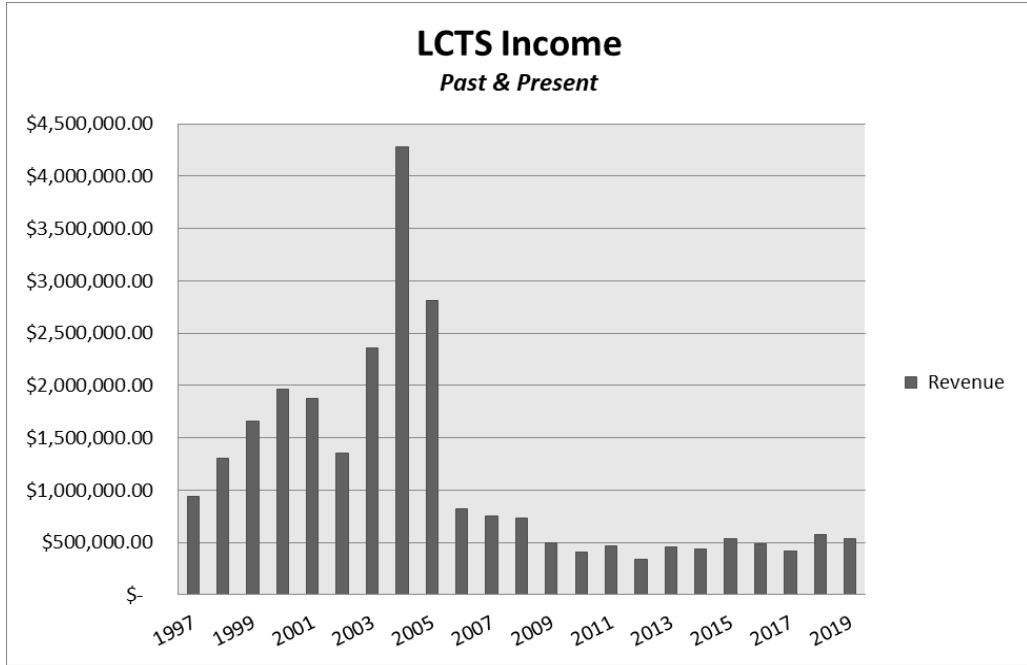
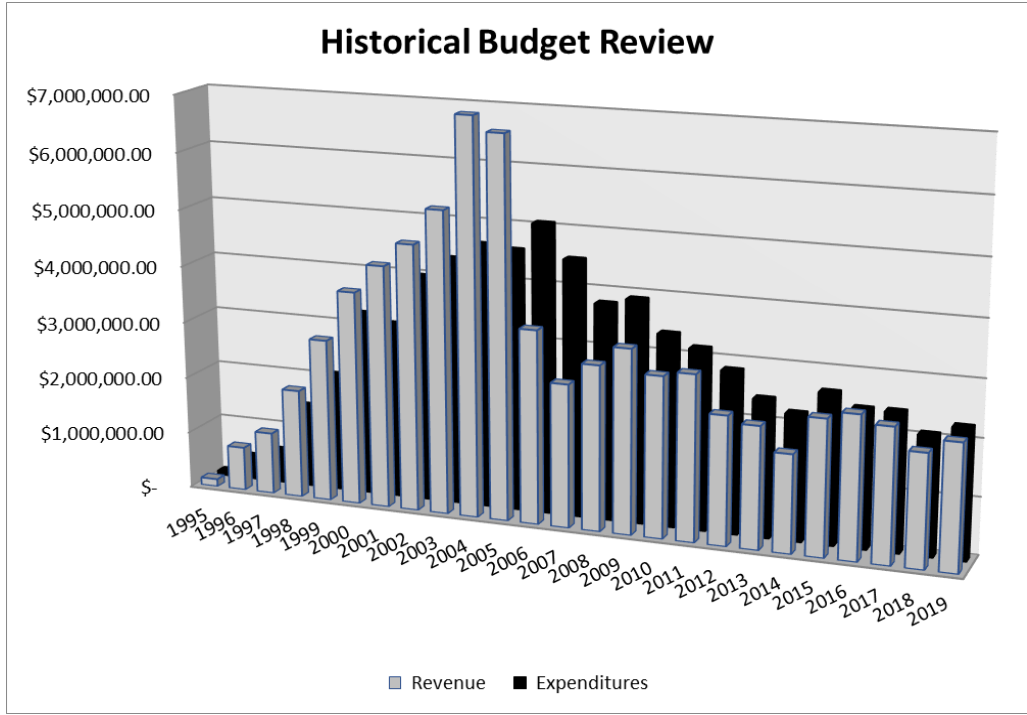


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**2020
Estimated
PACT
Budget**

Interest	\$	46,200.00
PERA Aid	\$	535.00
Grants	\$	511,914.00
Local Collaborative Time Study (LCTS)	\$	500,000.00
Contracts / Recoveries	\$	565,205.00
Partner Contributions	\$	228,078.00
Recoveries/Registration Fees	\$	17,750.00
Fund Balance Transfer	\$	375,161.00

TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 2,244,843.00
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Employment Salaries	\$	1,228,548.00
Unemployment	\$	44,123.00
FICA	\$	93,984.00
PERA	\$	88,178.00
Group Health Benefits (BCBS w/VEBA & Dental)	\$	262,057.00
Other Employee Benefits (Life/AD&D/LTD/Flex)	\$	6,324.00

total salaries/payroll liabilities \$ 1,723,214.00

Advertising - Marketing	\$	200.00
Auditing	\$	26,000.00
Child Care (Parent Participation)	\$	300.00
Contracts	\$	114,679.00
Contract - Approved Grant	\$	180,000.00
Contract - Maintenance Agreement	\$	1,600.00
Contract - Rent/Lease	\$	35,550.00
Discretionary Grants/Flex Funds	\$	31,711.00
Mileage - Employee	\$	35,279.00
Mileage - Contract/Consultant	\$	300.00
Mileage—Other	\$	6,700.00
Meeting Expense - Committee	\$	5,832.00
Meeting Expense - Youth/Family Support	\$	4,050.00
Membership Dues	\$	300.00
Office Supplies	\$	1,106.00
Phone Service	\$	3,000.00
Phone—Cell	\$	2,400.00
Postage	\$	1,329.00
Program Supplies	\$	28,910.00
Subscriptions / Dues	\$	400.00
Registration Fees	\$	1,140.00
Resources - Office (books, videos, curriculum)	\$	500.00
Resources - Program(books, videos, curriculum)	\$	1,000.00
Stipend (1099)	\$	6,800.00
Training Expense	\$	8,350.00
Wraparound (team approved)	\$	8,000.00
Insurance—MCIT	\$	10,693.00
Wellness	\$	2,500.00
Misc Bank Expense (investment fees)	\$	3,000.00

