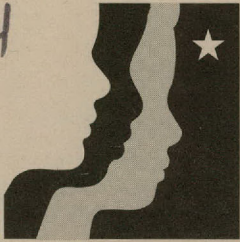


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CRCG

THE BRIDGE

Newsletter of the **COMMUNITY RESOURCE COORDINATION GROUPS** of Texas

"Bridging the Service Gap for the Youth of Texas"

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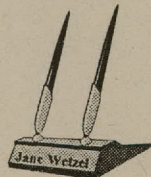
From the Chair

Greetings! I'm excited about all of the wonderful collaborative work that I've seen and heard about from CRCGs around our great state of Texas. I'm equally excited about the potential for increased collaboration on the local and state level. In this time of change, let me assure you that the CRCG function will continue to have an important role in the grand scheme of service delivery for children and youth. CRCGs are consistently recognized as a vital part of delivering coordinated services during discussions of systems reform.

This year the State CRCG Team is paying special attention to the inclusion of families and diversifying the CRCGs. We are also pleased to include two parent liaisons, Connie Bell and Linda Vancil to the State Team's membership. Our hope is that local CRCGs will take an introspective look at ensuring that diverse groups of children in need of interagency coordination are receiving the appropriate CRCG service in partnership with their families. Whether the families who are served through CRCGs have different cultural backgrounds, have diverse diagnosis, or have varying income levels, the result is the same - CRCGs networking to make the difference for a child or adolescent one at a time.

So, keep up the great collaborative work through your CRCG operation. I look forward to seeing you and exchanging ideas at the worthwhile, information-packed statewide CRCG conference in April.

Peace,



Jane Wetzel

Dallas County Strengthens Families

by Rick Doucet, M.A., Coordinator, Westside Family Center

In the spring of 1993, Children and Adolescent Services of Dallas County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services underwent a total reorganization. The reorganization was complete down to the philosophy for provision of services. Prior to the reorganization, the philosophy for services excluded many of the youth and families of Dallas County. Families could not get in for services, and those that did often remained for many years as the programs enabled families to become dependent on the system.

The idea was to become inclusive rather than exclusive, and in the process empower families to take control over their individual situations rather than relying on the system for answers. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) was reorganized to provide a therapeutic treatment service designed to keep families intact and children in the community.

As part of this change in philosophy it was determined that CAMHS did not have a sufficient continuity of care plan for adolescents who were placed by the juvenile justice system for treatment at Vernon State Hospital. In September of 1993 the management team for CAMHS visited Vernon State Hospital. It was during this visit that the initial discussion for a new aftercare program was discussed. Over the next few weeks a new program was developed in collaboration with the Vernon Staff. Once a month Vernon staff would transport the adolescents in treatment as well as members of their treatment staff, to the Westside Family Center for a day of family intervention. This consisted of lunch with the family and then a multifamily session led by a member of the treatment team and a member

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from Dallas County...)

of CAMHS clinical staff who would be providing the after-care program. The program has undergone many changes since its inception. We now allow Vernon to include adolescents from any county as long as the adolescent's family attends. We also encourage family members to attend the program aftercare group's weekly meetings, prior to their child being discharged from Vernon. This group is open to all family members as well as members of the Westside community with substance abuse issues. This group has evolved over the last year and a half in an attempt to ensure treatment continues for the family while the child or adolescent is placed outside of the home.

Building creative continuity of care plans such as this, decreases the "revolving door" syndrome...

We have opened up discussions with Waco Center for Youth in an attempt to develop a similar program that would include the youth and family in more intensive family therapy both in Waco and Dallas. Many times CRCGs access these and other out-of-home placements for children and adolescents. Building creative continuity of care plans such as this, decreases the "revolving door" syndrome as well as supports families to more effectively transition their child back to their community. ❖

CRCGS SEEK TO IMPROVE CULTURAL COMPETENCE



by Monique Ward,
State CRCG Liaison

Minority youth are an ever increasing proportion of the health and human service client population. Data from agencies like the Texas Youth Commission's Report, "The Overrepresentation of Minorities in the Juvenile Justice System" emphasizes this concern. This is especially important since CRCG staffing data indicates that there is a high frequency of Caucasian males between the ages of 12 and 15 being served by local CRCGs. Statewide data also tells us that local CRCGs frequently serve adolescents who have mental health needs and are on the crest of entering the juvenile justice system. The highest number of CRCGs referrals come from the mental health services of TxMHMR, with the following in descending order; Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, Juvenile Probation Departments, and Independent School Districts. Therefore, CRCGs have the opportunity to impact this population of minority youth who are in need of intervention.

Developing and implementing a comprehensive cultural competence program is key to the ever increasing success of CRCGs. Dr. Charles Cain, from the National Maternal Child Health Resource Center on Cultural Competency, presented at the '94 CRCG

Regional conferences. According to Dr. Cain, the term cultural competency is defined as a set of interpersonal skills that allow individuals to increase their understanding and appreciation of cultural differences and similarities within, among, and between groups. Cultural competence is a **goal** that a system, agency, or individual continually aspires to achieve. Multiple elements contribute to the ability for a CRCG to become culturally competent. The sheer versatility and uniqueness of CRCGs in different parts of the state warrant a variety of approaches.

