

2008 Annual Plan of Work

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Parenting Education

Situation Analysis and Program Priorities:

The need for effective, high quality parent education programs remains a high priority in Wisconsin and Pierce County. There is a growing need among parents, professionals, community leaders and citizens for educational opportunities and technical assistance that can expand their knowledge and skills about child rearing, especially in the area of evidence-based programs.

Evidence-based (or “science-based”) programs are approaches that have been developed and evaluated using scientific processes. These programs are grounded in a clear theoretical foundation and have been carefully implemented and evaluated. The evaluation findings have been subjected to critical review by other researchers and the program has been replicated in a variety of settings. Programs and approaches that are evidence-based have produced desired results in a number of different settings.

In my work with the River Falls Partnership for Youth (RFPFY), I have collaborated with UW-River Falls (UW-RF) staff on projects related to the effects of adolescent alcohol and drug abuse on the mental health and ultimately the academic success of college students. UWRF counseling staff report that more and more students are seeking assistance for feelings of being “overwhelmed” as early as the third week of school rather than at semester time as in years past. Some of these students turn to inappropriate and ineffective stress management behaviors such as alcohol or other drug use among others.

I am currently working with a team of colleagues from UW-Extension to implement and evaluate a “College Transition” curriculum that focuses on specific solutions and best practices in preventing mental health problems during mid to late adolescence. Since the goal is to address the issue from a prevention standpoint, the primary target audience is high school students pursuing some form of post-secondary education and their parents/caretakers.

Intended Outcomes for Priority Programs:

Priority Program #1: Increase Utilization of **Evidence-based** Parenting and Family Programs

Long Term Outcome:

1. Families who participate in **evidence-based** parenting programs will have more optimal child development outcomes and reduced youth and family problems.

Medium Term Outcomes:

1. Community partners and volunteers will increase their use of **evidence-based** programs.

2. Families who participate in **evidence-based** programs will improve their parenting practices

Short Term Outcomes:

1. Families and individuals will become better informed and connected to community programs and resources thereby improving their overall health and well-being.
2. Community partners and volunteers will increase their understanding of, awareness of, and access to **evidence-based** programs.

Priority Program #2: Provide Research-based information and Best Practices Parenting and Family Programs

Long Term Outcome:

1. Families who participate in research-based content and best practices parenting programs will have more optimal child development outcomes and reduced youth and family problems.

Medium Term Outcome:

1. Families and other caretakers of children who participate in research-based content and best practices parenting or family education programs will improve their parenting practices.

Short Term Outcomes:

1. Families and individuals will become better informed and connected to community resources, thereby improving their overall health and well-being.
2. Parents and other adults who care for children will increase their knowledge and use of positive communication and parenting practices.

Implementation Plan – Inputs & Outputs:

Inputs:

1. UW-Extension Staff
2. UW-Extension State Specialists
3. River Falls Community Partnership for Youth
4. Research-based content parenting education curriculum and materials
5. Evidence-based parenting education curriculum and materials
6. Funding for training and purchasing materials
7. Local community leaders
8. Program evaluation tools

Outputs: Participation (who we reach)	Outputs: Activities (what we do)
✓ Parents, grandparents and	1. Provide technical support and parenting education for the River Falls Partnership for Youth (RFPFY).

