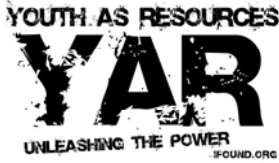




**INITIATIVE
FOUNDATION**

Children, Youth & Families News You Can Use



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Father Involvement Tops List for Brainerd Early Childhood Coalition

The Brainerd Lakes Area Early Childhood Coalition has made reaching out to fathers a priority area for their group, and they've been quite successful so far. Since becoming an Early Childhood Coalition just two years ago, the coalition has made great strides in providing opportunities for fathers and other significant male role models to be more involved in the lives of young children ages 0 - 5.



Increasing father involvement with infants is a major goal of the coalition, which has two components. First is the distribution of the "Daddy Books" to first time fathers. So far, 200 Daddy Book's have been printed and the group is busy getting them into the hands of new fathers throughout the service area. Requests from outside of the service area are coming in, and a plan is in the works on how to get more books printed and disseminated for others. A copy of the Daddy Book will be distributed to each of the 13 coalitions in our region. Additional region and statewide copies will be made available as requests come in.

The coalition hopes to hold its first Daddy Boot Camp sometime this winter. Daddy Boot Camp is for first time expectant fathers, done pre-birth of the baby, and is a hands on (literally!) class. It is taught by "veteran" dads, who bring their infants to class so the expectant dads can learn how to hold, burp, feed, and diaper a newborn. Topics discussed are caring for a new mom, changes in family life, and best practices in infant care.

(Continued on page 2)

Isanti County Methamphetamine Prevention Coalition Completes Training and Moves Ahead to Gain Community Input

The Isanti County Meth Prevention Coalition completed their first full day of training and planning efforts on Tuesday, October 9th. They are gearing up to conduct their community wide visioning session on Tuesday, January 15th, and will be ready to complete their Action Plan and implement county-wide support programs and projects by the spring of 2008. Isanti County is the last (but certainly not the least!) citizen-based team to participate in our Minnesota ICE campaign in Minnesota. Each of the established meth prevention coalitions are eligible to apply for a \$5,000 implementation to carry out their planned goals in 2008. Contact Linda Kaufmann at lkaufmann@ifound.org for details.



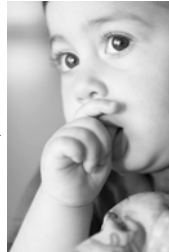
Looking for Resources for Fathers?

**Visit the
Minnesota Fathers and
Families Network**



THRIVE Impacts Professional Development Through Professional Learning Community

The Minnesota Thrive Initiative is a partnership among the six Minnesota Initiative Foundations and the Bush Foundation to advance the healthy social and emotional development of infants and toddlers throughout greater Minnesota. The greater St. Cloud area (including the St. Cloud, Sartell/St. Stephen and the Sauk Rapids/Rice school districts) was selected as one of six Thrive pilot sites in the state. The team has conducted a number a community-wide perception surveys, a mapping of current services and opportunities for children and families, and a visioning session to determine the most pressing needs of young children and families in the area of early childhood mental health.



Noted as one of the most promising strategies in the state, the Greater St. Cloud Area Thrive team is currently implementing an infant mental health "Professional Learning Community" with St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud Technical College and a number of child and family service providers in the area. The initiative is designed to increase the knowledge, education and development around early childhood mental health among students and professionals in five departments: *Social Work, Nursing, Special Education, Child and Family Studies and Community Psychology*. The group will also include a cohort of practitioners who will be prepared to serve as field placement and reflective practice supervisors in the fields listed above. Through the work of the Professional Learning Community, infant and early childhood mental health research, theory and practice will be integrated into already existing coursework, and new courses will be developed as needed. Coursework will be aligned with the Infant Mental Health (IMH) Endorsement Standards presently being adopted in Minnesota.

