

Parent to Parent Network

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 3

SEPTEMBER, 2012

From the Director

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Someday, after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love, and then, for a second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

This is the age of accountability and productivity in the helping professions. Gone are the days when helping agencies would vocalize the good they were doing, and payers simply gave grant money in good faith that “good” would be done. As tax and charity dollars become tighter and tighter, payers want to know that they’re getting their monies worth. That is certainly understandable. The “problem” sometimes is this: doing outcome research in the human services field is far more difficult, and less reliable than, say, in the physical sciences. Sometimes isolating a particular singular cause of some effect in an individual or families life is virtually impossible.

There are “tricks of the trade” as it were. What this means is, many times the obstacles to accountability research can be overcome, or lived with while still understanding

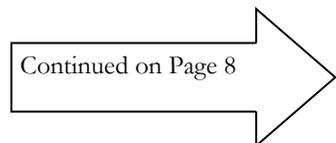
if a particular program or service is effective. But another challenge has lingered, and it is this: Everybody who funds services seems to do this accountability business differently. Many have simply done process evaluations, which means we would have to report how much and how often we did for clients. But that’s not outcome data. Just because we saw family doesn’t mean we were effective. At least it is not reliable to the payers of the world.

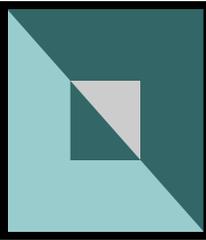
Others have wanted to know what it was we had done and to what degree it helped. Many times our efforts were centered around reporting on goals identified in a funding application, and how we did relative to those goals. Again, there has been no consistent way to do this. Lastly, one consistent measure still used today is client satisfaction survey documents. This gives real

voice and perceptions of the families we serve, and I believe is an absolutely essential part of overall program evaluation. Even if we adopt new ways of looking at data, I would always want to know what our families like and don’t like about us. After all, they are why we’re here in the first place, so it seems disingenuous to do anything that would reduce or eliminate their voice.

Well, thanks to the generosity of Thomas Pristow, the new head of Nebraska CFS and that of Candy Kennedy of the Nebraska Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health, I was able to sit in on some wonderful training in Lincoln recently, sponsored by DHHS.

Mark Friedman, author





Happenings

Parent to Parent
Network

Volume 2, Issue 3
September, 2012

Some staff changes occurred within the past month. **Teri Schlecht** and **James Horn** have both moved on to other things, and we wish them all the best.

Tonda Cranor, previously one of our Family Advocates, has been promoted to take Teri's place as Family Services Coordinator. If the reader has not yet had the chance to meet or talk with Tonda, you should do so. She brings experience, education, and bright, cheerful enthusiasm to the position. Services are in good hands under Tonda's leadership.

Maribel Bernal joined our staff as an office assistant on _____, and **Tawna Lichty** has joined our staff as a Family Advocate:

Hello Everyone, my name is Tawna Lichty and I'm the new Family Advocate at Parent to Parent in Norfolk, NE. I have 2 precious daughters, Tirany and Janicka, who keep me quite busy when I'm not at work. I grew up in Plainview, NE and graduated from Plainview High School. I received both my undergraduate and my graduate degrees from Wayne State College in the Counseling Field. Since 2001, I have worked as a Family Support Worker at Beneficial Behavioral Health Services in Omaha and Oasis Counseling in Norfolk. I worked as a Domestic Violence Outreach Advocate at the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska in Norfolk for 4 1/2 years. I recently worked at DHHS in Norfolk as a Children and Family Services Specialist. I look forward to continue working within the Norfolk Community and the many communities around us.

My name is Maribel Bernal I am the Staff Assistant at Parent to Parent. I have two beautiful children Anna, 7 and Ethan, 5. I graduated from Norfolk Senior High school in 2005 and I am currently studying for my Associates Degree in accounting at Northeast Community College. I have lived in Norfolk Ne since I was 6yrs old. I am originally from Chichihualco, Guerrero, a small town in Mexico. In my spare time I enjoy baking and spending as much time with my kids as possible.



Parent to Parent Network

Invites you and your family to join us for:

A Costume Party at Poppy's Pumpkin Patch!!

We will be having snacks, hot chocolate, and apple cider.

When: Tuesday October 23th, 2011 5:30-7:30pm

Where: Poppy's Pumpkin Patch

55275 837 Rd. Norfolk

South of Norfolk on HWY 81 to the 837th road sign. Then go west for 2 miles. Watch for signs.

Registration is Required! Please call by Oct. 18th:

1-877-379-9926 or 402-379-2268.

Free admission is limited to the first 100 people, so register early!!



Events



CHAMBER HOLDS COFFEE CALL

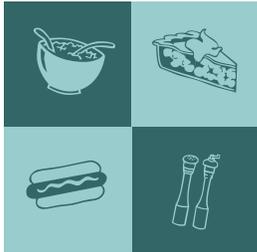
The Norfolk Area Chamber of Commerce recently held an Ambassador “Coffee Call” at Parent to Parent Network on Wednesday, September 19. Approximately 25 representatives of businesses and organizations throughout the community attended this event. Christian Ohl, Chamber Director expressed his support of the work done by the organization, and presented us with a certificate and chamber gifts.