<p>other caretakers of children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Youth age 10-14 ✓ Childcare providers ✓ Teachers, other school staff and administrators ✓ Galaxy III participants ✓ Separated and divorced parents ✓ Head Start parents and staff ✓ Galaxy III participants ✓ Students preparing for college ✓ Parents of students preparing for college 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Network and develop new working relationships with local agencies, organizations, schools and families to help support healthy families and communities in Pierce County. 3. Implement the “Parenting Wisely” curriculum with drug court participants. 4. Organize and teach parenting portion of “Strengthening Families for Parents (SFP) and Youth 10-14” in the River Falls School District (February/March). 5. Recruit new facilitators to be trained for SFP. 6. Recruit new school districts to implement SFP. 7. Seek funding to support SFP in Pierce County. 8. Teach “Overindulgence” to Ellsworth Head Start parents (January). 9. Teach “How To Talk So Kids Will Listen” class at Plum City Elementary School (March) 10. Teach “Bully Prevention” for the American Association of University Women (April). 11. Teach “Raising a Spirited Child” at UW-Stout Early Childhood Education Conference (April). 12. Teach “Raising a Spirited Child” at Plum City Elementary School (April) 13. Teach “Overindulgence” at a Caring For Kids Conference in St. Croix County (April) 14. Co-author and coordinate distribution of monthly Young Families Newsletter to Pierce County families. 15. Coordinate distribution of “Parenting Together While Apart” newsletter for non-traditional families in Pierce County. 16. Review and update local family living web page (quarterly). 17. Participate as member of the Success by Six Leadership Board (quarterly meetings). 18. Assist in expanding Family Resource Center educational programs into Pierce County. 19. Participate as member of the Coordinated Services Team/Wraparound program (monthly). 20. Participate as member of the River Falls Area Hospital Community Health Advisory Committee (quarterly). 21. Participate as member of the UW-RF University Advisory Council on Health and Wellness (quarterly). 22. Teach “The College Transition” at Galaxy III (September). 23. Teach “The College Transition” to Pierce county residents (River Falls in January; Ellsworth in March).
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	<p>24. Present “The College Transition” at the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Curriculum Showcase (June).</p> <p>25. Present “The College Transition” to Northern District Extension colleagues at district in-service (October).</p>
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Evaluation:

1. Post-session evaluation of Bully Prevention classes.
2. Post-session evaluation of Overindulgence classes.
3. Retrospective evaluation of Strengthening Families Program.
4. Retrospective survey of the College Transition program participants.
5. Long-term follow up telephone survey (9 to 12 months) of College Transition participants.

Professional Development:

1. Attend and teach at Early Childhood Education Conference at UW-Stout (April).
2. Attend Public Issues Leadership Development session in Washington D.C. (April)
3. Attend American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences Annual Conference – Evolving Technology: Impact on Individuals, Families and Communities in Milwaukee (June).
4. Attend parent education related presentations at the Galaxy III conference Indianapolis (September).

Strengthening Community Environments For Positive Youth & Family Development

Situation Analysis and Program Priorities:

The most recent Wisconsin public health plan identified substance abuse, high risk sexual behavior and obesity as youth health priorities for Wisconsin (Wisconsin DHFS, Healthiest Wisconsin 2010). There is growing recognition of the important role multi-sector community efforts can play in focusing on these issues and in supporting the positive development of youth. The Administration for Children and Families states that when young people are nurtured by caring adults, are given opportunities to develop skills, and are actively engaged in community activities, they become valuable contributors to the quality of community life. In addition, as young people gain confidence and skills, they are able to make positive choices (Positive Youth Development, Administration for Children & Families). In the 2004 UW-Extension program planning process in Wisconsin, many counties echoed these same thoughts regarding positive youth development and coordinated community efforts. For healthy development to occur for all children and youth, communities need to become environments where people and organizations feel connected, engaged, responsible, and committed to young people (Search Institute, Pass It On #6, 1999). UW Extension Educators are equipped to help communities develop and implement effective community-level strategies to support young people.

The River Falls Partnership for Youth (RFPFY) has been addressing issues of alcohol and other drug abuse in the River Falls school district for over ten years. They have been managing the federal Drug-Free Communities grant for over five years. Two of their major goals include: 1) reducing substance abuse among youth, and 2) increasing positive family communication and strengthening parental boundaries.

