Children, Youth & Family *Consortium*

CONNECTIONS

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
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In This Issue

About a year ago, the Children, Youth and Family Consortium began to focus its work on the interaction of education and health disparities. Articles in the previous three issues of Connections have fleshed out specifically how this focus is being defined, and have highlighted five forms the interaction takes.

One of those forms is that "common root causes may result in both poor educational and health outcomess."[1] This concept can be expanded to include the idea that large, current societal issues can also have an impact, negative or positive, on both educational and health outcomes.

In addition, CYFC uses a model called Circles of Influence in framing its work. Circles of Influence is based on the Ecological Model of Human Development created by Urie Bronfenbrenner. Circles of Influence highlights the idea that humans don't exist in a vacuum, but they live and move in a number of different environments, from close family and neighbors to more distant society and policy, and they affect and are affected by all of these environments.

Finally, in its work in focus areas, CYFC has always been open to addressing emerging and/or critical issues that may arise.

With these three things in mind, this issue of Consortium Connections, and the next two issues of 2010-2011, will explore ways in which the extended and persistent economic downturn in the United States is impacting the well-being of families, and their ability to function, with particular attention to education and health.

In a paper titled "Economic Scarring: The Long-Term Impacts of the Recession" published by the Economic Policy Institute, John Irons points out that "Unemployment and income losses can reduce educational achievement by threatening early childhood nutrition; (and by) reducing families' abilities to provide a supportive learning environment (including adequate health care, summer activities, and stable housing)…"[2] He also notes the importance of health, and that poor health can have a negative impact on school achievement. Irons clearly understands the interaction between health and educational achievement, and that the recession is having a negative impact on both. He recognizes that the ongoing loss of jobs and increase in poverty are not a "one-time event,"[3] and will continue to significantly affect families' abilities to function over many years.

Articles in this issue will begin to examine several aspects of the impact of the recession on families: how the housing crisis affects families; how the recession particularly impacts fathers and the ways in which they are re-defining "normal;" and the ways in which families are attempting to manage with their reduced incomes.

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Effects of Home Foreclosure on the Health and Wellness of Families in North Minneapolis

By Shonda M. Craft, Ph.D., LMFT, Sara Axtell, Ph.D., Leola Crawford, Raymond Dehn, AasimShabazz, Tisa Thomas, & Makeda Zulu-Gillespie
Action Research Team, Urban Research, Outreach/Engagement Center (UROC), U of MN.

> "[The] North Minneapolis community has long had problems of too many absentee landlords and low home ownership. The mortgage crisis set up an enormous number of people to fail as they tried to make the step into home ownership. The lack of understanding coupled with the lack of oversight led many into mortgages who weren't ready, and mortgages that were designed to fail. This coupled with artificial house prices and the economic collapse was a disaster."
> *anonymous survey respondent*

North Minneapolis has a rich history. For decades, this community has served as a place of welcome for many who are new to Minnesota. Its culture reflects groups of differing faith, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. In 1990, the 14 neighborhoods of the Northside had a population of 60,560, with 37% people of color. In 2000, the population increased to 67,483, with 65% of color.

North Minneapolis has a wide range of housing stock and numerous health and social service providers dedicated to helping address health and wellness issues. Many homes are spacious with room for gardens and trees. It is a great place for families large and not-so-large to create a foundation; a springboard to the "American Dream." Imagine the joy and stress of purchasing a home, the struggle of trying to keep a home and then the ordeal of losing a home and the feelings of shame that may result. In October 2010, the city of Minneapolis reported that Ward 4, which encompasses North Minneapolis, had the highest cumulative concentration of home foreclosures in Minneapolis at 21% (n = 390 homes).[1] The foreclosure crisis has cut across all cultural and economic groups, even affecting respected elders and longtime leaders in the community.

In February 2008,[2] a series of community discussions were initiated to discuss the swelling mortgage foreclosure crisis in North Minneapolis. While much of the media attention and social service resources focused on the economic dimensions of the crisis, one notable gap was the area of individual, family and community health and wellness. Community residents, University faculty and staff, county and city representatives, and non-profits working on the economic dimensions of the mortgage crisis began to meet to further discuss this gap, and consider how research might contribute to a better understanding of these effects on individual, family, community health and wellness. Dr. Shonda Craft, Assistant Professor in the Department of Family Social Science, agreed to be the lead on the project. She and UROC community liaison Makeda Zulu-Gillespie worked to assemble a team of community and university researchers--people who were Northside residents or who had significant connections to North Minneapolis. The Action Research Team (ART) began meeting in January 2009. The primary aim of this research initiative was to document the health impacts of the crisis and provide this information to community organizations on the Northside.