(Continued on page 5)

Early Screening Inventory-Revised (ESI-R) and Ages and Stages Questionnaire-Social/Emotional (ASQ-SE) trainings

Registration is now open for the Early Screening Inventory-Revised (ESI-R) and Ages and Stages Questionnaire-Social/Emotional (ASQ-SE) trainings. Please go to www.eventville.com/MDE and click on a training located in your preferred region. You must register for each of these trainings; **if you want to attend both the ESI-R and ASQ-SE trainings you must register for each**. These trainings are sponsored by the Minnesota Departments of Education, Health and Human Services. The fee is \$20 for each half day training (\$40 for the full day, lunch on your own).

SAVE THE
DATE!

- Wednesday, February 20 in St. Cloud**
- Friday, February 22 in Rochester;**
- Wednesday, March 19 in Proctor;**
- Tuesday, April 8 in Albert Lea**
- Wednesday, April 16 in Bemidji.**

Save the Date

Strong Foundations: Minnesota's Birth-to-Three Conference for Healthy Development.

When: Jan. 31- Feb. 2, 2008

Where: Duluth Entertainment and Conference Center

Contact [Rosemary Caspar](#) for more information.

Father Involvement

(Continued from page 1)

The goal of *increasing father involvement in early literacy learning* is being reached through the umbrella program of Fathers Read Every Day (FRED). There are three programs options. Each of nine sites chose which components they want to use. The options are the FRED book giveaways, Run and Read, and Dads and Kids Book Clubs. From October through December 2007, the Brainerd coalition held 11 FRED events with 151 fathers and 166 children attending. From January to March of 2008, 25 more FRED events are scheduled in the Brainerd area.



FRED has been received enthusiastically in the community, as evidenced by both the number of participants and the positive male energy present at each event. For more information on the father involvement project in the Brainerd Lakes Area, contact Lowell Johnson at ljohnson@brainerd.net.



2007—2008 Lessons from the Field Series

Impact of Trauma on the Developing Child

February 13, 2008 8:30 am - 12:30 pm
Great Hall, Coffman Union and broadcast to [Greater MN Host Sites](#)

Dr. Abigail Gewirtz, Family Social Science faculty member at the University of Minnesota and Project Director of the Minnesota Child Response Center, will be leading a workshop on trauma and its impact on the developing child.

Impact of Family Violence

March 24, 2008 8:30 am - 12:30 pm
Great Hall, Coffman Union and broadcast to [Greater MN Host Sites](#)

Dr. Oliver Williams, Director of the Institute on Domestic Violence in the African American Community and professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Minnesota, will lead a workshop on family violence and cultural influence as they impact the parent-child relationship. The presentation will also include a focus on implications for fatherhood.

Intergenerational Consequences of Attachment (Morning Session)

May 7, 2008 8:30 am - 12:30 pm
Great Hall, Coffman Union and broadcast to [Greater MN Host Sites](#)

Dr. Miriam Steele, Assistant Director of Clinical Training at The New School for Social Research in New York, will lead a workshop focusing on the intergenerational consequences of attachment as well as issues specific to adoption and foster care.

Advanced Practice Seminar (Afternoon Session - metro only)

May 7, 2008 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm
Mississippi Room, Coffman Union

Dr. Miriam Steele and Anne Gearity, PhD, LICSW, senior fellow in the School of Social Work at the University of Minnesota and clinical social worker, will lead this session geared for a smaller audience of clinicians, providing an interactive opportunity to focus more in-depth on the application of the morning session's content. Metro site only. Pre-Requisite. Attendance at morning session required.

For more information or to register, go to www.cmh.umn.edu. Questions? Please contact Ellen Lepinski at 612-625-6527 or lepin008@umn.edu.

Co-sponsors of the Attachment Series are: ABCDII/Great Start Minnesota Project, MN DHS Children's Mental Health Division, Center for Early Education and Development (CEED), Minnesota Adoption Support and Preservation (MNASAP), Washburn Center for Children, and Wilder Center for Children with Reactive Attachment Disorder.

Attention Meth Coalition Coordinators...

The Initiative Foundation is conducting final progress surveys...you should be expecting to hear from **BOB BUNGER** with **HBH Associates** in the near future.

Thank you in advance for your participation!

The Initiative Foundation wishes to thank the following foundations for their current support!

