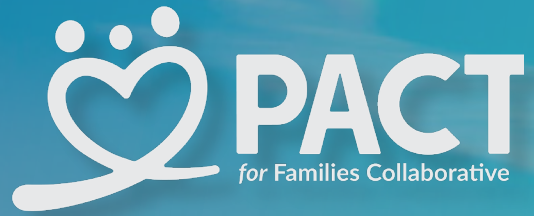


# 2023

ANNUAL MEETING



# YEAR IN REVIEW

*30 years of Collaboration*



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

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# MEET THE TEAM



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# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Dear *Collaborative Members*,

As we pause to consider the path we have traveled in the past year, we can see that our collaborative efforts are growing, as evidenced by our increased attendance at full collaborative meetings and the heightened contributions to conversations during collaborative meetings each month. In fact, our success has led to the pleasant challenge of outgrowing some of our previous meeting spaces! This surge in participation speaks volumes about the dedication and passion of our members and reaffirms the importance of our collaborative efforts.

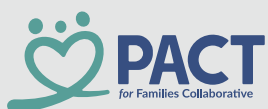
Our Annual Meeting in 2023 set a powerful tone, featuring the insightful wisdom of Jodi Pharr, author of “The Urgency of Awareness”. Her words resonated deeply, reminding us of the importance of our shared commitment to mental health advocacy. At the Brain Conference in April, we delved into the intricate dynamics of “Safe Social” discussing social media and mental well-being, with featured speaker Bailey Parnell. These events ignited a spark within us, propelling us forward with renewed vigor and purpose.

However, what resonated most profoundly with me were our collaborative conversations, which encapsulated the very essence of our mission. Each session was thoughtfully curated to address crucial issues, serving as a guiding light of hope and progress. From discussions on Early Intervention and Prevention to the exploration of School-Based Support, we collectively navigated through intricate challenges, sharing insights and networking with our partners to understand the needs across our five counties and developing a better understanding for some of the gaps that should be addressed collaboratively to guide our future work.

It is with this determination that we can truly work on a holistic approach to mental health. I am thrilled to announce that our newest grant award and initiative is well underway extending support to youth aged 16-25 who are at risk or have identified Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED), Serious Mental Illness (SMI), or developmental disabilities. This expansion represents a significant step forward in our commitment to providing a comprehensive system of care to those in need, ensuring that no individual falls through the cracks of our system.

As we begin 2024, let us carry forward the momentum of our collective efforts. Let us continue to challenge stigma, empower communities, and advocate for holistic approaches to mental wellness. Together, we possess the resilience and strength to transform challenges into opportunities, making a tangible difference in the lives of those we serve.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to our shared cause. Together, we are forging a brighter, more compassionate future—one conversation, one initiative at a time.



**SARAH VONDERHARR**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# FEATURED ARTICLE

## HOLISTIC APPROACH TO MENTAL HEALTH

BY: SARAH VONDERHARR

*At PACT for Families Collaborative*, we are dedicated to fostering a holistic approach to mental health through collaboration, prevention, early intervention, treatment, education, and ongoing support. Together with our partners, we strive to create a seamless network of support that addresses the diverse needs of individuals and families across our communities.

Over the last 30 years, collaboration has been at the heart of our approach to mental health. We work closely with stakeholders across sectors, including healthcare, education, social services, and community organizations, to leverage collective expertise and resources. By joining forces, we ensure that individuals and families have access to comprehensive, coordinated care that promotes resilience and well-being.

We are committed to building a comprehensive system of care and referral system to support prevention and early intervention efforts. Through PACT's Family Support Services, Wraparound, and Transition Services, along with targeted outreach, education, and community programs, we strive to identify and address risk factors early, empowering individuals to maintain their mental well-being. In 2024 we are implementing a universal referral form to streamline access to resources, providing a more seamless and efficient experience for those seeking support through PACT programming.

Through collaborative efforts with our partners, we help to ensure families and youth receive services and treatment that are tailored to their needs. For instance, the Transition to Independence Process (TIP®) and MiiWrap® Practices offer evidence-based interventions that promote positive outcomes. The TIP® model emphasizes a strengths-based, youth-centered approach, while MiiWrap® focuses on building resilience within families.

In 2024, we aim to enhance mental health education and awareness through collaborative meeting times and training opportunities. These initiatives promote awareness of available resources and educational opportunities for community members, professionals, and stakeholders. We actively encourage our partners to share their training opportunities at our meetings to expand our collective reach and ensure widespread access to educational resources.

Our commitment extends beyond treatment to offer ongoing support. We collaborate with partners to provide individuals and families with tools and resources for long-term well-being, ensuring continuity of care throughout their journey.

As we continue our mission to promote a holistic approach to mental health, we remain committed to innovation, collaboration, and continuous improvement. Together with our partners and stakeholders, we work tirelessly to prioritize mental well-being, reduce stigma, and create opportunities for all individuals to reach their highest potential.

