

**MAJOR PROJECTS**

One of the year's most important projects was the implementation of the Sanctuary Model, a trauma-informed method for creating or changing organizational culture. The Sanctuary Model, developed by Sandra Bloom, M.D. in the 1980s, incorporates perspectives from trauma, systems, recovery, and business theories and has been thoroughly tested in therapeutic communities. The Sanctuary Model has been identified as a promising practice by the United States Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and has proved to be very effective in reducing the need for restraints.

The Sanctuary Model is the way we organize our treatment and the way we run our organization. We call Sanctuary an *everybody* model because it is a way of guiding leaders, staff, clients, and families to share the same values and language. Sanctuary is a guide to the way we provide healing to children and to those who care for them. It is, first and foremost, a guide to creating a safe and non-violent environment for our clients *and* our staff.

The Sanctuary Model is based on seven shared values, or commitments:

- ***Nonviolence:*** Being safe physically, emotionally, socially, and morally
- ***Emotional Intelligence:*** Managing our feelings so we don't hurt ourselves or others
- ***Social Learning:*** Respecting and sharing the ideas of our teams
- ***Shared Governance:*** Shared decision-making
- ***Open Communication:*** Saying what we mean and not being mean when we say it
- ***Social Responsibility:*** Together we accomplish more. Everyone makes a contribution to the organizational culture
- ***Growth and Change:*** Creating hope for our clients and ourselves.

In addition, the Sanctuary Model is guided by four steps to healing, as embodied in the acronym SELF:

***S = Safety.*** No one can be healed or work well without safety, which includes physical, emotional, social, and moral safety

***E = Emotions.*** Managing emotions helps us know what we are feeling and to handle our feelings so we don't hurt ourselves or others

***L = Loss.*** We recognize the need to find a safe way to acknowledge and grieve the painful things that have happened to us and to move on to a healthy future

***F = Future.*** We are encouraged to make positive choices to create a better future for ourselves and for the world.

A Core Steering Committee began meeting in March 2008. One of the committee's first tasks was to establish a Sanctuary implementation timetable with target dates for reaching goals. Implementation activities include

- Completing Sanctuary training for all staff
- Permeating our orientation trainings with Sanctuary principles
- Encouraging all clients and staff to create personal safety plans
- Implementing community meetings and SELF groups throughout the agency
- Increasing family involvement
- Implementing psycho-educational groups using our new curriculum.

The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare has provided team training on the model to 29 Commonwealth providers, including Harborcreek Youth Services, through the Andrus Children's Center Sanctuary Leadership Development Institute. In addition, we received funding from the Erie Community Foundation for staff training and implementation activities and from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency for prevention services.

Because the Sanctuary Model is a cultural model rather than a treatment intervention, Harborcreek Youth Services maintains its structures and guidelines for our clients, as well as consequences, incentives, individual and group therapy services, and all the requirements of the Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) program.

A second major activity was the formation of the HYS Spartans, the first football team in agency history. The Spartans were accepted as a District 10 team of the PIAA and played at the Class A level. All Spartans home games were played at Mercyhurst College.

The football team was organized by Harborcreek Youth Services employees who sought to give our clients an exciting, new opportunity to develop their athletic skills and their ability to work as a team. All boys enrolled in grades 9 through 12 at HYS were eligible to play on the team. Younger teens, or those who preferred not to play, were invited to serve as managers, water boys, or statisticians.

Although the Spartans finished last in their division, we consider everyone connected with the team to be a winner. We are proud of our players and coaches for their perseverance, patience, and positive spirit. We are grateful for the staff who supervised our clients on and off the field, and for those who attended or volunteered at the games. We are still Number One and are looking forward to another season of play.

**PARTNERSHIPS AND JOINT VENTURES**

We maintain positive communications and relationships with Catholic Charities, as well as an agreement with Catholic Charities Counseling and Adoption Services to provide drug and alcohol education to our clients. We are a member of the Erie County Policy and Planning Council's Executive Committee. In addition, we are a member of the boards of Presque Isle Psychiatric Associates and the Parent Committee of the Erie County Integrated Service Plan Committee. These affiliations enable us to be of service to the community while at the same time providing networking opportunities that strengthen and promote our agency.

Recently, Harborcreek Youth Services hosted Sanctuary psycho-educational training not only for our own employees, but also for the staffs of Gannondale, Perseus House, and Sarah Reed Children's Center.

**FUND RAISING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Three annual fundraising events, including an agency-wide garage sale in May, a *Victorian Princess* cruise in August, and a spaghetti dinner in October, earned a total of approximately \$7,500 while drawing positive community attention to Harborcreek Youth Services' programs and personnel. All proceeds from these events were used to benefit the HYS Spartans, our new football team.

