

NETWORK NEWS

A newsletter for our families, friends, and volunteers.



Twenty-One Plus Years of Dedication

Barbara Sample's Retirement at Family Support Network



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Through Barbara Sample's vision, Family Support Network was established in 1989 and has continued to strive in its mission to work with families at risk for abuse and neglect and families with a child with a mental illness.

Family Support Network started under a Center for Mental Health Services (CHMS) grant with Parents, Lets Unite for Kids (PLUK) with a mission to assist parents with children with mental illnesses.

The State of Montana awarded FSN a grant to do in-home services for families at risk for abuse and neglect and six years later through a similar process FSN began to provide supervised visits and parenting classes. Staff completed specialized training to become certified in "Nurturing Parenting," an evidence based program designed to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Over the years, Family Support Network has expanded and succeeded beyond Barbara's expectations. "No one thought it would last, not even my family."

Family Support Network has become what it is today not just because of the services provided to families, but also because the relationships built with families are founded on respect.

"As our families learn to develop the skills we take for granted, we in return learn to value those skills and the families we came from."

Barbara's enduring passion to strengthen families in need instilled the same advocacy amongst FSN employees and the community.



Through the many years at FSN, Barbara was privileged to work with many talented and extraordinary people that "stepped up to serve FSN and our families. I had the opportunity to work with an incredible staff, Jesuit Volunteers, and AmeriCorps Volunteers that were inspired by FSN's mission and some even later pursued other jobs or Master degrees in Social work after their time at FSN."

Barbara started the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) in Yellowstone county which later became an independent agency.

Barbara has also been involved in national discussions on service innovation, family involvement and policy development. She was asked to be a guest speaker and panelist at the Carter Center in Atlanta on the issues of poverty and stigma. At the conference FSN served as a catalyst for the start up of several other non-profits throughout the U.S. similar to Family Support Network.

Barbara has served on the Board of Directors and past president of the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, received the "Celebration of Children's Award" by Governor Mark Racicot, received the Outstanding Mental Health Professional Award from the Montana Mental Health Association, and served on the DPHHS Child and Family Services Division Advisory Council, and the Youth Court Alternative Sentencing Panel, to name a few.

Barbara is looking forward to spending more time with her grandchildren and hopes to volunteer and continue improving life and the world for others.

"It is a privilege to share so intimately in the lives of our families. We are able to affect change not because of interventions, but because of relationships. We know that by experiencing success, families become successful"
-Barbara Sample

Please join Family Support Network as we honor Barbara Sample's retirement

Date: Thursday October 28th from 4-7pm

Celebrate Christmas Cheer with FSN Families

Adopt-A-Family-For-Christmas Program

This holiday season when you're making your Christmas list, consider adding a family from Family Support Network. The Adopt-A-Family program was created to address the needs of FSN's clients during the holiday season. More than 200 families will participate in FSN's Adopt-A-Family program including more than 360 children.

During visitations families create a wish list together for each family member. Each child receives an item of clothing and a toy. Parents choose gifts such as pots and pans, a shampoo set, or other necessary daily items.

Once family wish lists are compiled, it is up to the goodwill of our generous community members, organizations, businesses, and **you** to help provide holiday cheer to our families!

As presents start arriving mid-December, the whole office is buzzed with excitement! The most valuable goal of the Adopt-A-Family program is witnessing an ever lasting memory of family bonding. By sharing in the laughter, enthusiasm, and mere bliss of the experience, families take away far more than the gifts.

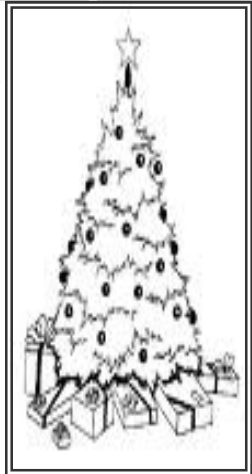
Please help spread the Christmas spirit in our community by choosing to adopt a family during the midst of a very difficult time in their lives. Sponsors can determine the size of the family to be adopted.

To sign up or for more information please call 256-7783!

Or

Check "Yes, I would like to participate in the Adopt-A-Family-For-Christmas program" on the donation form in our newsletter.

Thank you for being the "Santa Claus" in our families' lives this holiday season.



Thank you 4 all of the presents and doing one of the hugest favors for us every other Thursday. You are more than just a supervisor to us, you are one of the most important people in our lives right now and all we really have left and when we look at you we all know that you will always be there for us and you are the family's best friend. We all love you so much.

A thank you letter from 2009's Adopt-A-Family-For Christmas

Mental Health Development Survey/ CHMS Grant Awarded to FSN

In order to measure the core values and principles within the mental health services delivery system in Montana, we invite you to complete a survey, "Strategic Progress Assessment Report" (SPAR) on FSN's website at www.mtfamilysupport.org.

With this information we hope to identify service gaps within the various regions of Montana, the

level to which the family and child involved as partners in the individual's treatment plan and whether providers are sensitive to providing services within the cultural norms of the family and our community based.