Early Childhood Initiative

The McKnight Foundation

Mid Minnesota Federal Credit Union

The Minneapolis Foundation

Otto Bremer Foundation

TEAM Foundation

THRIVE Initiative

Bush Foundation

Jay & Rose Phillips Foundation

Mardag Foundation

Medica Foundation

Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi Foundation

Sheltering Arms Foundation

Youth as Resources

Great River Energy

Mid Minnesota Federal Credit Union

Minneapolis Foundation / Emma B. Howe Foundation

Minnesota Power

MN ICE

Bush Foundation

The McKnight Foundation

Ready...Set...Go Grants Make Regional Impact

A series of grants from the Initiative Foundation termed “Ready...Set...Go” grants in eleven early childhood communities are focused on fostering collaboration among child care providers, early childhood and elementary educators for the purpose of building professional relationships and communicating kindergarten expectations as they relate to early care settings, transition activities and the success of early learners.

Snapshots of events and activities in three of the early childhood communities area as follows:

In Cambridge-Isanti

- Three events were held, each focusing on a specific domain from the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress. Up to 30 guests attended each session, representing in-home child cares, child care centers, private preschools, School Readiness, ECFE, and public and private kindergarten.
- Participants heard presentations at the various events on Early Childhood Screening, Early Childhood Special Education, Kindergarten (public and private school). At two events, participants toured a classroom set-up with sample activities designed to promote skills in a particular domain. At the third event, participants worked in small groups to develop activities using a domain. Participants expressed interest in having more training similar to this and appreciated having the time to get to know and learn from one another. In addition to many other resources, participants were given both the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress and the Birth to 3 books. Both of these were new pieces of information for most child care providers. They were very excited to have them!
- On written evaluations, participants were asked about something new that was learned that could be used in their work. Comments included 1) How to make my curriculum better, 2) When to screen children. 3) Knowing where to refer people for special needs. 4) How to educate children better, 5) Help parents with their understanding of what children need to know to enter kindergarten, 6) Using the ECIPS to make every day intentional, and 7) Better communications with the parents is essential. In addition, Early Childhood Screening reported increased referrals from child care settings.



In North Branch

- Approximately 55 people attended the event held at a community banquet center. Attendance included representation from home and center based child care providers, ECFE and School Readiness teachers, ECSE teachers, Kindergarten and Elementary teachers, county professionals, and a State Representative. During the first part of the evening participants browsed seven different activity stations developed by teachers based on the six domains of the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress and Kindergarten curriculum. Each Activity Station provided sample activities, handouts on the activities, and appetizers. The second part of the evening included presentations to the large group on Early Childhood Screening, Early Childhood Special Education, expectations for Kindergarten entry (both public and private school), and guidelines for early entrance.
- Participants really appreciated the event giving comments on the high quality environment, the presentations, and the time for discussion. Participants were hoping this would be a monthly gathering, or at least an annual event. In addition to many other resources, participants were given both the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress and the Birth to 3 books. Both of these were new pieces of information for most child care providers. They were very excited to have them!

In Melrose

- Approximately 40 guests attended an Appreciation Night for Early Childhood Education Professionals and Child Care Providers. Local businesses provided the banquet and speaker, as well as offering back massages, hand care and facial tips, aromatherapy, and other “pampering” for guests.
- A great idea brought to the table from the teachers was to share the teachers workroom with the providers enabling them childcare professionals and teachers to network with each other and prepare craft projects for the children in their care. This is now offered one evening a month at the school. About ten providers are currently taking advantage of this opportunity with attendance growing each month. At least two teachers are in attendance at each session, and materials are paid for by the coalition.



Beat the Odds High School Student Scholarships

Beat the Odds is a scholarship program created to award and celebrate youth who have overcome tremendous odds to become personally and academically successful. This award is given to students who are currently a high school senior attending St. Cloud Apollo High School, St. Cloud Technical High School, St. Cloud Cathedral High School, St. Cloud Area Learning Center, Sauk Rapids/Rice High School, Sartell/St. Stephen High School, or St. John's Prep.

The student must be on track to graduate in June 2008 and have plans to attend a post-secondary school. Students interested in this award must fill out an application and recommendation form available at <http://www.sctc.edu/scholarships/awards/index.php>

Total Amount Available: \$12,000
Award Amount: (4) \$1,000, (4) \$2,000
Number of Awards: 8
Deadline: Received or Postmarked by February 8, 2008 by 4:00 p.m.

