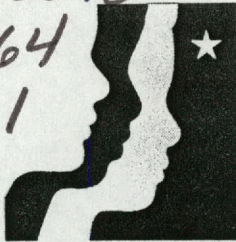


H 350.6
B764
3:1



CRCG

THE BRIDGE

A Publication of the COMMUNITY RESOURCE COORDINATION GROUPS of Texas
"Bridging the Service Gap for the Youth of Texas"

Government Publications
Texas State Documents
F B 11 1997
Depository
Dallas Public Library

Statewide Children's Collaborative Conference Wrap Up

The power of collaboration and networking was felt in El Paso as 200 people came together to attend the conference, *Tools for Today For Our Kids Tomorrow: Building Support for Children, Families and Providers in Their Communities.*

The Community Resource Coordination Groups (CRCG) of Texas and the Texas Children's Mental Health Plan (TCMHP) served as lead sponsors to this statewide children's collaborative conference, held October 8-11, 1996 in El Paso.

Besides CRCG and TCMHP, other sponsors contributed funds and services such as stipends for families to attend. The volunteers from the El Paso community also contributed to the success of the conference.

The three days of the conference were kicked off by Edward James Olmos' inspirational keynote address. He spoke about violence being a public health problem and the need to "vaccinate" against it.

Gerry McKimney, the associate commissioner of Service Integration at HHSC, was presented with an award for his outstanding commitment and work toward interagency collaboration for children and youth and their families.

The second day of the conference featured Angela Nelson and Barbara Huff from the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health. The two gave consumers' perspectives of dealing with the "system." Angela conveyed her insights and the effects on her life from becoming a ward of the state at age 11.

Barbara gave a compelling message about the parent's point of view. She ended her speech with the following consideration; when service planning for children and youth, providers should ask themselves, "Is this plan something they could live with for *your* children and—if not—why should it be okay for the family before you?"

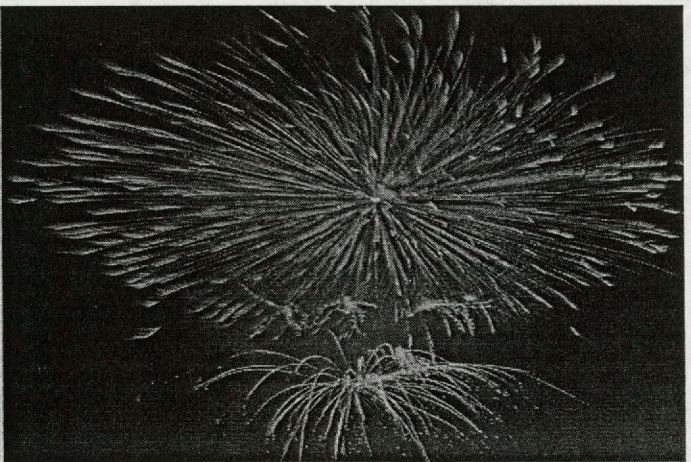
Karl Dennis of Kaleidoscope, Inc. closed the conference with an overview of the WrapAround approach. His message included the concepts of "unconditional care" and doing whatever it takes to support children and youth in normal living environments.

Thanks to everyone who helped make the conference a success. If you would like programs, T-shirts, etc. of the conference, please contact us at the (512) 424-6561.

You Did It!

Texas has CRCG statewide coverage! All 254 Texas counties have a local CRCG available to them! Thanks to all of you—and you know you are—who have spread the word about the CRCG process! This statewide expansion is a direct result of the wonderful work you do for the kids and their families in your community. You are true champions for collaborative service delivery!! We appreciate you and most of all— your community appreciates you!

