National Parent Leadership Month

February is National Parent Leadership Month! Know someone who you believe deserves to be recognized? Nominate them today! Please submit your nomination no later than January 31, 2017 to Jeannette Lewis at jlewis@pcamn.org and join us to honor those special parents.

DOWNLOAD THE NOMINATION FORM HERE

15th Annual MN *Pinwheels for Prevention* Tribe/Community Awards

Minnesota Communities Caring for Children spotlights statewide tribes and communities that have consistently worked to create safe and healthy environments for children. The Pinwheels for Prevention Award is presented annually to recognize communities that exemplify a strong commitment to prevent child maltreatment through collaborative efforts. Work at the community level is crucial to creating healthy environments where families and children thrive.

Submit nominations by Friday, March 17, 2016 to mweaver@pcamn.org

DOWNLOAD THE NOMINATION FORM HERE

2016 Midwest ACEs Summit
The 2016 Midwest ACEs Summit took place in November. Nearly 300 people came together to learn about how communities are addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and promoting healing in Minnesota and across the Midwest.

The Summit was a collective gathering of those doing research, doing work, or expanding their knowledge of the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study. The study showed that certain experiences in childhood can cause toxic stress and result in physical changes in brain development. These changes may affect learning ability and social skills, and can also result in negative impacts on one's long-term health and wellbeing.

Attendees were energized by the stories they heard at the Summit and inspired about what could be done to foster resilience and healing in their communities.

Keynote speakers for the 2016 Midwest ACE Summit included Dr. Roy Wade Jr. and Sam Simmons, leading experts on adversity and health in urban and African American communities. In his breakout workshop, Sam discussed the historical trauma of the Native American and African American communities and why it's important for individuals doing ACEs work in these communities to know about historical trauma. Dr. Wade shared research about how trauma is affecting Philadelphia's urban population and how the city's community-level systems are working to improve health outcomes.

Dr. Henry Emmons, author of The Chemistry of Calm and The Chemistry of Joy, lead a session informed by new research and ageless wisdom on healing and resilience-building strategies to sustain a healthy mind and mood. Laura Porter of the Foundation for Healthy Generations spoke about how individuals can create flourishing communities through resilience.

If you would like to take part in the conversation with others across the state, please visit the Minnesota ACEs Connection Page, which has the materials from all the presentations.

Check out some of the photos from the event below!
2016 Radiothon to End Child Abuse

We thank Hubbard Radio stations in Bemidji, Brainerd, Alexandria, and Wadena for organizing the 26th Annual Radiothon to End Child Abuse. This major effort, organized to support child abuse prevention programs, is made possible by the dedication of station employees, volunteers, and the many donors that put their hearts and souls into this effort every single year.

Celebrating Parent Leadership
On November 12th, Minnesota Communities Caring for Children and the Department of Human Services (DHS) celebrated the Parents who use their life experiences and knowledge from their communities to improve family service practices. Parent Leaders celebrated with MCCC staff, community partners, and all those who had invested in the PLCSP team to honor all of the work and dedication of these Parents.

Over the past three years, these Parent Leaders used their voices to promote transformative leadership for all Minnesotan parents that is equitable, inclusive, and socially just in their communities and at DHS.

Promoting Parent Leadership

MCCC has recruited a new team of Volunteer Parent Consultants for our Parent Leadership for Child Safety and Permanency team.

The team will meet monthly over the next 3 years to participate in trainings that will prepare them to use their life experiences and knowledge from their communities to improve family service practices at partner organizations. Members collaborate with the Minnesota Department of Human Services to ensure that parents are actively engaged in the planning, implementation and evaluation of programs, services, and the child welfare system. A goal of the program is to raise awareness of systematic and programmatic issues around race, ethnicity and culture.

The goals of this new cohort of diverse Parent Leaders from across Minnesota are as follows:

- Include parents as key partners in rethinking and improving strategies that focus on continuous improvement for child safety, permanency and well-being outcomes.
- Connect parents to policy and practice reviews and initiatives
- Advance family-centered and strength-base practices to the local county and
We welcome our new team to the MCCC family!

**THE FACES BEHIND THE WORK**

Meet Board of Director Member—Elizabeth Melton

Elizabeth Melton is an attorney who has worked at senior levels in two companies, a non-profit and a law firm.

*Over the years, Elizabeth has devoted a significant amount of time in volunteer and pro-bono service work, primarily dealing with abuse within families and with children's issues. For example, she has served as a court-appointed special advocate (Guardian ad Litem) in family court cases and as attorney for foster children in family court. She has also represented women and children seeking orders for protection.*

*Prior to her current term, Elizabeth served on the MCCC board for 6 years, including time as the board president.*

**What makes our organization's mission powerful for you?**

I know how difficult parenting can be. While it is the most wonderful & rewarding job, it can bring you to the brink of your capacity. I have been lucky enough to have been raised in a good home & to have plenty of physical, emotional and financial assets and support. I believe that if we (individually and in communities) support families and parents, our children will grow up without abuse or neglect and reach higher levels of achievement and happiness.

**As a Board Member, what do you want to contribute to the organization?**

Bringing stronger people into the organization as donors, volunteers & believers.

**Why did you become involved in the Board, and what has your involvement looked like over time?**

Originally, I got involved with a board in order to further my growth & career. I chose this board because I had volunteered in various ways with women and families experiencing domestic violence & wanted to be involved in prevention efforts, instead of dealing with the aftermath.