For more information, please contact the St. Cloud Technical College Foundation office at (320) 308-5668.



Thrive (continued from page 2)

The objectives of the Professional Community are to provide specialized training in IMH for this group, using state and national leaders in this field over a 2-3 year period; to increase interdisciplinary communication and collaboration among participating disciplines; to integrate new IMH knowledge and an inter-disciplinary perspective into current pre-service training for professionals; to revise current coursework and add new courses to meet competency requirements for Infant Mental Health Endorsement; and to facilitate collaboration between higher education and area practitioners to provide field placements and reflective consultation opportunities in infant mental health.

The Professional Learning Community will begin to meet January, 2008. Currently 15 faculty members are participating representing five different colleges within the University.

Foundation Seeks Anti-Poverty Work for VISTA Volunteers

The Initiative Foundation is seeking nonprofits and agencies that wish to expand their anti-poverty work with the help of a full-time, yearlong VISTA volunteer.



In partnership with AmeriCorps*VISTA, the foundation will place up to 20 full-time VISTAs (Volunteers in Service to America) in organizations serving Benton, Cass, Crow Wing, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Pine, Sherburne, Stearns, Todd, Wadena or Wright Counties. Eligible agencies include nonprofits, schools and government agencies.

Initial inquiries are due by February 8th. Selected sites will be invited to submit a full application and final site selections will be made by March 7. The following projects will be given highest consideration:

- Initiative Foundation program partners directly responding to poverty issues,
- Financial literacy and job-training programs,
- Faith-based initiatives using volunteers,
- Efforts to increase civic engagement among recent immigrants.

Agencies interview and select their own AmeriCorps*VISTA volunteers from a pool of local and national candidates. Selected volunteers receive training, medical coverage and a monthly living allowance of \$865. VISTA also provides a \$4,725 education award or \$1,200 cash stipend upon successful completion of a member's service year. For more information, visit www.ifound.org or contact Chris Fastner, VISTA Program Manager, 877-632-9255, or cfastner@ifound.org.





Youth as Resources Impacts Youth



A favorite story of a youth as resources coordinator is shared below -

One of our current freshman board members, Brandon Rogers, came to us as a member of the Boys & Girls Club organization. He was extremely involved in the club, and staff and club members recognized his dedication. We recruited him to the board this year. Brandon was an extremely shy and timid board member - never said too much at meetings other than voting and responding to questions when asked. Over the past year, he is actively participating in board conversation, not afraid to voice his opinion, has volunteered to assist with YAR presentations in the community, and describes his involvement with YAR as life-changing.

Brandon continues to be one of the best advocates for us at his school and in the club. He is always willing to help with fundraising and outreach opportunities. We just had our YAR recognition event in May. Brandon was involved in the program and presented some of

our funded projects. He spoke in front of more than 100 people. Brandon did an absolutely fabulous job representing our board. He continues to rise to the challenge especially when asked individually and wants to continue to stay involved in the board.

“Brandon has turned obstacles into opportunities and I think he is an amazing role model for his peers . “

This youth, given his family situation and struggles in school, has many obstacles to overcome. The Boys & Girls Club and Youth as Resources have been a valuable outlet for him. Brandon has turned obstacles into opportunities and I think he is an amazing role model for his peers as he demonstrates what he believes in the community. He still has a lot of learning to do but he continues to amaze me by his potential and what he is making out of the situation he was handed.

Circle of Parents

There are currently 36 Circle of Parents Support Groups throughout Minnesota and more are starting every month!

If you are parent, know some parents, or work with parents, check out our [Circle of Parents website](#) to learn more about these self-help groups dedicated to sharing ideas and support!

Workshops to Strengthen School Boards

For school boards preparing to tackle the 2008 aftermath of area referendums and other challenges, the Initiative Foundation is offering workshops to strengthen board effectiveness, planning and teamwork.