# EVALUATION

BY: MEGHNA SUBBA

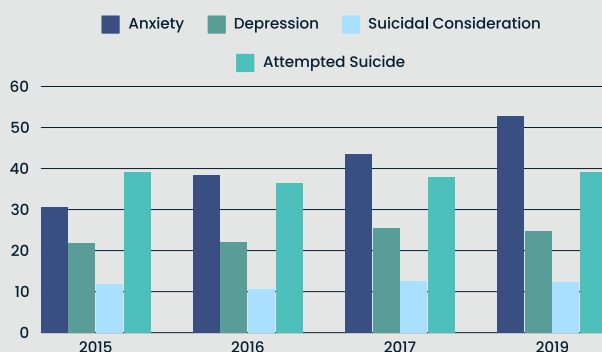
Since its inception, PACT for Families has prioritized continuous improvement, focusing on data compilation and review to assess various factors, including risks, protective measures, environmental influences, and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). This meticulous data collection serves as the cornerstone for capacity building, strategic planning, and fostering meaningful partnerships. Through iterative processes, we refine our strategic vision and implement grant projects aimed at addressing community needs, with feedback from project implementation guiding ongoing enhancements.

To further this mission, PACT for Families conducts the PACT Share Survey biennially across five-county school districts, serving as a vital mechanism for data generation and analysis. In 2023, the survey saw the participation of 2,353 students from nine schools, marking a slight decline from the previous cycle, which saw engagement from 12 schools in 2019. The decision not to conduct the survey in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic likely contributed to the reduced participation, resulting in a decrease from the 3,208 students engaged in 2019. Notably, in 2023, each of Kandiyohi County and Renville County contributed three schools, while McLeod and Yellow Medicine Counties each had one participating school. However, there was no representation from Meeker County, highlighting the importance of broadening participation to ensure comprehensive insights into regional dynamics.

The PACT Share Survey employed a robust methodology, utilizing three key metrics to collect and analyze data. Firstly, it scrutinized lifestyle impact factors, encompassing four pivotal mental health indicators: anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts. Secondly, it assessed protective factors, including the frequency of families eating meals together and the absence of emotional neglect within familial environments. Finally, the survey delved into risk factors, such as excessive screen time (four or more hours a day), late bedtime (12 am or later), and instances of truancy among students.

Over the past eight years, there has been a notable increase in mental health challenges among students in grades 7, 9, and 11. In 2023, a staggering 50.6% of students from these grades reported experiencing anxiety, representing a sharp rise from 30.6% in 2015. Similarly, the prevalence of depression among students in these grades climbed to 32.3% in 2023, up from 24.8% in 2019. While there was a slight uptick in the percentage of students considering suicide, from 12.3% in 2019 to 13.2% in 2023, there was a modest decline in actual suicide attempts among those who had entertained the idea, decreasing from 28.7% in 2019 to 21.8% in 2023. Overall, across the five PACT counties, there has been a concerning upward trend in students grappling with anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation from 2015 to 2023.

**PACT COUNTIES COMBINED: % OF 7TH, 9TH & 11TH GRADES**

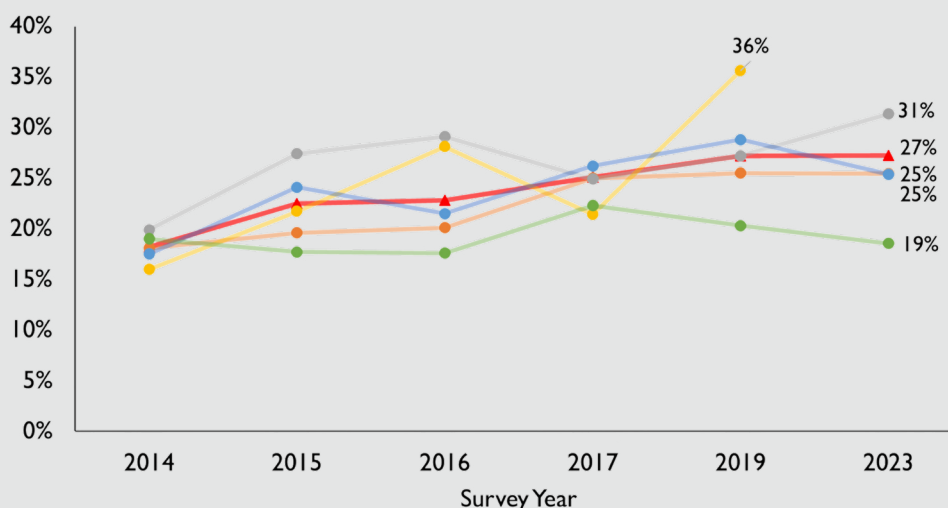


# EVALUATION

BY: MEGHNA SUBBA

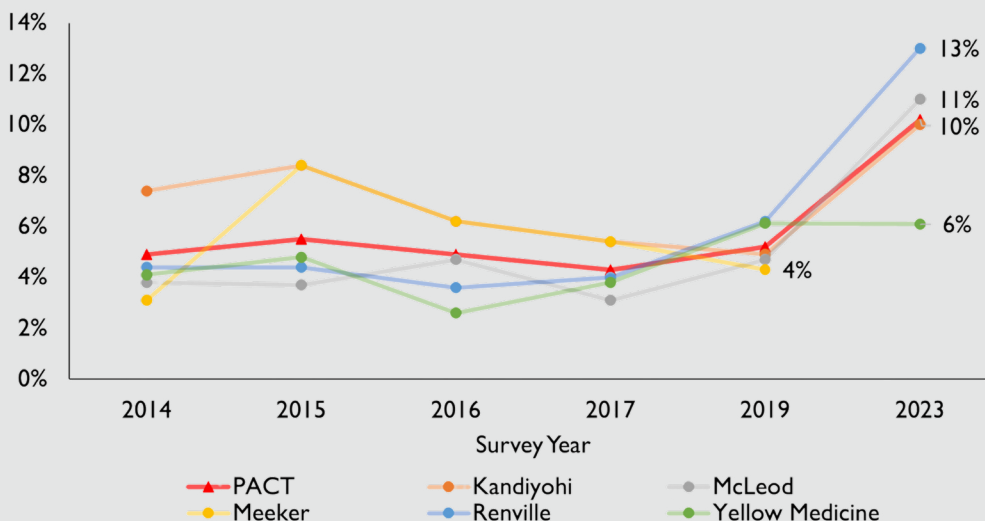
Emotional neglect can have profound repercussions on children’s emotional well-being, often leading to low self-esteem and a reliance on external sources for support, which can exacerbate substance use and mental health issues. Data from the PACT Share Survey highlights troubling trends regarding emotional neglect among students from PACT counties. Alarmingly, there has been an almost 50% increase over a five-year period in reports of youth feeling unloved or undervalued within their families, underscoring the critical need for interventions to address emotional neglect and its detrimental effects.