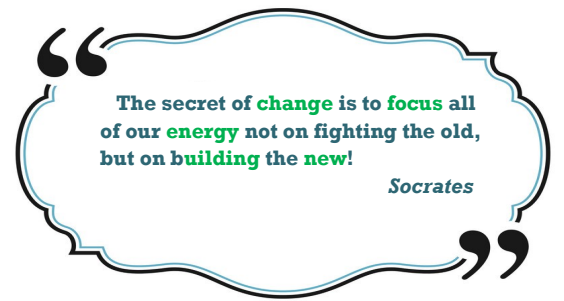
total administrative expenses \$ 521,629.00

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

2019—Change

In our fast-paced, ever changing world, perhaps the only constant we can rely on is change. Organizations must be nimble and able to make decisions quickly. PACT is no exception. In fact, The Collaborative role is being nimble and responsive when partners aren't able to. Community needs may stem from any number of factors; cuts in funding for certain programs, sudden needs in a community, or a new idea that feels like a solution to an ongoing issue. The Collaborative is an organization that brings people together, is creative, and find ways to collectively respond to needs. However, needing to respond so quickly can bring about challenges within the organization, staff, and with partnerships. Keeping a balanced approach can be complicated. It can be hard to keep vision moving ahead.

Beginning a few years back, I started creating a roadmap of asking-where have we been, where are we now, and where are we going? In 2018 we talked about organizational life cycles being similar to PACT's early years - figuring out our vision in uncertain times. 2019 was full of changes. Twenty five years ago we were on the verge of large funding streams to create actual programs. In contrast, 2019 brings us a time where there is virtually no large funding streams to develop programs or new positions and when there are, the competition is fierce. We need to apply for funds with the idea that entire sectors are at the table together, that we are creating long term community impact, and it will be sustainable after one grant cycle. Those can be tough objectives. We are figuring out our role in uncertain times and like twenty five years ago, we need to focus on building genuine partnerships to work in today's state of funding and expectations.



In 2019 we solicited feedback on how to increase participation and member growth. We asked what would make collaboration easier and meaningful. We want opportunities to hear more voices and gain greater perspective. Therefore becoming more responsive and having deeper impact on our communities.

2019 was the beginning of positive growth and change. It won't happen overnight. It's more of a deliberate strategic movement. We will define metrics to measure accomplishments and engagement while we keep connecting with partners and community to ensure we are staying on course. Finally, I would like to keep in mind that not all growth can be measured in minutes, money or number of heads. PACT for Families is a collaborative of people and agencies. In 2020 we will continue to ask the question, how we can we make PACT's work meaningful and impactful for all.

Rochelle Peterson, Executive Director

21ST CCL CENTERS

"Every student is one caring adult away from success." Ms. Robin Jones, 5th Grade Teacher

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) grant program has supported the creation of local school based programs that provided students and their families with high-quality academic learning and enrichment opportunities in the after-school time since 2007. Over the ensuing years, PACT has received grants under various cohorts—until 2019 when our application was unsuccessful. As suggested by Robin Jones in the above quote, many youth (in schools within the PACT region) have benefited from having important adults present in the after school hours. The success of the program over the years has been due to schools being able to recruit quality adults and also to offer great programming that helped youth succeed, to learn new skills and to explore their true potentials.

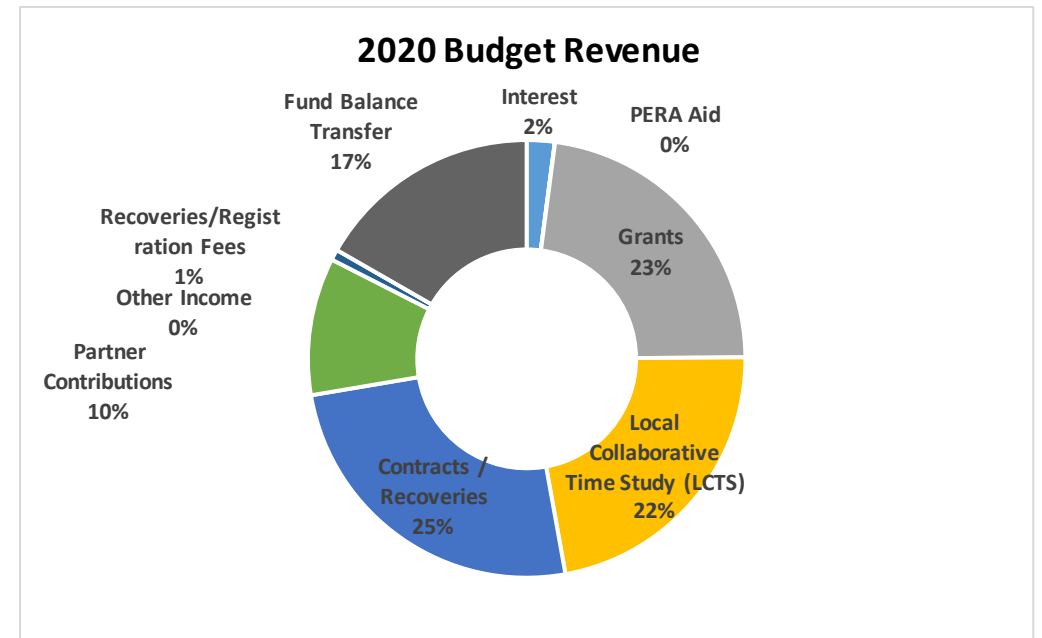
The four centers coordinated by PACT for Families Collaborative (PACT) over the past 5 years were part of Minnesota's Cohort 6. These centers have continued the tradition developed by previous cohorts and have provided academic, enrichment, character-building, and college-career readiness services to hundreds of youth throughout the school year and summer.

Over the past school year, good communication has proven to be one of other keys to success of each unique center. It hasn't always been easy to maintain a focus on 21st CCLC with staff experiencing competing priorities for their limited time. Staff commitment that ensured that the 21st CCLC centers succeeded deserves commendation. PACT has been proud to work with schools whose staff have shown so much care and dedication to create a safe space where youth received quality education. Along the way, youth were also provided opportunities to experience new and different things and learning methodologies that help them prepare for college, careers, and a lifetime of learning.

The outcomes achieved demonstrate the effort applied by team of coordinators, facilitators, administrators, and youth despite each center having faced its own unique challenges. During the 2018-2019 school year, a combined 821 youth were served at the four centers representing an 11% increase over participants last year (738). These youth were ethnically diverse and most participated regularly in programming. All centers conducted programming 4 of the 5 days of the week giving youth ample access to programming choices.

The variety of programming during the summer at each center ranged from 2 to 3 activities offered at a smaller center to 8 activities offered by the larger centers. During the school year, the activities offered increased to up to 7 and 9 for smaller centers and 21-23 activities in the larger centers. With such a rich variety of programming, all centers easily exceeded their goals.

A *Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes* (SAYO) was used to gauge responses from youth. Data showed that active participants reacted positively to their program experiences. Youth also felt that they had improved in their competence and had opportunity to develop their future planning abilities. A deeper dive into the SAYO results suggested that the program goals were met or exceeded. We can therefore conclude that as outcomes were achieved/exceeded, participating youth have been positively impacted in this and preceding cohorts.



