



The Digest

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The Community That Cares Provides Help to Many Children & Families

Someone to Help is Key

Editor's Note: This story is written by Sinnissippi Centers' Family Care Coordinator Jennifer Bubrick. The name of her client has been changed.

Community That Cares Family Care Coordinators (FCC's) often come across children and families who need our help more than we could have imagined. These families, while sometimes our most challenging, are also our most rewarding and our greatest successes.



I was assigned to help Angie and her 14 year old daughter as their FCC. Angie lived in a neighborhood which was not a great environment. Angie came to live there after her husband passed away. She reported to me that there was a lot of drug activity in the area. There were also many issues with other residents, due in part to the drug activity. At the time, the home was the best situation that she and her daughter could find.

When I met Angie the home they lived in was in need of a lot of repairs. All utilities were electric, including heat, which caused her bills to be very high. Angie lives on a very fixed income because she does not have a job. Also, Angie does not have any transportation which would help her to have a job. Almost half of Angie's income went to rent, what she had left over barely covered her large electrical bill. This left very little money for survival items, like food.

However, the biggest issue Angie faced was the emotional strain of her environment. Her whole family; brothers, sisters, parents, lived in the same neighborhood. This took a toll on Angie emotionally and financially because her family members would ask her for money and they constantly put her down. They put their problems on her and, unfortunately, expected her to fix them. This also affected her daughter, who saw this happening

but could do nothing to help her mom. This, in addition to attempting to heal from the death of her husband, made everyday life difficult.

Because the difficulties she was facing revolved around her living situation, it became apparent that moving could best help positively impact her life. After many discussions about ideas of jobs, needing a car, and bills, I asked her if she would like to move to a different area. She was interested.

We set off to start the process with paperwork to apply for low-income housing. The process was not easy, nor was it quick. It took several appointments and discussions to find a place that she could call home. She was finally approved and Angie moved into low-income housing in February, 2015.

It is too early to know where we will go from here. But, my work with her is far from over. She is still currently looking for a job and hopes, one day, to buy a car. Through some assistance and recognizing her own potential, Angie has started to enjoy her daily activities once again. She has also moved towards making herself happy, something that was missing after the death of her husband.

Angie is becoming more and more self sufficient, lessening her dependency on others. She has created goals for herself to continue to improve her life. I have seen significant changes in her daughter as well. When I first met them, both mother and daughter were very closed off and felt uncomfortable sharing their issues with each other and with me. This has since changed. They have both begun to open up. Her daughter smiles more often and seems to be enjoying life more now that they have moved. One success can be built into more, ultimately leading to a better life for Angie and her daughter.

More Wellness

Sinnissippi Centers' Ways to Wellness and Recovery Program has received a grant from the Dr. Louis and Violet Rubin



Fund of the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois, which will allow expansion of services to Ogle County. Sinnissippi Centers' Ways to Wellness and Recovery program has significantly improved the health of individuals residing in Lee and Whiteside Counties.

In Ogle County, the purpose is to establish and expand primary and behavioral health integration by providing screening for, and linkage to, primary and behavioral healthcare services for adults in Ogle County. The population of Ogle County faces difficulties accessing primary care and behavioral health care services due to a lack of income, transportation, and knowledge of available services. The program will be available to individuals 18 and older in Ogle County who are suffering from multiple chronic illnesses, such as Bipolar Disorder, substance use issues, and heart disease.

According to **Kim James, Director of Healthcare Innovations** at Sinnissippi Centers, "We will be able to expand those efforts into Ogle County and provide the same services, achieving the same success in providing better care for individuals facing multiple chronic diseases."

Natalie Andrews, Director of Adult Services at Sinnissippi Centers, explains the "key to the project will be building on existing linkages, closer sharing of health information, better identification of behavioral and physical health needs, and improving patient-centered care."

There will be a dedicated staff person to provide care coordination services to Ogle County residents. Through care coordination, individuals increase their access to behavioral and primary healthcare. Doing so will result in reduced overall healthcare costs and improved quality of life.

The Community Foundation of Northern Illinois is the area's largest provider of grants and scholarships. Its mission is to attract, grow, and preserve an endowment for the needs of the people of Northern Illinois.

"Together creating the highest level of care, empowering people of all ages to find joy and hope."

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SINNISSIPPI CENTERS

Sinnissippi News

Upcoming Mental Health First Aid Trainings

Sinnissippi Centers will conduct more Adult Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) trainings in the coming weeks. Thanks, in part, to a grant from the Rochelle Community Foundation, a training in Rochelle is scheduled for April 17th at the First Presbyterian Church. Another training will be held at St. John's Lutheran Church in Sterling on May 1st. Anyone can learn MHFA. Sinnissippi Centers would like to see MHFA become as common as CPR training and all other types of First Aid. For more information, call Cassie Zimmerman at 815-284-6611.

Some New Friends to Like on Facebook

There is hardly an organization or business today that does not have a Facebook presence. It's an efficient, free tool for communicating with audiences attuned to your business, organization, or cause. Recent additions to Facebook include the **Community That Cares** and Sinnissippi Centers' **Healthy Families Illinois** Program. Search for the titles of these programs to find them and "like" them.

