



Minneapolis Healthy Start: Community Action Network (CAN) Updates

The Family Partnership Case Managers' Trip to Washington, D.C.

The Family Partnership (TFP) is a family service agency at the forefront of North Minneapolis geared toward supporting marginalized and high-risk families and children to become independent and thrive as they become self-reliant. From February 29th to March 2nd, 2016, TFP's case managers attended the National Healthy Start Association's annual spring conference in Washington, D.C. as it celebrated its 25th anniversary of advancing health equity through community-based collaborations. TFP's trip to Washington was sponsored by the Minneapolis Healthy Start (HS) program as TFP has been a critical partner for five years providing intensive case management to the HS clients. Many HS programs around the nation were able to share their expertise and continue to build a strong partnership. This year, HS clients were able to attend and participate alongside case managers at the conference. Daycare was provided to attendees, making participation accessible and flexible throughout the conference.

Conversations during the conference focused on the impact of racism on birth outcomes, maternal health, and parenting for African-American women and families. Keynote speakers addressed the biological consequences of toxic stress created by institutionalized racism, highlighting racial



On the left: Kati Thayer, Betsy Bartek, Valencia Perryman, and Arlishia Irby

disparities in infant mortality and maternal health as well as positive involvement of fathers and male partners. During break-out groups, HS case managers from across the nation called attention to the numerous barriers many pregnant women, particularly African-American women, face while applying for safe and affordable housing. The dialogues on these issues resonated strongly with the TFP case managers as they face them in everyday work. Attendees had time to network with other HS grantees around the nation and exchange expertise in their fields.

Healthy Start CAN Connector *Issue 1 – May 2016*

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Meet the Family Partnership's Case Managers



Betsy Bartek is a Healthy Start Supervisor at the TFP. She has been working with Minneapolis HS for seven years. Betsy has 30 years of experience working with high-risk families in Minneapolis. She enjoys working with pregnant women to build connections and help them be independent. Betsy appreciated seeing participants during the conference, and hearing babies cry was a delightful experience since the conference was tailored towards them. Betsy was surprised to learn how institutionalized racism affects HS participants and wonders why this topic is not in our daily discussions. Betsy thinks that “racism is pertinent in our society”, and she wants to assist HS participants to have voices in this broader discussion.



Kati Thayer has been with the HS program for two years. She supports HS clients with resources, advocacy work, parenting and child development education. During the conference, Kati enjoyed personal stories from the keynote speakers, specifically Joe Jones who is the CEO

and President of the Center for Urban Families in Maryland. She was inspired by his personal story because he struggled with drug addiction in the past, but persevered, and has now turned over a new leaf and started his non-profit organization.



Valencia Perryman has been working with the HS program since 2011 and this was the second time she attended the national conference. During the conference, she felt empowered by the key note speakers' presentations. Valencia was frustrated to learn about struggles that African American women and their families are having across the nation. She hopes organizations and programs like HS can come together to ensure that struggling families' voices are heard. Valencia was excited to learn new parenting skills techniques that she hopes to use in her work.



Arlishia Irby is the newest member of the HS team at TFP. She recently moved to Minneapolis from Memphis, TN where she was working as a case manager for more than three years. As a HS case manager, Arlishia's role is to provide education, advocacy and outreach services to the HS participants. She enjoys helping families overcome barriers, and she wants to see her clients become self-sufficient and achieve their desired goals. While in Washington D.C., Arlishia found Dr. Camara Jones' presentation interesting.

He presented a historical perspective of the HS initiatives and the decline of the infant mortality rate. She thinks it is important to teach clients to lobby local leaders and Congress to make better policies that are going to improve their lives.

Minneapolis Healthy Start CAN Action Teams Update

Minneapolis Healthy Start established a Community Action Network (CAN) that meets at the North Regional Library every other month to reduce infant mortality in the African American community through collective impact. The CAN includes HS contracted partners (HCMC Mother-Baby Program, MVNA, North-Point Health and Wellness, and The Family Partnership) and a range of other stakeholders. The CAN engages public health professionals and Healthy Start participants in dialogues on the social determinants of health and health inequities and ways to improve them.

CAN strategies aim to foster healthy family development, promote parent leadership, and focus on system and policy changes to improve birth outcomes for families in Minneapolis. In 2015, the CAN prioritized areas for action to address infant mortality. The CAN then established four different action teams to address the priorities: mental health action team, housing action team, safe sleep action team and the fatherhood/employment action team.

