

The Bi-Monthly Broadcast



Welcome to the October edition of the Bi-Monthly Broadcast! I am excited to share with you that we have added three additional contracts with funding from the Office of Adolescent Health. These new contractors are Montana's Second Chance Homes: Florence Crittenton Home and Services (Helena), Harmony House (Billings), and Mountain Home Montana (Missoula). This brings us to 10 programs across the state being supported by the Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program.

In these pages, you'll hear about the Sacred Blessings Program on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation and receive some additional resources on pregnancy loss and grief. The list of upcoming conferences is also included on the back page. If you know of any conferences that would be good to add to the list, please consider the information my way.

Thanks as always for your work supporting young families across Montana!

~ Kelly Hart, Healthy Montana Teen Parent Coordinator

Resources for Pregnancy and Infant Loss

In July, the Healthy Teen Network provided technical assistance for programs to help participants experiencing miscarriage and grief through a pre-recorded webinar. As Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month, October is a good time to follow up and share additional resources:

- * First Candle
<http://www.firstcandle.org/>
- * Held Your Whole Life
Creates keepsake necklaces and key chains for families who have survived the loss of their baby in the womb through miscarriage and/or still birth:
<http://www.heldyourwholelife.com>
- * Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day (October 15)
<http://www.october15th.com/>
- * Ramsey Keller Memorial
Covers full funeral costs for babies under the age of one in Montana:
<http://www.kisses2heaven.com/>



Contractor Corner: Strengthening Young Northern Cheyenne Families One at a Time

By: Dr. Brooke Gondara, Raven Feathers Consulting for the Sacred Blessings Program

Sacred Blessings is a program that supports teen and young parenting families on the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation which is located in extreme, rural, southeastern Montana. The reservation is home to approximately half of the tribe's enrollment.

The reservation is situated approximately 80-120 miles from any major service delivery hub. This includes access to major medical, business, affordable grocery and retail options. There are four main communities or villages all situated approximately 20 miles in either direction from one another.

Lame Deer is the site of the Indian Health Service clinic and main services. Transportation is very limited and clients must often travel 40 miles round trip to receive services. There are approximately 10,000 enrolled tribal members. The largest demographic are those over age 55 and those under age 21 which comprise 65% of the tribe's enrollment. The average household income hovers near \$5000 to \$7000 per year and families often live 12-17 persons in one home in abject poverty often lacking electricity, heat or water due to lack of resources (money). Transportation and telephones are often not available to clients. Unemployment fluctuates from 70-90% - it is lowest during fire-fighting season. The local public high school had a 33% graduation rate in 2014.

Sacred Blessings began as a program of Raven Feathers Consulting in March of 2014. Raven Feathers has allowed Sacred Blessings to be an independent, flexible and highly responsive program for pregnant and young parenting families on the reservation.

Our community partners include but are not limited to four school districts on or bordering the reservation – public, private and tribal, Community Health Nurses, Community Health Educators, The Best Beginnings Council, Head Start, JTPA, Chief Dull Knife College, Second Season (non-profit), Honor Your Life Suicide Prevention, and Tribal Elders.

Sacred Blessings receives referrals from the Public Health Nurses, the IHS Clinic, school counselors, teachers, administrators, and coaches, parents and family members.

Sacred Blessings is rooted in the belief that our program is informed and led by family guided voice and choice regarding their supports and solutions. We believe in a strengths based approach to working toward success. We believe we must heal trauma and ultimately our families to strengthen and heal our community. We believe in a team based “wrap-around” approach to case management. We believe in the use of natural and cultural supports to inform this process. We believe in persistence. We believe that building a foundation of helping ourselves leads to helping others and through this we are providing the tools, coaching and modeling leads to accountability, empowerment and self-sufficiency.

Sacred Blessing has been using the Neufeldt Model of Parenting. Neufeldt is a model that resonates with our culture and community. It is based on attachment and bonding theory (trauma-focused), is insight based parent education, and is a newer alternative to cognitive based behavioral approaches and a medical “disorder” paradigm. We are very fortunate to have the only regionally certified instructor living in our community. Two eight week parenting courses were conducted since April for a total of 16 weeks by certified Neufeldt instructor, Jeanie Alderson, MA.



