

TABLE TALK

A MESSAGE OF HELP & HOPE



STATEWIDE ORGANIZATION OF THE FEDERATION OF FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Fall 2010

Volume 17, Issue 3

IN THIS ISSUE

ACMH Annual Conference	Cover
Message from the ACMH Executive Director	2
Parent Corner	3
ACMH Community Updates	6
Parent Leadership Camp	9
Parent Support Partner Update	9
Youth Corner	10

ACMH Annual Conference

October 27 & 28th brought the 2010 ACMH/Statewide System of Care Conference: *Partnerships and Possibilities- Sustaining Collaboration in Challenging Times*. This year's conference, held at the Lansing Radisson Hotel & Conference Center, proved to be a huge success!

Over 300 participants, including 100+ family members (80 who attended using a family scholarship), enjoyed six keynote sessions and 34 breakouts on a variety of timely topics.

The opening keynote, *The Critical Role of Families and Youth in Systems of Care*, set the tone for the entire two-day event. Frank Rider, Technical Assistance Coordinator with the Technical Assistance Partnership for Child and Family Mental Health and the National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, facilitated the session. Two parents whose children were served by the public mental health system shared two uniquely different experiences. One story painted an image beautifully illustrating the power of multiple systems working together, in partnership with the youth and parent, to create positive outcomes. The other painted the opposite image illustrating the frightening results when systems do not work together effectively and the devastating consequences that can occur when you do not partner with youth and their family. The messages inspired hope



coupled with the sobering reality that there is still much to do. Many youth and families are still in need of systems of care that can provide adequate mental health services and supports across Michigan.

Other conference highlights included a luncheon keynote titled *Cultural Competency in Practice* delivered by William McCoy and a keynote on Juvenile Justice titled *Hitting the Target: What Works in Reducing Delinquent Behavior* delivered by Dr. Ed Latessa.

As many of you may have noticed, this year's conference was a little different from the ACMH conferences of the past. ACMH decided early in the year to partner with the 3rd Annual Statewide System of Care Conference. For over 20 years ACMH has held an annual conference; however, we have never successfully drawn the professional attendance we have desired. This year's partnership was

continued on page 2

Director's Message



Happy Holidays everyone! As the weather begins to change and bring cooler air with snowflakes, I think about the fast approaching holiday season. The winter holidays are my favorite time of the year as anyone who enters the ACMH state office can tell you. I have been happily decorating since before Thanksgiving!

Some of my favorite things during the holidays are drinking hot cocoa by the fireplace, the decorating of the Christmas tree, baking butter cookies with my boys, and spending time with family & friends. I hope you are able to find time to do some of your favorite things this holiday season. 2010 has gone by so fast with so many remarkable moments. I can hardly wait to see what 2011 will bring!

During this holiday season, I am reminded of the importance of hope. Some say, hope is the most

important thing anyone can have. So here are some things I hope for you and your family. I hope you have health, happiness, and heartfelt joy. I hope you have so much fun your face hurts from laughter. I hope you love so much your chest feels as if it will burst. And I hope you have blessings so abundant you struggle to count them!

From our family to yours, ACMH wishes you a joyous, peaceful, and loving holiday season and a Happy New Year!



Malisa Pearson

ACMH Annual Conference *Continued from page 1*

ACMH's first attempt to demonstrate through our practice the importance and power of parents and professionals working together on behalf of youth with mental health challenges.

We could not have been happier with the result! The event was a great success and a wonderful opportunity for families and professionals to learn with each other and from each other. ACMH believes that only when families, professionals and systems work together can we successfully tackle the issues confronting children and youth with mental health challenges. The 2010 ACMH/Statewide System of Care Conference was a huge step in moving Michigan's system of care movement in the right direction.