## EMOTIONAL NEGELCT



Truancy, classified as a risk factor, poses significant challenges to both classroom dynamics and student well-being. In 2023, the incidence of students in grades 7, 9, and 11 skipping or cutting full school days three or more times increased substantially to 10.2%, compared to 5.2% in 2019. Understanding the underlying causes of absenteeism is paramount in devising effective strategies to mitigate truancy’s disruptive impact on academic performance and overall school culture.

## TRUANCY: SKIPPED/CUT A FULL DAY OF SCHOOL 3 OR MORE TIMES



# EVALUATION

BY: MEGHNA SUBBA

Considering these findings, PACT for Families puts forth a series of recommendations for leadership:

- **Parental Training and Education:** Equipping parents with relevant resources and knowledge is paramount in fostering supportive environments conducive to youth development.
- **Emphasis on Family Connection:** Strengthening familial bonds and nurturing positive relationships can serve as a buffer against adverse experiences and promote resilience.
- **ACEs Prevention:** Prioritizing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) prevention initiatives is essential in breaking intergenerational cycles of trauma and adversity.
- **Advocacy for Mental Health Resources:** Increased advocacy for accessible and culturally competent mental health services is vital in addressing the growing prevalence of mental health issues among youth.
- **Protective Factors Enhancement:** Proactive measures to bolster protective factors, such as family cohesion and social support networks, are instrumental in mitigating the impact of risk factors.
- **Environmental Factors Review:** Conducting comprehensive assessments of environmental factors and their impact on youth well-being is essential in informing targeted interventions.
- **Legislative Advocacy:** Active engagement in legislative advocacy at both regional and state levels can drive policy reforms and resource allocation towards youth-centric initiatives.

In essence, the PACT Share Survey serves as a cornerstone in PACT for Families' mission to nurture thriving communities. By harnessing the power of data-driven insights and collective action, we can pave the way for a brighter future for our youth.



# YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

EMPOWERING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

BY: MEGHNA SUBBA

*The Youth Leadership Academy (YLA) 2023*, held on November 02, 2023, at Willmar's Epik building, marked a significant post-COVID milestone. Organized by PACT for Families Collaborative, with the theme "Building Healthy Communities through Youth Leadership," this event attracted 57 students from our five counties and beyond.

The YLA featured Keynote Speaker, Doug Knick's inspiring talk on "Leadership: The Power of Softness" kicking things off.

The YLA continued to empower and educate with breakout sessions by session speakers including:

Cameron Kalkbrenner from Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center conducted a team-building exercise that challenged participants to collaborate effectively.

Jeff Filipek, SHIP Coordinator, Renville County Public Health Services, shared insights on "The Art and Science of Cause-Driven Leadership," encouraging youth to champion meaningful causes.

Andrew Peltz, Coordinator of the Restorative Justice Department, led a Talking Circle session that emphasized the importance of open and compassionate communication.

Renée Labat, Youth Program Coordinator at NAMI Minnesota, addressed the critical topics of anxiety, stress, and coping strategies.

The event concluded with Morgan Ironheart's impactful discussion on Native Culture and Healing from Addiction. Participants left with newfound enthusiasm, eager for the next Youth Leadership Academy. YLA 2023 successfully ignited the leadership spark in our youth, paving the way for a brighter and healthier future through empowered community leaders. Stay tuned for more information on YLA 2024!





# BRAIN CONFERENCE

EMPOWERING OUR COMMUNITY FOR #SAFESOCIAL

BY: MEGHNA SUBBA

The Annual Community Conference on the Brain, held on April 20, 2023, at Willmar High School, with 147 participants from various backgrounds, including parents, teachers, and social workers, childcare providers among others. This conference aimed to provide the latest insights and research in their respective fields.

Last year's Brain Conference, themed “**#SAFESOCIAL: Social Media's Impact on Mental Health,**” garnered immense interest and feedback. Responding to the demand for more information on this crucial topic, PACT for Families invited Bailey Parnell, a renowned Entrepreneur, Educator, and Speaker, to share her expertise.

**Bailey Parnell, Founder, and CEO of SkillsCamp**, a soft skills training company, and a two-time TED speaker with nearly four million views, delivered an insightful presentation. She is recognized as one of Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women, an award-winning entrepreneur, and an active humanitarian.

