



Newsletter

FAMILY SUPPORT C E N T E R

Summer 2011

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DELTA PROJECT: Eight Years of Primary Prevention

Almost eight years ago I became the coordinator for the Family Support Center's Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancement and Leadership Through Alliances Project (DELTA), funded by the Centers For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Our goal was the primary prevention of teen dating violence, meaning we would be working against its root causes, aiming to prevent it from ever happening. We will learn this summer whether the project gets refunded. In the meantime I wanted to share some thoughts about what DELTA has taught us and some of the successes we have had.

One of the strengths of the DELTA Project was the CDC's acknowledgment that programs, especially prevention programs, need time and patience: hence the length of the funding period. The project also allowed us to learn new information, skills, and even frames of reference. We started by setting up a committee of adults from law enforcement, social services, schools, and elsewhere. These were professionals who dealt with violence after the fact: responding to domestic violence calls, working with victims, prosecuting abusers. Committee members had to shift their thinking about relationship violence away from intervention, since primary prevention requires look-

ing at what causes violence in the first place, what combination of personal and social factors could be addressed to stop the violence before it starts.

This committee then learned about models helpful in creating primary prevention programs, one of which held that addressing root causes requires going beyond the typical education of individuals to changing those individuals' attitudes and behaviors. There are many root causes for relationship violence. The one that we chose to focus on was unhealthy gender assumptions, such as males always have to be in control, or females should always be in a relationship, any relationship. Because of their developmental stage, teens are particularly vulnerable to these assumptions. They haven't had much experience with relationships, they strongly feel the need to belong, and they are strongly influenced by the media, which tends to reinforce stereotypes.

Because of what they learned, the committee supported the formation of a youth group focused on preventing relationship violence. The group was called the Youth Action Committee, or YAC. The YAC began by meeting outside of school, then moved to the Chippewa Valley High School (CVHS), and eventually became a for-credit class, co-taught by myself and the social worker at CVHS.

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LADIES EVENING EXTRAVAGANZA INVITATION INSIDE!

Eight Years of Primary Prevention Continued from page 1

The fact that the YAC is now an established part of CVHS's curriculum is a huge success; few prevention programs attain such a stable position within schools, able to continue even if grant funding disappears.

In this class we try to stop teen dating violence before it happens by informing the students about healthy and unhealthy relationships, addressing their attitudes and assumptions, and allowing them to practice skills needed for positive relationships. We do this in large part through having the YAC create and give presentations to younger students, primarily in middle school.

The presentations they do involve addressing the unhealthy relationships being experienced by the middle schoolers: bullying, physical, emotional and sexual abuse. The younger students learn what makes a relationship good and what makes it unhealthy. They get to explore what they assume about being male and female and how that contributes to their relationships. And they get to practice skills needed to have successful relationships. For some of these middle schoolers there is learning and positive attitudinal change. However, DELTA's true goal is encouraging these things in the members of YAC.

Have we been successful? I would say we definitely have had an impact, in part shown through the formal data we have collected from the students. Even more telling for me has been the changes I have seen during my interactions over the years with YAC members. For example, there was the young man who was used to settling disagreements with his fists. During YAC's presentations he shared that

getting into fights never solved anything for him and he was now trying to overcome that habit. Or another student acknowledging that he used to bully kids when he attended middle school and now regrets doing so. Both young men encouraged the middle school students to treat one another with respect and modeled that behavior with their peers.

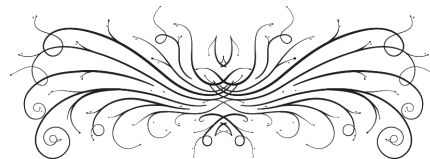
I remember the young woman whose face I couldn't see during the early months of the YAC class because she kept her long hair hanging over it. She hardly spoke in class and never ate any of the treats I would bring. Later I would find out that she was in an abusive relationship which resulted in her substance abuse and suicidal feelings. By the end of class, however, I got to see this young woman's face as she readily talked and ate in class. She wrote a long article for the school newsletter about her relationship. And she reported the abuser to the police.

Contacted years after graduating high school and leaving YAC, students have told me that they still have their YAC materials and look at them once in awhile. Many say they remember what we talked about and try to incorporate the information and skills into their current relationships.

