



WAHKIAKUM NETWORKING CAFÉ
MONDAY MARCH 4, 200 6:00 – 8:00 PM
SUMMARY

March's Networking Café began at 6:00 with a working dinner and networking opportunity.

Attending were:

Carrie Kennedy	WSU Wahkiakum Extension
Sara Niemela	Parent Representative: Private Education, Distance Learning
Linda Hartung	Wahkiakum Human Services
Christina Marnier	Kinship Caregiver Support Program
Mike Reardon	Kinship Caregiver Support Program
Lauren Head	Kinship Caregiver Support Program
Kari Schillios	Wahkiakum School Board
Judy Bright	Wahkiakum Health Department
Michaela Jackson	Child Care Resource and Referral, ESD 112
Abby Burns	Wahkiakum School District
Joy Niemela	Youth: Private Education, Distance Learning
Lisa Frink	Wahkiakum School District
Karen Fleming	Wahkiakum County
Virginia Shofner	Washington State Work Source
Colleen Theisen	Washington State Department of Social & Health Services
Tammy Peterson	Wahkiakum Community Network
Lia Sealund	Wahkiakum Community Network

FOCUS OF EVENT: Community and School Services

Following networking opportunities, presentations were delivered, focusing on the March theme of **Community and School-based Prevention Services**. This includes both formal and informal supports systems for families in Wahkiakum County. Written reports focused on answering the important question, "Are we doing the work *right*?" To answer that question, several pieces of information were necessary; including the following elements:

- ❖ *What are the identified goals of the service's provided, as intended by the legislature?*
- ❖ *What is the current status of the families, children and the community as it relates to the goals of the services provide?*
- ❖ *How is the service provider collaborating with other agencies within the community and state to achieve its goals? What agencies do you collaborate with?*
- ❖ *What options are available, or that you would like to see in place, to address specific barriers to success or to make improvements?*
- ❖ *What are your current successes?*
- ❖ *What are your current or anticipated challenges you would like to present to others for brainstorming?*

PROGRAM REVIEW

1. Community Mobilization

- a. Wahkiakum Community Network presented its report (attached) on mobilization efforts. Funding for mobilization include CTED's Community Mobilization Grant and SAMHSA's Drug Free Communities Grant. Goals include reducing substance abuse, violence, and increasing community mobilization.

Lia reported studies reflect there has been a reduction in alcohol, tobacco and marijuana abuse by youth since the Network began its work in 1998. Other positive trends include age of initiation, perception of risk, perception of availability and laws favorable to substance abuse.

Studies also report distressing levels of youth reported violence such as engaging in a physical fight, youth perception of access to a weapon and carrying a weapon on school grounds. This is especially disconcerting since the School Resource Officer was discontinued in the fall of 2008 due to restructuring of the Wahkiakum County Sheriff's Office officer duties due to budget cuts.

Challenges Presented

- *Wahkiakum Community Network has a small fund allocated for meth reduction and prevention through its Meth Initiative grant and is asking for suggestions on how to utilize these funds to increase meth prevention education within Wahkiakum County.*
- *If the Network considers opening a community center, what kinds of services would the community like to see offered at the center?*
- *What kind of fundraising or sustainability ideas might be done in the community to sustain a community center?*

For More Information Contact: Lia Sealund, Wahkiakum Community Network

Phone: 360-795-8040

E-mail: wahkiakum@centurytel.net

2. Child Care

- a. St. James Family Center provided a written report (attached) but was unavailable to attend. Successes reported include a consistent stability of staff, drop-in programs to accommodate families, no wait list, and a high-quality, licensed facility.

Challenges Presented

- *Asking for support for a child care subsidies bill – HB1754 that reforms Working Connections that benefits families and caregivers. Due to the economic conditions, the center is seeing an increase in families requesting sponsorship due to financial hardships.*
- *Council for Children and Families (CCF) is in jeopardy of elimination, which will drastically reduce funding for Family Support Services. Please access the CCF website at www.ccf.wa.gov to get involved.*

For More Information Contact: Beth Hansen, St. James Family Center

Phone: 360-795-8612

E-mail: bhansen@stjamesfamilycenter.org

- b. ESD 112 presented a written report (handout) on Child Care Resource & Referral services for Wahkiakum County. Notable highlights of the report are as of the end of 2007, there was only one licensed facility in the county (St. James Family Center), with 72 potential child care slots. Infant care continues to be the most difficult care to find and the most expensive. There are only 3 center-based slots for infant care and 8 slots for toddlers in the county. For a family with an infant and a preschooler in full-time licensed child care, the median cost represents 29% of the county's median household income for 2007.

