

FEBRUARY 2009

ISSUE 1

Building capacity within Ohio's communities to identify and prioritize critical community issues and manage the investment of resources to achieve positive outcomes for children, youth and families

FIRST LADY STRICKLAND SPEAKS

On February 3, the headline of *The Columbus Dispatch* read "State of Pain" followed by: "Gov. Ted Strickland had been promising that his two-year budget proposal would require 'shared sacrifice' and his administration spelled out what that meant yesterday. "

The unfortunate possibility that our country and state faces is that the economic downturn has not yet hit bottom, and the debate continues at the federal level about what needs to be done. Many ideas are being proposed but it is difficult to know for sure which strategies are likely to be successful.

Ted has requested that the federal stimulus package include funding that makes it possible for state governments to reinforce programs like those of the agencies of the Family and Children First (FCF) Councils. We see the neediest among us already feeling the brunt of the depression and we are deeply concerned about the human cost—especially if we haven't seen the worst of it yet. We can blame, we can deny, and we can wish for simple solutions. But, the fact remains, we are in the grip of something that is far greater than most of us have ever experienced in our lifetime.

It is much like being caught in the trough between the waves of a powerful tide. Experts who understand the nature of undertows warn that those gripped by fear, who use up their energy fighting against this raging force, usually become disoriented and drown. Only if they remain calm can the wave bring them to its crest again where they can finally regain their sense of where they are and where they need to go. This is a time when many Ohioans are struggling against feelings of helplessness and it is the work of the FCF Councils to help them.

Someone wrote: "How do we deal with that which we are powerless to deal with?" Then answered: "With acceptance, with compassion, and with each other."

As FCF Councils, we must fully accept and not allow ourselves to underestimate or deny the situation our state, nation, and world faces. And, as job loss continues and financial struggles increase, we must continue to show our deepest compassion for those hardest hit and suffering from conditions not of their own making. But, most of all, we must never lose faith in what we have in each other as council members.

Woody Hayes talked about the power of togetherness through lessons he learned in football: "When you get knocked down—which is plenty often—you get right back up in a hurry—just as quickly as you can. And number two, you need more strength. You know where you get it? You get it in a huddle. You get it by going back and getting a new play and running that play together. That 'together' is the thing that gives you the build-up to get ready to go again."

That “together” and huddling is what the FCF Council is all about. Together, we serve as the stewards of the social and emotional well-being of our communities. As the challenges grow, support from our Partnership for Success initiative (PfS) will help us strengthen collaboration and alignment between and within the public and private agencies and faith-based services as we work toward a seamless system of care in our communities. Faith-based and community groups are stepping up with a “Call to Action” to assist efforts such as recruiting mentors and new foster care and adoptive parents, supporting summer food programs for children, and expanding Ohio Benefit Bank sites that connect people to the vital safety net services that are available to them.

This is a worrisome and stressful time for both the families and individuals struggling to deal with their losses and those working to help them. But, Woody was right. Strength and calm comes from our “togetherness.” If we keep our focus on working as one system of care for the community as a whole, realizing that a loss to any one agency is a blow to the whole system, and value the FCF Council as the place to huddle and figure out the plays to run together, then we can regain a sense of where we are and where we need to go.

It has been said: “We ought never to minimize or underestimate the nature of the problems that confront us; but, likewise, we ought never to minimize or underestimate our ability to deal with them.”

My visits to the Regions will begin on February 23rd. I look forward to being with you again as there is much to talk about and much we can create together.

PFS COUNTIES: A GREAT INVESTMENT OF PUBLIC FUNDS

Across the nation, organizations, agencies, and schools are moving toward increased accountability in prevention and intervention programs designed for at-risk and high-risk children and youth. Demands for accountability are emerging from a sense of urgency to develop effective and efficient programs that meet the needs of these children and families. In addition to evaluating the amount of evidence behind a given intervention or prevention, there are a number of logistical issues that must be addressed before deciding whether a given approach will work for a particular agency, institution, or school. Using the PfS approach, FCF Councils make better program decisions and better investments of public funds. Although the PfS process begins with a comprehensive review of community needs, it is oriented toward finding specific, workable, and effective local solutions. To accomplish these ends, FCF Councils are encouraged to adopt effective and feasible practices to meet the needs of children, youth, and families.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUCCESS WORKS!

A recent report, “Results of an Evaluation of the Effect of the Partnerships for Success (PfS) Process on Collaborative Capacity”, finds that the PfS process enhances collaborative capacity and collaboration. PfS was designed to support and strengthen Family and Children (FCF) Councils and their efforts to improve child and family well-being outcomes most important to their counties. FCF Councils are focusing their efforts on building the local capacity needed to identify and prioritize critical community issues and manage the investment of resources to address those issues to make a positive difference in the lives of children, youth, and families. True “collaboration” requires that stakeholders exchange information, alter activities, share resources and be willing to enhance the capacity of others. Members of collaborative groups must have specific capacities in order to effectively collaborate. The PfS Academy has collected evaluation data over the last several years providing the opportunity to test the degree to which FCF Councils in PfS counties have gained capacity to engage in collaborative problem solving. Evidence suggests that the PfS process enhanced collaborative capacity and actual collaboration as judged by members of FCF Councils in the 10 Ohio counties that most recently completed a full cycle of the process. Collaborative capacity is viewed as a necessary ingredient to effective collaboration. Effective collaboration, in turn is a means to develop and implement effective strategies at the local level in Ohio.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FIELD