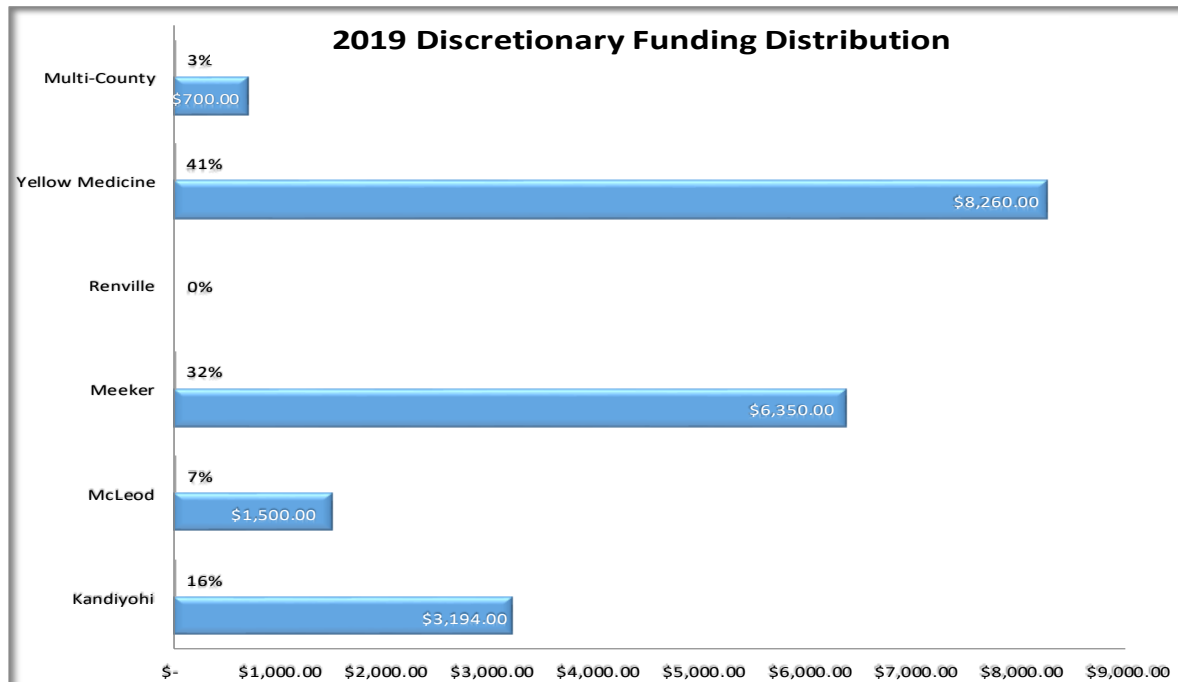
Note: a 0% reading on the chart above indicates a less than 1% allocation.

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 26-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.

Jolene Lambert, Finance & Benefits



21st CCLC continued

Quantitative data was supplemented with strong anecdotal evidence submitted by administrators, youth, staff and coordinators that indicated that the impacts on the student community and also individually was substantial. Some examples include; a positive impact on math and reading assessment scores; increased student engagement levels, and an overall positive impact on the school environment. It would seem that 21st CCLC programs have contributed significantly to the academic and enrichment experiences of youth in the schools served over the past years.



Service Learning Project—Youth Volunteer Group

Implementing a program of this scale has been challenging for both PACT and the schools involved. We have all learned together and along the way, hundreds of youth have been positively impacted and through the centers, communities have also been positively impacted. School based centers that partnered with PACT have demonstrated a commitment from year to year to enhance their own skills while broadening the experiences of the youth in their local context. Their creativity and dedication are commended. Center coordinators and staff have understood how to implement high quality academic and enrichment programming.

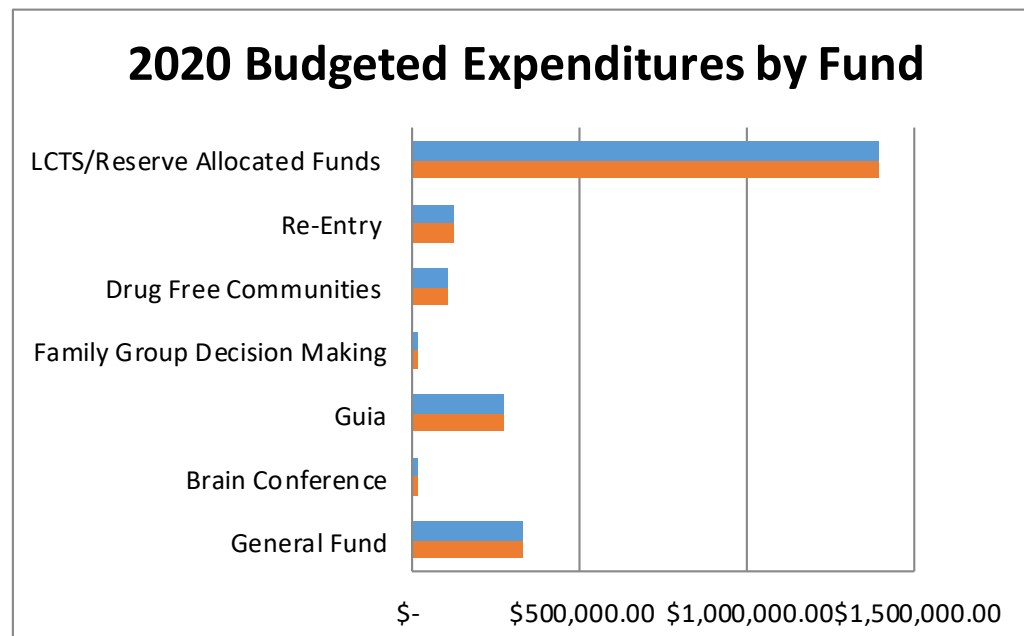
As mentioned above, anecdotal evidence has been an important measure of success. The evidence offered by staff, youth and partnering organizations has also indicated that the caring adults have made a huge impact in the lives of the active participants and their school communities. Without these people and the creative and stimulating experiences offered, youth would not have been impacted as they have reported.

By having a safe place along with great staff, youth have been able to explore/uncover their true potential during the afterschool and summer times. Youth have had the opportunity to also determine their limits (potentials) in these safe spaces and to challenge themselves to 'blow past them' as Picabo has suggested.

"To uncover your true potential, first find your own limits, then have the courage to blow past them." Picabo Street, Olympic athlete

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this great program.

Ian Graue, 21st CCLC Coordinator



The Evolution of Evaluation at PACT

Over the 2019-year, PACT conducted the 2019 triannual SHARE Survey. Data was gathered from PACT for Families

Collaborative member school districts. Our mission to serve our school districts as partners meant listening to their feedback. We learned that their student bodies were suffering from survey-fatigue, so the break could not have come at a better time.

