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Reaching Out

The newsletter of Family & Youth Services Bureau September 2020 volume 9 • issue 3

Program Highlight—Juvenile Detention Groups

One of the main programs under Juvenile Justice Services at Family & Youth Services Bureau is the juvenile detention groups that are facilitated by an FYSB mental health professional. Kids ages 12-18 in juvenile detention in Porter County (about 90% of whom are awaiting disposition) are required to attend group therapy sessions led by an FYSB staff member. Fortunately, they look forward to participating!

The bi-weekly sessions have a two-pronged objective; first, they work to tackle the issues that led to incarceration and develop skills such as coping and anger management that will help them after they are released. Second, they give these children the opportunity to discuss the issues they can't control and provide a productive setting to de-stress from the rigors of living in incarceration. The FYSB facilitator has been trained to assess the strengths of group participants and use tools to help kids develop a corrective adult experience including structure, discipline, and positive role models, all of which have been missing from the home lives of many kids in juvenile detention. The kids are also given materials and resources they can work on and read in their post-meeting time.

The work FYSB engages in to help the kids in incarceration in Porter County focuses on the fact that they aren't necessarily bad people but rather that they did something that brought them to the juvenile justice system - but even when that is the case, they still matter and their lives have value and potential. It's challenging but very rewarding and meaningful work!



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A Successful Round Up!

Family & Youth Services Bureau received necessary funds and excellent community exposure through the Strack & Van Til and Town & Country markets' *Checkout Challenge* in July. We are so grateful that the store owners chose FYSB for this opportunity!

Campaigns to 'round up your purchase to the next dollar' to support nonprofit organizations have been proven to be very effective in all types of stores throughout the country. Strack & Van Til and Town & Country have welcomed many nonprofit organizations to hold these events and in July, FYSB was selected for a week at their Porter County stores. In addition to donations, it was the kind of recognition and county-wide visibility FYSB has been working to obtain!



Portage Mayor at Portage Chalk the Walk

The Chalk the Walk event in Portage was a first as was having a mayor sponsor a space! New mayor of Portage Sue Lynch wanted to support both the event and the work of FYSB plus spread a message of inclusion and diversity to the community.
Cont. on p.3

Mayor Sue Lynch and artist Qamille Armour



WE ARE ALL DIFFERENT
FLOWERS FROM THE
SAME GARDEN

Our Mission is to assist youth and families through supportive services that create a positive change for Porter County.

The Family & Youth Services Bureau will ensure that no person shall be excluded from or denied participation in services based on the grounds of race, age, religion, sex, disability, national origin, ancestry, protected class, or any other protected class as defined by current law, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that directly or indirectly receives state or federal support.

Moms Rock! – An Appreciation of the Hard Work of Being a Healthy Families Family

Appreciation baskets with the theme “Moms Rock!” were created for families actively participating in Family & Youth Services Bureau’s Healthy Families program. A lot has changed since March, but one thing that has not is the dedication of FYSB’s Healthy Families team to provide support for the moms and families in the program. Staff came up with this idea collectively since they were unable to have their annual family picnic due to COVID-19. Yet they still wanted to show the moms they work with that they appreciate them for staying with the program through the many changes. Briana Kurek, Family Support Specialist said, “A lot of things go unnoticed by others when you are a mom and we wanted to shed a little light on the moms we serve. We recognize everything they are doing on top of being a great mom!” Included in the baskets are fun and learning items for the babies and other children in the home, items for mom and dad plus a small gift card to treat themselves to something nice.

Healthy Families of Porter County is a voluntary, evidenced-based home visitation program offered to eligible families at no cost. Eligibility for the program is determined by completing a screening for a family. If the screen indicates a need, the family is asked if they would be willing to schedule an assessment with the Resource Specialist. Even if a need is not determined, a family is still offered a variety of community resource materials. Healthy Families services can begin as early as the mom’s second trimester and go through the baby’s third birthday.



amazon
wishlist

Virtual Pick & Treat for Tots in 2020

Pick & Treat for Tots is going to be a challenge this year with many offices and senior residences enacting new policies to prevent the spread of COVID-19. To compensate for the lost bin donations we usually receive from these places that help replenish the Tot Shop each October, online purchasing on the FYSB Amazon wish list will be emphasized this year.

Please pick what you would like to donate at this link:

<https://www.fysb.org/donate>

THE TOT SHOP IS BY APPOINTMENT ONLY PRESENTLY.
CALL 219.464.9585 FOR AN APPOINTMENT.



CASA CORNER



Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, it's hard to believe we've gone from winter nights... through springtime...to 90° summer days! At CASA we've had virtual new CASA volunteer swear-ins, staff and information meetings and trainings, and virtual visits and hearings. Everything is new and different! We are not only going with the flow, but are doubling efforts in order to ensure no child's needs are overlooked in the chaos of these unprecedented times.

The stressors of COVID-19 put children at greater risk for exposure to domestic violence and neglect or abuse at home. Since the arrival of COVID-19, our CASAs have advocated for 185 children, and seen a **30% increase of new children involved with Court.**

It has been challenging for CASAs as they adjust to changes as well, however, one of our volunteers, Dawn B., recently expressed, “I’ve had wonderful, deep FaceTime conversations with one of my kids and realized that in this moment, our kids need their CASAs more than ever.”

CASA volunteers are amazingly dedicated and kind people who take time out of their own busy lives to help kids during one of the most difficult moments of their lives. If you are interested in knowing more about how you can help, please visit the CASA program's new website [portercountycasa.org].

Family & Youth Services Bureau

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Portage Chalk the Walk cont.

The very talented Qamille Armour created the stunning work for Mayor Lynch!

Other sponsors at the event were:

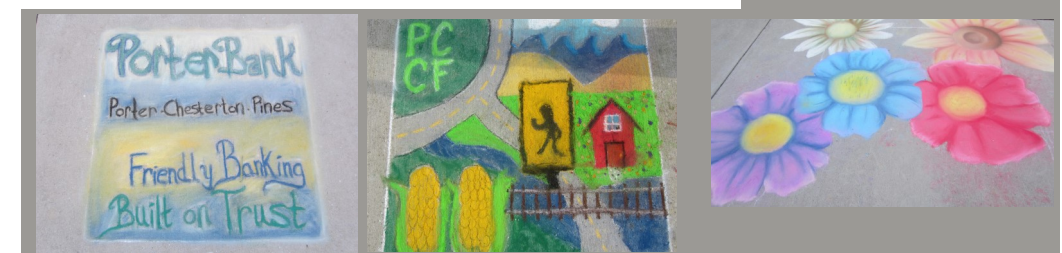
Castle Subaru

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Thank you!!



Staff

BeLinda Georgeff
President & CEO
219.464.9585
bgeorgeff@fysb.org

Sheryl Chambers
Director of Healthy Families Program
219.763.6623
schambers@fysb.org

Sarah Fink
Director of Porter County CASA Program
219.464.9585
sfink@fysb.org

Kate Flannery
Director of Development and Community Relations
219.464.9585
kflannery@fysb.org

Carrie Honeycutt
Director of Operations
219.464.9585
choneycutt@fysb.org