During her session, Bailey Parnell discussed the current state of social media and its profound effects on our mental health and that of our youth. She drew from research and her extensive experience to shed light on the social media landscape's impact on mental well-being. She also empowered attendees with five actionable steps towards achieving #safesocial.

The impact of Bailey Parnell's presentation was overwhelmingly positive, with 97% of participants expressing their great enjoyment and gratitude for the invaluable information she provided. One participant even shared, “The session was very informative as I look for new information and ideas because I teach young students social media safety through public health and learn ideas to change my own behavior.”

The Brain Conference 2023 was a significant step towards equipping our community with the knowledge and tools needed to navigate the complex world of social media while prioritizing mental health and well-being. We look forward to continuing these vital conversations in the years to come.

For more information about upcoming events and resources, visit [www.pactforfamilies/brainconference.com](http://www.pactforfamilies/brainconference.com).

# FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAMS



*Our Family Support Services offer comprehensive Family Liaison and Wraparound support, delivering personalized guidance to overcome challenges and achieve personal goals. Monthly support groups and family activities provide a platform for families to connect, share experiences, and gain insights from others on walking similar journeys.*

# 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. Connecting Families Program includes Parent Support networking groups - In 2023 we offered two groups that met monthly; one each in Kandiyohi & Meeker counties. These groups were facilitated by Becky Sook the second Tuesday of the month during the lunch hour 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 the parents met at Mimi's Café in downtown Litchfield once a month. There are opportunities for expansion into other counties as well. Topics of discussion vary each month. Parents connect for laughs, tears or whatever they are looking for at that season in their life. Some of the past topics include Social Stories & tips to help those with autism, anxiety & sensory processing disorder during the holidays, Celebrating Milestones & other accomplishments, Resiliency, Therapies, Guardianship, shortage of staffing & PCA's, Diagnostic Assessments that are often delayed due to long wait lists, Social Services & resources. There are guest speakers on various topics, including calming/regulation techniques, Journey to Independence during transition age, Adverse Childhood Experiences, and visual schedules/tools to help the child. We also share 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 us by email: [Becky.Sook@pactforfamilies.org](mailto:Becky.Sook@pactforfamilies.org). On Facebook, search for our page to become a member - 'Connecting Families Support' & 'Connecting Families Meeker'.

Weighted blanket program: In 2023, we placed 71 referrals and 128 weighted blankets into the hands of adults and children in need through a referral process. Kandiyohi Co. - 36, McLeod Co. - 10, Meeker Co. - 10, Renville Co. - 4, YMCO - 2, Swift Co. - 9

Mini grants for sensory equipment, camps, etc.: Connecting Families awarded 15 mini grants in 2023 for music lessons, Equine Therapy, sensory equipment, & safety equipment for the home.

Special family events: During the year we held Sensory Friendly Movies in Hutchinson & Spicer for families to attend a movie with low sound and lighted isles. Four movies were held in Spicer with an average of 65 participants and four movies held in Hutchinson with an average of 100 participants. On July 15, 2023, there were 27 participants for a Family Fun Event was a Meet & Greet with Willmar Stingers Baseball players complete with a tour of the baseball diamond. On July 22nd, a picnic was enjoyed at the ballpark, followed by a Stingers baseball game. 82 participants attended. So many family memories were made that day!

Over the year of 2023, we have seen and heard what a great program this is for our families. Here's to many more great moments!



# FAMILY LIAISON

PACT's Family Liaisons offer support to families facing diverse challenges, offering individualized support and resources to navigate complex situations. Participation in the family liaison program is voluntary, reflecting the determination of families to pursue positive change. The families' choice to engage in the process demonstrates the effectiveness of PACT's Family Liaison team and their determination to provide adequate and essential services to people in need across our service region. Our staff work tirelessly to ensure that families are receiving the care and services they need to be successful in their parenting and mental health journeys as they foster empowerment and resilience.

In 2023, our family liaison program supported over sixty families, with twenty-nine families successfully meeting their goals and no longer requesting support from their family liaison. Staff continue to support families across the service region, offering support and assistance to ensure adequate housing, clothing, food, and connections to community and other supports.

As we celebrate the successes of these families, we reaffirm the importance of investing in initiatives that uplift communities and empower individuals. PACT's Family Liaison program stands as a source of support and helps us accomplish our mission of bridging gaps and nurturing strength in times of challenge. Together, let us continue to champion these vital programs, helping families and children meet their highest potential.





# WRAPAROUND

BY: SANDY HRUBY

In 2023 we said farewell to Char Erickson, our Wraparound Coordinator for 23 years. As we celebrated her retirement, we turned a new leaf with Wraparound.

Both Jenn Pauff and I have gone through the **MiiWrap® Training** and will begin to train all PACT staff in MiiWrap®, which takes all of the best qualities of Wraparound and adds Motivational Interviewing to the process.

In her journey, Char served as the facilitator for hundreds of Wraparound teams in all five counties. Some families have needed Wraparound services more than once; others reach out and want to share their positive experiences with Wraparound and how it helped them overcome as a family.

We hired a new Wraparound Coordinator, **Jayde Smith**, in December who took on 14 active Wraparound Teams. She has jumped right in, absorbed a lot of information and has spent time getting to know the families.

As we move forward, Jenn and I will complete our coaching certification and begin training PACT staff as MiiWrap® facilitators, to intergrate MiiWrap® concepts in their work with youth and families.

