



1992 Consortium Connections: Winter *S*

Children, Youth and Family Consortium:

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MINNESOTA KIDS COUNT

by Carolyn Hendrixson, Congregations Concerned for Children

Minnesota KIDS COUNT is a four-year project of the Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota and Congregations Concerned for Children to reduce child poverty in Minnesota. The purpose of the project is to educate citizens and policy makers in Minnesota on the unmet needs of the state's children and promote policies that address these needs, and will allow both organizations to jointly utilize their strengths, build their capacities, and work with organizations, policy makers and citizens in addressing child poverty. Minnesota is one of thirty-seven states to have a KIDS COUNT project funded by The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Leadership of Minnesota KIDS COUNT comes from the Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota, Congregations Concerned for Children and Minnesota Extension Service. A KIDS COUNT Advisory Committee, as well as Data and Communications Advisory Committees, assist in the direction and statewide coordination of the project. The Children, Youth, and Family Consortium is represented on the Advisory Committee by Marti Erickson and Trudy Dunham. Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota is responsible for obtaining new county-by-county and statewide data on Minnesota's children and identifying their most pressing needs. Data on the national KIDS COUNT indicators will be reported annually in the Minnesota KIDS COUNT ANNUAL REPORT. These indicators include:

- 1) percent of low birth weight babies;
- (2) infant mortality rate;
- (3) child death rate, ages 1-4;
- (4) teen violent death rate ages 15-19;
- (5) percent of births to single teens;
- (6) juvenile custody rate ages 10-15;
- (7) percent of youth graduating from high school;
- (8) percent of children living in poverty; and
- (9) percent of children in single-parent families.

In addition to these indicators, county by county data will be collected on

- (1) the percentage of babies whose mothers begin prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy;
- (2) the percentage of children who are adequately immunized;
- (3) the percentage of infants born to single mothers where paternity is established at birth;
- (4) the number of children abused or neglected; and
- (5) the percentage of children who receive full payment of awarded child support.

All these indicators will serve as benchmarks in determining if the quality of life for children in Minnesota improves or declines in the next four years. Additional data on the status of Minnesota's children reflected in census and tax data will be reported, as well as data on child program use such as WIC and Head Start. In addition Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota will publish KIDS COUNT SPECIAL REPORTS on pressing issues such as child support, tax reform for families, and welfare reform and economic projections for families and children for year 2010. Minnesota KIDS COUNT data will be entered and updated annually in the Consortium Electronic Clearinghouse of the Children, Youth and Family Consortium. The data will be accessible to governmental and private agencies, organizations, and citizens throughout Minnesota. Congregations Concerned for Children and Minnesota Extension Service will disseminate the data reported by Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota and work to initiate change in public policy through grassroots support and advocacy. This will, in part, be accomplished by extensive work with the media and special events coinciding with the publication of the Minnesota KIDS COUNT ANNUAL and SPECIAL REPORTS. Additionally, numerous statewide organizations committed to and concerned about the needs of Minnesota's children will serve as a network for distributing Minnesota KIDS COUNT information and building support for action and policies that improve the status of Minnesota's children.

CONNECTING THE UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY THROUGH RESEARCH by Dale A. Blyth, Ph.D., Director, Research and Evaluation, Search Institute

The Research Workgroup of the Consortium has been discussing ways in which the community and University can better cooperate and collaborate on research needed to improve the lives of children, youth, and families and the communities in which they live. One way of viewing this issue is shown in Figure 1, which emerged out of one of the Workgroup's meetings. It highlights three major points.

First, there is a mutual need for information and resources. The University needs a better sense of opportunities

for research in the community and the nature of the questions that need to be addressed, while the community needs better access to researchers with knowledge and interest in the areas in which they are working. It should be noted that researchers in the area of children, youth, and families are increasingly aware of the need to understand basic theoretical and empirical issues in a richer context that only the community can provide. It is not only an issue of simplifying the research or making it more descriptive (which can be one valuable contribution), but it is also a matter of adequately capturing the richness of contexts that are increasingly important to understanding and promoting the optimal development of our children and youth. In particular, there is an increasing need to understand the many contributions and issues that come from increased cultural diversity and increased poverty. While one is desirable and can be beneficial, the other's impact can be devastating. Understanding these and other such real life community context factors can make research more useful to both practitioners and the academic disciplines. The Research Workgroup of the Consortium has been discussing ways in which the community and University can better cooperate and collaborate on research needed to improve the lives of children, youth, and families and the communities in which they live. One way of viewing this issue is shown in Figure 1, which emerged out of one of the Workgroup's meetings. It highlights three major points.

