



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

YMCA of Greater Cleveland

EUCLID/HILLCREST AREA FAMILY TO FAMILY COLLABORATIVE

PROGRESS REPORT

“ASSISTING EUCLID FAMILIES BECAUSE WE CARE”

The Euclid/Hillcrest Area Collaborative was formed in January 2000 as a way to establish a partnership with service providers for local residents. The Collaborative engages a variety of agencies, faith-based organizations and concerned residents in order to meet the diverse needs of families.

The Collaborative also provides a growing network of informal providers that can meet the needs of our families. Wraparound services and ongoing support are two major functions of the staff and Steering Committee members.

In 2004 the YMCA of Greater Cleveland’s Euclid Family YMCA branch became the fiscal agent for the Euclid/Hillcrest Area Collaborative. Funding for the project is provided by the Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services, specifically the Family-to-Family Initiative. The Family-to-Family Initiative applies four basic principles:

- A child’s safety is paramount.
- Children belong in families.
- Families need strong communities.

- Public child welfare systems need partnerships with the community and with other systems to achieve strong outcomes for children.

These principles drive the work of the Euclid/Hillcrest Area Collaborative to create a network of care that is neighborhood-based, culturally sensitive and located where the children in need live.

PREVENTION SERVICES

Since 2004, the Collaborative staff has assisted over 1,000 families with one-time services, ongoing prevention or wraparound. During 2010, we serviced 343 families. One hundred and fifty-eight families were referred directly from Children and Family Services.

We had a success rate of 94% for Emergency Custody Staffings and Placement Preservations. Families served by the Euclid Collaborative included: 91% are single female head of household; 90% of females serviced were African American; all families have children in the home under the age of 18; over 50% of families are 200% below the poverty level; the majority of families receive government assistance (food stamps, Healthy Start, OWF benefits). With the help of the Family Children and First Council we have secured over

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\$12,000 in emergency rent and utilities assistance for families that are neither DCFS involved or wraparound clients.

The Collaborative Prevention services link families to local and county agencies/organizations to address a variety of needs.

These include:

- Basic Needs Assistance (rent, utilities, food, etc.)
- Counseling
- School Advocacy
- Educational Support/Tutoring
- Foster/Adoptive Parent and/or Relative Care Giver Support
- Housing Assistance
- Recreation
- Municipal & Community Services.

Along with our Prevention Services we also work very closely with Children and Family Services Foster Care Recruitment Department to recruit and retain foster families. Over the past year we have hosted numerous Foster Care recruitment events to raise awareness about the importance of creating a “Forever Family” for our foster children. Not only have we partnered with Children and Family Services but we also collaborate with the Adoption Network, Berea Children’s Home and OYAP.

WRAPAROUND SERVICES

Wraparound is a planning process that follows a series of steps to help children and their families realize their hopes and dreams. This process brings people together from different parts of the family’s life. With the help of facilitators, they work together, coordinate their activities and blend their perspectives of the family’s situation. Wraparound is built on strengths and meets the needs of children and families to promote success, safety, and permanence in home, school and community.

The goal of wraparound is to develop a network of natural supports such as family members, faith-based support and friends. It also includes formal supports involving counselors, school staff or probation officers who work together to create a plan of care for the family.

In 2010 we had 39 families participate in some form of wraparound services. Wraparound takes six months to a year for a family to graduate from the program. Over the past year we have spent \$30,000 on families in our wraparound program. Funds have been used for rent, utilities, YMCA memberships, respite services, aging-out foster youth support, college application fees, clothing vouchers, sports programs, theater arts programs and other needs.



COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

The Euclid/Hillcrest Area Collaborative is comprised of representatives from local organizations, agencies, and service providers including schools, faith-based organizations, human services providers, government agencies and more. This group meets monthly for the sole purpose of servicing those families in need in the City of Euclid and surrounding suburbs. At these meetings, partners learn about the many programs and services available to our communities as well as learning about new ways of referring clients and working in a truly collaborative format. Partnering agencies include: Beechbrook, Cuyahoga County Board of Health, Euclid Police Department, Employment and Family Services, Berea Children’s Home, Euclid Area Churches, Euclid City Schools, Family Children and First Council, Moore Counseling and Mediation, Family Behavioral Health Services, YWCA and others.

In 2010 with the help of our community partners we hosted a community wide Annual Back-to-School Rally, Toys for Tots, Coats for Kids, Fill the Truck event to collect school supplies, Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets. We also hosted a weekly financial management series, weekly strengthening families series, Holiday event for Collaborative clients as well as a Kris Kringle Shop.

SUPPORT GROUPS

The Collaborative also runs two support groups for our local families: the Strong Parents Strong Families Support Group is funded through our Tapestry grant and the Foster/Kinship Family Support Group is held in conjunction with the Department of Children and Family Services.