

MAJOR PROJECTS

In 2009, Harborcreek Youth Services completed its 98th year of service to the community. During the past year, the agency either initiated or continued activity with several primary organizational efforts, including:

Sanctuary Model Implementation

During 2008, Harborcreek fully committed to the implementation of the Sanctuary Model, a trauma-informed method for creating or changing organizational culture. The agency has reached the mid-point in its 36 month Sanctuary implementation timetable and anticipates full organizational credentialing in the first quarter, 2011. To date, a majority of staff have completed training modules and an internal CORE Steering Committee continues to monitor goal attainment and progress in completing tasks necessary for full model implementation.

ARISE Initiative

The agency anticipates the implementation of ARISE model services in the second quarter 2010. The ARISE offers individualized academic, vocational and behavioral support to youth struggling to advance their lives. The ARISE is designed to intervene in the lives of youth who are at risk following a residential placement, at risk for residential placement, behaviorally compromised in their educational advancement or represent a threat to drop out of the educational system. Intervention is accomplished in a community based school setting located close to the youth's home. In 2009, several Harborcreek staff members completed training in the model. The ARISE service delivery program is intended to strengthen and complement the agency's commitment to the Sanctuary model.

Performance and Quality Improvement Program

Harborcreek Youth Services is committed to providing the highest quality treatment to clients served by the agency. Central to this commitment is the establishment of an organization-wide effort to promote effective service delivery and achievement of strategic goals. In 2009, the agency completed a thorough overview of major organizational domains including management and operations, service quality indicators, program results, client satisfaction and client outcomes. Both staff and community stakeholders participated in the Quality Improvement process and the agency is currently analyzing data with the intent of identifying areas in need of improvement and establishing performance goals for 2010.

COA Reaccreditation

The agency's national Council on Accreditation (COA) accreditation is subject to renewal in December of 2010. The year-long review process culminates in a site visit in September, 2010 by a COA Peer Review Team. The agency's self-study submission will involve participation from staff members across all levels; as well as clients and their families, placing agencies, board members and community stakeholders.

Internal Communication

Agency administration is committed to enhancing the relationship with internal stakeholders; their objective is to maintain an agency culture of respect, dignity, honesty and openness as a standard of communication and relationship with staff. The CEO provides written updates via email for staff concerning operations, programs and services. Agency-wide staff meetings continue at times available to first and second shifts. Staff have the opportunity to provide feedback and become involved in a variety of committees including Communications, Incentives, Safety, Transition, Events, House, Quality, and ad hoc committees.

PARTNERSHIPS AND JOINT VENTURES

Harborcreek remains committed to maintaining positive communications and relationships with a variety of service systems and stakeholder groups. During the past year, the agency has participated collaboratively with Perseus House, Inc. and Safe Harbor Behavioral Health in a client outcomes measurement project. Also, the agency has formed an agreement with Catholic Charities Counseling and Adoption Service to provide drug and alcohol services to Harborcreek clients. In addition, agency staff participate in projects sponsored by the Non Profit Partnership and the Erie County Policy and Planning Council. The agency CEO has been appointed to state and national posts with the National Governor's Association Foster Care Program, and the Casey Foundation Technical Assistance Initiative.

Recently, the agency, in conjunction with the Child Trauma Institute, hosted an educational program for community social service professionals. The seminar provided hands-on skills training for clinicians working with children who have been exposed to significant trauma or loss. A Total of 91 staff members from a variety of social agencies participated in the training program.

FUND RAISING AND DEVELOPMENT

Annually, the agency sponsors four fundraising events, including an agency-wide garage sale, a memorial 10k race, and two dinners intended to honor clients, staff members and community stakeholders. Revenue raised from these activities is used to support client athletics, recreational and educational activities.

Grant revenues exceeded projections and were received from the Spaeder Fund, Catholic Charities, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and the Erie Community Foundation.

CLIENT ACTIVITIES

Harborcreek Youth Services offers a variety of therapeutic and social enrichment programs designed to enhance client self-esteem, peer relationships quality, decision making capacity and conflict resolution skills. Agency clients also are provided the opportunity to participate in vocational education, community service and volunteerism activities.

1. Summer Sanctuary Activities

Agency clients participated in a seven week program intended to orient children and youth served to the Sanctuary Model being implemented by the agency. Clients were engaged in a broad range of psycho-educational group processes and participated in task focused activities designed to benefit the community.

2. Harborcreek Youth Services' Spartans Football Team

The Spartans, the first football team in agency history, completed its second season of competition in fall, 2009. Approximately 60% of agency residential clients are team members. The team competes at the PIAA Class A level and plays a full schedule. Agency clients are afforded the opportunity to develop their athletic skills and learn skills associated with team building, positive interpersonal relationship enhancement and completing tasks and assignments.

3. Therapeutic Activities

Harborcreek has developed a wide range of programs designed to enhance client behavioral, artistic and recreational skills including a minibike program, the opportunity to volunteer at a Therapeutic Riding Equestrian Center, drawing classes provided by the Erie Art Museum and participating in trout fishing competitions. In addition, a large number of agency clients participate in the "Model Club" and "Harborcreek Youth Services Choir".

4. Volunteerism

Agency clients completed over 12,000 hours of community service in the past year and are active with Habitat for Humanity, the Sisters of Saint Joseph, animal shelters, retirement centers and a variety of community service organizations.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

In 2009, the agency realized significant growth in both its Multisystemic Therapy and Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care Programs as the agency opened an Allegheny County office for the therapy program and expanded foster care services to Crawford County. Both programs have consistently met their capacities for referrals and placements. Funds generated from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency have supported expansion efforts.