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Only by addressing both barriers and opportunities can we - the university and the community - ever hope to increase the utility of the research that is done and its impact on the well-being of children, youth, and families in the state and nation.

CONSORTIUM UPDATE

An all-university proseminar on children, youth, and families will be created in a plan devised by the Teaching Workgroup. The course will provide an overview of knowledge and issues for graduate students and advanced undergraduates throughout the University. A pilot offering of the course is scheduled for Spring quarter 1993, under the leadership of Sandra Christenson (Educational Psychology). Other faculty who have participated in planning the course to date are Karin Alaniz (Nursing), Geraldine Kearse Brookins (Social Work/Humphrey Center), W. Andrew Collins and Ann Masten (Institute of Child Development), Charles Oberg (Medicine), and Joan Sprain (MES).

Associate Vice President Josie Johnson has met with the Workgroup to discuss recognizing and enhancing diversity in the course and in other courses on children, youth, and families throughout the University. by Andy Collins The Research Workgroup is addressing the issue of increasing collaboration between University researchers and community organizations and practitioners. In December they met with Dr. Anne Petersen, Dean of the Graduate School and Vice-President for Research, to discuss ways in which the University can eliminate barriers to research and encourage joint research participation. On January 8 the combined Advocacy and Outreach Workgroups decided to focus their efforts this year on the needs of elementary school-aged children. Within the framework of violence prevention, the group will plan a campaign to raise public awareness of the needs of 6 to 12 year-olds for support, supervision, and positive activities after school hours, and to promote the development of quality programs for this age group.

The Community Training Needs Workgroup is addressing the training needs of community and social service organizations. This group is focusing on the theme of violence, and plans to identify programs that relate to teaching non-violence in schools and disseminate the information to schools and organizations in need of non-violence curriculum training.

Food for Thought-The Consortium collaborated with Chi Psy, the University of Minnesota child psychology student organization, to collect books for needy children throughout the Twin Cities. The project resulted in an accumulation of over 2,200 books which were distributed across 23 child-related agencies in time for the holidays. The drive was also conducted successfully in collaboration with Minnesota Extension agents in Ramsey and Washington counties, who distributed the books to local social service agencies and projects.

Congratulate us on our new name! We have changed our name to The Children, Youth, and Family Consortium: a University and Community Collaboration. We believe our new name will be more easily identified (and remembered)! We thank those of you who gave us suggestions and especially thank Diane Hovey and Hal Grotevant who came up with the new name. We also have a wonderful new logo (see front cover). We thank Sheila Berigan, local art director, who designed it for us. We thank Brett Olson of Geografix for our newsletter design.

Joe Mahoney joined the Consortium as an undergraduate intern during winter quarter. Joe is a senior honors

student majoring in child psychology at the U of MN. He will graduate this spring and will then begin pursuing his doctorate in child developmental. During winter quarter Joe will be gathering information on university courses and research related to children, youth, and families for entry into the Consortium Electronic Clearinghouse. Jan Joannides, who has her B.A. in biology, joined the Consortium staff in October as office manager.

The Consortium is delighted to welcome Dr. Rosa Smith, Assistant Superintendent, St. Paul Public Schools, to the Steering Committee of the Consortium. We also extend a welcome to Marilyn Larson who has agreed to join the Executive Committee and we thank Lee Luebbe for the time she has served on the Executive Committee as she leaves this role. Lee will continue to serve on the Steering Committee.

Radio AAHS goes national as Children's Satellite Network. The children's radio station (1280am), which originated in the Twin Cities, is now simulcast in Phoenix, and the future holds more cities. "For Your Family," with Consortium member Janet Macy, features university research and information at 11:00 CST.

INITIATIVES AROUND THE STATE: DULUTH CHILDREN'S COALITION by Lynn Hardesty, Director, Duluth Children's Coalition

The Duluth Children's Coalition (DCC) is a city-based public advocacy effort where individual, as well as organizational, members can join forces in community action to promote "child conscious" decision-making. The mission of the DCC is to affirm that children are a public trust and to work for their benefit with parents, community leaders and all allies of children. Fostered by the Duluth Community Action Program and funded by the Sheltering Arms Foundation in Minneapolis and the Northeastern Minnesota Initiative Fund, DCC hired a full-time staff person in February, 1992. Aided by the efforts of dedicated volunteers before that time, the DCC had established a membership network, relationships with the media, and action groups. These action-oriented work groups addressed a variety of action alerts on matters before the legislature, and resources for kids, such as the Children's Health Plan, Earned Income Credit/Working Family Credit, and Children's Sabbaths.

