures

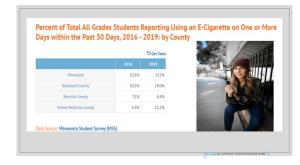
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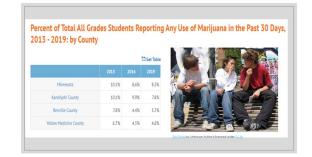
Partnerships for Success, continued

that progress builds, successes are celebrated, and tweaks are made to implementation that hones the program to better fit the real-world environment.

Thanks in part to the efforts of the RAPAD Coalition, the Kandiyohi County Drug-Free Coalition, and the DFC grant that Yellow Medicine County was awarded in the early 2010's, all three counties made significant strides towards lowering the use of alcohol, marijuana, and tobacco amongst this population. A bright achievement lay in the realization that all three counties were able to bring down once significant alcohol use rates. The specific rates of decrease amongst 9th graders, a key data indicator used by the State of Minnesota and prevention organizations, can be seen in the following charts:







Partnerships for Success, continued



PFS: Sustainability

PACT attempted to answer the second question by assigning it the importance of the second primary goal. As with all grants, there must be an effort to monitor return on investment. Sustaining prevention remains a problem that the entire field of prevention struggles to answer every day because it is often neglected despite having a fantastic returns on investment with some reports stating that for every dollar spend on prevention governments save \$10 to \$20 on the cost of addressing the symptoms of substance abuse. That is between 1000 and 2000 percent ROI. Even though there exists an insurmountable need for drug and alcohol treatment services, funding prevention continues to lag.

Therefore, a vast majority of prevention programs are grant funded usually by SAMHSA or another government or public health entity. This results in prevention programs that are temporarily sustained and seldomly funded after the grant ends. The community coalition or group of volunteers that were gathered to address the issue disband and the efforts made (even when effective) give way to new increases as the years pass by.

However, when considering the health and safety of our youth in this age group, we cannot ignore the overwhelming evidence that this group uses drugs and alcohol as a coping strategy. Thanks to lobbying efforts, industry greed, and at times a culture that is conducive to the "coming of age story" involved with these substances, we have created an environment that regardless of the efforts of law enforcement and the best intentions, has had limited impact on the ability of youth to access these substances.

PFS: Looking Over the Horizon

PFS, like any grant, was planned with ideals in mind that attempt to achieve decreases in substance use in the youth population aged 11-21 in the targeted counties. As the grant resources are brought to bear, environment inevitably shapes the range of possibilities of what can be achieved. For PACT, having two existing coalitions means that we start out ahead of where most PFS funded projects begin. Thankfully, we have a highly skilled and experienced Project Coordinator in Annie Tepfer who has been working in the Prevention field for more than 16 years. Since she worked alongside of RAPAD in Renville County, she also brings a great deal of familiarity with the community and mechanisms of change. Alongside Annie, we plan to have a Prevention Specialist working to build a coalition in Yellow Medicine County and to aid Annie in achieving our grant objectives. The Evaluation Department constitutes the third primary actor in this grant and our goal is to measure fidelity, monitor progress, ensure excellence in implementation, and to assist Annie and her staff in continuing the great work that has been done to lower substance use levels in the three counties.

PACT will lead the effort and act as fiscal host, assisting the grant coordinators with assessment, capacity-building, planning, implementation, and evaluation services. The primary aim of the grant is to create a permanent position shared between the counties that will continue to address substance

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abuse concerns long after the life of the grant. This builds upon work done for almost 15 years by the RAPAD Coalition starting with its Planning & Implementation grant in 2006 and 10 years by the Kandiyohi Drug Free Communities Coalition. The grant aims to reduce the use and abuse of alcohol, marijuana, and vaping products by people aged 11 to 21 over the course of 5 years. With the recent increase in vaping among school youth and the current Minnesota Tobacco-21 efforts, PACT and its county partners will follow suit with a number of environmental and direct intervention strategies like a Positive Community Norms campaign, a push for policy changes, distribution of educational materials, and additional community and school outreach. PACT for Families looks forward to the opportunity to continue work with all three counties to improve their drug prevention capacity.

Annie Tepfer, PFS Grant Coordinator

Joe Maffit, Evaluator



SAMHSA Mental Health Awareness Training Grant (MHAT)

This three-year federal grant was initially applied for back in the Spring of 2018. Unfortunately, we didn't receive funding that year but were notified in April of 2020 that we would be receiving this grant. Although it has been difficult to get up and running amidst COVID times, we are working to get information out to our school staff, students and families on Mental Health training and awareness. There are three main goals of the grant that we wish to accomplish by the end of three years.

<u>Goal I</u>: Increase the capacity of PACT member school personnel to gain competency to manage critical conversations in the areas of mental health and non-academic issues that impact school success and increase early referrals for mental health services. We will utilize a platform from Kognito, an evidence based virtual platform that lead real life conversations to improve social, emotional, and physical health.

<u>Goal II</u>: To increase peer-to-peer support in middle and high school through training of youth in a peer support model.

<u>Goal III</u>: To increase understanding by parents and school personnel of social/emotional development, mental health indicators, and available mental health resources.

Although we are having to adapt the delivery methods and the tasks are taking a bit longer than anticipated due to COVID, we are confident that this is rolling out successfully for 2021.



Rochelle Peterson, Executive Director

EVALUATION

2020 Evaluation Year In Review

Over the past year, PACT for Families has been especially busy, even though, we too, have been adjusting to a world with COVID-19. The Evaluation Department has had a direct hand in the teamwork and collaboration that have enabled PACT to come full circle and make the impact we have been discussing for the past few years.