Thank you to all who were able to join us for this year's conference and to the 2010 conference co-sponsors including:

Association for Children's Mental Health
Michigan Department of Community Health
Michigan Department of Human Services
State Court Administrators Office
Michigan Council on Crime and Delinquency
Impact, Ingham County's System of Care
Connections: Wayne County System of Care
Kalamazoo Wraps
Community Family Partnership of Kent County



We Want You! – Calling All Youth and Families

ACMH is gearing up for another year of educational opportunities with newly elected officials. As new legislators prepare to take office in January 2011, ACMH is busily strategizing how best to educate them about the importance of Children's Mental Health. ACMH is looking for parents of children with mental health needs and youth who have experienced mental health issues who are interested and willing to use their voice and share their stories.

It is critical that legislators understand the impact of the decisions they make on things such as funding for the public mental health system, parity to ensure equitable coverage for mental health treatment, and funding for programs like respite. As Margaret Mead once said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

If you would be interested in supporting ACMH's efforts to educate the 2011 newly-elected officials about the needs of children with mental health challenges and their families, please contact Lois DeMott, ACMH Administrative Assistant, at 517-372-4016 or by email at acmhlois@sbcglobal.net.

Parent Corner

Christmas Season Can Aggravate a Child with a Behavior Disorder

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The holiday season is a time for special events and celebration. Parents of children with disruptive behavior conditions know changes in daily routine can mean trouble.

Thanksgiving and Christmas are times for family fun and joyful celebrations.

However, parents of special-needs children with mental health impairments will need to brace for angry outbursts and explosive behavior that result from changes in daily routines and too much stimulation. Too often, friends, neighbors and even extended family members don't understand the stress and challenges faced by special-needs parents and families.



Celebrating the Holidays with a Child Diagnosed With a Behavior Disorder

A child with a behavior disorder may not respond well to parades, decorating the home, and holiday events. Holiday activities, school parties, family members arriving from out-of-town, and Christmas vacation can bring out the worst in a child with a mental behavior condition. Parents learn to cope, but the situation can be frustrating for other immediate family members.

Parents of children with behavior problems may keep Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations as low-key as possible. Instead of opening presents on Christmas morning, parents may find that opening gifts over a few days works better. The parents may turn down an invitation to a holiday party because they cannot risk leaving an aggressive child alone with a sitter. A couple may refuse to host out-of-town family members in the home because of the danger involved with a child diagnosed with IED.

What Can Friends and Relatives Do for Parents of Children With Behavior Disorders?

The holidays are stressful for many people, but even more so for special-needs parents trying to manage a child who has a behavior disorder or mental disability. Just getting through the day without an explosive argument can be a major victory. What's more, children and teens with IED often cause injury and destroy property when they have an episode. Friends and relatives can help. Here's how:

- Understand that the caregiver parents are doing everything possible to keep the home running smoothly during the holidays. Putting a relative up for the weekend might be a huge inconvenience. Be aware that holiday excitement, parades, parties, and noisy fun stress some children diagnosed with behavior disorders to the point of a violent reaction. Don't become offended if the parents choose not to participate or volunteer to help with a school holiday play or church performance.
- Don't isolate special-needs parents from holiday fun; find the best way to include them. Parents may not be able to attend a neighbor's party, but getting an invitation can mean a lot.
- Respect a couple's decision to celebrate in the best way possible and don't criticize. If it takes the family 3 or 4 days to open presents, then don't claim how offbeat or odd it sounds.

Children that have behavior conditions need structure and routine. When holidays and events disrupt the usual schedule, the child can become anxious, depressed, and agitated. Minor incidents can turn into violent and explosive displays of anger, especially for children and teens diagnosed with intermittent explosive disorder. Friends and relatives can make the holidays easier for special-needs parents by understanding the child's behavior condition and doing whatever is necessary to support the parents.