Designed for school board members and superintendents, the regional workshops will cover board and staff roles, planning and decision-making tools, public engagement, conflict management and effective teamwork. Bruce Miles, a strategic planning and school improvement facilitator, will be the keynote presenter.

Attendees may choose between three identical workshops at the following locations. All are scheduled from 4:30 to 9 p.m.

January 29th – Joseph’s Fine Dining, Avon

January 30th – Timbermist, Brainerd

January 31st – Grand Casino Conference Center, Hinckley

Fees are \$40 for the first person and \$35 for each additional person from the same district. Registrations include dinner and a take-home toolkit for each district. For more information, visit www.ifound.org or contact Tricia Holig at tholig@ifound.org, (877) 632-9255.



Pequot Lakes, Brainerd and Cambridge-Isanti Youth as Resources fund New Projects

The Brainerd Youth as Resources team funded the following two projects:

- Homecoming Banner for Lincoln Elementary School, and
- Forestview Youth Advisory Council to help them be a part of the Halloween Haunted Trail event held at the Northland Arboretum.

The Cambridge-Isanti Youth as Resources team has funded the following projects:

- Store Incentive Program at the Cambridge-Isanti Intermediate School (\$750),
- Planting for Kids - a class at Cambridge-Isanti Intermediate School bought a cart with growing lights, pots, soil, potting tools, seeds, etc. The class then worked on growing a variety of plants in the classroom, and once they grew, distributed them to local nursing homes. Plants were also sold at the schools character fair, creating sustainability for the project.
- Outdoor Edge BMX Race Team for updating the track to make it safe for all riders.

The Pequot Lakes Youth as Resources team has funded the following three projects:

- Children's Area at our new community library requested by a youth volunteer at the library,
- Supplies for Root Beer Floats that were sold to raise money for Thanksgiving Baskets put together by the Jr. High ALC Class, and
- Matched \$500 of the Penny Wars that raised over \$1200 for Christmas for Kids, grant request by the Jr. High Student Council.

Free Paint and Coatings Available Through Initiative Foundation, Valspar

To help central Minnesota volunteers and organizations spruce up their community in 2008, the Valspar Corporation will again offer awards of free paint and coatings through its "Minnesota Beautiful" partnership with the Little Falls-based Initiative Foundation.

Representatives from the Initiative Foundation and Valspar will select 8-10 restoration or beautification projects to receive coatings based on their visual impact, public benefit, volunteer participation and support, intended use and benefit to the needy.

Projects that may qualify for a grant include historic buildings, community centers, public buildings, facilities for seniors or people with disabilities, murals or other visual impact projects. Ineligible projects include churches, city maintenance, schools (except murals) and privately owned buildings. Projects must take place in one or more of the following counties: Benton, Cass, Chisago, Crow Wing, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Pine, Sherburne, Stearns, Todd, Wadena or Wright.

"The Valspar Corporation is a great community partner," said Dan Frank, Initiative Foundation program manager for community development and Valspar program administrator for central Minnesota. "Their consultants offer their grant recipients quality coatings as well as expert advice on surface preparation, product selection and application."

Applications are due by **March 3, 2008**. For more information or to apply visit www.ifound.org or contact Leah Posterick at (877) 632-9255 toll-free.

Anderson Fund Seeks Grant Applications

In partnership with the Initiative Foundation, the Anderson Brothers Family Fund is now seeking grant applications for projects beginning this summer.

The fund, created by the Jim and Linnea Anderson family and Anderson Brothers Construction of Brainerd, will distribute \$25,000 to five to ten programs supporting children and families, senior citizens, economic development and environmental preservation. Nonprofits, schools and government agencies may apply.

Projects must be volunteer-driven and demonstrate financial need within Crow Wing County, southern Cass County, northern Morrison County (including Little Falls) or the Park Rapids area.

Grant inquiries must be submitted online by March 14 for projects beginning July 1, 2008 or later. For details, visit the Initiative Foundation website at www.ifound.org or contact Chris Fastner, Initiative Foundation liaison, at (877) 632-9255 or cfastner@ifound.org.

For more information about starting a charitable family or business fund to give back to communities, contact Curt Hanson, vice president of donor services, at (877) 632-9255 or chanson@ifound.org.