Part of this effort included having a role in generating several new grants this year. Three federal, one state, and one foundation grant gave PACT new hope for carrying out its mission. The work done over the last few years to tighten the mission, emphasize the organization's core strengths and build new collaborative ties led us down this path. Often, evaluation takes a back seat to the more pressing matters of planning, capacity-building, and implementation. Thankfully, PACT's leadership understands the critical importance of evaluation and fully supports the department's endeavors ensuring it remains a cornerstone of every funding opportunity.

Key Trends Discovered in the 2019 SHARE Survey

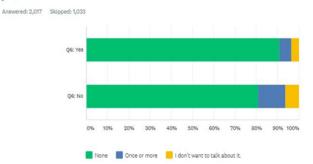
As the year began, PACT's Evaluator focused on processing the results of the 2019 SHARE Survey. The survey was administered in the Fall of 2019 following the Spring 2019 Minnesota Student Survey. Eleven school districts within the 5 member counties participated with 3,075 youth responding to the survey. Although this was covered in our 2020 Annual Review, it is worth restating the major findings again for review as we move into 2021. Anxiety and the pressure to do well in school showed increased prevalence in youth with 52% and 58% of youth responding that they feel this most or all the time. 27% felt that no one in their family loved them indicating a growing worry about family life. A correlation was shown between later bedtimes, device usage, and increased anxiety leading to a cautionary indication regarding unrestricted bed and device time. The teen suicide rate had also steadied, but suicidal ideation was trending upward, especially amongst youth that regularly go to bed later than 11pm.

Yet, the survey uncovered several positive trends in our communities. A strong protective factor found in the survey is whether a youth indicates that he or she has a trusted adult he or she feels they can talk to at school about their problems. A positive correlation was found between youth answering that they had a trusted adult at school they could talk to and how likely they were to think about and attempt suicide. Those without a trusted adult answered 19% of the time that they had thought of killing themselves versus 9% for those who stated they had a trusted adult. This represents a 53% decrease and therefore a powerful protective factor. (Note: This question was not posed to 5th graders).

(See chart on next page)

Page 9 continued on next page Page 10

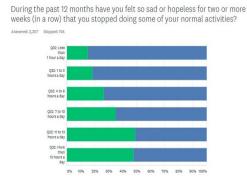
In the past 12 months, how many times did you actually attempt to kill vourself?



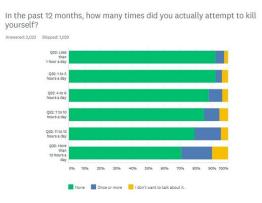
This trend continued when looking at how a youth answered whether their parents loved them and on the questions of selfreliance and independence. Youth who indicated that they had no trusted adult at school were 52% less likely to answer yes to having a sense of self-reliance and 19% less likely to indicate that they felt independent. There were several correlative factors throughout the survey, however, none was more

stunning than when youth use electronic devices more often throughout the day. A youth indicating that use of a device between 4 to 6 hours is 77% more likely to go to bed after 11pm 3 times or more per week than a youth using a device 1 to 3 hours a day.

Those youth who spent more time on electronic devices were also much more likely to use substances like tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana as they increased the use of their electronics. Less self-control also tracked along this trend as did the inability to self-soothe anger. Although anxiety did not correlate, selfharming behaviors, depression, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts strongly correlated.



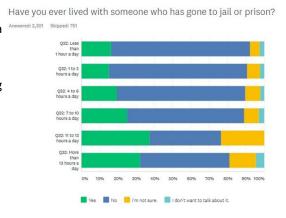
Yes No



Additionally, there were fewer youth indicating a sense of self-reliance and independence as their electronics use climbed perhaps pointing to unhealthy electronics use as a barrier to normal development. As youth screen time rose, a trend developed asserting that a youth felt less confident that either parent loved him or her. The trend continued as more youth screen time correlated with a lack of awareness of the home's rules and environment. Finally, a significant relationship exists between the presence of ACEs for a youth and how often they are on screens. All the above evidence suggests that electronics may be used more often as a coping mechanism for today's young people especially those experiencing trauma.

Evaluation continued

As an evaluator, I realize that the environmental situa- Have you ever lived with someone who has gone to jail or prison? tion with COVID-19 may have changed the current data landscape, but community partners throughout the counties have risen to meet that challenge. Many school districts have enacted Social-Emotional Learning programming that has helped to address the mental health issues of youth. The Community Health Assessments demonstrated a need to address mental health on several fronts. Some efforts were already underway such as Restorative Justice and Wraparound programs while newer initiatives focusing on ACEs, mental health, and substance abuse got underway in 2020,



adapting to the new virtual spaces as needed. Overall, it is comforting to know that given the challenges of 2020, we are still very much headed in a more positive, community health-minded direction.

Local Collaborative Time Studies (LCTS) Reserve & Discretionary Grants

Another bright spot this year centers on the projects funded by PACT's LCTS reserve and discretionary grants. Each year, a certain amount is set aside by the Board to fund innovative projects that contribute a great deal to the mental health and aid of children and families. Specifically, two projects this year exemplify the great ideas that can come from having funding like LCTS set aside for grants. First, Tina Mages from Kandiyohi County Family Services wrote an LCTS Reserve grant to support a training on Trust-Based Relational Intervention led by Meagan Galbari, a Therapeutic Independent Contractor, that proved significantly valuable to those who attended. Below are some quotations from two attendees:

"The TBRI training was fabulous. Meagan was easy to listen to and to understand when explaining training practices. I immediately began using the points that Meagan made. I remind parents to check on the simplest, but important, things like "is the child thirsty or hungry?". I use the "try again" statement with little kiddos. Both of those points are easy for parents to grasp when we first begin to address behaviors. Since I am an in-home family counselor, it has been important to me to think about what the parents may have gone through as a child growing up. What may have been their trauma and was it adressed. I hope to be able to attend an in-person training by Meagan in the future."