Quotes from 2010 ACMH Conference Attendees

James Taylor — *I had a fantastic time. Networking with other parents and the opportunity to meet and talk with the professionals was an experience that I will long remember. Great people...Great time!*



Kim Hunt/ Parent and Director of the ACMH Southwest Family Center — *I always enjoy the learning experience and networking with parents and professionals. This year's conference was full of interesting workshops and the keynotes were fantastic. I really enjoyed that this year's keynote included parents and youth. I look forward to what's in store for next year's conference!*



Nicole Baugh — *I took in a lot of information from the workshops I attended. The information was also helpful and the ability to meet new people from other places that were going through the same things was an experience.*



Deanna Pride — *The workshops I attended were full of information I could take home and use later. I truly enjoyed the motivation speaker. The family 2 family presentation was heartfelt and I learned a lot about how the process goes.*



ACMH Wayne County Staff experience — *Each year ACMH has the opportunity to sponsor parents and Wayne County has been fortunate to be able to bring parents each year. It is so exciting to hear parents talking and networking about using the information that they received at the conference. The parents were buzzing all the way home and the smiles on each face as they left the bus and said "I can't wait...I hope I can go next year" said it all!*



Lynecia Autrey — *It was a great experience. I learned about navigating through the systems.*

Vanessa Williams — *I enjoyed myself, I learned a lot in the workshops and I would like to attend the conference next year.*



ACMH celebrated 20 years of successful service to children and families in October at the ACMH/Statewide System of Care Conference in Lansing. And what an ACMH celebration it was! The evening feted the hundreds of individuals who have made The Association the strong voice for families it is today. More than 70 family members and professionals attended a festive dinner in ACMH's honor. During the meal, the crowd was treated to a beautiful vocal concert performed by Jessica Leese, ACMH's Youth Engagement Specialist.

Following dinner, Executive Director Malisa Pearson and the ACMH staff paid tribute to The Association's efforts by highlighting significant events in the organization's history. An inspiring narrative and an incredible song and dance program worthy of Motown status led the crowd through memories of The Association's amazing 20 years. ACMH staff from Wayne County performed this awesome song and dance program. This group absolutely knows how to celebrate.

Following this presentation, awards were given to parents and professionals for their outstanding work during the past year. ACMH honored the following individuals for their excellent work on behalf of youth with mental health needs and their families.



Carlynn Nichols Wayne County Partnership Award



Varil Williams Saginaw County Leadership Award

ACMH also recognized a special youth and parent. These two individuals are examples of what it means to never give up!



**Katherine Cruz Ingham County
Gail E. Lanphear Award**

**No Photo Available
Sintenesha King Ingham County
Heath Gallagher Robinson Award**

Co-founder, Gail Lanphear, was honored by Executive Director Malisa Pearson for her service to ACMH. Gail was gifted with a memory box filled with messages from parents and professionals who have worked with her over the years. To say she was touched by this tribute would be an understatement. The evening ended with lively dancing and quiet reflection by many in attendance on ACMH's journey and accomplishments on behalf of children and families.



Co-founder Gail E. Lanphear receiving her Memory Box

ACMH Community Updates

Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham County



Clinton, Eaton, and Ingham CMH, the Ingham County Family Division of Court, and the Department of Human Services continue to refer families to the Impact System of Care, which allows families access to peer-delivered supports through the ACMH Family Advocacy Support Program. The Impact Family Advocacy Support Program expanded its staff over the summer by adding a new family advocate; Lisa Terrill. We are excited to have her join us and want to say welcome aboard Lisa.

In September, CEI-CMH held an indoor/outdoor health expo. ACMH was excited to have a chance to participate and meet families from the tri-county area. Over 1000 people came out for the event. ACMH met the Directors from the Healing Hearts with Horses program that is located in Dewitt, through Sierra Rose Farms. Healing Hearts with Horses utilizes Equine Assisted Learning (EAL) activities to work with women & children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, grief, anxiety, depression, and those who have been both mentally or physically abused. In March of 2011, we will be holding a “Day at the Farm” event in collaboration with Healing Hearts with Horses. Stay tuned for more details.