The team decided to take a participatory, asset-based approach to studying the issue. The goal was to identify how loss affects health and wellness on multiple levels and to document strategies of resiliency in order to better understand the challenges and opportunities individuals, families, and communities experience around their health and wellness. In order to document the community's experience in a non-invasive manner, the team developed a web-based survey which was sent to community organizations (e.g.: human services, financial services, health services, schools). It included questions related to the experiences of and strategies used

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> “Providers reported that families and individuals are experiencing stress, anxiety, depression, and a sense of intense loss in response to foreclosure.”

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by residents living in North Minneapolis to cope with the Mortgage Foreclosure Crisis. Thirty-two providers completed the survey, and their responses were then systematically examined for themes related to family health impacts, community health impacts, or individual health impacts.

Brief findings

Providers reported that families and individuals are experiencing stress, anxiety, depression, and a sense of intense loss in response to foreclosure. For some families, the stress and depression caused by the loss of a home was compounded by disrespectful treatment from mortgage companies. Disconnection from family and support systems has forced people to move into unstable housing situations, compounding the problems. Sometimes families are forced to find alternative housing with very little lead time, turning to shelters or moving in with friends or family. In other cases, individuals and families are forced to move out of the area entirely, leaving the neighborhood and support systems that have been home, sometimes for generations.

This displacement has caused special problems for school-aged children. Children may have to change schools because their families have moved to other neighborhoods. Stress and competing priorities for families take their toll on children's attendance and school performance, with some children experiencing a drop in grades or engaging in negative behavior in school in response to this stress. Providers reported that some people experience a decline in overall mental and physical functioning because of foreclosure. Unstable housing can also lead to inconsistent management of chronic health conditions. In some cases, schools have been a resource, by storing and administering children's medication. In other cases, children may take siblings' medication, until they can see their primary care provider.

The experiences documented here could have far-reaching implications for families and for the Northside community as a whole. The mortgage crisis has forced children and families to live in conditions that are not stable. Previous research has suggested that family stability, or the predictability and stability of a family's

daily activities and routines, can be an important protective factor for young people.[3] Children and families, who may already be experiencing scarce resources, may be most negatively impacted by the collapse of the housing market and lack access to mental health resources in schools and in the community at large. Therefore, the mortgage crisis could place families at risk for a downward spiral within the education system. However, given the limited scope of our research, it is highly recommended that these results not be taken out of context and not be used to convey any message that the children and families of North Minneapolis are at an increased risk of any specific social or behavioral problems because of their foreclosure experiences.

Recommendations

Based on this research, relevant recommendations to health providers, educational providers, and funding foundations could be made.

- Health providers could increase availability of mental health and family support services, create support groups for individuals going through foreclosure, develop resource guides to inform individuals and families, as well as service providers, about resources that are available, and collaborate with schools and community media outlets such as community newspapers and community radio to help disseminate information on resources.
- Schools could provide teachers with guidelines for talking to students about issues arising from foreclosure, such as students leaving and entering school communities, and for talking with parents and peers about feelings and experiences of foreclosure; and they could intensify outreach efforts so families and service providers are aware of transportation

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> “Declining property values can lead people to feel they are fighting a losing battle against the mortgage companies. But the Northside community has responded creatively and resourcefully to the crisis.”

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options available to students who are experiencing homelessness, including students whose families are “doubling up” with other families.

- Foundations could provide funding to agencies that already have relationships with families to expand their services, including for schools to provide emergency clothing and food assistance, or faith based organizations to provide increased counseling and support services, or block clubs to be a first line of contact for families facing housing difficulties.
- Funding agencies could create incentives for collaborations between housing agencies and family support agencies, and provide emergency funding programs for community agencies and community-based clinics to increase their mental health and support services.

Conclusion

A sense of hopelessness and futility has touched even those homeowners who have been able to maintain ownership in their homes. Declining property values can lead people to feel they are fighting a losing battle against the mortgage companies. But the Northside community has responded creatively and resourcefully to the crisis. Families have opened their homes to other families. Schools have helped to provide for children’s basic needs, keeping food, clothing, school uniforms, and other necessities on hand for children whose families may be experiencing foreclosure. Faith-based organizations have expanded the outreach and programs they provide. Neighborhood organizations have gone door-to-door sharing information and resources about foreclosure. Strong block clubs and neighborhood organizations have also played a role as a resource.