State CRCG Team



The Community Resource Coordination Groups of Texas are 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 and Mental Retardation
Texas Education Agency

Texas Juvenile Probation Commission
Texas Youth Commission
Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse
Texas Department of Human Services
Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services
Texas Interagency Council on Early Childhood Intervention
Texas Rehabilitation Commission
Private Child Serving Providers

The Bridge is published by the State Office of CRCG
Texas Health and Human Services Commission
Send comments to:
P.O. Box 13247
Austin, Texas 78711
or call 512/424-6561 (voice or TDD)
or e-mail us at bernicer@hhsc.state.tx.us

Why A Family?

Imagine your childhood if you did not have a relation with your parents, your very best friend in the whole wide world, your grandparents, cousins, neighbors, friends and relatives. Through these life long bonds most of us developed our sense of trust, interpersonal skills, faith in ourselves and others, and coping strategies. Through your family and friends you learned about and participated in traditions, beliefs and history. The lifelong relationships you have had helped create who you are today.

Permanency planning is a concept which incorporates the significance of enduring relationships and assumes life long bonds are just as significant for children with severe disabilities.

In Texas, attention is given to the relationships of children with severe disabilities, especially those in out-of-home placements. We begin to question the quality of their relationships and look for ways to improve services and supports for these children and their families.

Through the State CRCG Office's **Families Are Valued Project**, permanency planning for children with disabilities will be integrated into the human service delivery system. Agencies serving children will be challenged to direct energies and resources into preserving the natural home and supporting the child-at-risk in his/her own community.

Statewide activities of the project include the strengthening of policies and practices directed to keeping families and their children with disabilities together, strengthening interagency collaboration, public awareness campaigns, training and technical assistance. In addition, support will be provided to four local family support partnerships to increase and support the number of children with disabilities who live in homes through: independent case management and case review models; transition services to unite children with their families; and alternative support services for families such as shared parenting, long-term foster care placement and adoption.

How can local CRCGs participate? Become familiar with permanency planning. Learn the philosophy and practices. Incorporate the tools and methods of permanency planning into the CRCG process. Become an expert on permanency planning and promote it within your agency and community.

For additional information about the **Families Are Valued Project**, contact Yolanda Montoya, project coordinator at (512)424-6528 or via e-mail (yolandam@hhsc.tx.state.us).

State CRCG Office Gets Wired!

Beginning in *mid-February* you can retrieve a variety of information about CRCGs via our homepage (<http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/crcg>).

There will be a special section on technical assistance tips such as grant writing or requests for proposal information.

We would like to be able to send you electronic mail on the latest legislative and other important information. If you have an e-mail address or someone on your CRCG has one, please e-mail Kelley Knight (kelley_k@hhsc.state.tx.us) with the address. If you do not have Internet or e-mail capabilities we will still get the important info you to via mail or fax. If you have any questions, please call Kelley at (512) 424-6544.

Make Sure You're Counted

Guess what? It's time to get the **Staffing Forms** into the State Office. If your CRCG has been holding on to 1996 Initial Staffing or Follow-up forms, you have till **January 15, 1997** to turn them in.

All data received will become part of the 1996 CRCG Statewide Data Report, which helps the State CRCG Team, agency CEOs, legislators and local CRCGs identify valuable information about the work of CRCGs.

The State Office has seen dramatic improvements in the data collection process. Over the past three years and based on the actual number of staffing forms submitted, CRCGs have collectively accounted for the development of approximately 1,337 interagency service plans. In 1995, of the 214 counties served by CRCGs, 65% of the CRCGs submitted their staffing forms. A staffing increase is expected for 1997 due to all 254 counties now served by a CRCG.

Many CRCGs have taken advantage of the data generated to identify service gaps in their areas and/or to determine the need for a paid CRCG Coordinator. Others have used the information to gain support for new programs and increase agency involvement in their areas.

The State Office will continue to serve an active role in 1997 to provide technical assistance to local CRCGs who are not utilizing the current CRCG reporting instruments. Instructions for filling out the staffing forms appropriately can be found in the blue CRCG Handbook in pages 22-33.

For further CRCG data information, contact Silvester Guzman at (512) 424-6575. If you need annual or data reports, please call us at (512) 424-6561.