Our first Family Leadership Series wrapped up in August, 2010. The family leadership series was designed as a follow up course for parents & caregivers who had successfully completed the ACMH Parent Leadership Camp. This series allows family members to further their development of leadership skills, connect with key leaders across Ingham County, and generate ideas how to apply leadership skills to impact issues in their communities. Participants attend a 2 hour meeting once per month for ten months. Leaders from across the state facilitate each of the sessions.

Recently graduated family leaders from the first series have begun strategizing ways that they can make a difference in their community. They decided to begin working on “Stomping out Stigma”. Stay tuned to hear more about their progress in future articles and please join me in celebrating their success. Congratulations ACMH-CEI-Family Leadership Graduates of 2010!

The next Family Leadership Series began in November of 2010. For more information, please contact ACMH Lead Family Contact, Tiffiany Leischner, at acmhtiffiany@sbcglobal.net.

The daytime Family Council has added an additional date/time each month. We meet the first Tuesday of every month, from 10-12pm, and the second Thursday of every month from 12:30-2:30pm at 838 Louisa St., Suite B, Lansing MI 48911. Listed below is a schedule of upcoming meetings:

Tuesdays — 12-07-10, 01-04-11, 2-01-11 from 10-12pm,
Thursday — 12-09-10, 01-13-11, 02-10-11 from 12:30-2:30pm

The Impact Family Council is open to any family in Ingham County that is raising a child/youth with behavioral, emotional, or mental health needs. If your child is struggling to make friends, having a hard time in school, or you as a parent need support from other parents who have similar stressors, please join us.

If you would like more information about Impact; Tri-county special events; the Family Leadership Series, or the Impact Family Council, please contact Tiffiany Leischner at 517-346-8158 or by email at acmhtiffiany@sbcglobal.net.



West Michigan

West Michigan is keeping Shareen McBride-Wicklund, ACMH Family Advocate, busy supporting families and youth in her communities. She has been attending numerous meetings with families to ensure their voices are incorporated into their service plans.

As the weather changes in the West part of Michigan, so does the way children and families can expect to receive services. Kathy Lacko with West Michigan Community Mental Health has been busy bringing stakeholders together across the community. The first meeting of the stakeholders was uplifting and encouraging. The meeting resulted in all stakeholders agreeing that families of at risk children need support. Shareen and ACMH are looking forward to additional meetings and further dialogue regarding ways to meet the needs of children and families.

Several parents from West Michigan participated in this year’s 2010 ACMH/Statewide System of Care Conference held in Lansing October 27 & 28th. Everyone had a great time learning, networking, and meeting new people. Parents who attended reported they were inspired to make changes not only for their own families but for all families across their communities.

The Wraparound program with Catholic Charities of West Michigan has some new faces. ACMH welcomes Nancy Miller, the new Wraparound supervisor; Tonya McKerchie, the new Wraparound coordinator; and Diane Petters, the new

ACMH Community Updates cont.

Administrative Assistant. These three women bring a lot of enthusiasm and knowledge to Wraparound and will be an asset to Mason, Lake, and Oceana counties. We look forward to working with you to make a difference in the lives of youth and families.

As the new fiscal year begins, many individuals will be retiring from the Department of Human Services in Mason, Lake, and Oceana counties. Thank you for all of your years of dedication to families in the community. Your presence will be missed.

Congratulations to our new Senator, Goeff Hansen, and Representative Ray Franz. We look forward to working with you on behalf of youth with mental health needs and their families.

Oakland County

Oakland staff, Marega DeLizio, Paula Eifler, and Dee Lantto continue to meet the service challenges that the budget cuts have made in their community. They have coordinated with community partners Easter Seals and Common Ground to continue both the Parent Support Partner and the Parent Guide positions. ACMH is are thrilled to be starting a new partnership with the second children's service provider in Oakland County, Oakland Family Services. Thanks to a recently approved contract, ACMH will begin supporting parents served by Oakland Family Services with Parent Support Partner services as well as a weekly parent group.