An awareness of one's own cultural values and beliefs and how they influence attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors toward others is essential to providing effective and sensitive service to children and youth from various cultures. According to the Georgetown University Child Development Center report "Towards A Culturally Competent System of Care," a system of care which is accessible, acceptable, and available to children of color should be based on a set of underlying values. These values might be used as basic guidelines, which when drawn together, provide a foundation for policy, practice, and attitudinal development. A culturally competent system of care has components which:

- View natural systems (family, community, church, healers, etc.) as primary mechanism of support for minority populations.

- Respect the unique, culturally-defined needs of various client populations.

- Acknowledge culture as a predominant force in shaping behaviors, values, and institutions.

- Recognize that the concepts of "family," "community", etc. for various cultures and even subgroups within cultures.

- Start with the "family," as defined by each culture, as the primary and preferred point of intervention.

- Advocate for effective services on the basis that the absence of cultural competence anywhere is threat to competent services everywhere.

- Respect the family as indispensable to understanding the individual, because the family provides the context within which the person functions and is the support network of its members.

It is important that CRCGs at every phase of the process are able to honor and respect those interpersonal styles, attitudes and beliefs which come together to allow collaborative teams to work effectively where more than one culture is present.

The components of a culturally competent program function together on a continuum involving planning, including the development of goals and strategies; support from the leadership; participation and commitment from diverse members of the group to ensure that the cultural competency initiative is followed

groups current level of cultural competence including the group's policies and procedures; training suited to the groups level; and revisions of policies and procedures which allow for more accessibility, flexibility, sensitivity, and inclusion.

Cultural competence is a process that doesn't happen over night. But if taken seriously, CRCGs can have a tremendous impact on providing encompassing community based, client-centered services available to the broadest range of youth across the State of Texas. ☒



Award To Recognize Service To Children

The following was a news release that Bill Freeman, the Fort Bend County CRCG Chairperson, drafted for media use in their area last year. Hats off to this CRCG for developing a mechanism to celebrate the "shakers and movers" on your team!

At the September meeting of the Fort Bend County Community Resource Coordination Group (CRCG), the introduction of a new award was announced. Designated the "M. Connie Almeida Award for Excellence," it will recognize individuals for their outstanding work with the youth of our community who require services for multiple problems.

Individuals who through their devotion to youth and commitment to interagency cooperation have positively affected the lives of these children will also be eligible. The award will be presented annually to the individual who was chosen to best represent this philosophy.

M. Connie Almeida, Ph.D., has been honored by this award as she exemplifies the qualities it represents. Dr. Almeida, a psychologist, specializes in working with youth who are dual diagnosed with mental retardation and mental illness. She has tirelessly worked with agencies and organizations in Fort Bend County to bridge the gaps that may exist to provide her clients with much needed services. Her devotion, energy, integrity, and commitment to excellence are the model of this award.

Established in 1987, the Fort Bend County CRCG is a staffing group that successfully exemplifies the CRCG philosophy by coordinating services for children and adolescents with interagency needs. Composed of representatives from the public and private agencies, this CRCG meets monthly to explore resources for children who may be missed or who are slipping through the gaps in services. Members coordinate and refer youth who have a number of problems and require service that any agency was unable to provide. ☒

In the Works

The State Office of CRCG is working on a couple of projects for the purpose of promoting the CRCG process on the state, regional, and local levels. One of these projects is a CRCG brochure that gives an overview of CRCG process and benefits. Copies of the brochure will be distributed to all local CRCGs and state CRCG members. The brochure may be used to educate key decision makers at all levels about the CRCG operation. It may also be used for educating families and service providers in communities.

Additionally, a CRCG video is being developed by the State Office of CRCG with sponsorship by the Travis County CRCG. This video features interviews with families who feel that CRCGs have had a positive impact on the services that their child or adolescent has received.

Approximately ten minutes in length, this video may be easily used for the same purpose as the CRCG brochure described above. This video will be available to all local CRCGs for educating their communities.

We plan for both these products to have an English and Spanish version and to be completed by the statewide CRCG conference in April. If you would like more information about these promotional products, contact the State Office of CRCG at (512) 502-3270.

CRCGs: Making a Difference ~ One at a Time

DON'T MISS OUT!

Have you reserved your space at the CRCG Statewide Conference yet? Registration materials have been mailed out across the state for this year's conference. This year's keynote speaker is the recipient of the Heinz Human Condition Award. Mr. Geoffrey Canada has been featured on Nightline and the CBS Morning News and has received national recognition for his work with high-risk youth and innovative youth programs.

This year's conference will be held:

April 10 - 12, 1995

at the

Austin Wyndham Hotel

Registration Cost \$30.00

For more information call (512) 502-3270.

We hope to see you there !



CRCG

**COMMUNITY
RESOURCE
COORDINATION
GROUPS of Texas**

CRCGs is a collaborative process serving the Youth of Texas.

In Partnership with families and:

Texas Commission for the Blind
Texas Department of Health
Texas Department of Mental
Health & Mental Retardation
Texas Education Agency
Texas Juvenile Probation Commission
Texas Youth Commission
Texas Commission on Alcohol &
Drug Abuse
Texas Department of Human Services
Texas Department of Protective &
Regulatory Service
Texas Interagency Council on Early
Childhood Intervention
Texas Rehabilitation Commission
Private Child Serving Providers

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