PACT conducted the SHARE Survey this year in partnership with our local member schools. In 2018, it was decided that the survey should move from an annual process to a process conducted once every three years. This new triannual survey schedule will enable a deeper level of analysis of SHARE data and cross-analysis of the Minnesota Student Survey data. Thanks to the work of the collaborative, the focus on ACEs has helped to clarify the analytical lens for the SHARE Survey. This focus was expressed through the addition of new questions that delved into the lifestyle and habits of area youth including their electronic device usage habits, whether they have a job, and how that job impacts their sleep schedule. The evaluator will continue to make survey adjustments to ensure that the analysis is helpful to our partners. Our collaborative has much to be proud of when considering that our youth remain resilient in the face of so many challenges.

One of the most poignant takeaways from the data lay in the increasing anxiety levels felt by youth in all five PACT Counties. PACT began measuring this in 2013 and it has continued to increase year after year. In 2019, the following answers were provided to questions on the survey by 3,874 area youth.

- 52% of youth feel worried about a lot of things either most or all the time
- 58% of youth feel pressured to do well in school either most or all the time
- 34% of youth feel nervous for no specific reason either most or all the time
- 27% of youth have felt that no one in their family loved them or thought they were important
- 41% of youth who answered that they are worried a lot about things most or all of the time went to bed after 11pm and 58% spent time looking at screens more than 4 hours a day.

Coupled with the impact of ACEs on youth and the stress of over-active survival instincts attempting to keep their bodies functioning, PACT for Families’ SHARE Survey reveals that our youth are struggling much more so than when the survey began. Inevitably, such long-term stress causes a host of physical, social, and mental health problems that manifest themselves soon after or later in life.

One of the most significant and disturbing issues our youth deal with pertains to suicide. Depression, suicide ideation, and actual attempts portray a telling picture on the mental and emotional resilience of our youth. After adding these questions a few years ago, PACT has since tracked an alarming relationship growing between hours of screen time (exposure to social media/games/blue light) and hours of sleep (body resiliency and mental processing of stress). In 2019, the following values were discerned:

- 25% of youth report feeling so sad and hopeless for two or more weeks in a row that they stopped some of their normal activities (in the last 12 months) – this figure has held steady for the past two years between surveys

2019 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 2019 there were \$20,000 in Discretionary funds disbursed for various projects such as Reflective Consultation Training and Incredible Years classes through Countryside Public Health, Building Resiliency at NLS Schools, Kindness Project in Willmar Public Schools, Jump Start Family Event and Mindful Movement for Kids at Litchfield Schools and Youth Leadership through the 5 – 25 Committee 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 2020 to assist in meeting the needs in our communities.

LCTS/Reserve Funding Highlights.....



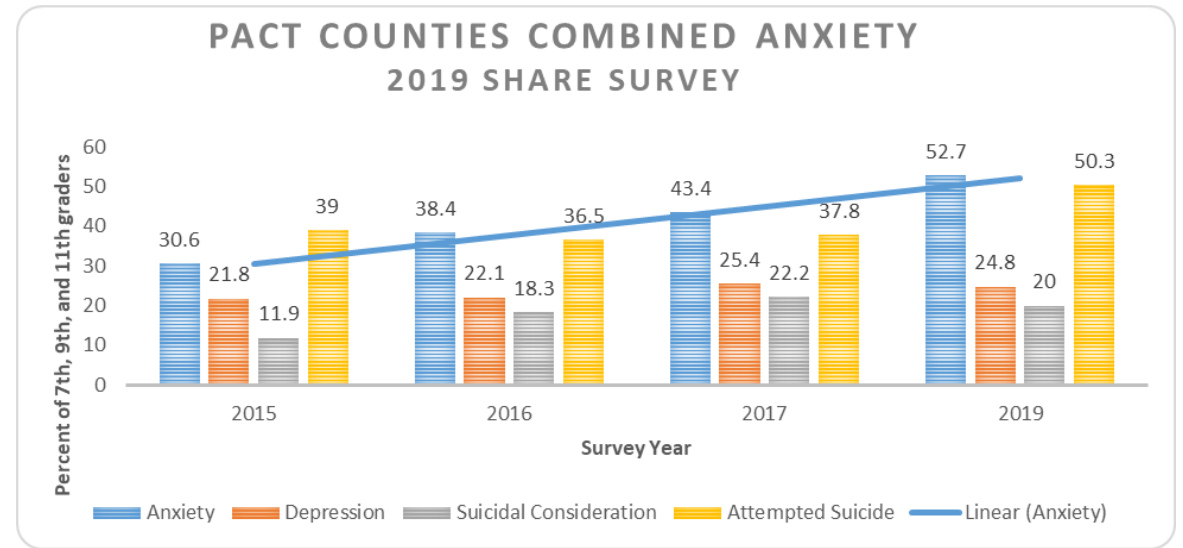
Wraparound continued

- ◊ Wraparound parents are “giving back” by telling their stories. As mentioned above, two parents shared at a wraparound training in 2019. Another former Wraparound parent told her county commissioners about her positive experiences with social services and wraparound. A current Wraparound parent also shared with her county board how services have helped her and her family. In addition to this, a Wraparound parent shared at a System of Care conference in St. Cloud last fall. *Parents are becoming empowered through sharing their stories.*
- ◊ Wraparound parents became involved with “Connecting Families” in 2019. Many attended our Fall Festival and Stingers events in 2019.

Wraparound in 2019 was a great support for families! It has brought providers and family together to work collaboratively and in a supportive way to help families reach identified goals. It has been a forum for providing hope and leveraging resources. Perhaps more importantly, it has served as a springboard to help parents gain empowerment and become connected with other parents and families when Wraparound and other services have ended.

Char Erickson, Wraparound Coordinator

- 15% of youth claimed to have scratched, cut, or burned themselves leaving scars in the last 12 months
- 20% of youth reported having thought about killing themselves
- Of this 20%, 67% answered that they made a plan as to how to kill themselves
- Of that 20%, 32% actually attempted suicide – constituting 158 youth (with a further 88 indicating that they didn’t want to talk about it. Of the 246 youth indicated above who did or may have made an attempt on their life, 58 suffered injury, poisoning, or overdose that required medical care



WRAPAROUND EXPENDITURES BY CATEGORY



Of 3,874 youth who took the survey, 704 youth went to bed after 11pm at least 3 or more times that week and reported spending time on screens 4 or more hours a day (during the school week), 65% of these 704 youth reported feeling pressured to do well in school and 64% or 405 youth answered that they seem to be worried most or all the time. 61% or 243 youth felt sad or hopeless for at least two weeks in a row, while 34% or 116 youth experienced suicidal ideation. Alarming, 51% of those who had thought about suicide actually made an attempt on their life. Just to be clear, it must be emphasized that half of all area youth who indicated that they go to bed after 11pm often and get 4 or more hours of screen time and answered that they thought about killing themselves followed through by making an attempt. That is 1 in 2 youth.