With the continued support of Havenwyck Hospital, a Parent Support group for Behavioral Challenged/Bipolar children continues every other Thursday at the Havenwyck Hospital facility. Thank you to Jim Walainis, MSW and Cheryl VandeWege, RN who generously help with facilitation of these meetings. Oakland parents are tenacious in the search for new skills and tools to better help their children meet the challenges and struggles they face daily. Their shared knowledge has been priceless in this task.

A special thanks to Easter Seals who recently expanded their partnership with ACMH through a Parent Support Partner contract. Dee Lantto, who has been providing support part-time to families served through Easter Seals for the last year, is now able to deliver parent-to-parent support services to families full-time! ACMH looks forward to another year of wonderful collaboration with Easter Seals on behalf of youth with mental health needs and their families.

Detroit-Wayne County

The 2010-2011 Wayne County System of Care Parent Training has begun. Orientation has been held in Southwest Detroit at Southwest Solutions and in the Westside of Detroit at the Development Center Inc. Orientation for the Guidance Center took place in November. Parents have received information and training schedules for the first level of three, with all beginning in November 2010. If you are a parent interested in attending, please contact Kim Hunt @ (313) 895-2860.

A legislative event/focus group was held with parents and professionals to discuss how the community can come together with the Department of Human Services to improve the quality of services provided to families in the Southwest Detroit area. Parents compiled the information collected at this meeting and distributed a report to Ismael Ahmed, the Director of Michigan's Department of Human Services, as well as our local System of Care Partners. Follow-up is scheduled for November 2010.

Calendar of Support Groups and Parent Team Meetings

21st Century Dads Group – *This group is for fathers in Wayne County who want to make a difference in the lives of their child/children.*

Group held every 2nd Monday of each month from 10-12 p.m. @ ACMH Southwest Family Center

Parent Support Group for Parents with a child with (SED) Serious Emotional Disturbance – *This group is open to all parents with a child who has a mental health challenge. Group topics include: The diagnosis of my child, what it means, and what can I do as a parent to access services for my child?*

Group held every 2nd Tuesday of each month from 10-12 @ ACMH Southwest Family Center

Hispanic Family Support Group – *This group is for Spanish speaking parents and will work with parents on identifying barriers in accessing services and distributing resources.*

Group held every 3rd Wednesday of each month from 10-11:30 @ ACMH Southwest Family Center

South West Youth Rising Leaders (SWYRL) Youth Group – *This group is for youth between the ages 8-14 with a mental health challenge and/or a want to stop stigma and develop leadership skills. Group is designed to grow into young community leaders and engage with Youth United in Wayne County.*

Group held every 4th Thursday of each month from 4-5p.m. @ ACMH Southwest Family Center

Legislative Team Meeting – *This group is for parents, community members, and system partners to work on policy change, legislative contacts, and system reform. Teams meet with local and state representatives to identify issues and develop solutions.*

Group held every 4th Thursday of each month from 10-12 @ ACMH Southwest Family Center

Trauma Focused CBT Parent Resource Trainers Group – *This group identifies interested and committed parents to partner with professionals and train while working towards a Trauma Informed System.*

Group meets currently through December on Mondays from 12-2 @ ACMH Southwest Family Center

ACMH Community Updates cont.

Special thanks to the following:

Page Way Tours- Claude Pressley(Owner) - for providing safe and enjoyable transportation for the parents to attend the 2010 System of Care Conference in Lansing.

Kevin Williams - for providing support and assistance to the Wayne County staff for their singing/dancing presentation at the conference.

ACMH State office staff - for all their hard work and support in getting Wayne County Parents to the conference. We had a GREAT TIME!

Northern Michigan



ACMH is excited to announce a new addition to the Northern Michigan region of the ACMH family! Julie Donley, a mother of 3, will begin working part-time as a Family Advocate in early December 2010. In mid-November, Jane Shank, Malisa Pearson, and Gail Lanphear met with Julie to do a face to face interview. During her interview, she articulated her strong belief in families, in the power of parent and

youth voice, and the importance of advocacy. Julie – welcome to our family. You are truly one of us and we are excited to have you join us!