We are indebted to the many people from the Northside and beyond who aided in the completion of this project. While the formal research work of the UART has concluded, we are strongly committed to continuing the dissemination of our findings to relevant community providers, funders, and policymakers. The full report of this project will be made available to the public through the UROC website (www.uroc.umn.edu) in December 2010. Any questions regarding this project may be directed to Dr. Shonda Craft (craft029@umn.edu).

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[2] We would like to acknowledge Dr. Irma McClaurin, (former) executive director of the UROC, Sherri Pugh (former) executive director of the Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC), the University of Minnesota Institute for Advanced Studies, and Center for Urban and Regional Affairs for their leadership in sponsoring the “Conversation on the Mortgage Crisis and North Minneapolis.” We would also like to acknowledge Nelima Sitati for your collaboration in developing our team’s action plan.

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> "The Great Recession also forced over 40 percent of American workers to have their work hours reduced, take a pay cut, take unpaid leave, or switch to part-time employment."

The recession has ended but **families still struggle**

By Paul Masiarchin,
Executive Director, Minnesota Fathers and Families Network

Late this fall, Americans learned that the U.S. economy had pulled out of recession nearly a year earlier. Officially, the economic downturn had ended in June 2009. Yet, ask most American families, and attitudes are far less optimistic about the current state of the economy.

It's true that job losses and layoffs have returned to historically "normal" levels. It's true that the gross domestic product is making positive, albeit small, gains. But national data hasn't permeated our living rooms and kitchen tables. Ask most families, and the economy is still a top concern.

Men and minorities were hit hard

As Americans struggle to get individual finances back on track, it's clear that many families were hit harder than others.

Minnesota's 2009 unemployment rate for White Minnesotans reached 7.1 percent, according to Minnesota Public Radio. Meanwhile, the state's Latino population was twice as high, at 15.5 percent unemployment. And African American Minnesotans reached a shocking 22.5 percent unemployment rate. These disparities were the second worst among any state in the nation[1].

The unemployment numbers, while grim, are only one part of the story. The Great Recession also forced over 40 percent of American workers to have their work hours reduced, take a pay cut, take unpaid leave, or switch to part-time employment, according to the Pew Research Center[2]. These smaller cuts to workers' compensation have had a strong impact on men, in particular. Sixty percent of part-time employed men would like to work full-time; the same is true of only 38 percent of women.

Fathers find a new reality

The Great Recession has disproportionately impacted men in many ways. Of the 11 million jobs lost since 2007, men lost 2/3 of them. According to President Obama's chief economic advisor, Larry Summers, "When the economy recovers, five years from now, one in six men who are 25 to 54 will not be working."[3] On the other hand, in 15 employment sectors where the most job growth is expected, 13 sectors are dominated by women[4].

For fathers, who often hold some attachment to the ideal of breadwinner, these numbers demand a reimagining of family roles.

Men can no longer expect to earn a higher income than their wives. Thus, unsurprisingly, Americans overwhelmingly are discarding a belief in "traditional" gender roles where men work and women take care of the home and children. Since the late 1970s, support for traditional gender roles has dropped to about 40% of both men and women, according to the Families and Work Institute[5].

Kids can be the winners

The Great Recession, and its strong impacts on men, came at a time when family attitudes were already changing. For example, men's attitudes about fatherhood have changed over the past 30 years, with nurturing/caring overtaking breadwinning as the most important role.

In some situations, changing family roles can have a positive impact on children, even when the change was unplanned and undesired. For example, according to research described in The Daddy Shift, "unemployment could, under the right conditions, drive men into a positive role with their families. If the relationship with the mother is loving, and the couple has values that prize children and family life, the reverse-traditional arrangement can work out. Men 'wind up enjoying how the care work is distributed, [even if] it did not originate out of a desire for family time'."[6]

As The Daddy Shift implies, these changing attitudes are not always anticipated. In Minnesota, mothers

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> “Legislators and policy implementers would do well to consider the impact of these decisions on the strength and ability of families to best support their member’s (in this case, children’s) early development.”

