



FAMILIES PLUS

Mentoring Kids for Life!

January 2012 – Newsletter
Community Corner Stones

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Brenda K. Holland, Ph.D.
Executive Director, Psychologist
Danielle Kemper, MSW, LCSW
Program Director, Social Worker
Thomas Friel, M.A., L.P.C.
Mental Health Professional
Karen Wolfram, M.A., L.P.C.
Mental Health Professional
Karen McFarland
Office Manager
Dave Armlovich, Web Master

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NINE YEARS OF INVESTMENT BY A MENTORING FAMILY

Cameron Porter found his own mentoring family when he was six years old. Cameron is the son of Debra Chandler. When Cameron was six years old, he and his Mom lived just up the street from Corey and Rob Rice who had an infant daughter named Rhetta. Cameron is outgoing and struck up his own friendship with them. He frequently came over to enjoy his imaginary play in their yard, chasing many monsters away for them. After a few years, Cameron moved with his mother to the Paonia area. He attended Paonia elementary and middle school. In April 2009 Cameron's mother enrolled him in the Families Plus program. Rob and Corey Rice had always missed regular contact with Cameron so they stepped up to assume a mentoring roll with him. They invited him frequently on the weekends into their home which now included their young son, Willon. Their relationship just took up where it had left off several years earlier. Even though Cameron currently lives in the Grand Junction area, the Rice family continues to stay in close contact with him and have him in their home once a month or more. Cameron is like a member of the family being viewed like a big brother by Rhetta and Willon. Cameron at fifteen is an avid reader and has good academic skills. He has a keen interest in joining the military when he is old enough to enlist. He is a typical teenager very skilled with videogames and keeping his iPod filled with music. Corey Rice is dedicated to supporting the needs of her two young children along with two businesses – seamstress and Rice Recycling. Rob has worked for years in the construction industry but currently is finishing his college degree at Colorado Mesa University.

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Located on Colorado's Western Slope
1211 Colorado Ave.
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lanqco.bobl@hotmail.com

(970) 201-8472

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2011 FAMILIES PLUS GIFT WRAPPING PARTY

This year we held our gift wrapping party for the parents at the Delta United Methodist Church. Our staff arrived early to set up the area with the gifts, wrapping paper and supplies. The gifts were purchased by all the wonderful people who pulled a tag off of one of our Christmas Trees set up at various locations in Cedaredge, Austin and Delta. We are so thankful for the support all of you show for our children in need.



The parents arrived at noon and Methodist Women's Group treated them to a delicious lunch of "sloppy jo.s, coleslaw and for dessert, your choice of white or chocolate cake. During lunch we played Bingo and the "caller" was one of our "singing staff reindeer", antlers and all. There was another "staff reindeer" running around and keeping everyone entertained. As the parents finished their lunch they started wrapping the gifts for their children and the bingo games continued. There was a special table with free gifts (donated by various people) for the taking.

It was a very successful event enjoyed by all. We thank all of you for your continued support, gifts and donations. Without them we would not be able to help our families and let their children have a wonderful Christmas.

THE COSTS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA:

Psychological trauma is behind an enormous array of problems. Events don't have to be life-threatening and dramatic (like experiencing combat, imprisonment, surviving an airplane crash, or being a victim of serious assault) to be considered traumatic. Traumas with a small "t" can have a great impact on both adults and children. Events that make one feel powerless, rejected, humiliated, unworthy, or crazy can have a lasting negative influence on a person. Left unrecognized and unresolved, they can haunt us for decades as if they were still happening in the here and now. Not all traumas lead to full-blown Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) either. That is just the most extreme consequence. A compassionate response from a supportive family and social group, accurate interpretation of what exactly happened, and realistic assignment of responsibility can all help reduce the likelihood that the impact, while temporarily overwhelming and painful, will lead to PTSD. The consequences of trauma are very diverse. They can take many forms ranging from anxiety and depression to hypervigilance, re-experiencing the trauma, avoidance behaviors, withdrawal, having an extreme reaction not congruent with what is actually happening, substance abuse, fear of losing control, a sense of a foreshortened future, or a loss of hope and belief that life has meaning. Trauma impacts people mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. The good news is that there are effective, evidence-based, and well-researched therapies to help resolve the trauma, not just reduce the symptoms. Tom Friel, a Licensed Professional Counselor, on staff with Families Plus is offering a detailed special presentation on effective treatments for trauma at Bill Heddles Recreation Center on Friday, February 10, 2012, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Admission is FREE, so come increase your knowledge base!

