

More Resilient Minnesota

Collaboratively Honoring & Healing Communities

Community Resilience Initiatives Summary Report for Fiscal Year 2021

Overview

More Resilient Minnesota seeks to improve the health and resilience of current and future generations. Resilience includes individuals' inherent strengths and nurtured capacities as well as the resources and supports of their families, communities, and cultures. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) has contracted with FamilyWise Services to support Children's Mental Health and Family Services Collaboratives throughout each phase:

- Phase 1: Collaboratives offer ACE Interface *Understanding ACEs: Building Self-Healing Communities* presentations to raise awareness of neurobiology, epigenetics, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and resilience.
- Phase 2: Collaborative partners, community members, and/or caregivers are trained to deliver *Understanding ACEs: Building Self-Healing Communities* presentations.
- Phase 3: Collaboratives gather community wisdom through group Community Resilience Conversations and/or one-on-one *100 Cups of Coffee* interviews.
- Phase 4: Driven by community data gathered in Phase 3 as well as existing data from the Minnesota Student Survey and other data sources, Collaboratives develop and implement Community Resilience Plans to reduce the impact of ACEs and enhance community resilience.

Community Resilience Initiatives

In December 2020, Collaboratives in Phase 4 of More Resilient Minnesota were invited to submit proposals for micro grants to implement initiatives based upon portions of their Community Resilience Plans. Four Collaborative communities each received micro grants of \$5,000 as seed or startup funding. Implementation spanned February 17, 2021, to June 30, 2021. Given the size of the awards and short timeline, grantees selected strategies from their more comprehensive Community Resilience Plans that would be most feasible to achieve. Also given the limited implementation period, grantees were only asked to identify short-term outcomes to measure the impact of their efforts.

The COVID pandemic caused numerous implementation delays. Staff time redirected to COVID and other community tragedy/trauma responses; fluctuations between distance, hybrid, and in-person learning; shipping delays; and paper shortages that postponed book releases emerged as a few of the resulting barriers.

Despite many challenges, these grantees proved they were flexible, resilient, and resourceful. They shared that their successes inspired some exciting ripple effects. These Collaboratives strengthened partnerships, created new connections, and generated funding and local media attention.

FY 2021 Community Resilience Initiative Grantees

Beltrami Area Service Collaborative

- Develop *100 Cups of Coffee* presentation messaging, community engagement, and coordination of presentations, and planning for expansion for Resiliency Team membership

Upon completion of 100 one-on-one interviews, the Beltrami Area Service Collaborative (BASC), hosted Zoom events called “*100 Cups of Coffee: Continuing the Conversation*” to share emerging themes and priorities with community groups and traditional leadership. Each event reached 20 - 33 participants. Ninety percent of *100 Cups of Coffee* interviewees expressed interest in learning about or participating in the next steps of planning and implementation, and 22 interviewees ultimately participated in presentations and/or meetings. A media push, presentations, and community events sparked interest and enthusiasm for expanding connections with the Beltrami Area Resiliency Team. BASC worked with community partners to establish core values and identify three categories of potential projects. Selection of a meaningful “Chickadee” logo and creation of a website helped establish credibility for Beltrami Area Service Collaborative’s work. Key partners, Peacemaker Resources and Headwaters Regional Development Corporation, were awarded grants from Northwest Minnesota Foundation to help continue planning and implementation. Learn more at <https://www.beltramiarearesiliencyteam.org/>.

I hope we’ll shift how people envision the idea of shared leadership.

Wendy Thompson, Beltrami Area Service Collaborative

Itasca County Family Services Collaborative

- Provide school and community providers with tools and training to promote resiliency for young people and support their social learning and coping skills

The Itasca County Family Services Collaborative implemented two strategies as part of their Community Resilience Initiative. Eight mini grants of up to \$200 each were awarded to area teachers and after-school providers to promote resiliency with youth. In total, 149 youth were reached with supplies to support social and emotional learning, such as fidget tools and take-home packs. The Collaborative also purchased 350 copies of the “Creating a Trauma Sensitive Classroom” tool for the four school districts in the county, to be accompanied by a short training video and survey. This tool and training were selected to enhance implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), as well as a social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum. One recipient shared, “I think the need for this will be great next year.” Collaborative members acknowledged the need for ongoing support for school staff to keep resilience work on the forefront.

Promoting and seeing the good in community is a guiding principle for our group and we look forward to continuing the work and bringing more to the table.