Parents as Teachers Helps Prepare Greene County Youth for School

In SFY 2008, the Greene County Family and Children First (FCF) Council selected Parents as Teachers (PAT) as one of its strategies to help Greene County youth be ready for school. PAT is a nationally recognized home visiting curriculum for parents of children from birth through five. PAT is identified as a Best Practice by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention and as a Model Program by Strengthening America's Families. In SFY 2007, the Greene County FCF Council allocated a portion of its ABC funding to cross-system training in PAT. Although several organizations had been providing home visiting services, there was no common framework among these organizations and none of the organizations was using an evidence-based curriculum. Six organizations were trained in PAT and, in SFY 2008, five of these organizations started using PAT in their home visiting: the Greene County Combined Health District, The Council on Rural Services (Early Head Start), Greene County Career Center (GRADS; program for pregnant and parenting teens), Help Me Grow (home visiting), and Greene County MRDD. Without any additional funding, these organizations used PAT with 119 families in SFY 2008. Feedback from the parents served has been very positive. In surveys completed by parents, 100% strongly agreed or agreed that the information they had received from Parents as Teachers had helped them learn about child development. All of the parents also thought Parents as Teachers had increased their understanding of the importance of reading in their baby's development. Providers working with PAT meet regularly to assess progress and address challenges. In SFY 2009, the group will adopt an outcome measurement tool to more directly assess the impact on school readiness. The FCF Council also allocated SFY 2009 Ohio Children's Trust Fund Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention funding to expand the use of PAT in the County.

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Muskingum County Care Team in Registry of Effective Practice

Care Team Collaborative is a community-based partnership among several child-serving agencies and institutions that is focused on promoting school success. The collaborative includes representatives from schools, health and mental health agencies, child protection services, juvenile court, law enforcement, child development services, and county planning boards, including the Family and Children First Council. Integration is accomplished through administrative and financial cooperation, a shared model for needs assessment and program development, school-based multi-agency consultation and service teams and pooled financial and human resources. Muskingum County Schools with Care Teams have yielded many noteworthy outcomes. These schools have observed a 27% decrease in out of school suspensions between the 2005 and 2006 school years; this represents a drop from approximately 340 suspensions (2005-2006) to approximately 250 suspensions (2006-2007). Similarly, the suspension rate in the first semester of 2007-2008 school year (20 suspensions per month) represents a 49% decrease from the suspension rate in the first semester of the 2005-2006 school year (38 suspensions per month). Graduation rates were increased at Foxfire School by 39% over a two year period. Foxfire became a charter school and began its Care Team in fall 2003. Foxfire was previously an alternative school with no reported graduation rate. In 2003-2004, the graduation rate was 69%. The 2006-2007 graduation rate was 93.7%. Foxfire is third for graduation rates in the state of Ohio compared to all other charter schools.

Care Team Collaborative has been adapted from the model developed by Care Team Concepts, LLC, originating in Navarre, Ohio. The development of the Care Team Collaborative has been guided by the UCLA Center for School Mental Health Interconnected Systems framework and the Search Institute Asset building model. Care Team Collaborative is willing to assist other schools and communities that are interested in developing a Care Team. Training material, start up support, an infrastructure for web-

based data collection and evaluation, and technical assistance can be made available to interested communities.

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Community Collaboration in Allen County Breaks the “Effective” Barrier

Although final figures are not yet out, Freedom Elementary School’s preliminary information from spring testing indicates that they have broken the “effective” barrier during the 2007-2008 school year. Community collaboration and partnering with behavioral health services has worked successfully for the children and families who belong to the “freedom community”. The tables below detail their rise from Academic Emergency to Effective Status from the 2002-2003 school years to the 2007-2008 school years and a steady rise in reading, math and writing scores over four school years.

School Performance Index Scores – Freedom Elementary School – Allen County					
2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
53.6	70.6	69.4	80.7	88.5	92.3
Academic Emergency	Academic Watch	Academic Watch	Continuous Improvement	Continuous Improvement	Effective

4th Grade Tests % Passed	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Reading	46.7%	56.5%	75%	80%
Math	43.3%	62.9%	65%	82%
Writing	48.3%	75.8%	77.5%	88%

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PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUCCESS NEWS

Congratulations to the Family and Children First (FCF) Councils Receiving Grants in SFY 2009

The FCF Councils in Carroll, Hardin, Henry, Tuscarawas and Union Counties began to implement Partnerships for Success in October 2008.

Ashland, Highland, Miami and Preble Counties’ FCF Councils initiated PfS readiness activities in October 2008 and hope to implement Partnerships for Success in SFY 2010.

FREE NEWSLETTERS

Faith Based & Community Initiatives

<https://app.e2ma.net/app/view:CampaignPublic/id:12049.1450856521/rid:e177e8e024c82c1c871935f116f546b4>

Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities: Up to the Minute

http://www.oacbha.org/publications/up_to_the_minute.html?PHPSESSID=af17e345f5a34872737cb55a0c156c2c


Public Children Services Association of Ohio

<http://www.pcsao.org/Publications/publications.htm>

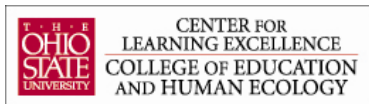
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration News

http://www.samhsa.gov/SAMHSA_News/index.htm



**Partnerships
for Success** 

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This communication has been sent from The Ohio State University Center for Learning Excellence, a translational center dedicated to outreach and engagement work within the service component of the mission of the College of Education and Human Ecology.

For more information about the Center for Learning Excellence or Partnerships for Success please visit: <http://cle.osu.edu>

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