For more information, call Tom at 970-216-1740.



“**SHARON’S KIDS**” is a nonprofit association whose goal is to “help youth cultivate an awareness, understanding, and appreciation for the natural world.” The initial focus of this youth outreach program is to send boys and girls, ages 8-13, from Delta County to summer camp. Sharon Riegel managed a similar, successful program for 12 years under Women on the Move hiking group, sending 70 children to camp through member donations. Under Sharon’s Kids, the successful summer camp component will continue, but the outreach program is expanded to include monthly outings such as hikes, swimming, X-C ski lessons, llama treks, and natural science explorations.

Boys and girls will be nominated for camp by local elementary schools and the two Delta County mentoring groups of Partners and Families Plus. The main criteria is that the child’s family cannot afford to send the child to camp. The Santa Maria YMCA Camp near Bailey, Colorado has been chosen for the summer 2012 destination. It is the goal of this YMCA camp “to make every activity, from eating breakfast to team building initiatives, opportunities for learning and development. Staff strives to include the core values of the YMCA: Respect, Responsibility, Honesty and Caring, into each experience that campers have while they are at camp.”

“Sharon’s Kids” is an organization that relies on volunteers and donations. There are currently twelve official adult members of Sharon’s Kids and approximately nineteen boys and girls, ages 8-13, that participate in activities. Through “Sharon’s Kids”, boys and girls lives could be forever changed. These kids will know that someone cares. Families Plus is looking for sponsors to pay the \$100.00 camp entrance fee and volunteers to drive kids to and from camp. For more information, contact Sharon Riegel at 921-3800.

CONGRATULATIONS KIDS!!

Antonio Visuano and Edward Hecht for being on the **HONOR ROLL** at Garnet Mesa Elementary School. ☺

Amber Mattler and Courtney Mattler for being on the **HONOR ROLL** at Hotchkiss K-8 School. ☺

Leroy Zavala earned a **Terrific Kid Award** from the Kiwanis Club of Delta for being a responsible citizen and student. ☺



**Photo taken by Dylan Hood
(He used his Mentors Camera)**



FUNDING CORNER

As an evolving and expanding organization, one of our priorities is to increase our fund-raising efforts in order to serve more Delta county children and families. We are pleased to report that our program has been awarded grants from the following foundations. We are honored to be associated with these organizations and look forward to extending their generosity to more effectively serve families and children in our community.

THE COLORADO HEALTH FOUNDATION \$30,000

Because one of Colorado Health Foundation's core values is collaboration, they believe that by bringing together individuals, organizations, and resources, the barriers to better health can be overcome in the state of Colorado. Their goal of improving the health and health care of Coloradans by increasing access to quality health care and encouraging healthy lifestyle choices fits right in with our mission at Families Plus. This is the second year of a three-year award intended to assist Families Plus to increase the number of children receiving mental health and mentoring services, and to increase the number of underserved children able to access health care services through partnership with The Moore Pediatric Clinic.

WESTERN COLORADO COMMUNITY FOUNDATION HAROLD AND MARGARET PORTER FAMILY FUND \$5,049

The Western Colorado Community Foundation has a logo that expresses their belief system in a way that really resonates with all of us at Families Plus. Their logo depicts an Anasazi petro glyph chipped from an ancient rock wall in the form of a spiral. WCCF states that for them, the circular form of the glyph reflects a sense of community and our connectedness to others, the spiral reflects the power of endowment and a gift that keeps on giving, and the petro glyph itself symbolizes those that have been before us and have left their mark. At Families Plus, we believe in the power of community and connectedness, and hope to affect change in lives that can be seen for generations. Thanks to this generous gift from the Harold and Margaret Porter Family Fund, we will continue to work toward what that ancient petro glyph symbolizes for WCCF.

ANSCHUTZ FAMILY FOUNDATION \$5,000

The Anschutz Family Foundation supports non-profits like Families Plus that are engaged in the work of assisting people to help themselves while nurturing and preserving their self-respect. The Foundation encourages endeavors that strengthen families and communities and advance individuals to become productive and responsible citizens. Because of their interest in self-sufficiency, community development and programs aimed at the economically disadvantaged, young, and elderly, especially in rural Colorado, this foundation and their generous resources are a good fit with Families Plus and support our mission to strengthen Delta county families and children.