(—LeAnn Stauffenecker, In-home Counselor, United Community Action Partnership)



Page 11 continued on next page continued on next page Page 12

TBRI Mantra – from the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development



"My husband, Barry and I were able to attend the all-day Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) Training on February 13th in Willmar. Pre COVID so we actually meet in person! Meagan Galbari, MA, LPCC did a fantastic job of packing a ton of usable, hands on information about helping children to heal into the day. We were also fortunate to participate in the monthly deep dive training phone calls over the last several months. In highly recommend this training to anyone who works with children. It has helped us to understand behaviors that are coming out in our beautiful foster children and how we can help them feel safe, loved and whole again. If you were unable to attend, take time to study the book The Connected Child by Dr. Karyn Purvis and Dr. David Cross. "

(— Karen Lefever, Foster Parent)

With the onset of 2020 and COVID-19, PACT worked with several of its 2018 and 2019 grantees to ensure that they could still use the funding as intended. One of our grantee districts, Renville County West, applied for funding to help in bringing high quality Social Emotional Learning events to the district's 5th and 7th grade students. Although they applied in 2019 for the funding, they were unable to use that funding prior to the Spring 2020 shutdowns. PACT worked with the district to ensure that RCW would be able to use the funding when things improve to a more normalized state. The uncertainty of the virus as the numbers ebbed and flowed made long-term planning difficult at best. The best lesson that we have learned in 2020 is to design systems with flexibility and empathy in mind.

Department Expansion

After completing the last grant in early April, we waited to receive word on the awards. During that time, the evaluator worked to improve internal processes and assisted colleagues with data needs. Survey data was also massaged for findings. As it happened, PACT received every award for which we applied, and this led the organization to realize that there would be a need for growing the department to efficiently serve all the new grant needs. This culminated in the search for an evaluation assistant. Although at time of writing, this position has been filled, it did take some time to find the right person with the qualifications and talent to jump straight into the role.

Evaluation continued

Towards the Future

Although 2020 marked a significant shift in how business is done at PACT and all over the world, the new communication and productivity technologies that have been adopted offer our organization the chance to grow and prosper whether virtually or in person. We have discovered that collaboration can work in the virtual dimension and we are using this to our advantage to build relationships and conduct research on how best to meet our grant outcomes. Therefore, 2021 has thus far made me a stubbornly hopeful optimist that we will continue to function; that our community will thrive; and that together we can all make a difference when we remember that evaluation should be incorporated at all stages of a new grant, program or organization.

Joe Maffit, Evaluator



FAMILY GROUP DECISION MAKING



Family Group Decision Making Annual Report 2020

"Making Decisions Virtually

PACT for Families has been the lead agency for overhead of Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) since 2014, serving four of our five counties (McLeod County contracts with another outside agency for FGDM). PACT also contracts with one outside provider, Cindy Koll-Tengwall, to facilitate FGDM conferences. In addition to this, Kandiyohi County has utilized an internal worker under this grant to facilitate safety meetings, which constitutes the bulk of the funding.

The basic premise of FGDM is that families are in the best position to make plans for their children because they know their families the best. The family group (family, friends, support people) creates the plan within the parameters of county and court requirements. Despite a pandemic prohibiting traditional in-person conferences, family groups were still able to come together to make decisions and plans, thanks to technology. The year 2020 was—among many other things—the year of "making decisions virtually."

When the first statewide COVID restrictions were brought forth in March, FGDM facilitators were initially given direction by Minnesota Department of Human Services to put FGDM on hold. There was concern that virtual meetings could not maintain the values and integrity of the process. When it became apparent that COVID restrictions would be here for a *long time*, however, we were encouraged to use on-line formats with certain protocols in place.

In 2020, there were eleven FGDM conferences facilitated by myself and Cindy Koll-Tengwall. All but one was in Renville County. Most of these eleven conferences were done via Zoom, but at least one was held outside. One meeting was done in hybrid fashion (some socially distanced in a large meeting room, some zooming in, one participating by phone). While it was challenging to prepare and get this hybrid meeting set up, it ended up working very well!

energize hope, guide change and foster healing

Continued on next page

Family Group Decision Making, Continued

So what did family members, support people and other participants say about FGDM in 2020? Below are some comments by participants in traditional FGDM conferences and safety meetings:

- "This was my first FGDM conference I enjoyed it, it was thorough and very productive!"
- "We should have a meeting like this every month so everyone stays on track and is held accountable."
- "I am glad we had this meeting so everyone is on the same page. We now all know what (parent) can and cannot do so he can get his child back."
- "Zoom technology worked well"
- "I liked that you guys listened to us because we know these kids best."
- "Parents and providers learned they have options they were not previously aware of."
- "There was great family support and some even asked for additional training/guidance for meeting (the child's) needs."

This sampling of comments shows us that, by and large, "virtual decision making" worked in 2020! Perhaps one participating family member said it best: "Thank you for letting us make the plan with these parents. We got this." While we look forward to meeting in-person again, it is clear that virtual FGDM served families well in 2020!