After reviewing the trends of anxiety and suicidal ideation in PACT’s 5 counties, the evaluator found that a number of strong relationships existed between these areas and factors such as sleep, pressure to do well in school, and whether or not they felt loved by someone in their families. Additionally, the rate at which youth are exposed to an incarcerated individual in the home and the levels of depression, mental illness, and attempted suicide by others in the family unit have an outsized impact on youth anxiety and depression.

The impact of these factors led the evaluator and an area partner to work together to help one of our

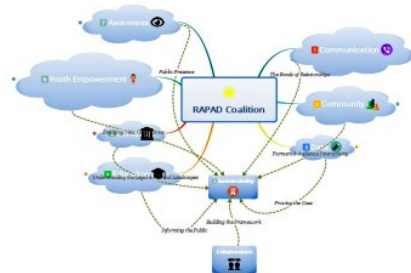
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member districts to better plan for a great environmental transformation. MACCRAY school personnel worked over the summer of 2019 to raise their standards and to transform the school into a trauma-responsive district. Although much work remains, the work done can be held in high regard as a strategy map to the trauma-responsive fast lane. School personnel including administration, faculty, and staff were convened many times for staff trainings that highlighted the road to be taken. A small intimate work group comprising youth alongside the staff were also engaged to hammer out strategies that might enable the school to implement the philosophical transformation. These were then presented to the PACT Full Collaborative in the Fall of 2019. Although the route is complex, the staff remains committed to the transformation and the youth that assisted have gained a valuable lesson of capacity that can be created when collaboration is utilized with everyone on an equal footing. Indeed, the PACT evaluator found this to be one of his highlights from this year because it allowed him to step out of the office and engage with an area with which he is most passionate – leadership.

Since coming aboard two years ago, the PACT evaluator has worked hard to expand how other programs collect, manage, analyze, and report data. The Drug-Free Coalitions were exceptional examples of application of data to make the case for a more robust, line-item form of prevention in their respective counties. In Renville and Kandiyohi Counties, the grant coordinators have worked alongside the coalitions to build ties throughout the community, leverage partnerships to raise the profile of prevention, and to help spread the word about the dangers of vaping, consuming alcohol and smoking marijuana. Thanks to their efforts, 30 day usage levels have plummeted since they began their work 10 years ago. Now that 2020 is here, both programs will sunset due to the limitations of the DFC grants being 5 year commitments of funding and all grantees only being eligible for 2 of those grants in their lifetime. I want to personally thank Laura Daak, Rebecca Zwonitzer, and Annie Tepfer for their devotion to the cause of helping youth to clear up the messages they receive from adults, marketing firms, and industry lobbyists who see them only as customers. The trove of data collected over the years will assist future prevention programs in maintaining the war that rages between the companies and the public’s general health and well-being.

In 2020, the collaborative can continue to expect PACT’s evaluation department to provide high quality data analysis to partners upon request. This includes presentations of SHARE Survey data, MSS data analysis, and assistance with strategic planning for the next school year. We remain firmly committed to engaging county, state, and federal entities. By presenting our findings, working with the epidemiological community to drive discussion of funding and programmatic choices, we will help our partners serve the needs of youth, parents, and families. As PACT strives to build community capacity, the evaluation department will be there to support its efforts every step of the way.

Joe Maffit, Evaluator



WRAPAROUND

In 2019, I had the opportunity to facilitate 25 teams within our five counties. Because Wraparound is an individualized process, the duration of meeting for each team is different. At times teams will convene for three or four meetings to brainstorm for a specific reason. Other teams meet for several months. At least one team has been meeting for over three years as life has changed course several times; the team continues to see the value of meeting together to provide support to the family and to enhance communication. In addition to this, other Wraparound teams are meeting with a social worker or other trained staff facilitating the process. I am aware of at least ten other families who were served through Wraparound in 2019, and I am sure there are more. When you also consider safety meetings, Family Group Decision Making conferences, community circles and other group processes, there is a lot of ongoing collaboration!

One Wraparound Orientation was held on April 5, 2019. Seventeen people attended including social services case managers, school staff, mental health practitioners, and community outreach staff. Two parents shared their “wraparound experience” at this training, which was the highlight of the morning. One parent included some of her trauma story and shared how wraparound helped her gain a network of support during difficult times.

Wraparound Values:

- ◇ Strength-based
- ◇ Team-based
- ◇ Outcome-based
- ◇ Persistent
- ◇ Individualized
- ◇ Informal supports
- ◇ Community-based
- ◇ Culturally aware
- ◇ Collaborative
- ◇ Family voice & story

Wraparound funds continue to be available to teams when there is a barrier to reaching a goal. Wraparound funds are requested by the team, not an individual. This team request takes into account the youth or family goals, the barriers to reaching them, and other resources that could help as well. In 2019, Wraparound funds that were expended totaled \$5,412.23.00. Elsewhere in this report is a breakdown of how funds were spent, but the bulk of funds supported activities for youth such as camps, athletic equipment, swimming lessons and other social and recreational activities.

A small portion of funds was spent on “celebrating success,” which is a very important part of Wraparound. Progress needs to be recognized, and plans need to be made to help families leverage their support system to continue “moving forward.” How are Wraparound families moving forward when their teams disband and services close? In 2019 I have discovered a few ways:

- ◇ They are connecting with other parents. At least 14 parents who attended the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) in 2019 were involved in Wraparound in the past. They chose to get connected with the PAC as a means to contribute and to find support and networking with other parents. (This has been very valuable, since part of the mission of the PAC is to support the work of Wraparound within our five county area). In addition to these 14 parents, several more PAC parents are currently participating in Wraparound.



2019 was unique in that it was the first year that our Annual Brain Conference had to be cancelled due to bad weather last April! We are thrilled that our keynote speaker scheduled for last year, Julie Athman Ernst, Ph.D will be returning this year presenting “Finding Balance—Connecting Your Brain With Nature”.

- **Youth Leadership Conference held in November 2019;**
Seven districts represented— 85 students in attendance

The day included leadership-oriented sessions that reviewed everything from vaping, mental health to leadership superpowers and “Envisioning Tomorrow: Incubating Action Today.”

With the support of the RAPAD Coalition, Kandiyohi DFC, Assembly of God Church and PACT 5-25 Committee another successful Academy was held at EPIK Center in Willmar.



- **Boundaries & Ethics training—two sessions held in December 2019;**
Participation was so high this year that we added another session! 64 people in attendance

This seminar is designed to meet the 2-hour ethics requirement for the Minnesota Board of Social Work. PACT is fortunate to be able to give Board of Social Work CEU’s at a very affordable rate. Thank you to Rick Loseth who continues to present on this topic.

Since 2014, PACT for Families has been the holder of a grant from the Department of Human Services to expand the practice of Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) conferencing. Four of our five counties are served through this grant (McLeod county contracts with another agency for Family Group Decision Making).