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are now the primary breadwinners in more than one of every three families. This means extra time on the job, and sometimes, no relief at home. Many dads, however, are stepping up to the plate. Their daily time spent with kids has increased from two hours in 1977 to three hours in 2008. That’s nearly equivalent to moms’ time spent with kids – 3.8 hours daily. However, even while dads increased their time, moms stayed steady at 3.8 hours daily for the last 30 years, according to the Families and Work Institute[7].

A new normal in families

The economic downturn has led to vast changes in family resource management. Notably, credit card delinquencies have dropped to their lowest levels since 1999.[8] With lower credit card usage, many Americans also have decreased their definitions of luxuries versus necessities. In 2009 just 54% of Americans said that air conditioning was a necessity (down from 70% in 2006). Similarly, the microwave dropped from 68% to 47% who continued to identify it as a necessity.[9] In similar ways, we see growing trends of families who are practicing increased frugality and thriftiness.

Beyond how families manage their resources, we also see parents making large-scale changes in how they define their roles within families and even how they define their families. More adult children are living with their own parents and more elderly Americans are living with their children. This shift has created growth in multi-generational households with the “sandwich generation” of adults supporting their parents and children at the same time. Additionally, birth rates have declined dramatically and many Americans are putting off divorce until it’s financially feasible.

Many families are learning to cope with these changes in innovative and healthy ways. It’s truly a new normal that is redefining family life.

Families can find a variety of resources to help navigate this new normal by visiting this link: www.mnfathers.org/newnormal.html.

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> “If expenses need to decrease, use cut back rather than cut out strategies”

Learning Skills to Manage Income and Expenses Can Help Families in Crisis

By Shirley Anderson-Porisch
Extension Educator/Professor, Family Resource Management

People are making the best money management decisions they can given the challenges they face in the current economy: insecurity about employment; stretched to the limit with available cash leading to more use of credit; often unqualified for support programs; and just uncertain about their financial future.

A 2010 *Star Tribune* survey of Minnesota adults asked how you would rate your financial situation today. Responses showed 38% felt they were in good shape, but 55% said they were in fair or poor shape. If these data reflect the general population, the current economy calls for using money management strategies that maximize the use of personal finances.

Working with families in financial crisis as a University of Minnesota Extension Family Resource Management Educator and Accredited Financial Counselor, I suggest strategies that focus on purposeful actions for making personal finance decisions. I use *Dollar Works 2*, a personal financial education program developed by University of Minnesota Extension.

Designed to strengthen people’s skills at managing personal finances and taking control of financial decision making, *Dollar Works 2* is based on the assumption that financial management is a set of skills that must be learned. Learning to manage and take control of finances leads to long-term success for accomplishing goals, and achieving financial security and stability. *Dollar Works 2* is flexible and meets the timely needs of families like managing food dollars, dealing with natural disaster, and tackling the tough issues of this economy.

Even though Extension has excellent resources like *Dollar Works 2* to assist learning, we are not usually the first call made by people in crisis — *we are often the second call*. That call comes as a referral from the “first called” agency/group who sees that the family has need of learning educational/counseling strategies that Extension can provide. Agencies/groups contact us because they know our programs. Some families do make their own contact because a friend/family member “once received some good help” from Extension.

If a family in crisis qualifies for support services from agencies/groups, they get the “fish” -- cash assistance, one month’s rent payment, food support, heat assistance, a loan, or a winter coat. When a family is referred to Extension, thy receive the “fish pole” -- money management strategies to help short and long term decision making.

My most common referrals include:

- Families who have defaulted a bank account or not qualified for a loan through a financial institution;
- Families who have struggled with managing a low income but do not qualify for support programs through a human service agency;
- Families who have lost their income and now need money management strategies for handling expenses while they look for work through local workforce centers;
- Families who seek help from a faith community that is not staffed to address the issue.

These scenarios are often about management decisions with income, expenses, and/or the use of credit.

People are often without employment or under-employed (they have a minimum wage or part time job). One income households struggle when the job pays only $8-10 per hour. Minimum wage employees often do not participate in workplace health options because employee contributions decrease their net pay. Whatever the crisis, income changes impact expenses and spending.

Can income be increased? Can expenses be decreased? For some households, increasing income is not possible, especially if they lose support programs by increasing income. Decreasing expenses may be more realistic, but many already use suggested strategies to reduce expenses. To assist people with balancing any income and expenses, I suggest monthly spending planning:

1) Identify all cash income for one month.