Char Erickson-FGDM Facilitator



FAMILY LIAISON TRANSITIONS

As Debbie Gerrety moved into her new role as Family

Liaison for the Journey to Independence Grant, I was hired as the Family Liaison in September, serving families that do not fall under one of our other grant programs. My job as a Family Liaison has been wonderful. I have enjoyed getting to know the families that I work with and creating a relationship. I felt nervous meeting my first family. However, my nerves were put at ease when I realized how easy it was to relate to the things that were going on in their family. I think it helps them feel more comfortable when they have someone helping them who also has children with special needs. Being able to use my life experiences to guide families along their path has been very rewarding.

Katie Ziehl, Family Liaison



The year 2020 brought about many changes for our Agency as well the families we work with. The year started off in our typical Minnesota fashion of cold, snow and ice and as we were heading into the brighter days of Spring, our State

FAMILY LIAISON TRANSITIONS

and our Nation came to a grinding halt with shutdowns as COVID-19 made it's way to our shores.

Working from home became the new norm for many of us and families faced difficulties of job losses, longer hours of work if deemed an essential worker, the inability to visit loved ones and distance learning for their students. As a Family Liaison, I was able to stay in touch with the families I worked with via weekly

phone calls. For some of the families, the calls were a life line as they had limited contact with anyone outside of their immediate household and for others they were content with just touching base. In May I was able to resume in person visits and the majority of those were held in an outdoor setting to avoid "masking up" as the many of those families felt more comfortable having our home visit in an outdoor setting.

Summer brought some exciting news to our Agency as we found out that PACT was awarded two grants, The Families Forever Grant and the Journey to Independence -JTI. The Families Forever Grant added 2 family liaison guide and support families that are adopting, have adopted, doing foster care or kinship care.



JTI is a program that is a targeted group of youth 16-21 that have a SED (severe emotional disturbance) SMI (serious mental illness) or and emerging mental illness. JTI is comprised of a grant Coordinator, 3 Transition Coaches/Facilitators and a Lead Family Coordinator/Family Liaison to work with youth and their families in several domains to help the youth transition to adulthood while they gain the skills to be successful.

Autumn brought in new staff as PACT was busy hiring to fill those grant positions. One was another Family Liaison, Katie Ziehl, to work with families who have Children and youth birth to 15 as I transitioned into my new role as the Lead Family Coordinator/Family Liaison for JTI. Jessica Erickson and Sheila Peterson were hired as the Families Forever Family Liaisons, Cynthia Schumaier as the Grant Coordinator For JTI and the three Transition Coaches are Dione Wangen, Jackie Thorson and Hailey Condon.

Winter of 2020 continued much as it had been with limited access for staff in the office and we continued to work remotely to get these two new grants up and running. I continued to work with my current families while waiting for JTI to be up and running and accepting Youth to the program.

When asked who I work for my answer is "PACT for Families Collaborative. We are a 5-county Children's Mental Health Collaborative, serving the counties of Kandiyohi, Meeker, McLeod, Renville and Yellow Medicine. As a Family Liaison I work with families whose children have mental health issues. I'm there to support the family, help them find resources and navigate systems such as Children's Mental Health Services, Schools, Social Services and the Judicial System."

Debbie Gerrety, Family Liaison/Lead Family Coordinator

CEMIG GRANT—SOMALI OUTREACH



It was an interesting year, with some of our Somali community connections that moved on to other positions or moved out of the area. We struggled with reaching the community, but Hamdi was bound and determined.

She said written materials, brochures, etc. were not a good communication tool, that many of the Somali families rely on social media videos for information and much prefer in person meetings to build trusting relationships. So Hamdi has written short scenarios in play form that we hope to produce either live and/or video recorded that can be used with all audiences.

We also made new connections and office space was donated in the Midtown Plaza by Abdirizak "Zack" Mahboub for Hamdi to have a central location where people could meet with her face to face. Many hours were spent educating others on housing and utility issues, food assistance, voting instructions, medical issues, and mental health and substance abuse issues. Hamdi was able to share a variety of resources as well as direct persons to additional resources when needed. Several people/families were recommended to seek to services at Woodlands.

Sandy Hruby

Social Services & Program Supervisor

GUIA-COACH

This past year has been a deeply emotional experience for Latino families in the US and their respective families back

home. The Washington Post asked readers to describe 2020 in one word or phrase. Here's what they said. "Exhausting, Lost, Chaotic, Surreal, Relentless" (Eliza Goren, 2020). As I kept reading, I decided to continue with my approach. I asked some families to describe 2020 in one word and here is what they said:

- •Cambio=Change •caótico =chaotic •Unidad=Unity •Esperanza=Hope •Unique •Revealing •Past
- •Unpredictable •Disappointing •Transforming •Dificil=difficult

What are you hopeful for in 2021?

"Muchas bendiciones y abundancia en las vidas de cada persona" "Many blessings and abundance in the lives of each person"

"de mi parte tener un mejor futuro-estabilidad, por parte de mi esposa una mejor vida" from me have a better future-stability, from my wife a better life.

"Esperanzas para este año que sea un año próspero en todo" Hopes for this year to be a prosperous year in all.

"Una vida normal" A normal life.

""I hope that we are able to reach a place where we are able to reflect on the revolutionary times of the very recent 2020 and moving forward towards patience and understanding of desire to understand others"

Families have experienced tragedy, struggles, and worry because they were unable to see family members even before the pandemic. The magnitude of loss felt by others as people were forced to quarantine. The dread of not being able to visit family members as they got sick or passed away. That shock has been felt by Latino families since coming to this country. The pandemic inflamed this already horrible burden and inflicted a newer, deeper level of pain on the Latino community. I have been fortunate to hear the happy stories, sad ones, and tragedies from the losses of homes and unable to locate family members because of natural disasters in Central America. In the aftermath of the flooding and mudslides, I was introduced to a family here in Willmar. This couple, who back in Honduras, were educated professors. One is a math professor and his wife a computer science professor. They talked about losing their home to the mudslides and the loss of people that lived by the rivers that lost everything. They had to flee their home which was close to a river before the hurricanes reached them. They quickly tried to sell any items they could, to gather money and come to the United States. They were now sitting at the mercy of no home, no jobs, and no other choice. Feeling lost throughout this entire ordeal, the youth of all communities but especially those of Latino heritage felt shocked by their relocations.