We anticipate an exciting year of great things to come for MiiWrap®.

# TRANSITION SERVICES PROGRAMS



*Our transition services staff are here to support youth navigate the transition into adulthood, helping youth & families embrace their roles and responsibilities with confidence.*

# JOURNEY TO INDEPENDENCE

BY: JENN PAUFF

The **Journey to Independence (JTI)** program is a SAMHSA funded program for 16–21-year-old youth who have or are at risk for a severe emotional disturbance (SED) or a severe mental illness (SMI). Transition Facilitators use the evidence-based TIP Model® to assist youth in developing independent living skills in the areas of employment, education, living situation, personal wellbeing, and community functioning. Our Youth Peer Specialist provides monthly peer group events that offer socialization and in depth training on such skills as budgeting, interviewing, food safety, and social/emotional well being. Data is collected on SAMHSA provided assessments three times during youth participation. This, along with data collected by the Transition Facilitators during pre-entry and post-exit interviews, is used in the development of a sustainable program and quarterly federal reporting.

## **Overcoming Adversity: A Youth's Journey to Independence with PACT | MARIA MORENO**

“Amidst the challenges and uncertainties that our participants face, we would like to share a recent success story - a tale of transformation within the Journey to Independence (JTI) program at PACT. By sharing this story, we celebrate this youth's journey, aiming to offer hope and empowerment to others.

Like so many of the stories that begin at PACT, this story begins with a hesitant youth, struggling to overcome challenges and uncertainty. Quiet and reserved, they questioned the path ahead, unsure of how anyone could assist them in navigating life's complexities. Yet, within the nurturing guidance of a Transition Facilitator and Coach, their journey of self-discovery began.

They began their journey with apprehensive steps, acknowledging their struggles and the feelings of abandonment. Their life seemed overwhelming, chaotic, and hopeless. Yet, through hopelessness they were connected with the support and resources that led them on their journey.

As challenges mounted and crises unfolded, the facilitator remained steadfast in their efforts to support the youth in their journey to healing and recovery. With support from partners and resources, coupled with the individualized guidance from their Transition Facilitator and Coach, a plan emerged to guide them towards a brighter future.

As time passed, the youth's team began to see glimmers of success as they became more dedicated to their education and other life goals. The team continued to support them as they journeyed forward, encouraging them and guiding them as they pursued additional opportunities for growth and advancement, including additional classes and driver's education to empower their transition into adult roles and responsibilities. With each milestone achieved, they progressed from adversity to achievement- with their teachers recognizing and praising their accomplishments, resilience, and determination.

Communication with their parent improved, fostering reconciliation, and understanding. Over the last nine months, they have achieved improvements in their education, increased independence by completing drivers' education, and has experienced nine months in recovery from substance misuse. Moreover, they have begun advocating for youth prevention by participating in the 'Escape the Vape' contest with students at their school to promote awareness about the dangers of Vaping.

As graduation approaches, their journey showcases the resilience they have developed, and the invaluable support provided by the Journey to Independence Program. Graduating alongside their peers in May, they embodied the triumph of overcoming obstacles and seizing opportunities for growth.

Despite facing adversity, their story reflects the resilience and determination of the human spirit. Within PACT's annual review, their journey stands as evidence of the lasting impact of the Journey to Independence program, inspiring others toward a brighter future.”

JTI has supported 26 youth in year three of our grant cycle, which included: six from Kandiyohi County, seven from McLeod County, five from Meeker County, seven from Renville County, and one from Yellow Medicine County. Our Transition Facilitators have provided assistance in valuable life skills that aided in job securement, independent living situations, procurement of adult mental health case management, and necessary documents all while fostering a sense of belonging and healthy boundaries in the youths' day to day lives.



# ROAD TO SUCCESS

BY: JENN PAUFF

In September 2023, PACT for Families Collaborative was awarded a Healthy Transitions grant through SAMHSA with the intent of improving and expanding access to developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate services within our five-county area. This program, named **Road to Success**, is a five-year grant to assist transitional aged youth aged 16-25 at risk for Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED), Severe Mental Illness (SMI), and/or with developmental disabilities.

Transitional Facilitators will assist youth one to one with independent living skills in the areas of education, employment, living situation, personal wellbeing, and community functioning. A monthly peer group is offered to provide socialization and skill building activities in a group setting. By using the Transition to Independence Model (TIP Model®), Transition Facilitators can guide youth in acquiring skills to aid in their successful transition into adulthood. Charting the LifeCourse through LifeCourse Nexus®, will also be utilized to assist in teaching developmentally appropriate independent living skills.



# YOUTH PREVENTION SERVICES



*Our Youth Prevention services offer support while fostering positive relationships and empowering youth to overcome challenges without alcohol or drugs.*



# GUIA

BY: V. LEYVA & AMINA MOHAMMED KHARIE

In our Year in Review, we celebrate the contributions of our Latino and Somali Outreach workers through the GUIA program. GUIA, translates to “guide” and that’s exactly what our Latino and Somali Outreach workers do. They guide youth (ages 14-22) and their families through early intervention, education, and community resources for mental health and substance misuse. Both of our outreach workers have worked with an average of 14 youth and families at any one time.

