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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

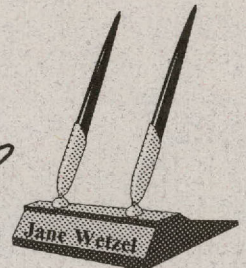
Greetings and welcome to the first edition of the "The Bridge"! I'm excited about the publication of a newsletter that helps all of us who work with Community Resource Coordination Groups (CRCGs) get in touch with each other. As Chair of the State CRCG, I can assure you that the State Committee is dedicated to supporting the operation of local CRCGs. The State CRCG Committee has taken the position to empower local communities by sharing guidelines for operating CRCGs instead of instituting strict procedures and practices. This allows CRCGs to tailor a process to meet the unique needs of their local community. We want to remove barriers that exist for local CRCGs and identify gaps in services across the state. With the creation of the State Office of CRCG, we are looking at several ways to listen, collect, document and report the accomplishments and limitations of delivering services to the children of Texas. This information will in turn be shared with people in positions who are also addressing childrens' issues.

Looking at national level childrens' programs, our Texas CRCG model is definitely in line with the wave of the national movement. Our interagency collaboration is one way to pool knowledge and resources to serve our children in need. Funding sources are few these days, so we **must come together, learn to trust each other, and develop programs** that will meet the needs of the children we see every day.

While CRCGs are mandated by law, your ideas for future initiatives to carry out mandates are welcomed.

So enjoy the newsletters, as they highlight local programs and new state initiatives. Network with other CRCGs at regional conferences as you share your success stories and the difficult barriers you face. Call for assistance to the State Office of CRCG. And together we can make a difference in how we provide meaningful services to our children in Texas as we invest in the future - our children.

Peace,



HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF CRCGs

In 1987, the 70th Legislature authorized the creation of Children and Youth Services State Coordinating Committee (C&YSSCC) in the Texas Health and Human Services Coordinating Council (THSSCC). The enabling legislation directed C&YSSCC to develop a model for initiating local level interagency staffing groups to coordinate services for children and youth with interagency needs.

The C&YSSCC responded to this mandate by developing the Community Resources Coordination Group (CRCG) Model which was formally adopted by THSSCC on August 17, 1988.

Senate Bill 298 also enacted Texas Human Resources Code § 41.0011 which requires a joint memorandum of understanding (MOU) to implement a system of local level inter-agency staffing groups to coordinate services for children and youth with interagency needs between the Texas Department of Human Services, Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, Texas Department of Health, Texas Youth Commission, Texas Juvenile Probation Commission, Texas Rehabilitation Commission, Texas Commission for the Blind, and the Texas Education Agency.

In March 1989, the C&YSSCC implemented Community Resource Coordination Pilot Projects in Travis, Tarrant, Val Verde and Henderson Counties as a first step in implementing that MOU. The projects targeted youths who required services from several agencies due to a multitude of problems and needs. Consequently, the CRCG model was effective in all pilot sites with only slight modifications by counties. The decision was made to move ahead with statewide implementation.

House Bill 2116, passed in the 71st Legislature, created the Commission on Children, Youth and Family Services (CCYFS) to replace the C&YSSCC and serve in an advisory capacity to THHSCC. The CCYFS established the State

CRCG Committee, which includes representatives of the eight participating state agencies and the private sector to oversee the statewide implementation of CRCGs.

After legislation authorizing the THHSCC and CCYFS expired August 31, 1991, the CRCGs continued to operate under the memorandum of understanding required by Texas Human Resources Code § 41.0011. Another MOU has been enacted that includes updating the agencies involved with the CRCG structure. Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, Early Childhood Intervention, and Texas Health and Human Services Commission have been added. ❏



An Essential Part of the CRCG Vision

by Gerald McKimney,
*a State CRCG Committee Member from
TXMHMR*

For many of us who work with children and their families, whether in education or juvenile justice, or health or any of the areas we serve, there is an underlying vision of the future. It may not be clearly articulated, or written down anywhere, but the vision is of a time when every child who needs help gets it.

Every child, regardless of income, disability, location, or ethnicity, gets needed services.

Sounds simple, even simplistic.

The sad fact is that we are so far away from that vision that it escapes us at every turn. The other part of the vision is that every child is a member of a community. Not a case number on one of our caseloads, or a CPS kid, or a special ed kid, but a member of our community who needs help.

How do we get from where we are to where we want to be?

I read an article in the paper the other day that nine out of ten new state employees hired during the next six years will be prison guards. We're getting tough on crime and nobody can disagree with that. But, it can't help but remind one of that old instigator, Thoreau, who said that for every thousand attempts to strike the leaves of a problem, there is one blow delivered to the root.

Community Resource Coordination Groups are an essential part of the vision. They are community-based, rather than state focused. They provide services beyond agency lines of responsibility. The two elements of the vision are embodied in the design and practice of the groups. As we move forward, we can learn from the experience of other states, including the use of CRCGs to approve expenditures for any placement of a

child out of the home community or region, and the control of "wrap-around" resources to serve children with special needs. Already some CRCGs in the state are hiring coordinators, or dedicating funds for expenditures approved by the groups. These are steps in the direction of the vision.