**What has been your greatest learning as part of your journey as a Board member?**

Learning that –except in extreme or rare cases – neglect & even abuse happen because parents lack basic needs. Parents want to be good parents & children want their own parents, no matter how imperfect they are. Society is best served by helping families where those families are.
When you are done with your time at MCCC, how will you use what you have learned in the future?

I will continue to support parents in my extended family and in my communities.

Is there anything else you would like us to know?

I have been so impressed with the depth of knowledge and dedication of the PCAMN staff. They are my heroes.

ACE Interface Trainer Spotlight: Barb Sorum

Minnesota Communities Caring for Children (MCCC) is the only nonprofit in Minnesota to focus on the prevention of child abuse and neglect before it starts. One way we do this is by educating communities about how our early experiences shape lifelong health and well-being.

A lot of our work is influenced by the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, which showed that certain experiences in childhood can cause toxic stress and result in physical changes in brain development.

Using a national curriculum, MCCC empowers individuals to raise awareness about the effects of trauma and the promise of prevention in their communities. Barb Sorum, the Director of Prevention Initiatives in Southern Minnesota, is one of the more than 40 ACE Interface Presenters who were trained in Fiscal Year 2016. As a certified ACE Interface Trainer and Presenter, she has co-presented 5 educational presentations across Southern Minnesota.

“I'm excited to be ACE Interface certified with Minnesota Communities Caring for Children. As we recognize epigenetics and continue grasping a better understanding of how significant childhood adversity interrupts the brain's natural development, it's essential to recognize, build and strengthen resiliency within families and communities across Minnesota. Knowing my individual roots, how the past has affected who I am today, and accepting the circumstances I may not have had control over has helped me build a stronger foundation to grow and confidently move into the future for my children and grandchildren.”

Check Out the Minnesota group on ACEs Connection to learn more about trauma-informed work happening in Minnesota.

PREVENTION INITIATIVES: NORTHWESTERN MN

Parent Leadership, Education, and Collaboration

Mary Weaver, Director of Prevention Initiatives–Northwestern MN

The Northwest region is bustling with news. As we excitedly gear up for opening new Circle of Parents groups in Hubbard County and on the White Earth
Reservation, we are also thrilled that there will be five (yes, 5!) new members of the Parent Leadership for Child Safety and Permanency (PLCSP) team representing our neck of the woods in Greater Minnesota!

Our new members are Brian Loch, Misty Littlewolf, and James Roth all from Hubbard County; Darlane Miller from Otter Tail County; and Joseph Johnson from Becker County. These strong men and women are already movers and shakers and I am so excited for them to gain the knowledge and support that comes with being members of our PLCSP team. They are going to do amazing things, and I am so honored to work with them as well as the other new members of the PLCSP team.

Speaking of being leaders, MCCC has contracted with DHS to provide training and coaching to Children's Mental Health and Family Services Collaboratives across the state. I am fortunate to be working with Carolyn Strand with the Clay County Collaborative as well as Deb Hengel with Grant County Child and Youth Council. We are busy squaring up locations, presenters, and dates for the two collaboratives, which will take place in early 2017. The partnership will allow these two communities in my region to have day-long workshops around Understanding ACES: Building Self-Healing Communities. The workshops will feature ACEs presentations and café conversations centered around community action and resilience. Additional collaborative partnerships are also happening in other parts of the state and we are grateful for the opportunity to share this information.

The Reach in Mankato receives Pathfinder Award for Promoting Human Rights

Congratulations to Tasha Moulton, an active member of MCCC's ACE Interface Network, for her work with the Reach Youth Drop-In Center in Mankato. Tasha, who is the Reach's program director, works to provide emergency assistance to teens and young adults who are homeless. The organization goes beyond just providing the basic needs of their clients. They invest in their clients’ over-all well-being by helping them to find stable housing, applying to schools and work, teaching life skills such as budgeting and cooking, and providing leadership and community service opportunities.

At the Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Community Celebration, the Reach will be recognized. This is a free event also includes a speech from Rashad Turner, former leader of Black Lives Matter St. Paul.

Click here to RSVP

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Teaching Traumatized Kids

These high-poverty schools were characterized by a recurring set of challenges: high stress in the adults and children, low readiness to learn in students, negative culture, and an adult staff that felt nothing in their training had prepared them for
"When Kelsey Sisavath enrolled as a freshman at Lincoln Alternative High School in Walla Walla, Washington, in the fall of 2012, her mother was struggling with drug addiction. Kelsey herself was using meth. The multiple traumas in her life included a sexual assault by a stranger at age 12. She was angry, depressed, and suicidal. Her traumatized brain had little room to focus on school.

Today, much has changed in Kelsey's life. She graduated from Lincoln this spring with a 4.0 GPA while also taking classes at a community college. She is articulate, confident, and happy. Kelsey believes Lincoln changed her life.

A deeper understanding of Kelsey's journey could offer answers to critical questions about how to help millions of traumatized children—particularly those growing up in poverty—succeed in school and beyond."

To Read the Full Article Click Here

DONATE NOW! REMEMBER CHILD ABUSE IS 100% PREVENTABLE

With the support of individuals like you, we can eliminate child abuse in our state. Thanks for joining MCCC in providing better outcomes for our children and protecting our future.