Jane Shank attended the Rural Behavioral Health Symposium in Glendale, Arizona in September. As part of ACMH's focus going into 2011, we are pursuing new and innovative ways to get parent-to-parent support to families in rural areas across Michigan. Jane's attendance at this conference was a wonderful opportunity to learn about innovative and family driven approaches to mental health care in rural and frontier communities and to network with providers and families from over 30 states.

Saginaw

Very exciting things are in store for children, youth, families and the community of Saginaw. Saginaw County was recently awarded a federal System of Care Grant. Saginaw County Community Mental Health (SCCMHA) and local System of Care partners became a SAMHSA funded site for 6 years on October 1, 2010.

Saginaw's System of Care will build on the foundation of strong state and local collaboration initiated in 2007 to develop a system of care for children and youth with serious emotional disturbances and their families. Saginaw's system of care will target families with children and youth experiencing serious emotional disturbances, ages 6 to17, experiencing difficulties in school, at

home, and/or in the community. These will be youth who require the services and supports of two or more child-serving systems (such as mental health, juvenile justice, child welfare, or special education.).

The cornerstone of systems of care is the authentic inclusion of youth and family voice and choice not only in the development and provision of individualized services, but also in the transformation of the service delivery system. Families will be provided with needed supports to empower them to take a lead role in planning a positive future for their child, family, and community. Teams will work to develop and manage individualized service plans in full partnership with families and youth.

Families will also have a vital role in system of care planning and implementation. If you are a parent/caregiver and would be interested in participating on the Saginaw County System of Care Family Advisory Board, which currently has 5 openings, the next meeting date is December 21st. If you are interested in participating, please contact Dalia Smith at acmhaldalia@sbcglobal.net or by phone at: 989-498-2272.

The Saginaw County Parent-to-Parent Support Group will take place on December 21st and the topic will be Recipient Rights and Appeals and Grievances. Please contact Dalia Smith for additional information.

Saginaw families have been taking advantage of many learning and leadership opportunities offered by the Association for Children's Mental Health and other local and statewide agencies. Two Saginaw parents, Kim Austin and Leon Brown, attended the ACMH Parent Leadership Camp held in September and several Saginaw parents were able to attend the ACMH/Statewide System of Care Conference held on October 27 & 28 in Lansing.

A special thanks to SCCMHA for donating gas cards for parent transportation and to Regina Hilburn, Val Williams and Mark and Rhonda Bryant for providing transportation.

SCCMHA therapist and Family Intervention Specialist/ Juvenile Justice, Varil D. Williams, was honored at the ACMH 20th Anniversary Dinner Reception during the recent ACMH/ Statewide System of Care conference. Varil was awarded the ACMH Parent Professional Partnership Award for all she does on behalf of youth with mental health needs and their families. Congratulations Varil!



2010 Parent Leadership Camp

On September 28 & 29th, over 20 parents/caregivers of youth with mental health challenges came together to embark on a journey of leadership development. By participating in ACMH's annual Parent Leadership Camp, these parents/caregivers join an elite group of individuals who have identified their interest in using their experiences, their stories, and their voices to create change for youth with mental health needs and their families.

This year's participants came from Saginaw, Ingham, Oakland, Wayne and Eaton counties. The group was eager to learn, asked a lot of questions, and developed new connections with key family leaders across the state. ACMH believes parents partnering with professionals will ultimately be what lead's to systemic transformation in Children's Mental Health. Participants spent the two days learning about strategic communication skills, the public mental health system, critical events in the family driven movement, conflict management skills, and strategies for developing parent/professional partnerships.



Parents/caregivers who attend the annual Parent Leadership Camp are encouraged to consider leadership roles within ACMH such as committees, planning groups, and vacant board seats. If you would like more information on the 2011 Parent Leadership Camp, please contact Terri Henrizi, ACMH Education Coordinator, at 517-372-4016 or by email at acmhterri@sbcglobal.net.