2) Show all expenses in one of eight categories - savings, housing, transportation, health, food, payments, personal, recreation. For example, a $600 car insurance premium paid every 6 months means $100 on the monthly spending plan.

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"A 2010 Star Tribune survey of Minnesota adults asked how you would rate your financial situation today. Responses showed 38% felt they were in good shape, but 55% said they were in fair or poor shape."

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3) Show the "bottom line" difference between income and expenses. If expenses need to decrease, use cut back rather than cut out strategies. Cut back or moderation strategies set people up for successful outcomes and strengthen their personal confidence for future decision-making.

Spending planning strategies also include tracking/recording all spending, monitoring spending with a calendar, and applying strategies to save money on a monthly basis. In many cases, the reality of getting this information on paper helps people "tackle" the issue – many can say "I can handle this" or "we're better off than we thought!"

Financial crisis is also about *management decisions with income and credit*. Credit provides spending flexibility but not if people use credit as if it were income. Using credit is taking out a loan and making another promise to pay! People I work with have often made promises they cannot keep, usually with many maxed-out credit cards! They are behind on payments, not contacting creditors, and considering consolidation loans or bankruptcy as best alternatives.

The first step that helps these situations is to list all payments on the spending plan and complete a debt to income ratio worksheet. The ratio connects income to the credit choices that have led to the debt. Suggested strategies include changing income, changing expenses, or changing both. No matter what the income or the situation, I assist families with credit crisis in working through the spending planning and debt to income ratio process as well as reviewing their credit report. Together we formulate a debt repayment plan to assist short and long term decision making. If the situation is very serious, I will refer to consumer credit counseling and/or suggest they talk with a bankruptcy attorney to always gather the information before they make any decision.

Do our "*fish poles" make a difference when we work with people in financial crisis?* It is challenging to document the difference but referring agencies/groups do provide feedback describing positive action being taken by families. These agencies/groups continue to send families to us for counseling and work with us to maintain present financial education programs and implement new ones. Learner evaluations from *Dollar Works 2* programs with a variety of audiences continue to show how people are learning money skills and making positive change with their financial decision making.

My experience suggests we are making a difference. Extension does not have all the answers – no one does – but we are positioned with well-trained staff as well as quality materials and resources to assist families in making positive financial decisions in this economy.

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[1](For more information: http://www.extension.umn.edu/ResourceManagement/Dollarworks2.html)

Scholar Updates

The CYFC's Scholars Program generates new research through the work of its four scholars, who were selected through an application process and funded for a minimum of four years. In the 2009-2010 issues of Consortium Connections, their work was explained in detail. Three of the scholars have provided updates on their work for this issue of Connections.

Ying Ling Fan

My CYFC project features before-and-after evaluation of physical park interventions in the city of Minneapolis. The objective is to investigate the impact of park improvements on physical activity behavior among children and adults in adjacent neighborhoods.

The project includes three neighborhoods: two intervention neighborhoods (Harrison and Phillips) and a control neighborhood (Powderhorn Park). Harrison and Phillips neighborhoods are adjacent to the Theodore Wirth Park and the East Philips Park; both parks will experience physical improvements during 2010-2011. Powderhorn Park has many recreational opportunities but will not experience any park improvements during the study period.

The project will assess physical activity behaviors among children and adults before and after park environmental interventions. The baseline (before-intervention) data collection period was September 1 through November 7, 2010. The housing units in which the 600 participating households live will then be resurveyed in fall 2011. Preliminary findings from the baseline survey will be released in spring 2011.

Since the project began, the research team has developed a strong partnership with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB). We meet with MPRB staff members biweekly. MPRB has committed substantive staff time and other resources to assist in developing survey instruments, providing translation and printing services, and conducting the surveys and field observations. MPRB issued a media release on August 20, 2010 on the project partnership. (See http://www.minneapolisparks.org/default.asp?PageID=52&prid=1350). I was also invited to present the project to MPRB Commissioners at their Board Meeting on August 19, 2010.

More details about can be found on the project website at http://blog.lib.umn.edu/yingling/splash/.