The Cultural and Ethnic Minority Integration Grant through the MN Department of Human Services has allowed me a small window into the lives of our fellow Latino community members. With the support of other grantees, we collaborate along with other community partners to serve Latino and Somali youth and young adults and their parents who live in our service area. In my job as the GUIA coordinator, I have been able to work directly with these families. I have helped them connect to resources such as United Community Action Partnership (UCAP) to help them apply for assistance with utilities specifically with non-English speakers. I have been able to get them food and deliver food to them from our local food shelter and Harvest Community food pantry. Families can't always call the local food shelf who is mostly staffed with English speakers making it difficult to communicate their needs, but this is where I help. I have also been able to connect with our local Family Promise program that provides homelessness prevention. I have been able to speak on behalf of the families with our local landlords. With the loss of jobs through the pandemic, I have been fortunate to help families apply for jobs and be part of the joy when they are hired. I have also been able to help families start their businesses because that was the only option. I have helped families complete the arduous task of applying for unemployment benefits and follow-up with them to see things come through or make any adjustments needed. I have also been able to help youth with their studies and explain homework assignments they could not understand when they had to take on the difficult task of doing online learning. Because of what I have seen, my scope has changed a little. We were in survivor mode. We hope 2021 brings better times.

Jeanette Morales, GUIA Coach

"Victorioso cumplir metas ahorrar, esperanzador"



LCTS—Local Collaborative Time Study 2020 Report and Updates



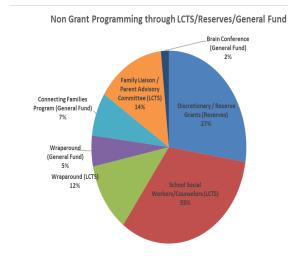
In 2020, our LCTS participants and partner contacts continued to be the keys to our success with this federal program that earns our collaborative funds to enhance and expand services for children and families in our county.

From our participants, who choose the best code that reflects their activity; to the county IV-E specialists, who work diligently on getting the best list of kids to be used for certain codes out to participants; to the building contacts that facilitate getting these lists to the participants; we are grateful for the continued support and attention of all those involved in this process! After 20+ years this funding continues to be of great value, as its flexibility helps provide many services and supports to kids and families in our five-county area.

We were pleased to see a couple of wonderful enhancements to the LCTS process in the early part of 2020. LCTS Coordinators are now able to default their names as "Validator" in the profile of each of the time study participants' profiles in the State of Minnesota system. This makes the process less complicated for the participants as they no longer have to select someone to validate a small percentage of their "random moments". This also streamlines things as we know there are no errors in spelling of names or email addresses and all moments that come to the Validators will be successfully validated.

Another change in 2020 was the creation of additional "time shifts" generated by the system for random moments—there are now a total of 12 shifts to choose from. Most of our participants were on the default time shift of 8:00 am to 4:30 pm which did not necessarily correspond to some of our participants actual working hours. We have been able to make changes to each individual's profile to choose time shifts that more closely fit their schedules which in turn reduces the number of "missed" random moments.

We are looking forward to another great year with our LCTS participants and partners in 2021. Thank you all for the work you do to make the time study a success!





CONNECTING FAMILIES PROGRAM (CFP)

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.

Connecting Families programs include:

Parent support networking groups: In 2020 we offered 2 groups that met monthly by Zoom Meetings for Kandiyohi County. These meetings were facilitated by Becky Sook the first Tuesday of the month from 11:45-1:00 and a second group for Meeker County met facilitated by Becky the 4th Monday of the month from 6:30-8:00 pm. Look for an expansion to our other 3 counties in the near future. A Renville County group will be starting very soon. Topics of discussion vary each month. Some of the past topics that parents have requested include Social Stories & Visuals to help those with autism, anxiety & sensory processing disorder, Medical Cannabis, Selective Mutism, Guardianship, daily struggles of school, home and community during this pandemic, and sharing resources available through our PACT programs. Parents do not need to feel alone in their journey. We are here for you! Please reach out to me by email at Becky.sook@pactforfamilies.org. If you are a Facebook user, please search for our page to become a member - 'Connecting Families Support' & 'Connecting Families Meeker'.

Weighted blanket program: from March through December 2020 we placed nearly 40 weighted blankets into the hands of adults and children in need through a referral process. Thank you to our quilters for their donations and time: Quilters Along the Yellowstone Trail, Covenant Women of New London Covenant, Bethel Church Quilters, Connie Peters – Volunteer Quilter, and Carol Westberg and Sue Sunde – Volunteer Quilters.

Special family events: During December 2020, we held Virtual Family Bingo for the holidays two times. Children and parents had a great time decorating their own Bingo cards, receiving prizes and a special guest appeared to sing some Christmas carols. We had a total of 21 families participate, with most families having multiple players.



Mini grants for equipment, camps, etc.: Connecting Families awarded several mini grants in 2020 for summer camp experiences, sensory equipment, reading therapy, and safety equipment for the home.

Over the 2020 year we have seen and heard what a great program this is for our families - here's to many more great moments!

