



FAMILIES PLUS

Mentoring Kids for Life!

September 2011 – Newsletter
Community Corner Stones

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Team Work!

Damion, with Dennis and Mary

A positive and productive mentoring relationship has developed over the past year and half between Dennis Bollig and Damion Kirksey, age 12. In addition to being a member of the Families Plus Board of Directors, Dennis also devotes himself to mentoring a child. Dennis has taken Damion boating and fishing many times. They have built a doghouse together, built bird feeders and worked on the garden together. Damion is a common part of the Bollig home. Damion has discovered interests and abilities he didn't know he had and explored outdoor activities and adventures his great-grandmother, with whom he lives, could not herself provide. She is very supportive of the mentoring relationship. Over time Damion's defensive reluctance toward letting anyone help him or teach him has significantly diminished. This past spring saw Damion make great strides in school and devote himself to more and more productive activities, both in and out of school. This is a volunteer mentoring relationship that has brought both challenges and rewards to both participants and continues to make a significant difference in a young man's life. Facilitating these positive relationships is the mission of Families Plus.

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ANNUAL PICNIC AUGUST 19, 2011



COLLABORATION FOR KIDS

Families Plus children and families traditionally start the new school year with an annual picnic of appreciation, celebration, and talk of having-a-great-school-year. This year the picnic was a collaborative effort of Families Plus, Altrusa, Astra Club, and local businesses. Members of the Astra Club, with some help from advisor Amanda Twamley, put on the picnic from planning, to setting up, grilling, and taking down. Ashley Church was the Astra Club leader of this effort. Altrusa Club supplied dessert, school supplies and paper products. Also helping out were Big E Market with lots of Olathe Sweet corn picked early that morning and McDonald's with beverages for all.

The annual picnic seems to be the start of a good year for the children involved. Data collected by Families Plus shows that 95% of Families Plus children ended the school year with a "C" average or above last year. That hard work and effort will build strong a strong future for these children. The teachers of Delta County public school put extra energy into guiding teams of Families Plus supporters for each child to help each to succeed in school.



Karen McFarland has assumed leadership of the Families Plus office. She came into service through SOS Staffing Service in Delta. She has lived in Delta

County since 1994. She is a mother and a grandmother. She currently is also the president of the Council and Congregation, Treasurer of the Women's Group and assistant to the Pastor at All Saints Lutheran Church in Cory, Colorado. She will be available to answer questions Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 3 PM. She comes in with years of experience in bookkeeping and small business management. After several months of training, Karen comments, "I truly enjoy working here at Families Plus, it is such a rewarding experience to be able to help children and parents that are in need. The staff here is wonderful to work with and I am looking forward to many years of helping others. Mentoring for Life is wonderful, it works.

THE GOOSE IS GETTING FAT

Excuse us for already mentioning that Christmas is coming. Families Plus invites you to buy one Christmas present for one of our parents to give a child. If you are interested, we can email or mail you a gift request tag. Through community donations, we provide one small gift for parents to give each child in the families we support. We will be collecting the presents in our office in time for the parents to wrap them on December 23, 2011. If you are willing to help, please email (allamericanfamiliesplus@gmail.com), call (874-0464) or write us for a tag.

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Parents are so delighted to have these presents to put under their tree.



MOTHER'S DAY

Families Plus mothers are very special people!!! Mother's Day was even more colorful and fragrant this year with all the flowers given to mothers and mentoring mothers by Families Plus children and their siblings. 85 vases of flowers were delivered to children for their mothers by dedicated volunteer-neighbors that used their own time and gas to run them around. Several community organizations including United Methodist Women gathered vases to hold the flowers. Mothers are very special people so remembering them is worth all the investment in them.



FATHER'S DAY

There was lots of help this year with honoring the fathers and mentoring father's and mother-filling-in-for fathers in the Families Plus Program. Individual bakers around the county donated 150 dozen cookies that were packaged and decorated and delivered to 51 children to give to fathers to honor them. Organizations collecting cookies for the children to give included the bakers who were too numerous to list. Also helping were those that packaged the cookies and those that delivered to children including Marsha Bryan, Clay & Marilyn Spear, Linda Bell, Maggie Shishim, Cecilia Hurla, Sharon Riegel, Charles Fuller, Patricia Towner, Larry Donathan, and Mariah Clark. Families Plus assists the participating children and their siblings to appreciate and to express their appreciation for others. Who knows, they might even have gotten to share the cookies.