FSN was granted funds through the Children's Mental Health Bureau to help implement family

and youth organization with a mission to provide education, training and support to families and to provide leadership and direction on mental health services for children with severe mental health needs and their families.

To access the survey go to www.mtfamilysupport.org/mental-health/

Cruz's Birthday Donations



One evening, FSN received a telephone message from Cruz Martinez, an 11-year old boy, saying he would like to donate all of his birthday presents to the agency. Cruz explained "I had to make the decision between keeping the presents for myself or giving them away to other kids. I chose to donate my gifts because other kids may not receive birthday presents." Thanks to Cruz's generosity and special consideration to FSN's children, many children treasured a new toy such as a baseball glove or Slip'N'Slide as a birthday gift from a young local humanitarian. Thank you Cruz!

The Healing Field



The Billings Exchange Clubs hosted MT's first Healing Field event Sep. 3-11th. One thousand flags were displayed proudly at the Par 3 Golf Course. All proceeds benefited five local charities including Family Support Network. Thank you Exchange Clubs and the community for all of your support!



Thoughts on Parenting

by Tara May

Tara is a current Family Support Network Board Member and former client. In August of 2007 Tara and her boyfriend "were raided. The police found guns and drugs and my kids were removed." Tara entered the Yellowstone County Family Drug Court. She maintained sobriety, completed the requirements of her treatment plan, and worked with Family Support Network family support specialists Kathy and Nancy during supervised and home visits.

In December 2008, her middle child was returned and now all three of her children are home.

Tara shares some thoughts about her experience as a parent:

"Being a mom has it's up and downs. Some weeks it seems like more downs; the kids drive me crazy and with three of them I sometimes wonder and ask myself why I got them back-it's hard work! But I know I don't want to get high, it's just peace of mind I want to find!

Then there are other times when I feel I missed so much when they were gone. They grow up so fast. Some say watching your kids become who they are is the light in your eye, but for a while there were tears in my eyes as I watched them go.

What I know now is that all that really matters are the times my kids make me laugh, smile, and even cry as I watch them go to school. I'm so thankful I got them back. Even though they weren't with me for a while they were always with me in my heart: I am their Mom!" -Tara May



FSN's Wish List



crafts board games*diapers*wipes*shampoo*
*deodorant*towels*socks*hats and gloves*lego sets*
*disposable cameras*coloring books*monthly planners*
gifts for gift closet*alarm clocks*brooms*mops*dressers*

One of the easiest ways to support families at FSN is by donating items from our Wish List. By collecting items from our Wish List, you help keep our families' smiles up!

A Year of Service

FSN has been privileged to host volunteers from the Jesuit Volunteer Corps for more than 10 years. Jesuit Volunteers commit to one year of volunteer service. The year of service focuses on the core values of the community, spirituality, simple living, and social and ecological justice.

This year we have the pleasure of welcoming Devon Katz and Katherine Brady to Family Support Network.

Devon graduated from St. Anselm College in Spring 2010 receiving her bachelor degree in Psychology. Devon relocated to Billings from Wantagh, NY.



Human Development and Theology.

"It is so encouraging to work at an organization that has such an immense impact upon its community. The transition has been made easier by the staff at FSN who have welcomed us with their constant support and willingness to lend a hand." -Katherine Brady

Katherine grew up in Buffalo, NY and recently received her bachelor degree from Boston College in



Annual Day of Caring

United Way of Yellowstone County Day of Caring is held every year in September. This annual event is full of opportunities for individuals and companies in the community to provide the gift of time.



Day of Caring allows these individuals an opportunity to experience the work of local charities and nonprofit agencies.

At FSN fourteen volunteers from US Bank and General Electric extended their helping hands on September 16th to do a much needed scrub down in FSN's visitation rooms.

Tasks included sanitizing toys, dusting, and carpet cleaning.

Thank you to all the great volunteers for the fun-filled day giving back to families in need at Family Support Network!



Family Support Network changes families one visit at a time.

FSN programs promote development of healthy parent-child interactions to interrupt the multi-generational cycle of abuse, neglect, hopelessness, poverty, and drug use.



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Return Service Requested

With just a little support each of us can discover the sources of strength in our lives.



The FSN board has designated first meeting of the calendar year as the annual meeting, which is open to the public.



YES! I WANT TO ADOPT-A-FAMILY-FOR CHRISTMAS
And/or help in others ways.

Name _____ Signature _____

Address _____ Phone _____

- I would like to participate in the Adopt-A-Family-For-Christmas program.
- I want to do more. Contact me to be a volunteer.
- My contribution is enclosed for \$ _____

Please make your check payable to **Family Support Network** and mail to:
P.O. Box 21366
Billings, MT 59104

Fun Fall Activity

Autumn is a magical season for outdoor family activities. Get your kids outside and into the autumn groove by going on a nature walk. Have your kids collect colorful fall leaves, sticks, and rocks on the trail. At home have the kids each make a collage of their nature walk.

Items needed:

- Paper
- Multi-Purpose Glue
- Fall leaves
- Rocks
- Sticks
- Other items found on nature walk

Thank you



Family Support Network is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Donations are tax-deductible. All donations will be acknowledged in writing for your records.