FGDM provides a forum for families and providers to come together in a purposeful way to plan for a specific safety concern. Family is given private time if desired to discuss plans after receiving input (and county bottom lines) from those present. The goal is for this to be the *family’s* plan. Often the purpose of the meeting is stated in the form of a question. In 2019, some of the questions that were answered at FGDM conferences included the following:

1. *How can the youth’s mental health needs be met through outpatient services and natural supports, rather than out of home placement?*
2. *What is the best and safest place for the child to live? How can everyone work together to give the child the best possible situation/outcome?*
3. *What will be the custody and living arrangements for the three children?*

In 2019, there were a total of one hundred forty (140) FGDM conferences were held. The vast majority of these were held in Kandiyohi County with an internal worker facilitating the meetings. For interest and for grant reporting purposes PACT for Families has been tracking specific markers of FGDM conferences. The following information was submitted in our grant report for 2019:

1. Seventy-three (73) conferences were held *early in the life of a case* to develop a safety plan and support to safety avoid out of home placement.
2. Seventh-two (72) conferences were dedicated to safely *returning a child or children to their home from out of home placement.*
3. One (1) conference was designated for purposes of *pre/post permanency planning.*
4. Two (2) conferences were dedicated to *youth transitioning from foster care* or other out of home placement.

Kandiyohi County reports that their safety meetings have been very successful, bringing family and supports together to gather input on keeping children safe and supporting parents. The facilitator has used scaling questions in the satisfaction surveys to gage how helpful the meetings are to families. The feedback and input they have received has been very positive.

Continued on next page

Judging from survey feedback and follow up, the facilitator reports that people often walk into a meeting feeling crabby, being upset with the county, and/or having low expectations for the meeting. Feedback shows that virtually everyone walks out feeling better. They also report that they hear of safety plans working well past the date when the case is closed; people have enacted the plans to keep kids safe and to decrease the need for re-opening Child Protective Services. In 2019, Kandiyohi County reports that there were no meetings that had to end prematurely because people could not finish or become triggered. This is remarkable given the seriousness of issues often discussed, and the nature of issues that are involved when people are involved in Child Protection (trauma triggers can come up, for example).

Who attends FGDM conferences? A quick look at plans that were developed in 2019 reveals that meetings were well attended. Participating in FGDM conferences in 2019 were parents, foster parents, aunts and uncles, friends, grandparents, Child Protection workers, guardians ad litem, an attorney, counselors, skills workers, a principal and more!

Family Group Decision Making continues to be offered in 2020. Kandiyohi County utilizes its internal facilitator, but referrals can continue to be submitted to PACT for Families. A recent comment from a family member after a potentially conflict-ridden conference summed up the value of the FGDM process: "Not knowing what to expect, I feel that it was a very positive and rewarding experience."

Char Erickson, FGDM Facilitator



Energizing hope...

Guiding change...

Fostering healing

"Family Group Decision Making has the potential to energize hope, guide change and foster healing."

- American Humane Association

PACT SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

The following story is from one of PACT's nine school social worker/counselors serving our partner districts in: ACGC, BLHS, BOLD, Canby, Cedar Mountain, Hutchinson, Litchfield, NLS, and Willmar. PACT began with 2.5 co-located school social work/counseling positions, had a peak of 15 school staff in 2005, and have currently had our nine positions for the last few years. **The following story is from our school-based social worker at Buffalo Lake/Hector/Stewart Schools.**

Wow! 25 years has flown by! It's hard to believe that I started at BLHS and BOLD while finishing grad school after the PACT 4 earned a "Be All You Can Be" grant creating a one-year position for an elementary school counselor. It seemed like a perfect opportunity that would look great on my resume. Fast forward to 2020 and I'm still here! I truly feel like I have the best job in the world, and I am incredibly proud of what we have accomplished.



The role of school counselor is focused on the growth of students in 3 key areas: academic guidance, personal development, and creating a safe environment for everyone at the school. We work tirelessly to support the social, emotional, academic, and physical needs of BLHS students. *Making a difference* is always our goal.

What I love most about my position is the opportunity to make a positive impact on the lives of students on a one-to-one basis whether it is through academic advisement, personal guidance, or school-wide character education. I am very proud of our monthly "Mustang Time" celebrations where students get the opportunity to be superheroes and vie for a superhero cape to wear for the whole month. It is a joy to work with the incredibly supportive PTO that continues to amaze us with all the encouragement they provide for staff and students. We work together to plan a fantastic carnival in the fall and several family nights throughout the winter months. This builds engagement with all of our students and their families. It truly takes a village!

I am also grateful for the district's support of our afterschool program to help students in academic need. Our staff chooses to celebrate successes (no matter how small) and challenges our students to be all they can be. It is an honor to work with such a fantastic group of staff and students.

My advice for students: *Tap into your brilliance!* Everyone has the capacity to be creative and innovative. Find your passion and commit to making a positive impact on your community. Develop a growth mindset and be persistent in striving for success.

Thank you PACT 4 for a wonderful 25 years and for writing that grant!

Lori Jensen Hagert, PACT School Social Worker - Buffalo Lake/Hector/Stewart Schools

In the grant, there are limited discretionary funds available to assist with items necessary for employment success, such as proper work attire, bus tokens or helping with other transportation needs, GED testing fees, and work readiness training fees, first/last month housing rent and a deposit etc. These ‘small’ things often make the difference between successful reintegration and re offending.

At any given time, I have been working with at least 15 active clients in addition to another 10 (or more) who are in treatment or temporarily uncontactable.

I have greatly appreciated having Rochelle Peterson as my patient teacher/supervisor. And as with life in general, I also have learned much from my interactions with the clients. Thank you to all of you. I hope I have been a good learner!

Ian Graue, Reentry Ready Navigator

PACT Staff List at a Glance

2020 Staff List		Date of Hire		Years of Service
		mo/day	yr	
Jolene	Lambert	3.30	1995	25
Lori	Jensen Hagert	2.12	1996	24
Char	Erickson	10.23	2000	20
Misty	Langseth	11.13	2000	20
Tom	Kroes	8.30	2004	16
Brian	Skogen	8.02	2005	15
Liz	Kruger Hommerding	2.25	2005	15
Tammy	Minton	11.20	2006	14
Anna	Tepfer	12.07	2007	13
Paula	Sturm	8.13	2007	13
Ian	Graue	9.29	2010	10
Sara	Nelson	12.01	2011	9
Debbie	Gerrety	10.24	2011	9
Rochelle	Peterson	7.26	2016	4
Natalie	Campos	8.28	2017	3
Jeanette	Morales	9.11	2017	3
Joseph	Maffit	2.07	2018	2
Katie	Ziehl	4.01	2019	1
Becky	Sook	4.01	2019	1
Sandy	Hruby	1.03	2019	1
Lynnette	Sommers	10.01	2019	1
Ham di	Kosar	5.20	2019	1
Rick	Loeth	10.06	1997	Phased Retirement

The Family Liaison position is unique in that one of the requirements is to have cared for a child or children with mental health issues. I have 31 years’ experience in parenting children with mental health issues and have been navigating the adult mental health system with one of my children now for 16 years. It has been a journey of ups and downs and lessons learned that I can share with the families that I work with.