Becky Sook, Kandi/Meeker Co Parent/Peer Group Facilitator

REENTRY READY

2020 brings an end to Reentry Ready Grant

December 2020 brought an end to the Reentry grant program funded through the Minnesota Department of Public Safety. The grant initially began in March of 2017. Due to COVID pandemic and slower referrals mid-year 2020, we received an extension for one more quarter, ending the grant December 31st.

After coordinating the program for about two and half years, we see that system barriers and grant funding are two of the largest programmatic barriers. Creating a new program as a resource within already existing systems takes time. It takes time for system stakeholders to learn about the program and start to make referrals. By the time this starts happening, the grant funding may be near complete. Finding people willing to work in short term grants can also present challenges. Short-term employment isn't always what people are looking for. You often get turno-



ver in a position such as this which makes it difficult when the relationship of staff and client is imperative.

We also learned that adding a resource within the existing system can be difficult. If the resource is seen as another "program" versus a support, it can be difficult for participant and the system. There are so many requirements already that adding something else can be a challenge. Until effective working relationships are established, this can be difficult for all groups to work together efficiently.

The grant was originally utilized for youthful participants returning to community but as we went further along, we realized that offering the reentry services to slightly older participants with children was very impactful. Many people who have been involved in the system and have children in their late 20's, often need extra support to gain employment and secure housing to reconnect with their children.

In the time we had this grant, we learned many things. The largest barriers for successful reentry on our communities is housing, employment, and transportation. I don't think this is anything new, but we were able to see this on a wider scale. Many of the participants in the program were unclear as to best go about these challenges and having someone walk beside them and teach through modeling can be very effective. Although we didn't reapply for the reentry grant, much of what we learned is relevant to our Federal SAMHSA grant, Journey to Independence grant we began in late 2020.



Rochelle Peterson, Executive Director

Food for Thought......

In every crisis, doubt or confusion, take the higher path - the path of compassion, courage, understanding and love. - Amit Ray



"On the other side of a storm is the strength that comes from having navigated through it. Raise your sail and begin." — Gregory S. Williams





PACT Staff List at a Glance

PACT FOR FAMILIES COLLABORATIVE TEAM MEMBERS

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Supervisor	PACT Cell: (320) 444-8769	Brian Skogen, MSW, LGSW Social Worker
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sandy.hruby@pactforfamilies.org	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	Canby: (507) 223-2002 / Fax: (507) 223-2012
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Jolene Lambert, Finance Coord.	PACT Office: (320) 231-7030 ext. 2963	
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jolene.lambert@pactforfamilies.org	PACT Cell: (320) 444-8827	Worker; NL/S School
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joe.maffit@pactforfamilies.org	PACT Cell: (320) 444-0326	a ager (ayar) at 2 mar as
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Meghna Subba, Evaluation Assistant	Jackie Thorson, JTI Transition Facilitator	Jr/Sr School
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	Foster/Adoptive Family. Liaison	High School: (320) 587-2151 ext. 5135 sara.nelson@isd423.org
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	PACT Cell: (320) 444.5673	uninton(a)sa403.0rg
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PACT Cell: (320) 444-8783		Schools; K—12th Grades
D 1 0 1 7 10 1 0 D 0		(320) 523-1031 ext. 3104 (hs); ext. 4115 (elem)
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Facilitator; Connecting Families Program		
becky.sook@pactforfamilies.org		Cari Bulthuis, LSSW; Social Worker, Willmar
Children P. W. Children		Schools-Lakeland Elementary
Cindy Coltrain, Renville/YM Co. Parent/Peer		(320) 214-6692
Group Facilitator; Connecting Families Program		bulthuisc@willmar.k12.mn.us
cindy.coltrain@pactforfamilies.org		

Page 23 Page 24

PACT SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS & COUNSELORS



Thoughts and observances by some of our School Staff.....

Three simple words shared by Tammy Minton.....*Grace * Patience * Flexibility *

Lori Jensen Hagert - I would like to say that kids are resilient - adults struggled more during COVID. Kids took things in stride and remain flexible and understanding of changes. Their whole days have changed and they go about it in stride. I feel our Random Acts of Kindness has risen and I am proud of our kids and the direction they are heading.

National School Counselors Week

This week we celebrated National School Counselors Week. At BLHS Elementary we are very thankful to have Mrs. Jensen Hagert as part of our team. Her passion for students and our school is evident every day. The students had no problem sharing how she touches each and every one of their lives. As one student said "It is nice to have someone who likes us just the way we are!





Insights from Sara Nelson

This pandemic has brought so many life lessons and oh so many frustrations and struggles. I'm thankful that early on in the pandemic I was encouraged to choose a "focus word" at school. That word for me has been **resilience**. How do we bounce back from the tough stuff and learn from our experiences to be even better and stronger? How do we?.....How do we? Well, I believe we do this in part by acknowledging our feelings, being flexible in adapting to changes, acknowledging the importance of self care and continuing to nurture healthy relationships, even if that has to look very different. In the schools, I believe we have seen many students show incredible resilience from being persistent with Distant learning to being creative in staying connected. We also know many students and families have struggled for many reasons. We have realized the MANY roles school plays in the lives of students, families and in our communities. I hope we can move forward having learned that positive relationships and connections are critical. It is ok to slow down sometimes. It might be more about HOW we learn than even WHAT we are learning. I'm hopeful we can continue to show resilience in the days ahead!



TRAININGS / CONFERENCES / WORKSHOPS



Unfortunately, we were unable to hold our Brain Conference in 2020 as COVID arrived on the scene shortly before our planned date in April. We are excited to let you know that our keynote speaker scheduled for last year, Julie Athman Ernst, Ph.d will be returning this year for our Virtual Brain Conference presenting "Finding Balance—Connecting Your Brain With Nature". More info to come!

