



# Collaboration Connection

Anoka County Children and Family Council

Summer 2006

## *School Based Team to Transition to Community Connections this Fall*

At the June meeting of the Anoka County Children and Family Council, a new model for regional services was adopted that focuses on resource and referral, family intervention and community capacity building. The new name of the program is Community Connections.

All school districts will utilize the program, plus all agencies currently working with School Based Team. The change is occurring because of a more than 80 percent cut in funding from the Local Collaborative Time Study.

Beginning in Sept., the county will be separated into three regions with two Community-Based Intervention Specialists assigned to a region. The regions are:

- Anoka-Hennepin School District
- Fridley, Columbia Heights, Spring Lake Park School Districts
- Centennial, Forest Lake, St. Francis School Districts

Requests to help a child, family or staff member will go to a central phone or email.

They will be assigned to specialists in that region who will tap into community resources or help create new ways to meet needs.

School districts are working within their regions to make implementation decisions, including selecting school sites for participation. Not all schools will be included. Next steps for the Council will focus on filling the six specialist positions using existing staff.

“Adjustments will certainly be needed as the new model is implemented, but I believe this is in line with our renewed focus on working together in better ways to serve families,” said Anoka County Commissioner Rhonda Sivarajah, co-chair of the Council.

## **Partner Spotlight —YMCA**

Chad Lanners, executive director, Emma B. Howe Family YMCA, sees great value in the Council’s mission. “The Anoka County Children and Family Council helps create a sense of community when it comes to moving forward and making sure services are met for kids,” Lanners said.

Lanners has been an active participant in the Council for about two years. Before that, the YMCA had a history of working with the Council, and specifically School Based Team.

More than 40,000 people are served by the Emma B. Howe YMCA every year, through a variety of health and wellness programs, as well as youth, teen and family efforts. The YMCA brings an important community perspective to the Council. Lanners says he benefits from the partnership, too.

“The prevention and intervention focus that the Council has energizes me,” he said. “You can see movement in families creating success for themselves through community services.”

Lanners says he stays involved in the Council because it offers the YMCA new resources, partnerships and opportunities.

**What's next for the time study?**

Funding will decrease from \$2.7 million to less than \$500,000 annually in the Local Collaborative Time Study. Still, every dollar will continue to play an important part in the Council’s efforts to help families.

Refresher time study materials will be provided this fall to approximately 750 time study participants. New this year in the materials will be an Anoka County Community Resource Guide, produced by ACCAP. The Guide offers a wealth of information for participants to use with the children and families they serve.



**Anoka County Children and Family Council**  
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Mission: Nurturing collaborative efforts by building bridges and networks between people and agencies who share a vision of a healthier community for children and families.

Partners: Anoka County, Anoka County Community Action Program, School Districts: Anoka-Hennepin, Centennial, Spring Lake Park, Columbia Heights, Fridley, St. Francis, and Forest Lake, community agencies, and parent representatives.

## Site Funds Change to Community-Based Intervention Funds

Before the huge cuts in Local Collaborative Time Study funding, money was provided through the School Based Team to each participating school site.

This school year, school districts will be allocated \$1,500 for each site that was operational last year. For example, districts with four sites in 2005-06 will receive \$6,000 in community-based intervention funds.

Community-based intervention funds may be used to improve family and educational functioning. The first priority is to meet basic needs, such as medications, housing payments, food, clothing, and short-term transportation. Basic needs also include mental health or therapeutic interventions. In addition, these funds may be used for parent and family support, as well as school programs.

Decisions about using the funds will be made collaboratively between staff working with the schools and the new regional model.

## Community Asset Fund

Funding has been earmarked to help community partners work together around an identified issue or need in the county. The menu of possible needs target immigrants, refugee and non-English speaking families, housing, families with multiple challenges, basic needs, transportation, and mental health resources.

“The money is not a grant opportunity,” said Barb Zandlo Hutchinson, Council co-chair. “Rather it is a chance to work together and combine resources to address something that we might not be able to address alone.”

Any community group is welcome, but a Council member must take the lead in submitting proposals.

Details on the process are being finalized for presentation at the August 10 Council meeting. For more information, call Jessica Parker Carlson, 763-323-6034.

## From the co-chairs...

We're making progress on our restructuring. You'll see the changes this fall with the implementation of Community Connections. Healthy Start and Proactive Intervention continue to work on transition plans.

The new model will help us harness resources on a broader, regional and countywide scale. The ongoing efforts to work smarter will certainly result in new connections within our communities.

Working together, we can continue to make progress on diverse issues, like those targeted in the Community Asset Fund.

Thank you for staying engaged.

*Barb Zandlo Hutchinson,*  
Spring Lake Park Schools

*Rhonda Sivarajah,*  
Anoka County Commissioner