Mary Hearst

"We need to address the intersection of education and health disparities in youth, and we need to do it together. "

This has been the overwhelming response from members of the Minnesota Child Welfare Research Collaborative (MCWRC). Collaborative members have been interviewed individually this fall in an attempt to capture the multidisciplinary perspectives on the important work driving the group of state agencies and university faculty to meet and collaborate regularly. This type of partnership is desperately needed between universities and their surrounding communities. Members have shared that the most important aspect of the group has been the creation of these sustainable relationships whereby they can call one another for help and know that the voice on the other end will be receptive and is already engaged in working to address the intersection of education and health disparities in youth. The foundation for this group was a symposium held in 2008 funded in part by the Children, Youth and Family Consortium. The CYFC continues to support this effort through the Scholar's program. For more information on the group, contact Mary Hearst hearst@umn.edu. Marissa Steed is an MPH student who is conducting interviews with the Minnesota Child Welfare Research Collaborative members.

Lauren Martin

Over the last year and a half I have worked with both Over the last 18 months I have worked with community members and researchers on my project called "Kids, Communities, and Researchers: A Study of Research on the Intersections Between Education and Health Disparities". Our interdisciplinary team has conducted research and evaluation with the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ). My aim in this study with CYCF is to examine the process of conducting community engaged research on education and health disparities by observing and analyzing research in action. My goal in examining this process is to improve our theory and practice, thus generating more impactful and effective research that will contribute to far reaching and inclusive solutions to pressing social questions regarding education and health disparities.

I have experienced rich learning from all the participants in this project - particularly the staff and participants in NAZ. I worked with the NAZ engagement team and a team from Wilder Research to implement a large-scale random household survey of the NAZ geographic zone in north Minneapolis. The survey examines education and health. In early November 2010, the engagement team completed administration of this survey and we now have a representative sample. The engagement team showed me the important and distinct role of intermediaries in conducting research. Among many other things, these mediators have shown me that I need to be more intentional about theorizing the concepts of "culture" and "community" as I examine the process of doing research. In academia and elsewhere we talk a lot about community (community-engaged, community-based) and culture (often phrased as cultural competency). What do these words mean in practice, as they are lived? How are they deployed in real-world settings? How do they shape meaning for researchers, intermediaries and research participants? Do these different positions vis-a-vis knowledge production shape the meaning and experience of these concepts? I have begun to delve more deeply into my discipline of Anthropology to explore these concepts more fully and I expect this to be my primary focus over the next year as I continue with my embedded research on research.

CYFC Policy Update

> “One aim of the CFPC is to support the career development of scholars interested in child and family policy work.”

CYFC’s policy work has had several new developments this fall.

- In October, Policy Director Karen Cadigan was nominated to the National University-Based Consortium for Child and Family Policy’s (CFPC) Steering Committee. Click here (http://www.childpolicyuniversityconsortium.com/about_us.html) for information about other Steering Committee members.
- Karen has also been named the facilitator for Minnesota’s Task Force for an Office of Early Learning. The task force will “consider objectives related to how state agencies and other providers deliver early childhood services and measure their impact, and how quality can be improved.” Click here for more details. (www.house.leg.state.mn.us/sessionweekly/art.asp?ls_year=86&issueid_=61&storyid=1980&year_=2010).
- CYFC also welcomed a Family Impact Policy Intern, Amber Holzmeister, in October. Amber, a senior studying political science and history, is graduating in December but will remain on board through the spring semester to assist with CYFC’s policy work. Amber has a wide range of experiences that have already added great value to our work.
- Every year, instructors at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute accept project proposals from clients. Several projects are selected, and small groups of Humphrey Institute graduate students work on them. These “Capstone Workshops” are incorporated into interested students’ degree programs. Members of each group complete a written report for the client, present final findings to the class and client, and write a paper detailing the experience and results of their work.

CYFC submitted a proposal this year, and it was one of four selected by students. Joellen Gonder-Spacek, Molly Illes, Nikki Vilendrer and Connie Starns are the four graduate students working on CYFC’s project *Using Science to Inform Public Policy: Traditional STEM Areas vs. Children, Youth and Family Sciences*. Students are assisting CYFC in the examination of how state policymakers access and use scientific information to inform their decisions, and how the content area of policymaking impacts policymakers access and use of research.

This project offers the students the unique opportunity to engage in the policy realm in a nonpartisan way while helping to inform the University community about how to improve the research translation process. Students meet with CYFC policy staff weekly through December to develop research questions, determine the scope of the literature review, identify candidates for interviews, create interview questions and protocol and generate the outline for the students’ final report to CYFC. The next issue of *Connections* will summarize the findings from this small study.