I currently am the only Family Liaison with PACT and I cover a 5 county area, consisting of Kandiyohi, Meeker, McLeod, and Renville and Yellow Medicine counties. The referral process is simple, the form is on the website and can be filled out and submitted by either professionals, such as School personal, Social Workers, Mental Health Workers, Public Health Nurses or by the families themselves. Once the referral is received it is reviewed by my supervisor and if an appropriate fit assigned to me if my case load has room. This past year, 2019 I served 25 families consisting of 36 Adults and 57 children and youth. The breakdown by county is Kandiyohi 8, Meeker 2, McLeod 3, Renville 8 and Yellow Medicine 4.

My job as the Family Liaison is to support the parents/caregiver, help in finding resources and to assist them navigating systems such as Children’s Mental Health, Social Services, Schools and the Judicial System. Children and youth with mental health issues often times need the extra support or services that these various systems offer.

“Debbie has helped in finding outside resources and information I have otherwise been unaware of, that has definitely benefitted my family. She has been a support when no one else has been able to, in every sense of the word, in my family’s legal and mental health struggles.” Renville County Parent

A Kandiyohi County Parent gave me permission to share the following thank you note she wrote.

“Debbie, You coming back into my life has not just been amazing, but very inspiring to me. Your empathy and compassion towards myself and others is such a sweet blessing. You go way beyond your job title and pay rate to help me succeed in life. Not many people do that, especially to a single mother in recovery. You have supported and shown me the stigma of society today does not matter or define me. You have shown me what it is to feel cared for and remind me there is hope and to never give up. Mistakes I’ve made in life, I no longer see as failures, but experiences to learn and rise above them and to try again. You were my boys Head Start teacher and now you just don’t help me but you support and help me and my boys become stable and reunification and how to live a content life where there will always be room to grow more, this world needs more people like you! Thank you!”

My job as a Family Liaison is never dull, I continually learn from the different families I work with. It is not an 8:00 to 4:30 kind of job, I often work evenings and even some weekends as I try to accommodate different schedules but I must say it has been a very rewarding job and might add my Dream job!

Debbie Gerrety, Family Liaison

GUIA—SOMALI OUTREACH

My name is Hamdi Kosar. I am a community organizer and work part-time for PACT for Families as the Cultural and Ethnic Minority Integrated Grant Somali Coach. I am also a full-time college student at Ridgewater College. I

was born in the Dagahaley refugee camp and was resettled in the United States at the age of 12. Now a decade later I am a United States citizen, a self-published author and a community leader. I am a graduate of Willmar Senior High School. I have earned my community health worker certificate in the Spring of 2019 and I am currently continuing my education.

Since being hired in March by PACT for Families I have already accomplished many things. I was hired for the Somali outreach worker. I am able to meet families in their houses or in the community and raise awareness about mental health. I have successfully helped a client to go through the process of connecting with a doctor, being diagnosed and prescribed the right medication. Currently, I am working on writing a play that will reflect mental health and drug use in the Somali community. The Somali community is a visual community and very poetic - I thought what better way to educate them about mental illness than to bring a play into the community. Watch for this production in 2020!



Youth Empowerment Event September 28th and 29th, 2019. Two days filled with empowering youth discussion topics such as social isolation, generational gap and social justice.

When I was invited to be the navigator for this program in August 2019, I only had a sketchy understanding about the challenges that my future clients faced. It has been wonderful to be a part of this program and to gain many new insights along the way. Some of the insights learned so far include:

1. Homelessness is a real challenge to people's success. It often takes a long time get suitable housing after release from prison or treatment
2. Access to suitable treatment for people with mental health and addiction challenges is difficult to find
3. Employment options are limited to these people. Not many people are willing to allow second chances
4. Clients need to be encouraged to take one day at a time as there are many things to do in a short time
5. It's hard to develop new skills quickly and to unlearn long time behaviors
6. Solutions/strategies are unique to each individual



I have much more to learn! Once I receive a referral, I set up an initial appointment to hear their story. I get them to think about what they see as their biggest challenges/obstacles to success. Based on the challenges, we work on a strategy that aims to assist them to successfully reintegrate. The overall approach is to continue to address individual needs/challenges (as they happen), build on their strengths, model positive communication and problem solving, build a support system and support them as they transition into the community and establish a secure foundation for success. Most often the biggest challenge is safe housing closely followed by employment.

By identifying challenges and focusing on job readiness, we can provide a life-changing response through recalibrating their environment, attitudes, and self-image as well as equipping them with the tools they need to be successful and productive members within their community. For example; a high need for employment may lead to us working together to find a job (after a visit to the Career Force). But s/he may lack the education, job skills, or navigational skills to obtain employment.

Other risk factors too often go unaddressed (e.g., lack of transportation, stable housing, mental health challenges, or chemical dependency). These are the issues we work on together. I support them in their decisions and attempt to help them address the barriers that often contribute to the high level of recidivism.

Continued on next page

“The first 72 hours after parole can make or break a man”.

This title caught my attention recently as I was scrolling through my social media feed. In the article, Elle Hardy chronicled the lives of a few ex-prisoners to learn about their lives once they were released from their organized, disciplined prison world. Some of the challenges/ex prisoner comments mentioned include:

1. Freedom is the hardest part of getting out of prison/treatment
2. Having to make the many decisions themselves rather than having them made for them
3. The ‘system’ society is largely unsympathetic to the life of paroled inmates
4. Family and friends are often reluctant /unable to help
5. The world has often changed significantly since their initial incarceration

Elle Hardy highlighted one rehabilitation program developed by Reverend Tyrone Smith after he faced these challenges himself in 1994. A friend helped him transition—“...he was there for me when I got out”. He has formed an unofficial network of formerly incarcerated people to help others being released. A businessman also helped his network out with a couple of houses 5 years ago. They now run a transition home and offer many other services for recently released prisoners.

Studies have shown that what a former prisoner does in the first 72 hours upon release often determines whether they will end up going back into jail. Research also shows that successful reintegration hinges on three main factors:

1. Making plans prior to reentry and focusing on success during the first few months is vital.
2. Plans must be customized based on the unique risk factors, needs, and assets of each offender.
3. Appropriate mechanisms and supports must be in place to implement the plan.

Knowing this, PACT for Families (PACT) created the *Reentry Ready Navigator* position in 2017 to help clients being released from prison or those receiving mental health/drug treatments. The main goals:

1. Develop an evidence-based reentry plan well in advance of release.
2. Increase participant’s job readiness.
3. Improve community responsivity to offender needs.

Reentry Ready supports participants in their transition by reducing barriers that often hinder success. This includes transportation, increasing employment success, and obtaining affordable safe housing etc. It is also important to work with them to build on their existing skills and abilities. They need to know that they are valued for whom they are.