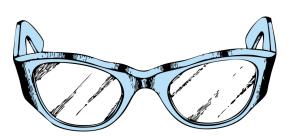
See more details on our website:

https://www.pactforfamilies.org/current-news.php?ci=32



Youth Leadership Conference 2020

Due to COVID, we didn't have our conference in the fall but are planning for an online Youth Leadership Conference in the Spring of 2021.





Page 25 Page 26

Wraparound Annual Report 2020

Virtual Wraparound



COVID-19 has given us, for better or for worse, new common lingo and slogans. *Social distancing. Zoom fatigue. Super spreader. The new normal. Better together.* We have heard these phrases so often that they have become trite. But as we have adjusted to virtual meetings, phone meetings, and a whole different way of doing things, we have found this to be true: *We are better together on screen than not being together at all.*

To my great surprise, virtual wraparound worked better than I ever expected, technology glitches and all. Of course there are limitations to seeing people only in their little squares, but overall, wraparound meetings helped families feel connected and supported. People were patient and understanding and tried to make it work. Thanks to everyone who clicked onto a Zoom link to help support a family!

I had the privilege of facilitating nineteen wraparound teams in 2020. Some were shorter term, some have been meeting for months or even years, and a couple teams disbanded by parent choice when distance learning became a long-term reality. Most of these meetings (from March on) were held via Zoom, although a few meetings were held outdoors in families' back yards or driveways.

A wraparound orientation was planned for May 2020 but was postponed due to the pandemic. It has now been rescheduled for April 2021, with hopes that some can participate in person while others join virtually.

Wraparound funds continue to be available when there is team agreement and supervisory approval (see graph elsewhere in this report for a breakdown of funds). In 2020 funds were expended for activities for kids (before COVID hit), clothing, some sensory equipment, and basic needs related to the difficult times families have been experiencing. It is good to reflect on what we have learned during this *unprecedented time* (another COVID term). Some thoughts from a Wraparound perspective:

- Although it takes more effort, the values of wraparound CAN be carried out through the screen.
- One parent shared that wraparound is what has kept her feeling connected during a time of isolation. This was good to hear, and it also propelled the team to help her make *other* connections for added support!
- Focusing on strengths and positives has been greatly needed during these times. Recognizing success and progress great or small is more important now than ever.
- We at PACT continue to reach out to the parents who needed a break from Zoom, still holding out our programs and our support to them.
- Virtual meetings have revealed amazing persistence and resilience. Family and team members who found Zoom technology to be a stretch also found a way to make it work...walking to a participating family member's house, listening patiently to steps to installing and utilizing the app, borrowing a device, choosing not to give up.



Wraparound continued

Technology has its glitches and challenges, to be sure. But virtual wraparound has made it possible for teams to stay connected during these tough times and, according to feedback, parents are very grateful for the support!

Char Erickson, Wraparound Coordinator

WRAPAROUND VALUES

STRENGTH-BASED INFORMAL SUPPORTS

TEAM-BASED COMMUNITY-BASED

OUTCOME-BASED CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE

PERSISTENT COLLABORATIVE

INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY VOICE AND CHOICE

Wraparound Expenditures in 2020

Individual Child/Youth Needs (such as sensory equipment)	\$535.00
Basic Family Needs during COVID (phone, transportation)	372.00
Activities for Kids (not as much as usual due to COVID)	280.00
Meeting Expenses	30.00
Total Funds (rounded to nearest dollar)	\$1,217.00



2020 Discretionary Grants





Discretionary grants are meant to provide funding for new, unique or one-time programs or services to partner agencies. Members are asked to not request Discretionary Funds when other monies are available to fund a project or when the activity is something the agency would normally be expected to do. 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 can be found at www.pactforfamilies.org.

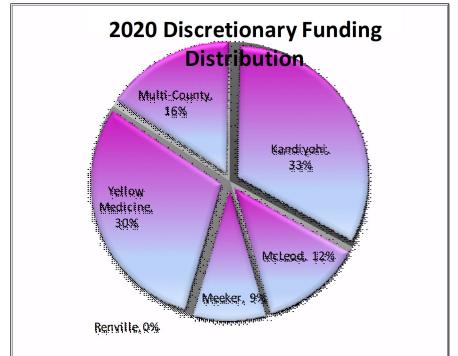
In 2020 there was \$10,050 in Discretionary funds disbursed for various projects such as Reflective Consultation Training through Countryside Public Health, Incredible Years classes at ACGC Schools, Kids in the Kitchen at MACCRAY Schools, event support for Drug Free Communities at the Willmar Area Learning Center and Baby's First Year Reading Promotion through Meeker County Public Health just to name a few. 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 2021 to assist in meeting the needs in our communities.

Thank you!

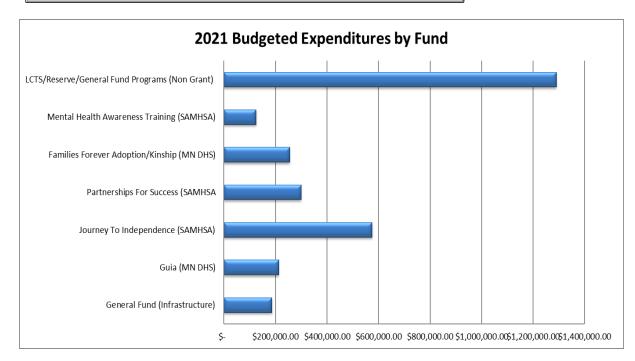
To all of our **L**ocal **C**ollaborative **T**ime **S**tudy (LCTS) participants! Without your hard work, none of these projects would be possible.