Child Care Resource and Referral supports Wahkiakum County by helping parents find child care and financing options, offering professional development for the child care workforce, advocating for children, parents, and child care providers, increasing availability of child care, and other services.

Challenges Presented

- *In 2007, no families contacted R&R for referrals or requested non-standard hour care. In rural areas with a lack of licensed care like Wahkiakum County, few families typically call the R&R referral line. R&R staff is focusing its efforts on building community support to increase the licensed capacity in the region so families have more choices. The handout reflects there are 555 children under age 13 in Wahkiakum County, with 185 under age 5. Most parents are using family, friends and neighbors. How can the general public become knowledgeable of the availability of guidance the R&R can provide to increase licensed home child care facilities?*

For More Information Contact: Michaela Jackson, ESD 112

Phone: 800-282-0874

On the Web: www.esd112.org/ccrr/

3. Early Intervention and Educational Services

- a. Wahkiakum Health Department provided a written report (handout) of their immunization program for Wahkiakum County. In 2008, the Immunization Program Goal was to increase the uptake of new and under-utilized child and adolescent vaccines; specifically focusing improvement efforts and reporting in Varicella (chickenpox), Rotavirus, Human Papillomavirus (HPV), and pediatric influenza. Successes include an increase in all four immunizations in 2008 vs. 2007. Studies report each year in the US, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized and 36,000 people die from the flu.

For More Information Contact: Judy Bright, Wahkiakum Health Department

Phone: 360-795-6208

E-mail: bright@co.wahkiakum.wa.us

- b. St. James Family Center also reported on Early Childhood Education and Prevention (ECEAP) preschool program. St. James reports the program has been fully enrolled with 24 slots for the entire school year. A positive success of the program was when St. James had a wait list at one point; the center was able to accommodate these families through sponsorship to place the children in its

blended program of ECEAP and private preschool, with 36 currently enrolled. The center is happy to report that ECEAP is safe from a decrease in funding at this point.

For More Information Contact: Beth Hansen, St. James Family Center (see above)

4. Drug & Alcohol Abuse Prevention and Early Intervention in Schools

- a. Wahkiakum School District prevention/intervention specialist Lisa Frink gave an update on the multitude of activities she is implementing to prevent tobacco abuse in middle school youth. Efforts include collaboration with Wahkiakum County Tobacco Prevention Specialist Linda Hartung. The school is hosting a series of youth initiated parent education efforts such as hosting an information booth at JA Wendt Elementary and John C Thomas Middle School family night, setting up a booth at St. James Family Center family events, participating in the Washington State *No Stank You* prevention campaign, localized youth support groups during school hours and incorporating prevention education with science curriculum.

For More Information Contact: Lisa Frink, Wahkiakum School District
Phone: 360-795-3261

5. Kinship Caregiver Support Program

- a. Southwest Washington Agency on Aging and Disabilities presented a report (handout) on the Kinship Caregiver Support Program (KCSP). The KCSP has financial assistance that can be used to help pay for the cost of emergent needs incurred by eligible kinship caregivers such as utility assistance, rent assistance, home needs, mediation, Guardian Ad Litem and attorney fees, gas and car repairs, and a multitude of other costs that a family might occur to care for the youth.

A grandparent, step-grandparent or any relative raising a child, age 18 or younger, by blood or marriage may qualify. It can be a relative who is raising the child either with a legal relationship, such as legal custody or guardianship or informally. Contact KCSP for income and eligibility guidelines.

Challenges Presented

- *The agency is looking to get this information out to Wahkiakum County families, who have been underserved by this program in the past. Participants suggested the Network could run this information in the Did You Know column; the information should also go to Mary Vik at Wahkiakum Human Services, who coordinates social service needs for the county. Flyers were provided to Lia to leave out at the Wahkiakum PUD office as well.*

For More Information Contact: Chris Hulings

Phone: 360-501-8362 or 1-800-682-2406 E-mail: hulingsc@dshs.wa.gov.

NEXT WAHKIAKUM NETWORKING CAFÉ: *June 3, 2009*