One of the clearest lessons from the DELTA Project has been that primary prevention requires patience and commitment: changing attitudes and behaviors takes time, persistence and attention to each individual. But I have seen that the outcome is worth it, as when a student told us: *"The knowledge [from YAC] helped a lot. My thinking and behavior went from angry and violent to caring and realizing that many situations were wrong in my*

life. You saved me from what could've been years of destroying behavior."

-Denise, Prevention Coordinator



Country Fest & Rock Fest Raffles

Family Support Center is having raffle booths at both Country Fest and Rock Fest again this year. An autographed acoustic guitar was raffled at Country Fest, and an autographed electric guitar will be raffled at Rock Fest. If you attend the Fests, please stop by the booth in front of Leinie's Clothing & Stuff and purchase a \$2 ticket or 6 tickets for only \$10. Advanced raffle tickets for Rock Fest are available for purchase at the Family Support Center. We would like to thank **Chippewa Valley Music festivals, the performing artists, Leinenkugel's, Miller Brewing Co., and Schmitt Music**, for making this fundraiser possible.

An Evening of Entertainment 6th Annual Chi-Hi Talent Show

What an evening of fun! On March 25th, Chi-Hi held its 6th Annual Talent Show to benefit the Family Support Center. We would like to thank all of the students, faculty, and participants for making the evening a great success.

These shows began in 2006. This year, Chi-Hi raised \$2,400 for the Family Support Center.

LADIES EVENING EXTRAVAGANZA

Join us for the fourth annual Ladies Evening Extravaganza to benefit the Family Support Center!

Enjoy great conversation,
delicious food, Autumn Harvest Wine,
Leinenkugel's Beer and
raffles with AMAZING prizes!

Tuesday, September 13th

Doors open at 5:30 pm

White's Wildwood Retreat
18059 County Hwy. 00, Chippewa Falls

Tickets:
\$35 in advance,
\$40 at the door
Early Bird Drawing
Deadline is July 30th.

Groups:
If you purchase your
ticket in a group of 6 or
more people, your
group will be entered
into a drawing for a prize.

To purchase tickets:

Call Family Support Center at: 1-800-400-7020 or
visit our website at www.familysupportcentercf.com.

Advance Tickets on sale until September 1st.

Must be 21 years of age to attend.

A limited number of tickets are available.

We cannot guarantee tickets will be available at the door.

Thank you to our sponsors to date for making this event possible.

Autumn Harvest Winery
Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing Company
White's Wildwood Retreat
Korgers Decorating & Fine Furniture
Evy Ivy Over
Reality Works
Northwestern Bank
Mason Companies

W.S. Darley Companies
Royal Credit Union
Heyde Companies
Marshfield Clinic
St. Joseph's Hospital
Great Northern Corporation
Rainbow Catering
Briggs Tent and Party Rental



All proceeds benefit the Family Support Center.



Family Support Center is a
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United Way
of the Greater Chippewa Valley



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Tickets Now on Sale! Ladies' Evening Extravaganza

Join us on **Tuesday, September 13, 2011** at White's Wildwood Retreat for a fun-filled night for ladies only. There will be raffles, great food, and much more! Please call Family Support Center at (715) 723-1138 if you would like to buy tickets or for more information. All proceeds benefit Family Support Center.

The Family Support Center is an equal opportunity agency. Family Support Center does not discriminate in any manner on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation. Family Support Center is a United Way member agency.



Do you know how you can help us the next time you go for groceries?

**With a little help you too can make a difference.
 All items on this list cost less than \$10.
 If you have any questions, call us at 715-723-1138.**

- Dish soap
- Laundry detergent
- Fabric sheets
- Cleaning/Disinfecting Wipes
- Lg. Latex-free Plastic Gloves
- 33 Gal. Garbage Bags
- Paper Towel
- Toilet Paper
- Handwipes
- Toothpaste
- Feminine Hygiene Products
- Deodorant
- Grocery and Gas Gift Cards
- Microwavable Non-frozen Self-contained Meals
- Stickers
- Coloring Books
- Children's Books
 Appropriate for ages 10-15
- Children's Movies
 (DVD or VHS)
- Cereal Bowls
- Juice
- Snacks

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