Parent Support Partner Update

Late summer and early fall have seen the Parent Support Partner project grow and flourish. Cohort Two (participants from St Clair, Lapeer, Ingham, Kalamazoo, and Wayne counties) completed the second part of their classroom training in September and joined Cohort One in a Professional Development/Technical Assistance quarterly meeting on November 22nd. Jane Shank, PSP Statewide Coordinator, and Malisa Pearson, ACMH Exec. Director, have visited multiple communities who have expressed interest in learning more about the role of Parent Support Partners and how they can be a part of Cohort Three. Cohort Three will begin in mid-January 2011. Any community interested in being included in the next Cohort should contact Jane Shank at 1-231-943-0368 or by email at acmhjane@sbcglobal.net for an application packet.



Great value has been found in doing more extensive one-on-one community readiness training with systems partners as they begin to integrate Parent Support Partner's into their mental health service delivery system. Additionally, the joint supervision component of the model has given us an opportunity to witness first-hand the positive impact that peer parent-delivered support can have for families, professionals, and systems.

Several presentations have been done about the Parent Support Partner project across Michigan and at national conferences. Malisa Pearson and Jane Shank presented at the Michigan Association for Community Mental Health Boards in October, at the ACMH/Statewide System of Care Conference in October, at the Home-Based Services Workers Conference in September and at the National Federation of Families Conference in November. These presentations have been a wonderful opportunity to educate individuals about the Parent Support Partner model, gather feedback, and hear from communities across the country how they are implementing peer delivered parent support services.

Youth Organizers (Y.O.) – ACMH's Statewide Youth Advisory Council

Youth Organizers, the statewide youth advisory council for ACMH, has been working on several projects within the past couple months. First and foremost, the decision was made to begin their focus on creating awareness regarding mental health challenges, specifically for their peers. In order to begin this process, the council created an “Anti-Stigma” brochure that highlights what stigma means and how to stand up against stigma. The next step is to create a presentation that they can take into schools, particularly focusing on psychology and health classes within each school. From there, the council will take on the challenge of hitting every high school in the state!



The council made a decision that it is imperative to collaborate with several youth programs across the state with the purpose of sharing resources, getting involved with different program activities and events, and to make youth involvement and youth voice a more powerful movement in Michigan. Currently, the youth on the council have identified seven youth programs across the state that they are in the process of contacting to begin building strong relationships.

Events the council has been involved with recently include presenting at the Department of Community Health, the Children's Issues Committee, and the System of Care/Association for Children's Mental Health Conference, and being part of a panel at the Michigan Association of Community Mental Health Boards Conference. The council also continues to update the timeline of their goals and is working on materials that can be used to evaluate their effectiveness in collaborating with other programs and agencies.

In the future, the council plans to get involved with training opportunities across the state where they can share their stories and inform agencies, youth, and legislators about stigma, the importance of youth voice, and how we can all come together to make a difference. They are also planning on creating three support groups throughout the state where youth can come together to share their successes and challenges. Lastly, the council is in the beginning stages of developing a “Youth Resource Guide” that will incorporate resources for youth across the state, broken up by county. Examples of resources to be included are youth programming, mental health services, suicide hotlines, and Planned Parenthood.

The youth are looking forward to the projects to come and are excited to have the council goals under way. If you would like more information on the council, have a youth who would like to be involved, or know of a youth program that might want to collaborate with the council, please visit the ACMH website (www.acmh-mi.org) or call the state office (1-888-226-4543).

Impact, Ingham County System of Care – Youth Involvement

The past few months have been busy for the youth in Ingham County. The Speak Your Mind Youth Council (SYM) was just awarded a 2010 Dare to Dream grant by Youth Move National, which is the youth movement through the National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. This is a huge accomplishment! Special congratulations go out to Britiney Thayer who wrote and submitted the grant! Youth who are a part of the Speak Your Mind Youth Council will be creating posters with their pictures and their own stories, highlighting their struggles and accomplishments with the theme “I Am Not My Mental Illness”. The posters will be displayed as part of their Children's Mental Health Awareness Day travelling art show, which is displayed at different partner agencies each month throughout the year. The project is expected to be done by April 2011.