Fatherhood/Employment Action Team

On March 31st, MAD DADS presented a fathers' dinner and discussion event at Urban Ventures sponsored by the CAN fatherhood and employment action team. The event focused on healthy living including being physically, emotionally and

intellectually healthy parents. Approximately 30 fathers ages 17 to 60 years old attended the dinner and discussion. There were two speeches at the dinner. The first speaker addressed ways to stimulate the mind using an interactive app to improve dads' reading skills, math, and vocabulary. The second speaker addressed healthy eating and how fathers can engage their children in healthy eating behaviors and be more engaged as parents.

The organizer for this event was Connie Rhodes, Executive Director and consultant with Restoration Incorporated. She said the discussion allowed fathers to better understand their health and explore healthy eating as it relates to parenting their children. Connie believes that if conversations like these happen more often, we can create a culture where fathers and partners feel more comfortable sharing their experiences and become more involved in raising healthy children. Participants shared their appreciation for the fatherhood/ employment action team as well as MAD DADS and Urban Ventures for making this event happen. Next steps for this action team include planning a back to school event focused on talking, reading and singing to young children.

Housing Action Team

On March 17th, the Community Action Partnership of Suburban Hennepin (CAPSH) in partnership with the CAN housing action team held a 4 hour training for HS case managers and members of the Minneapolis Healthy Start CAN. Marcy Harris and Pat Longs, who are housing placement and housing law experts from CAPSH, provided the case managers and nurses with helpful resources.

For example, a Minnesota Renters Guide was given to the case managers to use as a reference when their clients have questions related to understanding their lease. Case managers were provided with a Landlord and Tenants' Rights and Responsibilities handbook from the Minnesota attorney general's office, legal aid fact sheets, City of Minneapolis housing resources and a legal service clinic referral card.

Case managers learned how they can help their clients negotiate when issues arise with landlords and how clients can hold landlords accountable if they do not fix problems around the rental property. Case managers also learned about repairing credit, avoiding housing scams, financial literacy, and monthly budgeting using an envelope system. The CAN housing action team is looking forward to offering a follow-up training with housing experts on how to assist clients who need immediate help to find housing. A follow up training is being planned.

Mental Health Action Team

On March 1st, the CAN mental health action team held The Sanctuary Model training: Exploring Intersections between Mental Health & Trauma-Informed Care. This six hour training was geared towards case managers, mental health professionals, and clinical or hospital leadership to learn about The Sanctuary Model and to adopt trauma-informed care practices in their organizations. Ibet Hernandez, a consultant from New York, conducted the training and uses her expertise and knowledge of complex systems and human dynamics to help organizations implement The Sanctuary Model. While the CAN Mental Health Action team played a significant role in organizing this event, Jodi Hennessey was crucial in introducing The Sanctuary Model to

Minneapolis. Jodi is a Psychiatric Social Worker at the Hennepin County Medical Center Mother-Baby Day Hospital. She serves Healthy Start clients by providing perinatal and postpartum mental health care. This training supports what Jodi does every day for HS clients since trauma informed care is relevant to all who work in the field of mental health.

The mental health action team would like organizations to start thinking about trauma-informed care across all settings. Other action team members appreciated that the Sanctuary model creates support for community professionals from multiple disciplines such as social work, community health workers, health administrators, and community clinics staff.

Safe Sleep Action Team

The mission of the Minneapolis Healthy Start program is to reduce the infant mortality rate. The CAN safe sleep action team is holding three community baby showers in May to address a common cause of infant mortality called Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID). During the baby showers, young parents and pregnant women will learn how to avoid SUID through safe sleep practices. Participants will learn the ABCs of safe sleep – the baby sleeps (A)lone placed on its (B)ack in a (C)rib. The baby showers will be held at Shiloh Temple International Ministries, Northpoint & The Family Partnership, and the Little Earth of United Tribes. Participants will receive a diaper bag with baby care essentials as well as safe sleep literature. All parenting families and pregnant women will receive a Pack-N-Play crib.

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Thank You CAN Members!

Minneapolis Healthy Start staff would like to extend their appreciation to CAN members and contracted partners for their remarkable work and contribution in the program. If you know someone who would make an excellent addition to the CAN, please call the Minneapolis Healthy Start Project Coordinator Kristen Tharaldson at (612) 673-2622.

Updates and Events

- Next CAN meeting is June 14th at North Regional Library
- Visit our website at <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/health/youth/healthystart/index.htm>