Referrals come from schools, social services, probation, and other agencies. Outreach workers spend time with youth to build trusting relationships using motivational interviewing to elicit how the youth is feeling and what they may struggle with daily. They also educate youth on things like depression and anxiety as appropriate as well as on the health issues related to using various substances. Our Outreach workers assist families to build personal protective factors using the 40 Developmental Assets. They also provide cultural consultation to youth and families within other grant programs within PACT for Families. They also spend time translating fliers, crisis cards and other materials for our PACT programs, trainings, and events.

Our Latino worker works with youth in school and home environments. Leyva builds relationships with the entire family and oftentimes finds that a sibling will help bridge the connection to the youth that needs more intervention. She collaborates with schools, social workers and casemangers, and other professionals to gain a better understanding of the youth she is serving.

Our Somali worker works within the schools and at the center of the Somali Community in a space in downtown Willmar near other Somali community resources. Amina supports youth and families as they work on their citizenship status, and provides resources to aid in finding affordable housing, employment, and medical resources to promote positive outcomes and increase family and youth wellbeing.

# PARTNERS FOR SUCCESS

BY: JESSICA JOHNSON

In 2023, *the Partners for Success* grant team went through numerous changes. In June we welcomed a new Program Director and in August we welcomed a new Prevention Specialist. The team hit the ground running and started some large projects to aid in our goal of sustainability of prevention efforts in our service area.

During the County fair season, the team partnered with **PACT GUIA coach, Leyva**, to create conversation starters in both English and Spanish. The conversation starters focused on questions that ranged from how you were kind today to role playing scenarios of what to do if offered a vape, etc. At the fairs, we also shared information about teen marijuana use and its effects. This message was presented in a banner in both English and Spanish. Additionally, a radio ad shared into about the effects of marijuana use with teens and featured students speaking in English, Spanish and Somali.

Another large campaign that the Partners for Success team completed was targeted snapchat ads. The first snapchat ad campaign was done during graduation; with messaging correlating with each school's graduation weekend in the tri-county service area. The Program Director had two different ads that would pop up on snapchat based on age. Of the youth, there was also an ad geared towards adults + parents about teen marijuana use, and an ad geared towards teens. This ad campaign spread information out to a total of 47,072 people with an addition 745 people choosing to "swipe up" on the ad for more information. The next Snapchat ad campaign was done in the fall around homecoming. This ad campaign focused on using the positive community norm message of "Most <insert county name> students avoid the use of alcohol and marijuana. 4 out of 5 choose not to use". This messaging was shared out in the tri-county service area using county specific data based off the Minnesota Student Survey. The fall snapchat ad campaign spread information out to a total of 44,538 people with an additional 410 people choosing to "swipe up" on the ad for more information.

With the legalization of adult use marijuana, a need for a new type of education came about. The Program Director and Prevention Specialist stayed up to date on the legislation and shared out the timeline with stakeholders. The team was able to present this timeline to three different groups in 2023, educating 48 people, in total.

The team was able to complete a 3-part series at DREAM technical academy covering the topics of alcohol, vaping/tobacco and marijuana. Throughout that series, the team was able to have conversations with staff and students about the importance of a SWAT group being active in their school and different ways they can partner with the Partners for Success team.

As we finish up year four and move into year five our goal of sustainability remains the focus. The team continues to build relationships within the county to create a long-term plan for the coalition once the grant funding ends with the sustainability committee. We continue to reach out to find new members of our coalition and have made it a priority to invite youth from our youth groups to attend. We want to empower youth to speak up and share what they are seeing and experiencing within their own schools.

# SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER AT BLHS

BY: LORI JENSEN HAGERT

Wow what a year. I have experienced many changes this past year and have had to take a look at the past and the future of my position at PACT. We continue to have staff in multiple schools to support the students and staff. My job has changed a lot since I started in February of 1996. More students are in need of mental health services at an even younger age, and we all are doing extra with less. There is not a day that goes by that I have regretted my choices in becoming part of the PACT team and my time at BLHS. There are no harder workers than the teachers, support staff, administration, and my colleagues in the Social Work and Counseling positions,

School Counselors/Social Workers work with students to address an array of issues, offering everything from academic support to college and career counseling, as well as personal counseling, and classroom lessons focused on prevention. This can be accomplished through group or individual time. We support students at every level, from kindergarten through 12th grade and have opportunities to work with partners in the County and Public Health. Often a large part of our jobs is to support the staff who are working with students that are dealing with Mental health issues and parents that need support. We all continue to assist in finding support for students within the communities they live in, which at times is very difficult in rural Minnesota. As social workers, we work closely with parents so that they listen to their child and are realistic about options. We offer individual counseling to students for an array of personal or mental health related issues and can play an active role in helping students navigate potentially significant mental health issues.

Our primary focus is supporting students, particularly at-risk youth, through close collaboration with parents and special education staff. The interventions and programs focus on the effects of mental illness on a student's success and provide support to improve educational and emotional outcomes. I am so grateful for the support of PACT to support our programs.



**LOCAL  
COLLABORATIVE  
TIME STUDY  
&  
FINANCIAL REVIEW**



# LCTS

BY: LYNNETTE SOMMERS

## WHAT IS THE LOCAL COLLABORATIVE TIME STUDY (LCTS)?

The LCTS is administered by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). The opportunity to participate in LCTS is exclusively available to members of approved Family Service or Children's Mental Health Collaboratives within Public Health, County or Community Corrections, and School Districts in our service region.

As a Children's and Family Service Collaborative, PACT serves Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Renville, and Yellow Medicine Counties. Our rich history in providing vital services and support to families and children in our communities began in 1993. PACT has participated in the LCTS time study since 1996.