The power of the CRCG is the forum. That's the place dedicated to putting aside the agency hats, and working toward the needs of the child, regardless. Practically everything that is being considered for children and families by state planners involves local, interagency activities.

With the creation of the Health and Human Services Commission, the interagency focus is better than it has ever been in the state. The new Texas Commission on Children and Youth is being formed to examine the needs and strategies for improving services in the areas of education, health care, juvenile justice, and family services. All of us are a part of the new attention being paid to finding better ways of helping our children. CRCGs will play a large part in that effort. The future is right outside the door. It's up to us to invite it in. ☒

THE STATE OFFICE OF CRCG

Beginning September 1, 1993, the State Community Resource Coordination Group (CRCG) Committee created

a State Office of CRCG housed and directly supervised by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. This State Office is funded by the pooling of monetary resources from the following state agencies: Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, Texas Health Department, Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, Texas Education Agency and Texas Juvenile Probation Department. The additional State CRCG Members including Early Childhood Intervention, Texas Commission for the Blind, Texas Rehabilitation Commission, Texas Youth Commission and private sector providers contribute in-kind services to ensure the success of the activities planned by the State Office of CRCG for fiscal year '93-'94.

*... ninety local CRCGs
are currently in existence.*

During the past couple of years the State CRCG Committee has pooled resources and contracted with the Texas Coalition of Juvenile Justice (TCJJ) to provide initial training to potential local CRCGs. TCJJ did an exceptional job in this capacity. An estimated ninety local CRCGs are currently in existence. This year the State CRCG Committee, through the State Office of CRCG, has chosen to focus on supporting existing CRCGs.

Sherri Hammack serves as the Director for the State Office of CRCG and is assisted

by Monique Ward. The goals of this Office are to support the networking of local CRCGs with each other and to facilitate communication between the state and local levels. This Office will be collecting data that will identify trends in service gaps. This information will be passed on to legislators and other groups who are working on funding and service issues for the youth of Texas.

The activities planned this year to accomplish these goals are:

- to publish a quarterly newsletter (welcome to the first edition!),
- to deliver four regional conferences targeted for local CRCG members,
- to provide technical assistance for the initial training of new CRCGs, and
- to provide general technical assistance to local CRCGs.

The immediate work of the State Office is to update CRCG training and support materials, which includes the CRCG handbook, the training video and the CRCG staffing form. Regional conference planning is also in the works.

CRCGs are an innovative and exciting wave of the future that break through traditional isolated service delivery practices. These local interagency staffing teams personalize integrated service plans for many children who may ordinarily fall through the cracks in our system. For more information about CRCGs contact Sherri or Monique at (512) 502-3270. ☒

COME ONE, COME ALL!

The wheels are in motion for **regional conferences** for CRCG members across the state!!!

Four conferences are being planned at this moment! Conference sessions will include:

- ◆ networking sessions - between local CRCGs and the State CRCG Committee
- ◆ training sessions that address interagency collaboration
- ◆ skill building sessions targeted specifically for facilitators of CRCGs
- ◆ clinical sessions for professionals who provide services to children

Here's the line up:

February '94 - Corpus Christi
June '94 - Dallas

April '94 - Houston
August '94 - Lubbock

CRCGs will be divided up geographically to attend these four conferences. A questionnaire will be coming your way soon to ask you specifically about what you want to hear and who you want to hear it from. If you want more information about the regional conferences, call Sherri Hammack or Monique Ward at (512) 502-3270. See you in '94!

!!WANTED!!



NEWSLETTER ARTICLES that addresses positive practices and success stories of local CRCGs. Articles may demonstrate how your group overcame some barrier, such as educating the community about CRCGs, increasing members attendance to CRCGs, improving the quality of your CRCG meetings, pooling resources within your CRCG, sharing the load of logistically turning a CRCG, etc. We're not looking for a dissertation here, we just want to share a short tidbit of good, positive information from your CRCG. Chance are what you have done may be useful to another community! Please contact Sherri Hammack or Monique Ward at the State Office of CRCG, at (512) 502-3270.



CRCG

**COMMUNITY
RESOURCE
COORDINATION
GROUPS of Texas**

CRCGs is a collaborative process serving the Youth of Texas.

In Partnership with:

Texas Commission for the Blind	Early Childhood Intervention
Texas Department of Mental Health & Mental Retardation	Texas Department of Health
Texas Education Agency	Texas Department of Protective & Regulatory Service
Texas Rehabilitation Commission	Texas Juvenile Probation Commission
Private Child Serving Providers	Texas Youth Commission

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Send comments to PO, Box 13247, Austin, Texas 78711
or call 512/502-3270 (voice or TDD)

Editor: Sherri Hammack

Assistant Editor: Monique Ward

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