WOLCOTT FAMILY FOUNDATION \$4,500

The Wolcott Family Foundation takes the motto, "If you give a person a fish, they will eat for a day, if you teach them to fish, they will fish for a lifetime" to a whole new level. Their belief is "Teach them to fish, and together we can feed the world. Teach them to fish along with cooperative organization and sustainable practices and together we can feed the world with a high quality of life for generations to come." Because of the Wolcott Family Foundation's gift, we are able to expand our work to enhance the community at large by serving Delta county children and their families.



FAMILIES PLUS recycles ink cartridges. If you need a place to drop your used cartridges off, please bring them by our office at 115 Grand Ave., Ste. 2, Delta, CO 81416. We will be glad to recycle them for you. Office Max gives us credit toward the cartridges so we can buy more supplies.



NEWS FROM THE *INSIDE*

At Families Plus, we are always looking for new ways to grow our organization that will allow us to serve even more children and families in Delta County. We are happy to announce two exciting changes:

Dave Shishim, formerly on our staff as the Director of Outreach, will now be lending his expertise as a Board Member. Around the office, we call him our “gentle bulldog” because of his gentle but tenacious way of getting results for the program.

Danielle Kemper, currently on staff as a therapist, will also be allocating time to our administrative team as Program Director. We hope that with this shift, our organization will become more efficient. Our hope is that this will allow our Executive Director Brenda Holland to spend time exploring new funding sources so Families Plus can expand services to more children and families in need.

Welcome, Dave and Danielle, to your new roles!



COMMUNITY GOINGS-ON FOR KIDS

Doesn't every girl want to feel like a princess? That's what Connie Williams, the owner of the Apple Shed Gallery and Art Complex in Cedaredge, thinks. Connie hosted a “Dress Bonanza Party” for Cedaredge High School senior girls where they could choose a dress for homecoming and prom at no cost and have it redesigned into a one-of-a-kind dress. In addition, the girls will get their hair, make-up, and nails done at no cost to them. Other Delta County girls can take advantage of this program by having someone nominate them for a scholarship to receive a dress, but the dress will not be remade into a one-of-a-kind. All services are paid for by donation. For information on donating to this program or to nominate a girl in your life to receive a dress, call Connie Williams at 856-7007 for more information.



NEWS ON THE *STREET*

We made the news! Did you see the January 18 article about Families Plus in the Delta County Independent? We were on the back page, in a very nice article written by Hank Lohmeyer. He pointed out something that we are very proud of here at Families Plus: that our program is “on the cutting edge of a growing national trend aimed at building successful families and stronger communities.”

It's true. We are on the cutting edge, and we have to take this opportunity to brag about Delta County.

For the last thirteen years, Families Plus has been organized as a “system of care” model, a phrase that is now being thrown around nationally as the most effective means of service delivery. We always knew our community was ahead of the national trend!

What is a “system of care model” and why are we so excited to be providing services in this way? We'll tell you. A System of Care model entails relationship building, strategic planning, and implementing a con architecture of structures, functions, and processes to assess and improve the quality of services and supports in the community for children and families. That's a lot of fancy talk for a team approach to service delivery by networking with existing social services, schools, churches, non-profits, health care systems, and legions of community volunteers to “wrap around” our families and children that might need some extra supports in place in order to thrive. And that's what we're all about here at Families Plus. We want to see Delta County residents thrive rather than just survive. If you have more questions about the System of Care model, call us at 874-0464. We'd love to give you more information and share why we are excited to belong to a community that supports cutting edge programs!



DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Who would think to look in Delta County for a fully functioning systems-of-care model for children with challenges? In December, the Colorado Division of Behavioral Health in the State of Colorado released a request for proposals for counties wanting to plan systems-of-care programs for children. Families Plus is already thirteen years into the development of community-based, long-term program to assist children who might otherwise be overcome by the multiple challenges in their young lives. The residents of Delta County, for many complex reasons, have always been innovative and able to increase their quality of life in creative ways. The Bill Heddles recreation center rivals the facilities of many counties around. The Delta County Public schools were ahead of the trend to provide state-of-the art tech labs. Our drug court programs are in the thick of providing advanced help to persons with substance problems. The members of services clubs, small businesses, churches, public agencies, physician groups, and school staff who have volunteered much extra time and energy to Delta County children under the coordination of Families Plus are far too numerous to mention here. The Families Plus Board of Directors, Staff, and parents salutes the hundreds of individual who are invested in putting Delta County into the lead again in Colorado in caring for and providing for our underserved children.



***Kids for Life!
Mentoring***

***Families Plus
115 Grand Avenue, Suite 2
Delta, CO 81416***

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