## HOW DOES THE LCTS WORK?

Random Moment Time Studies are done by staff members throughout our PACT Partner Agencies. These staff perform eligible activities in their work, documenting their time through a random moment time studies to capture work activities at "random" dates and times each quarter. Staff choose appropriate activity codes to represent their work during these moments. The data collected offers a comprehensive view of time allocation within the collaborative and provides snapshots of work being done by LCTS participants, to determine funding through federal claim calculations.

Reimbursements received are used to expand services to children and families including early intervention and prevention, support collaboration and system redesign, and support the mission and vision of the collaborative and its members. PACT currently uses the LCTS time study funds to support our Family Support Services Programs which includes our Family Liaisons, Connecting Families, and Contracted School Social Workers. The funding also allows us to allocate \$100,000 for discretionary grants to our partners.

## WHO MAY PARTICIPATE IN THE LCTS?

Select staff in Public Health, County or Community Corrections, and School Districts who are members of the collaborative are eligible to participate in the time study. Specific staff in these organizations who perform coordination and case management activities for children at risk of out-of-home placement, or who perform the coordination activities which focus on the physical and mental health needs of children are the participants in the time study. There are currently about 400 eligible participants from the Public Health, County or Community Corrections, and School districts within the five counties of PACT for Families.

## HOW IS LCTS FUNDING UTILIZED?

LCTS funding supports many of our goals for our communities, including prevention of out-of-home placement, enhancement of family support and children's physical and mental health services, development of a seamless service system and strengthening local community-based collaborative efforts.

We sincerely thank the LCTS participants for their essential work in helping us secure funds that support our shared goals and objectives. Thank you for your unwavering support, dedication, and partnership. Together, we can continue making a positive impact on the lives of children and families in our communities. For more information about participation in our LCTS time studies or to receive support or training to enhance your LCTS time study efforts please reach out to the PACT office.

# FINANCIAL UPDATE

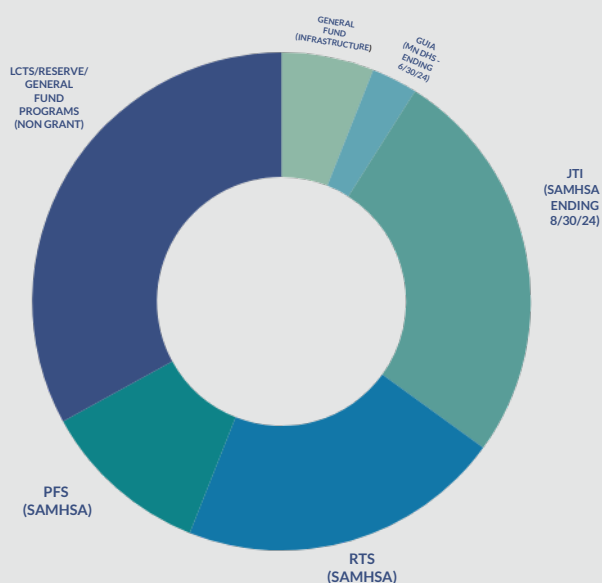
BY: JOLENE LAMBERT

Since our establishment in 1993, PACT for Families has been committed to assisting its partners and delivering services that exceed the expectations of its members. Guided by its mission, vision, and values, PACT's Chief Elected Officials-Joint Powers and Executive Boards participate in an annual retreat to develop and adopt a strategic approach that directs the collaborative's efforts. PACT continually seeks ways to enhance its effectiveness and responsiveness to its members in order to remain vital and necessary in the community. This commitment has led to changes and enhancements in the utilization of personnel, infrastructure, and technology over the years.

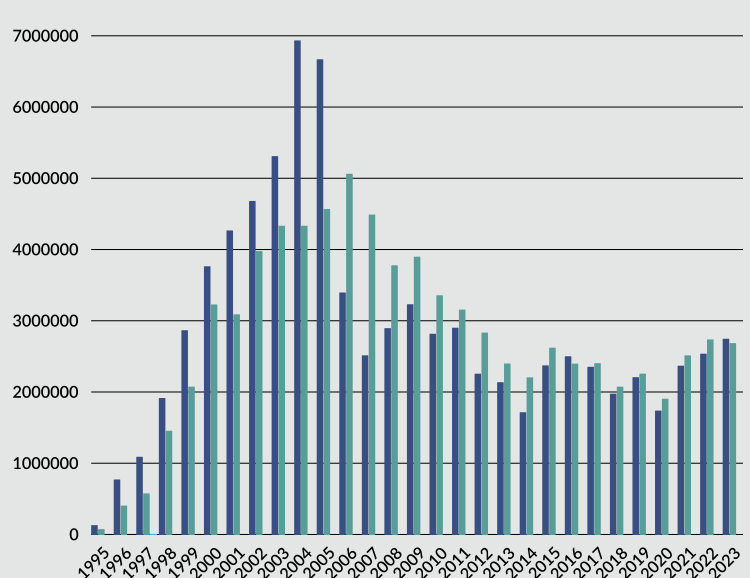
The PACT for Families budget is determined by funds available from various sources, including state and federal grants, foundations, local contributions, and membership fees. These funds are consolidated into an Integrated Fund and allocated to address the goals and programs established by the collaborative. PACT's 30-year history, along with lessons learned, has demonstrated that system integration extends existing resources and fosters the development of new ones. Collaboration with partners has enabled PACT to reduce duplication and expand services for families.