Executive Director Robert Gereaux spoke about the work of the organization, it’s history, funding sources, and vision for the future. Gereaux advocated more interaction between the organization and local businesses, and explained how family peer support organizations help not only restore families, but likely save taxpayers money in the long run. Gereaux also discussed the importance of collaboration as an integral part of family remediation. In a question and answer session afterward, one of the Ambassadors indicated she would be making a referral for services.

Family Services Coordinator Tonda Cranor presented information about the many services provided by Advocates, and provided examples of those services. Cranor also emphasized the value of family peer support, and collaboration.

Informal discussion followed with several chamber representatives expressing how valuable the services of Parent to Parent were to the community.

Two of the Ambassadors were board members: Linnea Gettman, Board President, and Candace Allen of United Way. Staff attending included Tonda Cranor, Cliff Hogancamp, Kimberly Dye, JoAnn Pieper and clinical consultant Skie Peltier-Anderson.



Staff Notes

Federation Retreat

Parent to Parent Network Service Staff will participate in a staff development retreat sponsored by the Nebraska Federation, to be held in Aurora on Thursday and Friday, October 11 & 12. The Center will remain open for business, and staff will be available. The service staff can be reached via cell phone. To make contact with one of us, simply call the office, and the receptionist will contact us to return a call. The retreat will feature a combination of team building and stress reduction activities, as well as training activities. Parent to Parent Network will present to the program Directors regarding Results based Accountability. Advocates will also receive specific training during the two day event. All will receive training regarding “vicarious trauma”. John Ferrone of Hastings will facilitate the event.

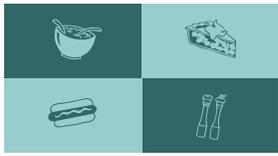
WRAP Training

Parent to Parent advocates recently participated in a weeklong training to become certified in the WRAP process. WRAP stands for Wellness Recovery Action Plan, a simple, consumer friendly map to mental health recovery. The system was developed by Mary Ellen Copeland and a team of mental health consumers, and is recognized around the world as an innovative and effective way to rebuild families and give hope to people profoundly affected by mental health problems.

Our advocates can help individuals and families develop their own Wellness Recovery Action Plan to grow stronger, healthier families and alleviate stresses, large and small. WRAP includes developing a list of activities for everyday well-being, recognizing early

warning signs and triggers, and preparing your own personal response when starting to feel badly. Consumers even create a plan for supporters who might need to step in to take over the care of an individual in crisis. WRAP is dynamic and adaptable. It can be used in many and varied situations: depression, anxiety, divorce, death, PTSD, abuse, addiction, etc. It is used with children, adults and the elderly. There is even a version specially adapted for veterans and those in the military.

WRAP is a simple and inexpensive tool with the potential for life changing results. It can help a person regain control and live a healthy, happy life again. Parent to Parent hopes to share this program with clients and others in the community as another form of hope and wellness in our part of Nebraska.



Legislative News

-Excerpts from “Unicameral Update” the Nebraska’s legislature’s official news source.-

Oversight and reorganization of the state’s troubled child welfare system topped the list of health and human services issues addressed by lawmakers this session.

Child welfare

A bill intended to provide a strategic plan and legislative oversight for child welfare programs in Nebraska was approved this session.

[LB821](#), sponsored by the Health and Human Service Committee, creates a 22-member Nebraska Children’s Commission tasked with creating a statewide strategic plan to reform child welfare programs and services in the state.

Among other issue areas, the commission will be required to create committees to examine foster care reimbursement rates and – based on provisions originally introduced by Omaha [Sen. Gwen Howard](#) as LB837 – state policy regarding prescription of psychotropic drugs to state wards. The commission is required to report on the strategic plan to the Legislature and the governor by Dec. 15, 2012.

The bill also creates the Office of Inspector General within the Office of Public Counsel, also known as the Ombudsman’s Office.



Sen. Kathy Campbell, chairperson of the Health and Human Services

The inspector general will be appointed by the public council and approved by the Legislature. The office is authorized to investigate allegations of possible misconduct, death or serious injury in foster homes, private agencies, childcare facilities and programs. The office also will review the role and effectiveness of the state’s youth rehabilitation and treatment centers, analyze data and report to the Legislature and the governor annually.

The bill passed on a 49-0 vote.

LB961, also introduced by the committee, re-of Health and Human Services (DHHS) by department will be allowed to contract for lead Both the department and the pilot project lead 17 cases per worker by Sept. 1, 2012. If children in a family receive services in the home, all children will be considered one case. If any child is placed

The bill passed 48-0.

Lawmakers also passed a bill that seeks to

The Legislative Performance Audit Committee introduced LB949, which, among other provisions, requires DHHS’s division of children and family services to include a strategic plan in its budget request to the Legislature for the next two budget cycles. The plan must identify the main purpose of each program in the division, goals for measuring progress and benchmarks and time frames for meeting those goals.