In the past, the RFPFY focused primarily on prevention strategies that helped to build the capacity of the coalition to address the needs of individuals and families. According to the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA), “significant evidence exists showing that the most effective way to prevent alcohol and other drug problems is to change the environment in which these problems occur”. Environmental prevention efforts focus mainly on changing the settings and circumstances in which people use drugs or alcohol rather than solely focusing on changing individuals. Our RFPFY leadership team (of which I have served on for three of the past four years) has been educating the Partnership and other community stakeholders about the need to shift the focus from providing programs and services to implementing community-focused approaches that are externally focused and more likely to transform communities.

As a result of a strategic planning process conducted in 2007, the RFPFY identified the following as one of the Partnership’s bold steps: “Educate and engage citizens in promoting policy that positively impacts drug free, safe, healthy communities”. I currently serve on a sub-committee working to flesh out how to effectively implement this objective.

Intended Outcomes for Priority Programs:

Priority Program #1: Increase Environmental Strategies That Affect Community Change Around Alcohol and Other Drug Prevention Issues

Long Term Outcome:

1. RFPFY and other community members will adopt or modify policies that positively impact drug free, safe, healthy communities for youth and families.

Medium Term Outcome:

1. RFPFY and other community members will increase their ability to assess their own community environment relative to positive youth development.
2. RFPFY and other community groups and coalitions will increase their ability to effect change in the community.

Short Term Outcome:

1. RFPFY and other community members will increase their knowledge of and their role in providing an environment for positive youth development.
2. RFPFY and other community members will understand how implementing community-focused approaches (as opposed to providing services or programs to individuals and families) can be more effective in preventing alcohol and other drug abuse issues.

Implementation Plan – Inputs & Outputs:

Inputs:

1. UW-Extension Staff and State Specialists
2. River Falls Community Partnership for Youth Leadership Team
3. Funding for training and purchasing materials
4. Local community leaders
5. Program and process evaluation tools
6. Drug-free communities grant funding
7. PRIDE Youth Survey and Community Readiness Survey results
8. Media and marketing tools

Outputs: Participation (who we reach)	Outputs: Activities (what we do)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Teachers, other school staff and administrators ✓ RFPFY members ✓ Key stakeholders in River Falls 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Network and develop new working relationships with local agencies, organizations, schools and families to help support healthy families and communities in Pierce County. 2. Participate as member of the Western District Urban Initiative on Methamphetamine team. 3. Help plan, implement and evaluate a Community Forum in River Falls around the recent PRIDE (middle and high school student risk survey) and Community Readiness Survey results. 4. Help plan, implement and evaluate a Town Hall Supper on Underage Drinking in River Falls (April) 5. Search for and refer RFPFY members to appropriate professional development opportunities around policy development. 6. Facilitate a learning opportunity for key stakeholders in River Falls about promoting effective drug prevention policies to affect community change. 7. Participate as member of the UW-RF University Advisory Council on Health and Wellness (quarterly). 8. Participate as River Falls Area Hospital Community Health Advisory Committee member (CHAC).

Evaluation:

1. RFPFY group member survey to assess effectiveness of coalition activities and leadership.
2. Post session evaluation of RFPFY Community Forum.
3. Post session evaluation of Town Hall Supper for Underage Drinking
4. Documentation of local policy creation/changes.

Professional Development:

1. Attend Transforming Communities and Building Community Capacity training in Madison (February).
2. Attend Multicultural Awareness Training in Eau Claire (April).
3. Attend Public Issues Leadership Development session in Washington D.C. (April)
4. Seek professional development opportunity related to “helping community members learn how to create or modify policies that positively impact drug free, safe, healthy communities”.

Addressing the Affordable Housing Crisis in Pierce County

Situation Analysis and Program Priorities:

Families want to live in homes and communities that will get their children off to the best possible start. Yet, high housing costs complicate housing decisions, as families weigh tradeoffs among cost, quality and location. Poor and low-income families face the greatest constraints on housing choices. To make matters worse, children in these limited income households tend to fare worse in other areas such as health or cognitive development. These already vulnerable children are the most likely to suffer from housing-related problems.