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We offer the Fatherhood is Sacred Curriculum, a 12 week approach to assist fathers to engage with their children and families and realize their full potential. Fatherhood is Sacred is a nationally accredited, culturally based model that inspires and motivates fathers to devote their best efforts to teaching and raising children to develop their potential and the attributes needed to lead a successful life. It seeks to strengthen Native families by responsibly involving fathers in the lives of their children, community and partnering with mothers to co-parent. Increasing father engagement has been addressed by training two certified facilitators in Fatherhood is Sacred to work with fathers in our community. Both are respected Cheyenne community leaders.

Additionally, our parents attend a Teen Parent Support Group every other week for two hours that is facilitated by a licensed therapist on-site 4 times a month at the schools. This provides an additional opportunity to talk about issues around life and being a teen parent in the presence of a mental health professional and peer support.

Case management is done by the Project Lead, Dr. Gondara and Teen Parent Support Specialist, Jade Sooktis, herself a former teen mom and single parent of five children. She is an excellent resource and role model to our moms in particular. Case management is complemented by the role of Parent Coaches who provide additional wrap around support to the parents and their families via home visits, mentoring, life coaching and checking on progress weekly toward the goals of the Family Success Plan and Educational Completion Plan. Educational and Family Success Plans provide an opportunity for voice and choice in how to best achieve academic success and progress toward family self-sufficiency that will work for them. Sacred Blessings also provides linkages to childcare and transportation assistance, pre-natal, post-natal and well child visits, post-secondary educational or job-training opportunities, GED (HiSET) and testing services.

A two day Teen Parent Training in April included teen parents/families and their family supports. Topics were provided by community partners, Sacred Blessings staff and included Parenting 101, family literacy, healthy relationships, Shaken Baby Syndrome, suicide prevention, cultural presentations, a former teen parent panel, nutrition, empowerment, Fatherhood is Sacred and traditional childrearing practices.

Finally, Sacred Blessings is excited to begin using the American Indian Life Skills Curriculum with its parents in October. American Indian Life Skills is a Native based intervention based on building self-esteem, identifying emotions and stress, increasing communication and problem-solving skills, recognizing and eliminating self-destructive behavior, learning about suicide, role-playing around suicide prevention, and setting personal and community goals. Lessons are interactive and incorporate situations and experiences relevant to American Indian adolescent life, such as dating, rejection, divorce, separation, unemployment, and problems with health and the law.

For more information, contact Dr. Brooke Gondara at brookegondara@yahoo.com.

Webinars from the Office of Adolescent Health

The Office of Adolescent Health regularly offers webinars on topics relevant to your programs and the youth with whom you work. If you miss a webinar, or would like to view a past webinar, OAH has a website to find slides, audio, and transcript files on webinars dating back to 2010. Visit their website here: <http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/resources-and-publications/webinars.html>

UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

*Have training opportunities to share? Send them to Khart2@mt.gov *

October

Parents As Teachers Conference

October 8 –10, 2014

St. Louis, MO

<http://www.parentsasteachers.org/training/conference>

Montana DPHHS- *Helping Children to Eat and Grow Well* (Ellyn Satter Institute)

October 9, 2014

Billings, MT

<http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/childcare/cacfp/index.shtml>

2014 Montana Early Childhood Conference—*Together Creating a Community of Learners*

October 9–11, 2014

Billings, MT

<https://extendedcampus.msubillings.edu/wconnect/CourseStatus.awp?&course=E152CSAEYC1>

Healthy Teen Network Annual National Conference *Synergy: Achieving More Together*

October 21-24, 2014

Austin, TX

<http://www.healthyteennetwork.org/>

December

National Indian Child Welfare Association—Positive Indian Parenting, ICWA Basics, Advanced ICWA

December 1-3, 2014

San Diego, CA

<http://www.nicwa.org/training/institutes/>

Native Wellness Institute *Adults Working with Native Youth Training of Trainers*

December 3 –5, 2014

San Diego, CA

<http://www.nativewellness.com/events.html>



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