Youth also had the opportunity to participate in the 2010 System of Care/Association for Children's Mental Health Conference. Lindsey Leischner, Airen Spindler, and Sintenesha King presented on the value of youth voice and the importance of youth involvement. The presentation was done in collaboration with Calling All Youth- Advocacy Services for Kids in Kalamazoo- and Youth United-Southwest Counseling Solutions in Detroit. The breakout session was well attended, and the youth received a lot of positive feedback. Sintenesha King also presented with Advocacy Services for Kids and Pace and Partners on effective communications, how to get youth involved in an outreach campaign, and what youth in Ingham County are doing to reach out and spread the word. This presentation was also well received. Lastly, youth were also able to participate in the ACMH 20th anniversary reception. Youth of SYM created a slideshow that emphasized the importance of acceptance and focused around the message of “anti-bullying”. Congratulations to Sintenesha King who was awarded the Heath Gallagher Robinson Award!

Other important events happening with youth in Ingham County include the creation of a youth involvement and youth guided training that will be presented during agency staff meetings and other appropriate venues. They are also working on a training series for youth focused on

Youth Corner cont.

employment, leadership, and transition. They steadily participate in providing feedback for the local Evaluation Team and are part of several workgroups within Impact. Lastly, the youth are gearing up for the 2011 Children's

Mental Health Awareness Day campaign. Currently, they are brainstorming ways in which they can reach out to the community at large, as well as focusing on partner agencies, families, and youth.

Children's Mental Health Facts



Did You Know...

- One in five children has a diagnosable mental health disorder
- Up to 44% of youth with serious mental health disorders will drop out of school
- Up to 70% of youth involved in the Juvenile Justice system have a diagnosable mental health disorder
- Youth with mental health disorders are three times more likely to be suspended or expelled from school
- Youth suicide occurs at a rate equal to more than one MD-88 jet airliner crashing and killing everyone on board every two weeks!

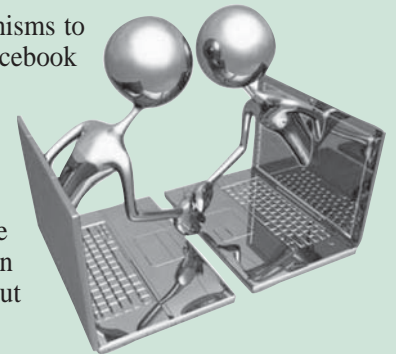
Information adapted from National Center on Childhood Poverty (NCCP) and the National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health (NFFCMH)

The ACMH Communication Connection!

The Association for Children's Mental Health has begun seeking additional on-line mechanisms to communicate with youth, families, and professionals. Earlier this year, ACMH launched a Facebook page in efforts to get important information about events and happenings related to children's mental health out to youth, parents, and professionals in real time. When we began, we had 12 fans on our Facebook page. In just 7 short months, we have grown to over 195 fans!

Another exciting opportunity for youth with mental health needs and their families are the ACMH Bulletin Boards that launched earlier this year. These bulletin boards are interactive rooms where youth with mental health needs or the parents/caregivers who raise them can go to meet other youth and parents, share experiences, support one another, and learn about resources, information, and opportunities that exist in their neighborhoods.

If you haven't checked out our new on-line communication tools, please visit the ACMH website at www.acmh-mi.org for a link to connect. We look forward to hearing from you soon!



ACMH
6017 W. St. Joe Hwy, Suite 200
Lansing, MI 48917

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A Warm Welcome from the ACMH Family to our newest funders: Muskegon CMH, Oakland Family Services, and CareLink

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Support for this publication comes in part from SAMHSA