Kim Geislinger, Itasca County Family Services Collaborative

Robbinsdale Area Redesign Family Service Collaborative

- Host free “Community Reads” event with discussion on inclusion, resiliency, and bullying response planning plus engage youth in social marketing for More Resilient Robbinsdale

Through a Community Reads events, Robbinsdale Area Redesign distributed copies of two Papa Lemon books— Book 7 on mental health and Book 8 on bullying by local author Lehman Riley. The events were promoted to families and community members through flyers and the Robbinsdale Area Redesign website. Books were sent to 51 households along with the Minnesota Student Survey ACEs fact sheet and one-on-one conversations report. Story Theater Tellers read Book 8 online for households where adults have limited English or limited literacy skills. Conversations touched on immigration, providing safe spaces for opening conversations around diversity, equity, and inclusion, and need for increased understanding, acceptance, and response to local mental health. Fifty-one households were reached with the books; remaining books will be available for events at local apartment complexes. Additionally, youth intern position descriptions were developed and posted during the micro grant. While transition back to in-person learning and staff turnover led to hiring delays, two Youth Ambassadors were ultimately hired after the grant ended and they will assist with youth shared learning and youth leadership.

The conversations, connections ,and collaborations continue to include some of our community members who are not typically engaged. We cannot wait to see how this may develop into additional People Power!

Melodie Hanson, Robbinsdale Redesign Family Service Collaborative

Stevens County Family Services Collaborative

- Create comprehensive, bilingual web page of services and supports to become a communications hub for Stevens County

The Stevens County Family Services Collaborative partnered with the Morris Chamber of Commerce and webpage design company Cybersprout to develop and launch the one-stop-shop Stevens County Resources. A bilingual intern was hired to collaborate with community partner Conexiones to ensure resources, programs, and activities on the site were available in Spanish and English. The resource page was promoted in both languages through newspapers, radio shows, and social media. The intern hired had direct ties to the local Latino community, and helped identify both needs and existing resources. View the webpages at [Stevens County Resources](#) – Morris Chamber of Commerce (www.morrismnchamber.org) and [Recursos en Espanol](#) – Conexiones (www.conexionismn.org).

We are so excited to move forward with this project and other goals we've set.

Diane Strobel, Stevens County Family Services Collaborative

Lessons Learned

Leadership Expansion

- **Moving at the pace of trust.** Expanding leadership takes time. Beltrami Area Service Collaborative worked to create equitable spaces for emerging community leaders despite pressure to move the work along faster and grow the initiative bigger. They focused on developing relationships and listening to one another with curiosity. A key challenge was choosing initial projects to work on that wouldn't disengage those who were hoping to work on something else, compounded by the issue of not always having the same people attending planning meetings each month.
- **Youth leaders.** Robbinsdale Area Redesign's Youth Ambassadors will collaborate with local providers to address health care discrimination for youth, advocacy in restorative practices, and what is meaningful to youth in the creation of a trauma-informed community/school environment.

Community Collaboration/Coming Together

- **Virtual platforms provided opportunities for community connections.** Despite barriers to in-person gatherings that resulted from the COVID pandemic, grantees created opportunities for community members to come together virtually. Robbinsdale Area Redesign's virtual Community Reads event engaged parents/caregivers and their children in shared learning. BASC's series of Zoom meetings enabled emerging leaders to continue conversations about building resiliency in Beltrami County.

Shared Learning

- **Participation in initiative events expanded knowledge.** Robbinsdale School Board members who typically do not participate in the Redesign activities were engaged in the Community Reads event, helping to expand knowledge, connections, and future collaborations. Many participants hadn't been aware of the Minnesota Student Survey and ACEs data prior to Community Reads.
- **Increased awareness of community resources.** In the process of developing Stevens County Resources, community partners learned more about local agencies' services and supports. Ultimately, the new online resource raised awareness of local resources among families in the community.

Results-Based Decision Making

- **Short-term outcomes were tracked in order to measure success and guide next steps.** Itasca County Family Services Collaborative surveyed recipients of "Creating a Trauma Sensitive Classroom" to learn about the tool's utility and their commitment to implementing practices shared in the tool and training. Mini grant recipients submitted outcome reports describing the impact of the grant funds on their SEL work with youth.
- **Phase 3 community wisdom was disseminated widely.** Beltrami Area Service Collaborative and Robbinsdale Area Redesign shared findings from their one-on-one community conversations widely with partners and participants. BASC plans to continue using the *100 Cups of Coffee* process to inform new and ongoing initiatives.

Implement Strategies to Enhance Protective/Resilience Factors and Prevent/Reduce ACEs

- **Shared new tools and skills to increase consistent supports for young people.** Itasca County Family Services Collaborative provided Social and Emotional Learning tools and coping skills training to support students, staff, and families. This began building shared language and approaches in schools and the community for promoting resilience and understanding trauma.

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