A fourth event was held on September 20. During the 1980s and 1990s, Harborcreek Youth Services hosted a 10K race in memory of Father James Fahey, a long-time agency administrator. The race was discontinued for a time but was revived this year. Now known as the Fahey/Ferko Memorial Race, the event honors the memory not only of Father Fahey but also of Rick Ferko, who worked at Harborcreek Youth Services and who devoted his life to serving troubled youth. We expect this race to be an annual event, and to expand in participation and revenue in the years to come.

Grant revenues exceeded expectations and were received from the Nonprofit Partnership, the Spaeder Fund, Catholic Charities, the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, the Erie Community Foundation, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, and Wal-Mart.

Our annual Friends' Christmas Dinner was held on December 2 at the Ambassador Banquet and Conference Center. Entertainment for the event was provided by the Harborcreek Youth Services Choir.

**CLIENT ACTIVITIES**

In addition to our Spartans football team, Harborcreek Youth Services offers a variety of programs and activities that offer behavioral incentives, as well as opportunities for vocational education and self-expression:

1. The National Youth Program Using Minibikes (NYPUM) is a dirt bike riding program that is behaviorally focused. The clients earn riding time through the accomplishment of goals and the completion of safety courses. The agency has 14 dirt bikes participating in this program. There have been very positive outcomes associated with this program in the areas of improving client behavior and school performance.
2. The Therapeutic Riding Equestrian Center (TREC) is a horse-based equivalent to the NYPUM program. This program is run in conjunction with the organization called Therapeutic Riding of Erie County. Through the accomplishment of treatment goals, clients earn the ability to “volunteer” at TREC. The volunteer experience requires the clients to groom and care for the horses at TREC (animal therapy) as well as care for the safety of riders who participate in the program. The riders are physically and mentally challenged children and adults (empathy development). This experience has been a tremendous success, from both the therapeutic and organizational perspectives. Our staff and clients were featured in a recent TREC newsletter and were recognized at TREC’s annual dinner.
3. Educational electrical and plumbing classes have been developed to provide vocational and therapeutic experiences. These are team-based educational “how-to” classes run on a weekly basis at the agency.
4. Clients were given the opportunity to participate in classes offered by the Erie Art Museum. These classes involved working with clay to make pots and other objects. Every step of the process, from modeling and sculpting to glazing, was included in the six-week course of instruction. Drawing classes will be offered to clients early next year.
5. Clients were given the opportunity to acquire new skills at the Bayfront Center for Maritime Studies. Projects included restoring boats and canoes, helping to prepare the Bayfront Center’s fleet for sailing, learning how to sail themselves, and spending time on Lake Erie.
6. Our annual Trout Derby was held on May 7. At present, our clients are participating in fishing field trips at 20 Mile Creek in North East, Pennsylvania. Clients are learning to use equipment, lures, and bait, as well as preparing the fish to be eaten.

7. The Model Club has been in existence for five years and is seen as the “seed” to the development of the other above programs. The model classes were seen by the clients as the number one activity, as voiced in a recent client survey. Two model shows are held annually. At these shows, the clients’ families and the general public view the clients’ efforts at building models. The shows are judged by the Erie Scale Modelers’ Club and trophies are awarded.
8. Many of our clients are members of the Harborcreek Youth Services Choir, which had a very successful Christmas singing season. Practice began in early November to prepare for the annual Friends’ Christmas Dinner. Later in December, the choir performed for the entire agency, which was the first time choir members had sung for their peers. Finally, the choir sang at Bishop Trautman’s annual Christmas Luncheon at St. Mark Center on December 23. Participation in choral events allows clients to learn new skills, develop productive working relationships with others, and achieve successful outcomes. In addition, choir members earn community service hours by performing.
9. Our clients are active volunteers at Habitat for Humanity. In addition, they provided over 12,000 community service hours at festivals, clothing drives, boxing centers, animal shelters, retirement centers, antique shows, and other community organizations and events.

Of note is that all the above programs are staffed by volunteers from this agency, as well as the community.

## **COMMUNITY PROGRAMS**

In 2007, Harborcreek Youth Services developed a Community Programs division consisting of our Multisystemic Therapy (MST) program, established in 2006, and our new Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) program, initiated in 2007. Both MST and MTFC emphasize strict adherence to well-established, evidence-based models, and both serve male and female adolescents and their families. The primary difference between the two programs is that MST treats the adolescent in his or her home, while MTFC treats the child in a foster home. Both programs have received positive state licensing reviews and have been successfully credentialed by their respective developers.

In April, we were awarded a two-year grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency to hire and train two additional therapists for our MST program. These therapists have expanded our services to youth and families in rural areas of Erie County. We currently have six MST therapists, all of whom are carrying full caseloads.

As of November, we had recruited and certified seven foster families in our MTFC program, and had two children in placement. At least three more children are expected to be placed before the end of the year. MTFC is funded in part by a four-year grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.