Doing these things often enhances their self-esteem which can assist them in succeeding as it is an important preventative measure for mental health. We work with them on this so they become more adjusted individuals and better able to cope with the many life challenges.

In the 2019 year, GUIA with PACT for Families has held steadfast to its mission by being the driver of the GUIA grant via the Minnesota Department of Human Services. The grant currently serves two counties, Kandiyohi and Renville, as there is a high percentage of Latino youth residing in those counties. PACT has impacted the health and well-being of Kandiyohi and Renville county youth, from ages 14 to 24. As an employee of PACT and coach, I continue to make meaningful connections in the Latino and Somali communities. I have witnessed social and environmental contributions evolve in cultural changes making new trends that influence health among youth, the state of Minnesota also adapted its funding support. As a GUIA Coach with PACT over two years now along with my previous experience with Willmar Public Schools for more than ten years, I understand the factors in keeping families connected through programs and available resources. My goal is to help youth and their families live healthier lives through the use of resources they can tap into and taking a leadership role via communication seeking the needs of families through PACT support. I do this through understanding their systems at home and how we can work together to access healthy minds, body and well-being.

Over the course of 2019, I coached many youth. In particular, one stands out because she is a major contributor to her family’s financial stability; paying core expenses like rent and utilities. She lives in a single family home and helps support her family including a 15 year old, a 4 year old, and a 1 year old. Her mother struggles to see the value in her daughter continuing her education and understanding that it dramatically impacts a youth’s future. Due to the added stress and pressure, this young lady struggled with depression and almost gave up on the two credits she needed to complete her high school diploma. There were days she was faced with her own personal battles feeling she was living a life without purpose. She was able to accomplish her goal through conversation and mentoring. She knew she could reach out anytime and any day she needed. I let her know she was not alone with her battles and she had someone to listen. I would remind her of her positive qualities and the contributions she makes to her family and friends. As a result, the youth has kept in touch with me on a daily basis since graduating high school.

Thankfully, she understands that she has a mentor and friend listens without judgment. Even as we continue our conversations today, she realizes that she can talk openly with me about any concerns. I remind her of the importance in allowing herself the opportunity to grow and explore options for her future. As we continue to work together we strive each day to build her strengths. We also examine her needs so that we might create lifelong positive change in her life. The dialogues help guide her to a successful and purposeful life as she continues to discover new talents with purpose and passion. I am proud of the work I have done to impact the life of this one young lady. My position allows me to do this kind of work every day.



LCTS participants and “recorders” are the keys to our success with this federal program that earns the collaborative funds to enhance and expand services for children and families in our county.

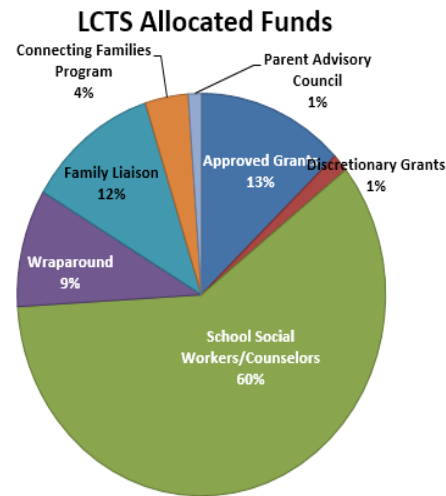
From our participants, who choose the best code that reflects their activity; to the county IV-E specialists, who work diligently on getting the best list of kids to be used for certain codes out to participants; to “recorders”, who are the building contacts that facilitate getting these lists to the 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 provided many services and supports to kids and families in our five-county area.

LCTS, or Local Collaborative Time Study, began in 1995 as a pilot project in a few Minnesota collaboratives. After operating as a pilot project for two years, the state of Minnesota made LCTS a state-wide activity for any collaborative wishing to participate.

A time study is a process which documents time spent by staff on various work activities. The LCTS is called a random moment time study because it uses several randomly selected days and times per quarter as “snapshots” of the activities being performed by participating staff. There are currently about 440 eligible participants from the public schools, corrections, and public health departments within the five counties of PACT for Families. Our eligible employees include social workers, special education staff, ECFE and ECSE educators, juvenile probation officers, OT and PT workers, and maternal child health nurses, to name a few.

LCTS income accounts for 22% of the 2020 budget. As you see from the chart, 60% of the funds received are allocated to school social workers/counselors who provide early intervention and prevention services.

Lynnette Sommers, LCTS Coordinator



PACT for Families acquired The Resource Center Program (TRCP) from West Central Industries, before they sunset the program due to a change in focus in March of 2019. The mission for TRCP aligned so well with PACT’s mission it was hard to say no to such an opportunity.

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 : through 2019 there are 2 groups that meet monthly. One in Kandiyohi Co. facilitated by Katie the first Tuesday of the month from 11:30-1:00 at Lulu Beans in Willmar. The second group in Meeker Co. facilitated by Becky the 3rd Monday of the month from 6:30-8:00 pm at First Lutheran Church in Litchfield. Look for an expansion to our other 3 counties in 2020. Topics of discussion vary each week, some of the past topics include, autism, anxiety, back to school and balancing life, service dogs, daily struggles in school home and community, and there is always sharing resources with one another.
- ◆ Weighted blanket program: from March through December 2019 we placed over 60 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 2019 we held 2 events with the Willmar Stingers Baseball Team. The first on June 22, a warm Saturday afternoon in the park “Meet and Greet” with yard games, bubbles, root beer floats and watermelon. We had 23 adults, 24 youth, 4 PACT staff, 3 adult volunteers, and 12 Stingers players interacted for a fun filled afternoon. The second was July 7th, a Stingers baseball game with tickets provided by the team. Prior to the game Walt’s sponsored a family picnic for our families attending the game, it was also jersey night which made it extra special for the youth. We had 68 adults, 4 transition age adults, 54 youth and 4 PACT staff that attended this event.
- ◆ Mini grants for equipment, camps, etc.: Connecting Families awarded several mini grants in 2019 for summer camp experiences, sensory equipment, reading therapy, and safety equipment for the home.

On October 26th we held a Fall Festival and Resource Fair. We used the West Central Industries facility. There we had a sensory room, bingo, pumpkin painting, cookie decorating, popcorn and apples, a small resource fair, and other crafts indoors, outdoors there were photo opts with a tractor and knocker balls to play. There was also a short song presentation by 9 Fidgety Fairy Tale cast members. Fifty-six youth attended, 36 adults, 8 PACT staff, 6 volunteers, there were 8 Resource Fair booths and 4 Resource Fair participants who sent information.

As said by a parent, “PACT does a lot for parents, but nothing for families and the children”. That statement had a profound message as we took the leap with Connecting Families Program. In our short time with this program we have seen and heard what a great thing this is for our families - here’s to many more great experiences for our families.

Sandy Hruby, Social Services Program Supervisor