- The National University-Based Consortium for Child and Family Policy (CFPC) is an organized national forum fostering scientific collaboration regarding child and family policy issues, cross-disciplinary undergraduate and graduate training and effective translation between research, practice, and policy issues.

  One aim of the CFPC is to support the career development of scholars interested in child and family policy work. This includes students, early career faculty and staff, and seasoned scholars who are interested in expanding their work into the policy arena. Led by CYFC, the Consortium’s Career Development Working Group created a survey to better understand and address the career development needs of university students, faculty and staff members currently working or interested in child and family policy.

  In mid-November, the survey was sent to CFPC members and students, staff and faculty at colleges and universities across the United States. We look forward to better understanding how users assess their access to and use of mechanisms that support their policy efforts.
- On November 3rd, Sara Benning and Karen Cadigan co-presented the symposia “Innovations in Family Impact Analysis” at the National Council on Family Relations’ (NCFR) annual conference. Approximately thirty-five NCFR members, ranging from students to seasoned scholars, attended the presentation.

The presentation illustrated the work of a collaboration between CYFC, UW-Madison’s Department of Human Development and Family Studies and UW-Madison Extension.

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Symposium presentations focused on the following facets of the Family Impact Analysis:

Innovations in Teaching Family Impact Analysis to Policymakers and Family Professionals (Sara Benning and Dr. Karen Cadigan); *Innovations in Teaching Family Impact Analysis in Undergraduate and Graduate College Classrooms* (Olivia Little, Graduate Student, and Dr. Karen Bogenschneider, both of UW-Madison Human Development and Family Studies); and *Innovations in Family Impact Analysis of Early Child Care and Education Centers* (Kathy Hetzel, Family Living Educator, UW-Extension (Dodge County), Dr. Patti Herman, Family Living Educator, UW-Extension (Columbia County), and Olivia Little); Symposia discussant was Shelley MacDermid, Director at the Center for Families at Purdue University and Director of the Indiana Family Impact Seminars

- Sara Benning, Karen Cadigan, Olivia Little and Karen Bogenschneider have updated two family policy tools:

  The Family Impact Checklist, last updated in 2000, guides program and policy design and evaluation for family professionals and policymaking staff. The major change made to the Checklist is that there are now five Family Impact Principles instead of six. These Principles help assess policies and programs for their support of family well-being.

  The Family Impact Handbook, last updated in 1988, was significantly changed. In addition to updating with contemporary research through extensive literature reviews, the handbook has been divided into two parts: Processes and procedures for bringing a family impact lens to policy and practice; and a “Backgrounder” that presents empirical and theoretical rationale for bringing a family impact lens to policy and practice. The intended audience includes family professionals, researchers and policymaking staff.

The overhaul of the above tools also resulted in the creation of a new tool for policymakers and their staff. **The Family Impact Guide for Policymakers** outlines five questions, or “discussion starters,” that policymakers can use to prepare questions and frame policy discussions on broad social problems for hearings, meetings and public forums. This guide is intended to spark conversations among policymakers to assist them in systematically thinking about family impact in the same way that they think about the economic or environmental impacts of policies. The discussion starter questions are parallel to the five Checklist Principles. The Guide will be shared with focus groups of policymakers and their staff to determine if the length and language are appropriate for this audience.

We will be sure to let you know when these tools become available at the Policy Institute for National Family Impact Seminars’ (PINFIS) website www.familyimpactseminars.org.

If you have questions or comments about CYFC’s policy work, please contact us at:

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Center for Excellence in Children's MENTAL HEALTH

The Center for Excellence in Children's Mental Health (CECM) announces new staff members, training events and research documents.

News from the Center for Excellence in **Children's Mental Health**

New Staff

Judy Myers, MS, RN, CS-BC joined the CECMH staff as Program Coordinator in September 2010. In this position she is responsible for planning the annual Lessons from the Field series. Previously Judy worked at the University of Minnesota in the School of Nursing as a teaching specialist and at Georgia Perimeter College in Atlanta as an Assistant Professor of Nursing. She has many years of experience as a psychiatric nurse. As a clinical nurse specialist in child and adolescent psychiatric/mental health nursing, she worked with homeless families and with uninsured children in several Atlanta city public schools. Judy earned her nursing diploma from Union Memorial Hospital School of Nursing, Baltimore, Maryland, her BS in Nursing from Lebanon Valley College, Annville, Pennsylvania and her MS in Nursing from Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia.