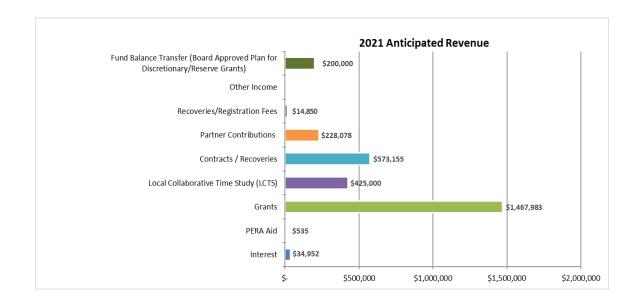








Page 29 Page 30



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 a number of funding sources, including state and federal grants, foundations, local dollars, and membership contributions. These dollars are put into an Integrated Fund and used to address the goals and programs that have been established by the Collaborative. The 27-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.

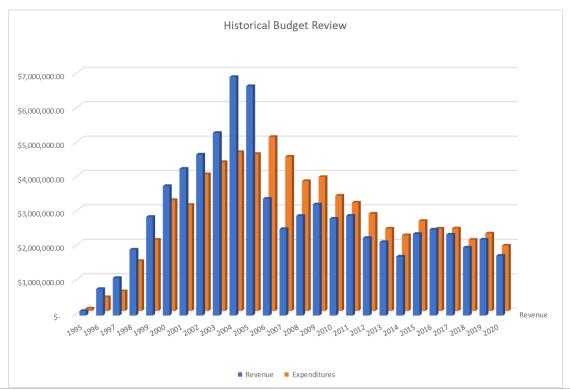
Each year PACT for Families undergoes an audit by the Minnesota Office of the State Auditor to assure that solid accounting principles are followed and dollars are distributed correctly. The PACT for Families budget is developed by the Executive Board and approved by the Chief Elected Officials Board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

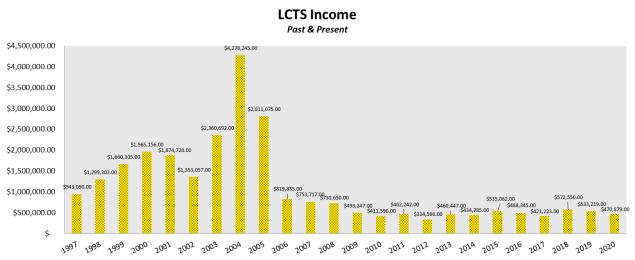
Tolene Lambert, Finance & Benefits





2021 PROPOSED PACT BUDGET			
Estimated Revenue			
Interest	\$	34,952	
PERA Aid	\$	535	
Grants	\$	1,467,983	
Local Collaborative Time Study (LCTS)	\$	425,000	
Contracts / Recoveries	\$	573,155	
Partner Contributions	\$	228,078	
Recoveries/Registration Fees	\$	14,850	
Other Income	\$	-	
Fund Balance Transfer (Board Approved Plan for			
Discretionary/Reserve Grants)	\$	200,000	
TOTAL REVENUE	s	2,944,553	
Estimated Expenditur	es		
Employment Salaries	\$	1,636,055	
Unemployment	\$	44,992	
FICA	\$	125,158	
PERA	\$	122,704	
Group Health Benefits (BCBS w/VEBA & Dental)	\$	323,540	
Other Employee Benefits (Life/AD&D/LTD/Flex)	\$	32,721	
total salaries/payroll liabilities	5	2,285,170	
Advertising - Employment	\$	_	
Advertising - Marketing	\$	3,333	
Auditing	\$	30,000	
Child Care (Parent Participation)	\$	1,800	
Contracts	\$	185,658	
Contract - Maintenance Agreement	\$	2,600	
Contract - Rent/Lease	\$	35,550	
Discretionary/Reserve Grants	\$	200,000	
Equipment	\$	7,300	
Flexible Funds (grant specific)	\$	14,841	
Mileage - Employee	\$	56,548	
Mileage - Contract/Consultant	\$	400	
Mileage - Other	\$	6,500	
Meeting Expense -Committee	\$	6,013	
Meeting Expense - Youth/Family Support	\$	17,700	
Membership Dues	\$	500	
Office Supplies	\$	3,693	
Phone Service	\$	2,160	
Phone - Cell	\$		
	•	8,040	
Postage	\$	2,080	
Program Supplies	\$	37,551	
Subscriptions / Dues	\$	1,450	
Registration Fee's	\$	1,100	
Resources - Office (books, videos, curriculum)	\$	200	
Resources - Program (books, videos, curriculum)	\$	800	
Stipend (1099)	\$	6,200	
Training Expense	\$	4,000	
Wraparound (team approved)	\$	6,000	
Federal Conference Exps	\$	2,679	
Gift Certificates (appreciation/stipend)	\$	200	
Insurance - MCIT	\$	11,487	
Misc Bank Expense (investment fees)	\$	3,000	
total administrative expenses	s	659,383	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	S	2,944,553	





In 1997, LCTS or Local Collaborative Time Study began in Minnesota Collaboratives as a means of drawing down federal reimbursements for certain activities already being performed by staff in public health, corrections and public school districts. The results of this federal reimbursement far exceeded everyone's expectations by bringing in over \$40 million per year in new federal funding to the State of Minnesota. However, due to federal rule changes that started taking effect in 2005, a steady decline in these federal reimburse-

PACT FOR FAMILIES COLLABORATIVE EST. 1993

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Following Our Vision....



If you would like more information regarding activities and programs at PACT for Families Collaborative, or have questions about the content of this publication, please contact us:

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Page 34