The western Wisconsin counties of Pierce and St. Croix have seen growth in population as well as rental and home ownership costs. Growth in the job sector for west central Wisconsin has been in lower wage jobs that do not meet livable wage standards. In addition, the overall cost of living in these counties has created a need for more than one wage earner per family. The 2004 self-sufficiency wage for a single parent raising one preschooler and one school-age child in Pierce County is \$19.01 per hour (\$21.18/hour in St. Croix) compared to \$13.25 in Dunn County.

The fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Pierce and St. Croix counties is the highest in the state. The median sale price of a single-family home rose 54% in Pierce County between 1995 and 2002 (\$164,000 in 2003), far exceeding the state’s overall increase in housing costs. During that same time period, the Consumer Price Index climbed at less than half that rate increasing only 17.8 percent.

According to the Department of Workforce Development, the jobs in greatest demand in western Wisconsin make \$10.11 or less per hour. This disconnect between livable wage jobs and escalating housing costs will continue to increase the burden on low and moderate income households.

A recent trend in the housing crisis is the growing numbers of families facing foreclosure due to a number of economic issues including job loss, predatory lending and the increase in nontraditional mortgage products. Local newspapers contain pages of foreclosure notices instead of the typical one or two.

The Pierce - St. Croix Housing Resource Network (PSCHRN) has documented the growing need for safe and affordable housing in the area. Communities, government and nonprofit entities need to respond to the housing crisis using a variety of tools, but first they must be educated about the possible options. One innovative solution is the community land trust; a nonprofit organization created to acquire and hold land for the benefit of a community while providing access to permanently affordable housing. The PSCHRN is in the process of bringing

the community land trust model to western Wisconsin with the intent to demonstrate to developers, potential funding partners and the broader community that a community land trust is a useful tool to help address the affordable housing issue. In mid-2007 the PSCHRN purchased their first community land-trust home in New Richmond. Plans are currently in progress for the purchase of one or more homes in the River Falls area in 2008.

Intended Outcomes for Priority Programs:

Priority Program #1: Safe and Affordable Housing for Residents of Pierce County

Long Term Outcomes:

1. Communities will increase their capacity to develop and preserve decent, safe and affordable housing.
2. Low to moderate income families will have greater access to safe, affordable housing options.

Medium Term Outcome:

1. Community partners will adopt and implement new practices that increase access to housing resources and housing stability.

Short Term Outcomes:

1. Community partners will build connections through multi-stakeholder coalitions, planning and other efforts.
2. Community members will become more aware of the local housing situation.

Implementation Plan – Inputs & Outputs:

Inputs:

1. UW-Extension Staff
2. Pierce-St. Croix Housing Resource Network
3. Two Rivers Community Land Trust (Theresa Vanderbent)
4. Educational materials/curriculum related to affordable housing
5. Media and marketing tools

Outputs: Participation (who we reach)	Outputs: Activities (what we do)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Service agencies and providers ✓ Local developers and home builders ✓ Faith-based community representatives ✓ Local and county government officials ✓ Landlords and realtors ✓ Bankers and lenders ✓ Local volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue to recruit new housing coalition members from key organizations in the community ✓ Educate key stakeholders about the value of community land trusts as an option for affordable housing ✓ Facilitate educational presentations to increase awareness of local housing issues and resources

Evaluation:

1. Number of people who increase their awareness of the affordable housing and homelessness issue as a result of participating in community awareness events.
2. Number of partners or key stakeholders who increase their awareness of affordable housing issues and resources.
3. Number of new partners or key stakeholders who commit to working on issues related to affordable housing.
4. Describe ways in which the coalition's work has effected infrastructure changes related to local housing.

Professional Development:

1. Attend housing-related presentations at the Galaxy III conference in Indianapolis (September 2008).
2. Attend professional development opportunities related to foreclosure prevention.