Jessica Barnes works with CECMH in the Principal Office and Administrative Specialist position and joined the team in October 2010. She supports the work of CECMH by preparing for training events, managing our website, conducting literature searches, developing communications materials, and giving general support. Jessica received her BS in Environmental Studies from the University of Minnesota and has been working at the University for 12 years. Jessica hopes to pursue a Masters of Education.

Lessons from the Field

The 2010-2011 *Lessons from the Field* series will focus on relational aggression, the most common type of interpersonal violence among girls. The aim of this year's series, "More than just mean girls: A series on relational aggression" is to help those who interact with children and adolescents recognize the signs and symptoms of relational aggression and explore effective interventions and prevention measures. The first event was held on Nov. 30, and focused on defining relational aggression and describing why it is a problem. Future events in the series include:

II. February 8, 2011

How does relational aggression vary across cultural contexts?
Keynote speaker: Dr. David Nelson, School of Family Life at Brigham Young University

III. April 15, 2011

How do we prevent or intervene in relational aggression?
Keynote speaker: Dr. Stephen Leff, Department of Pediatrics, Clinical Psychology in Pediatrics Program, University of Pennsylvania and Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania.

To register for these events, visit: http://www.cmh.umn.edu/aggression/aggression_2010-2011.html

Children's Mental Health eReview

The newest issue of the *Children's Mental Health eReview* is titled "Historical Trauma and Microaggressions: A Framework for Culturally-Based Practice". This is the second issue in a series related to trauma and child welfare systems. The issue captures the presentation of Dr. Karina Walters on December 4, 2009 and is posted at http://www.cmh.umn.edu/ereview.html.

The *Children's Mental Health eReview* promotes use of research in practice and policy in order to improve services for children. Each *eReview* issue features (i) a review of published research in a specific area related to children's mental health, and (ii) a collection of responses from different types of service providers regarding use of that research.

2009-2010 CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY CONSORTIUM CORE ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Office of the Mayor – St. Paul

John "Rob" Warren
Department of Sociology, U of MN

Who's The Consortium?

Jean Bauer

Jean Bauer, PhD, is professor and extension specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension and the U of MN Department of Family Social Science in the College of Education and Human Development. Jean has worked most of her career on issues related to family resource management, and she has researched and written extensively on related topics. Her research interests have included the impact of welfare reform, family economics, and a systems approach to family policy. She has provided training and resources for regional and county Extension Educators to assist in their work with families and family-serving professionals. Jean is in the process of completing a book on rural families and work based on several years of a multi state research project.

Action Research Team, Urban Research, Outreach/Engagement Center (UROC), University of Minnesota

The Action Research Team working in North Minneapolis is made up of Shonda M. Craft, Ph.D., LMFT, Sara Axtell, Ph.D., Leola Crawford, Raymond Dehn, Aasim Shabazz, Tisa Thomas, and Makeda Zulu-Gillespie. The team members include community and university researchers - people who are Northside residents or who have significant connections to North Minneapolis. They have been working together since January 2009 to assess how the housing/foreclosure crisis has affected family health and well-being in North Minneapolis. They are currently working on the final report of their research, which included surveys with community members.

Shirley Anderson-Porisch

Shirley Anderson-Porisch is educator/professor in family resource management with University of Minnesota Extension and an Accredited Financial Counselor. She holds Bachelors and Masters Degrees from South Dakota State University in Home Economics/Education; has completed coursework for an Ed.D in Family Education at the University of Minnesota; and is financial counselor accredited with the Association for Financial Counseling and Planning Education. As an educator, Shirley provides programming in personal finance throughout Minnesota; has served as an Extension program administrator; and provides financial counseling at Vanguard Addicted Gambler Treatment Program, Granite Falls, MN. She is co-author of four personal finance curriculums: *Building Awareness of Culture and Resource; Dollar Works; Dollar Works 2; and Gambling: A Challenge for Youth.*

Paul Masiarchin

Paul Masiarchin directs the Minnesota Fathers & Families Network, a statewide professional coalition that promotes healthy fatherhood. Previously, Paul worked for the National Youth Employment Coalition, served for three years for the Peace Corps in Paraguay, and taught middle school Spanish in rural Wisconsin. Paul earned a bachelor's degree from Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee and a master's degree from the American University in Washington, D.C.