Two new initiatives are taking root in Duluth with the assistance of DCC and a third is in the planning phase. One, the Lead Awareness Action Group, came together last summer to work on community education and collaboration to prevent lead poisoning for children. In November, the Community Violence Prevention Council was convened to develop a strategic plan for community-wide efforts to decrease the violence experienced by youth and to teach them how to resolve conflict without violence.

Exciting plans are in the works for a new project to implement a system of measuring changes in the well-being of Duluth's children and families. Calling it, "Key-In on Kids," the DCC will generate a report each month on one of twelve indicators identified by their member organizations as key to child well-being, with the hope of stimulating media coverage, as well as public discussion on priorities for children.

The DCC publishes a monthly newsletter and sponsors public training opportunities every other month. They network with state and national child advocates, updating Duluth members about trends and needs in policy development to support kids. For more information, call Lynn Hardesty, Director, 218/724-8538.

CONSORTIUM CALENDAR

February 24-26 - The Consortium, the College of Human Ecology, the Departments of Family Social Science and Afro-American and African Studies, and the Inter-College Group on Interpersonal Relationships Research are sponsoring the visit of Dr. Linda Burton, a sociologist from Pennsylvania State University, whose research highlights multigenerational issues in African-American families. Dr. Burton will be involved in a series of lectures and colloquia February 24-26, 1993, and is the featured keynote speaker at the full-day public workshop on February 25th. The free workshop will include presentations and discussions on family experiences especially related to the African-American experience. Registration is required. Lunch and CEU's are available for a fee. Contact Dr. Philip Colgan, Family Social Science, 612/625-1900, fax 612/625-4227.

March 4 - The Parent Educator Researcher Breakfast meeting will be held at 7:30 am on March 4. Lynn Barringer and Mary Kay Stravik will be the speakers. For more information call Joni at 612/625-1855.

March 3 - A Coffee Klatch on Juvenile Offenders, sponsored by CEED and the Consortium, will be held on March 3, from 3 to 5 p.m. in room 108 Child Development. For more information contact the Center for Early Education and Development., 612/624-5780.

April 16 - The all day conference NEW ENERGY: Youth Workers in the '90s will be held at the Jewish Community Center of St. Paul, on Friday, April 16, 1993. Judson Hixson of the Midwest Regional Center for Drug Free Schools and Community will be the key note speaker. Workshop topics include preventing burnout, enhancing cultural diversity, violence prevention and others. Cost is \$25 per person. Scholarships are available. Co-sponsors include the Consortium, 4-H Youth Development, MN Prevention Resource Center, Office of the Attorney General, Khmer Youth Leadership, and the Neighborhood Action Project on Drug Abuse Prevention: A project of Jewish Community Center of St. Paul, funded by United Way of the St. Paul. For a registration form or more information, call the Neighborhood Action Project at 612/698-0751.

April 30 - The Department of School Psychology will be sponsoring the visit of Harold Stevenson, from the University of Michigan. Stevenson will speak on the afternoon of April 30. More details to follow. The Consortium and the College of Education will co-sponsor this event. For more information call Sandy Christenson at 612/624-0037.

CONNECTION CORNER

The goal of the Connection Corner is to share resource information. If you have an item, call 612/626-9582 or

send it to: N645 Elliott Hall, 75 East River Road, Minneapolis, MN 55455

Children's Defense Fund is seeking student interns to work with them in their child advocacy efforts. Interested undergraduate or graduate students should speak to their advisor or department head re: procedures for earning credit. Questions about the internship experience should be directed to Luanne Nyberg, Director, Children's Defense Fund, 612/227-6121.

The MN Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse is looking for volunteers to help staff their Lifesaver Campaign on Saturday, April 3. The campaign is an effort to solicit donations to support child abuse prevention activities. There is a training session on March 27th. For more information call Shawn at 612/641-1568. The Fathers' Resource Center (FRC) was created to provide services and information about services that support men in their role as involved parents. FRC offers a wide range of services for men, including fathers' support groups, parenting classes, a family law clinic, a speakers bureau, individual counseling for fathers, father and child activities, and information and referral. For more information about FRC and its services, contact Neil Tift, Director, at 612/874-1509, or write to Fathers' Resource Center, 430 Oak Grove Street, Suite #105, Minneapolis, MN 55403.