Under the bill, the division is required to provide quarterly updates to the Legislature’s HHS and Appropriations committees beginning in October 2012 on any movement of funds greater than \$250,000 into the child welfare subprogram from other budget programs. **LB949 passed on a 48-0 vote.**

Senators also overrode a gubernatorial line-item veto of a provision in the state claims bill related to child welfare reform.

LB1072, introduced by the [Business and Labor Committee](#) as part of the Legislature’s budget package, approves claims exceeding \$50,000 authorized by the state claims board. Senators approved the measure on a 42-4 vote. Gov. Dave Heineman subsequently vetoed a provision approving 50 claims totaling \$2.5 million made by subcontractors of Boys and Girls Home – a former lead contract agency with DHHS that since has declared bankruptcy. Senators **voted 31-12 to pass LB1072** notwithstanding the objections of the governor. **Thirty votes were needed** to do so.

Under LB842, introduced by Scottsbluff Sen. John Harms, recipients of the state Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program may count hours spent pursuing an associate degree toward their work activity requirements. The program will be evaluated prior to the new termination date. **The bill passed on a 45-0 vote.**

LB507, also introduced by Harms, allows an applicant who is 21 years old or the head of a household to meet the state’s self-sufficiency requirement by maintaining satisfactory attendance at a secondary school, a general education development (GED) program or equivalent or participating in education directly related to employment for an average of 20 hours per week. LB507 passed on a 48-0 vote.

“Action expresses priorities.”

turns child welfare case management to the state Department April 1, 2012, except in the eastern service area, in which the agency case management as a pilot project. agency are required to reduce caseload size to between 12 and 17 cases per worker by Sept. 1, 2012. If children in a family receive services in the home, all children will be considered one case. If any child is placed

tighten budgeting standards for the state’s child welfare system.

Parent to Parent Network

Parent to Parent Network
201 Miller Avenue
Norfolk, NE 68701

Board of Directors:

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Big Brothers & Big Sisters

Vice President: Alicia Dorcey,
Faith Regional Psych. Services

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tified Public Accountant

Secretary: Cathie Anderson,
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Candace Allen, United Way

Bev Ferguson, Liberty Centre

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chologist Norfolk Public
Schools

Joel Carlson, Attorney



Parent to Parent Network is affiliated with the
Nebraska Federation of Families for Chil-
dren's Mental Health

Members of:

National Alliance for Mentally Ill (NAMI)

National Federation of Families for Children's
Mental Health

Parent to Parent Network is a private, non-profit, commu-
nity based organization devoted to strengthening families
in Nebraska. Organized in 1998, the program has grow
substantially through the years, including outreach to sev-
eral communities in Northeast Nebraska.

We hire people who are or have been primary care-givers
for children with behavioral health, emotional, or school
issues. Our Advocates are trained to help, but their
strength lies in having "been there", and having found
ways to navigate the systems affecting their child.

We charge no fees for our services. We're members of the
Nebraska Federation of Families for Children's Mental
Health and the National Federation with the same name.

Services are provided confidentially. You determine what
services you want. We may make suggestions, but you
have the final say!

Advocacy on behalf of the families we serve is an integral
part of the services we provide. We look upon those to
whom we advocate as being partners rather than oppo-
nents. We prefer what we call collaborative advocacy. We
know that our families are best served when we make and
strengthen partnerships with other helping organizations.
Our advocacy is done with regard for one overriding princi-
ple: ***that the family voice be heard.***

OUR WEB ADDRESS IS:
WWW.PARENT-PARENT.ORG

Staff:

Robert Gereaux, Executive Director

Tonda Cranor, Family Services Coordinator

JoAnn Pieper, Office Manager

Cliff Hogancamp, Information Systems Specialist

Kimberly Dye, Family Advocate

Tawna Lichty, Family Advocate

Vacant, Family Advocate

Mirabel Bernal, Office Assistant

of Trying Hard is Not Good Enough presented what I perceive to be a well thought-out, simple-to-understand, yet effective way of measuring the outcomes of the services we and others provide. He calls it “Results Accountability”. One thing I especially like about it is that it is not the latest passing fad.

Taking stock of the outcome of the services we provide can help us to improve what we do. It has the potential of saving money so that precious dollars are used largely for the things that work. It can help to evaluate staff, and make corrections, provide training, etc. when needed. And it can help governing groups like our board to make decisions about services offered.

But balance is needed. Outcome evaluation of services can cost jobs, eliminate programs, erroneously drop useful services, etc. if the evaluation tools are not reliable or valid. So, I’m grateful to our precious partner, Candy Kennedy for the opportunity to work with her in bringing Friedman's tools to all of the family organizations. This forces both of us to expand our knowledge and understanding of the tools. I’m generally a pretty cautious person and the older I get, the more I see the need for balance in almost everything. Being involved in this process allows for advocacy opportunities for Parent to Parent, and ultimately all the family organizations. Knowing Candy as I do, she is likely to use the information gleaned to help organizations improve, and not to zap them for poor performance. This is reassuring to know that thoughtful scrutiny will be given which is likely to balance the need for evaluation with the need to prevent unreliable instruments being foisted upon us. What we all want is to help. I’m absolutely confident that our Advocates do just that. Now we’ll be able to prove it.