Annually, PACT for Families undergoes an audit by the Minnesota Office of the State Auditor to ensure adherence to sound accounting principles and proper distribution of funds. The budget is developed by the Executive Board and approved by the Chief Elected Officials-Joint Powers Board each year. PACT maintains a standard of performance that distinguishes it from other collaboratives in Minnesota, reflecting its commitment to accountability, transparency, and excellence in service delivery.

**2024 BUDGETED EXPENDITURES BY FUND**



**2024 PLANNED EXPENDITURES FROM LCTS & GENERAL FUND**





# GRANT INFORMATION



# DISCRETIONARY GRANT

**The Discretionary Grants** offered by PACT for Families aim to provide funding for new, unique, or one-time programs or services to partner agencies. Members are encouraged to request Discretionary Funds when other alternative funding sources are unavailable for their project or if the proposed activity falls outside their agency’s regular responsibilities. Applications for Discretionary Funds are accepted throughout the year and can be requested by completing a brief application, which are available at the PACT office or can be accessed on the organization’s website at [www.pactforfamilies.org](http://www.pactforfamilies.org). Discretionary funding allows partner agencies to propose innovative projects or initiatives that align with PACT’s mission and contribute to the well-being of families and communities.

In 2023, a total of \$67,212 in Discretionary funds was disbursed for various projects aimed at enhancing services for children and families across different counties. Some of the projects funded in 2023 included:

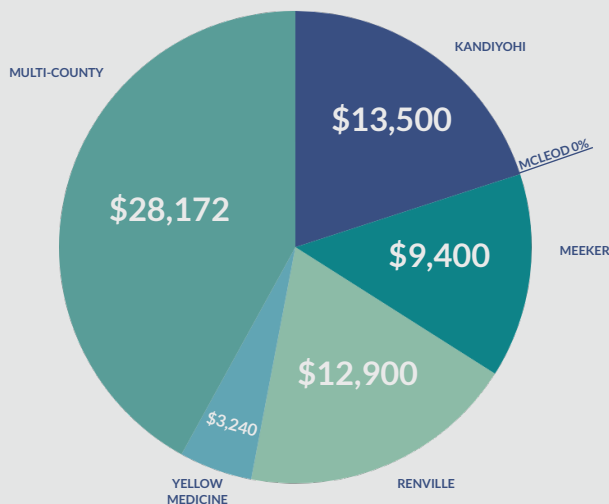
Sensory room and social-emotional learning initiatives implemented in NLS, ACGC, RCW, Litchfield, and BOLD public schools.

Distribution of Talking is Teaching toolkits across all five counties to promote early childhood development and literacy.

LGBTQIA Diversity & Inclusion initiatives in Meeker County and Team Building activities in Yellow Medicine County to foster inclusivity and community engagement.

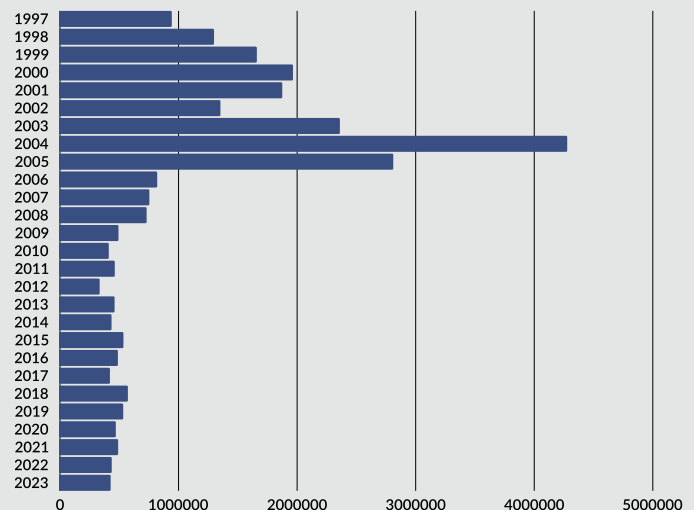
Promotion of Mental Health Month through the local advisory council on mental health (LAC), focusing on raising awareness and destigmatizing mental health issues.

These funds, generated through the Local Collaborative Time Study (LCTS), were instrumental in supporting creative and visionary projects that address the diverse needs of children and families in the communities served by PACT for Families. The continuation of these funds into 2024 will further contribute to meeting the evolving needs of the community.



## LCTS INCOME

REVENUE



# GRANT APPRECIATION

**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR INITIATIVES & EVENTS!**

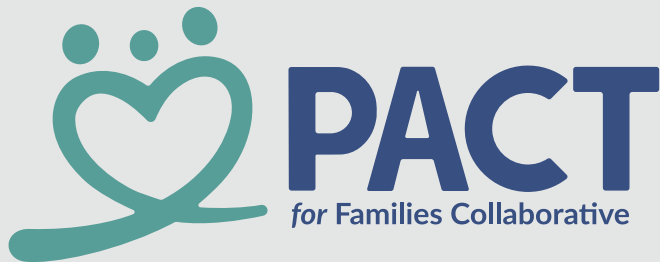
## MARDAG FOUNDATION



## WEST CENTRAL UNITED WAY



# THANK YOU



## GET IN TOUCH!



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Pact for Families Collaborative



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*Putting All  
Communities Together*