HAPPY 13TH BIRTHDAY TO ALL AMERICAN FAMILIES PLUS

We are so pleased to be celebrating our 13th BIRTHDAY ON OCTOBER 9th, 2011! Can you believe it has been 13 years since its inception!! Time does fly when you are having fun. We are so proud of our children and families on how well they are doing. Many thanks to all the Mentors and Mini Mentors that have volunteered their precious time to help the 51 children that we have participating in our program. Also many thanks to the organizations, churches and volunteers that have been there to help when needed, also for the donations of school supplies, household goods and appliances. This is a community effort to raise healthy children. Community support just continues to grow for these children. YEAH, Delta County!

IN MEMORIAM



NATALI HOOD

FAMILIES PLUS: Ready when needed

In life we never know when we are really going to need other people. On September 3, 2011, such a day arrived for Summer and Dylan Hood who have participated in the Families Plus program since 2004. Their mother, Natali Hood, passed away in her sleep that night while the children were both spending the night with friends. Jeff Bartosiewicz her partner, was present. Families Plus has over the years organized nine adults in the Cedaredge community to be helpful to the Hood family when needed and mentor the children. These kind neighbors all sprang into action to be present for Jeff and the children, bringing food, assisting with services, and just standing by. All nine volunteers were present at the celebration of life services held for Natali at the Cedaredge Assembly of God church with Pastor Bob Hillyer, officiating. Many of the children's teachers also attended the services in support of the children. These same giving individuals all plan to continue to be there for the children as they move through yet another tragedy in their lives. If anything can make a difference, this outpouring of support and love for these children will steady them and encourage them forward. Mentoring for life: It works!!!

YAY for SUMMERTIME!!!

Endlessly long, sunny days, cookouts, swimming, biking, hiking; these are just a few of the fun activities associated with summertime, especially here in the beautiful playground that we know as Colorado. During this three-month period, all of us kids and adults try to cram as much fun and adventure into our lives before school starts again in the fall. One of the summer experiences many of us have in common is camp.

Summer camp can be an amazing learning and growth experience for children. Attending a summer camp program can help kids not only gain both social and practical life skills, but can provide an experience that they will never forget.

Once again, some of our Families Plus kids participated in a week-long overnight adventure discovery camp experience at Camp RedCloud, the week of July 31 through August 5. Located outside Lake City, Colorado at 9,200 feet, Camp RedCloud offers beautiful mountains, lakes, and a bunch of marshmallows and songs around the campfire during the cool summer nights!

Some of the activities included in this week of fun were a high ropes course for trust-building, an adventure course, canoeing, mountain biking, archery, a Continental Divide hike, water games, and an overnight campout. During this week, our kids had a chance to gain valuable skills, try new experiences, and were able to share summer fun and enjoy outdoor challenges with other children from across the country.

This unforgettable life experience was made possible for our kids by collaboration with many of our partners, including the ever-active Women on the Move. This collaboration makes it possible to help with everything from covering the cost of camp to providing transportation to and from Lake City.

Our wonderful campers included: Jarrin & Ivorie Crandall, Summer Hood, Zoey, Owen & Ryan Janssen, Briana & Aliyah January, Courtney and & Amber Mattler.

CHILDRENS SUCCESSES



Cassidie and Ashley Gardner purchased “show goats” over the summer and had their first show in August. Cassidie took 2nd place and Ashley took 4th place. **Way to go girls, congratulations!!**

Dylan Hood played on a winning baseball team that came in 3rd place in the tournament.



Alexis Medrano has her learning permit to drive.

Zoom Zoom

Antonio Visuano attended the art class at the Creamery in Hotchkiss this summer. There he was able to show and sell some of his art work. **Way to go, Antonio!!!**



The following are the children that attended Camp RedCloud; *Jarrin & Ivorie Crandall, Summer Hood, Zoey, Owen & Ryan Janssen, Briana & Aliyah January and Courtney & Amber Mattler.*

We are so proud of all of you, keep up the good work!!

From the Director:

The parents enrolling their children in the Families Plus program have placed a lot of trust in those they are allowing to help them with their children. Families Plus usually comes into their lives as a group of complete strangers. These parents take a chance that their lives will not be disrupted and their children will be safe. They summons up their courage in hopes that their children will benefit.

The summer compilation of statistics will excite them and the rest of us along with them. Families Plus children were strong in school performance during the 2010-11 school year. Ninety-five percent of the participating children ended the school year with a "C" or above in grade point average. Seventy-nine percent of the children had a "C" or above average all year. Also the children's mental health improved. According to tests completed by parents, 76% of children exhibiting better mental health now than when they enrolled. According to tests completed by the teachers, 74% of the children improved in their mental health between to time they enrolled the spring of 2011.



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