Researchers in the Department of Family Social Science, funded by a grant from the Emma B. Howe Foundation, have published a report entitled The Cost of Raising Children. This publication aims at helping divorce parties, mediators, judges, and attorneys to estimate the costs of raising children in the process of deciding amount of child support. Copies are available for \$1 each (plus 6.5% sales tax for Minnesota residents; 10% discount for quantities of 100 or more). To obtain a copy, contact the Minnesota Extension Service Distribution Center, 3 Coffey Hall, 1420 Eckles Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108-1030, or call 612/625-8173. Indicate item number HE-BU-5899-C.

The Search Institute has conducted a study for the national RespecTeen program entitled, Healthy Communities, Healthy Youth, which examined 90,000 high school students in 112 communities. The study found that at least 12 factors (other than the teenager's and family's own strength) help prevent young people from getting involved in problem behaviors such as alcohol and drug abuse, sexual activity, and anti-social behaviors. The report includes recommendations that help parents, educators, teenagers, community leaders, business leaders, government and youth-serving organizations to improve community life for youth. Free copies of the summary report of Healthy Communities, Healthy Youth are available from RespecTeen by calling 1-800-888-3820.

Want to make a difference in the life of an abused child? Hennepin County Juvenile Court is looking for volunteers, especially people of color, to serve as guardians ad litem. Guardians ad litem are people from the community who are willing to speak up for children involved in child protection situations. The most important qualification is life experience and common sense; there are no requirements for college degrees or professional training. Volunteers spend between 5 and 10 hours a week on their assigned cases, and are asked to make a commitment to participate for at least 18 months. Contact Johnzetta Murphy, Community Resource Specialist, 612/348-4597.

The University of Minnesota Continuing Education and Extension, and the School of Social Work are presently accepting applications to the Child Abuse Prevention Studies (CAPS) Certificate program. CAPS is a 20-credit, post-baccalaureate program for community practitioners and graduate students who are interested in acquiring a solid knowledge base, improving their practice, or preparing themselves for work in the child abuse field. The next cohort of 20 to 25 students will be admitted to begin the 2-year program in fall quarter, 1993. Core classes will be offered Tuesdays from 4 to 7 pm. Instructors are Drs. Marti Erickson and Jane Gilgun. For more information or application materials, contact Terry Petek, Certificate Program Coordinator, CEE Counseling, 314 Nolte Center, 315 Pillsbury Dr. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455, 612/625-2500. Application deadline is April 16, 1993.

The Minneapolis Optimist Club, a service club whose motto is "Service to Youth", owns a year-round residential camping facility, Kitchi Kahniss 2001, which is available to non-profit organizations and various youth agencies at a modest fee. Users provide staff and operation supplies. The site is located 100 miles north of the Twin Cities, 50 miles south of Duluth on Highway 35, Willow River Exit, and offers 100 acres adjacent to a 500-acre state game preserve. Lakes, athletic fields, and undisturbed forest allow for a range of activities in any season. Buildings are approved by the American Camping Association and can house 70 to 100 people. Contact the Minneapolis Optimist Club at 612/ 533-9187.

The University of Minnesota's College of Education is offering Enhancing Student Well-Being: An Innovative Summer Institute for Educators to assist Minnesota schools with the development of comprehensive school-based programs to enhance student well-being. The Institute will be held from 8:00 am-12:00 noon weekdays from June 15-July 1, 1993 on the Minneapolis campus of the University of Minnesota. Applications are requested from school teams (3-4 members each) that are committed to providing programs for student well-being and promotion of healthy behaviors especially in the prevention of alcohol and other drug abuse. Participants will receive three credits, waiver of the student service fee, and a \$150 stipend. Application materials will be available after February 1, 1993. To obtain application materials, contact Elizabeth Nealy at 612/624-6827.

Dakota County has produced a Community Report Card: A Profile of Children in Dakota County, which was the topic of discussion at the Dakota County First Annual Children and Families Conference "Growing Up Healthy and Whole." The Report Card contains survey information regarding indicators and trends of quality of life for children in Dakota County (e.g. health, juvenile arrests, child maltreatment, nurturance). Copies of the report are available by contacting Howard Schneider, Senior Planner, Dakota County Community Services Planning, 33 E. Wentworth, West St. Paul, MN 55118, 612/450-2808.