Trends in Illicit Drug Use

Local law enforcement officials have been tracking a trend of increased use of both Methamphetamine and Heroin. Use of Meth is increasing after years-long efforts nearly eradicated the drug locally and measures are again being directed at combating the increase. There have been several deaths particularly in Lee and Whiteside Counties due to Heroin overdoses, most recently in the Dixon area. Residents, community organizations, and treatment providers, like Sinnissippi, have begun meeting to organize a response to the increase in heroin use locally.

Drugged Driving on Rise

While there's been a decline in the number of Americans driving under the influence of alcohol, a growing number are driving under the influence of illicit drugs. A new report from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration shows that since 2007, the number of drivers testing positive for alcohol decreased almost 30 percent. Over the same period the number of drivers who tested positive for at least one illicit drug increased by 25 percent. The number of drivers who tested positive for marijuana increased by almost 50 percent. The study also found that over the last two years, 22 percent of drivers tested positive for at least one drug that could affect safety, including illicit, prescription and over the counter drugs.

The Rauner Budget

News out of Springfield for human service agencies like Sinnissippi Centers has not been good. Governor Rauner's budget makes deep cuts to mental health and substance use treatment and begs the question, "how many more times can human services be cut?" Previous years' cuts have heavily impacted access to care for thousands across the state. The FY16 state budget offers more of the same.

Long Planned Pediatric Developmental Center Has a Home

Florissa Flourishing

Downtown Dixon will soon have a new addition that will positively impact children and families in Carroll, Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside counties. Florissa, a pediatric developmental center, was scheduled to open in March in the former U.S. Bank building, located at 101 East First Street. The center is a collaboration of efforts between Kreider Services, KSB Hospital, Sinnissippi Centers, and The Autism Project of Illinois. The purpose of the new center is to provide a central location for children with behavioral, developmental, social, or emotional needs and their families to receive evaluations, diagnoses, and therapy.

Many times, the greatest obstacles for families with children who may have behavioral, developmental, social, or emotional needs is the travel and time it takes to find a diagnosis. The developmental center will help to lessen the stress that many families feel when trying to find out how to help their child. The knowledge that a child could need assistance, but not knowing why, is frightening for parents. Many times, the stress of the process affects families more than an actual diagnosis. Florissa will house doctors, therapists, and other representatives from each of the four partners. They will work together, side-by-side, to help children. By being able to house needed resources under one roof, Florissa will help streamline assistance for families.

Florissa implementation continues to move forward in a number of key areas. **Kelly Flannigan, PhD**, has been hired as the Clinical Director for the program and has been participating on a limited basis until this summer when she becomes full time. The clinical and implementation workgroups are meeting regularly to work out details of full implementation of programs and services. Site preparation is progressing quickly and some program areas were to move to the new location in March 2015. Key partners met in February for a day long planning session to develop a five year strategic plan required by the federal grant which is providing a significant amount of funding for Florissa. The project is also thankful that the community has shown a great deal of interest and support as the vision of Florissa becomes a reality.

It is hoped that the location of the new center will help to alleviate stigma within the community about autism and other developmental, social, emotional, or behavioral needs. While much has changed in recent years to lessen such stigma, there is still work that can be done. Florissa hopes to brighten children's futures as well as that of their families through bringing together much needed resources in the area.

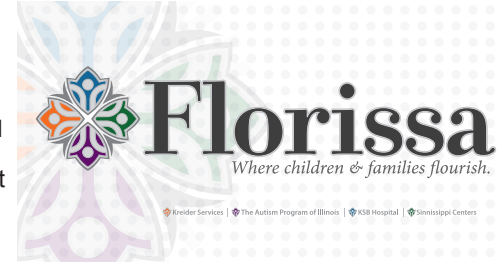
Getting the Gold Seal

Sinnissippi Centers is accredited and licensed by several agencies that conduct intensive surveys of hundreds of policies and procedures. For the uninitiated, it can seem overwhelming.

One of those agencies, The Joint Commission, conducted a four day on-site survey in December 2014, that reviewed compliance with 1,276 standards. Sinnissippi Centers received a very high score, 99.6%. In addition, the reviewer had several complimentary comments.

"No agency can ever receive a 100% score," Says Sinnissippi Centers' President/CEO, Patrick Phelan. "There is always room for improvement. Sinnissippi Centers has a culture of constant quality improvement that has served the agency and the individuals we serve well over our history," adds Phelan. "We are very proud of all of our staff and our management team who have worked very hard to make the agency the best it can be, and that has been reflected in this survey."

The result of the survey means Sinnissippi Centers will be accredited by The Joint Commission for three more years and retains their Gold Seal of Approval™. The seal of approval is an internationally recognized symbol of quality. It is an indicator that the organization has proven its commitment to high quality care and its willingness to be measured against the highest and most rigorous standards of performance.



11th Annual Art Fundraiser Takes Place April 7-24, 2015

Expressions Art Sale

There will be something for everyone at the **11th Annual Expressions Art Sale and Reception**. "Whether you like art, sports, fine foods, crafts, collectibles, exciting experiences, or home baked treats, there will be at least one item for you to purchase or bid on," says **Andy Jackson**, Expressions event coordinator.

Expressions features art from local and regional artists that will be available for sale, and a wide variety of auction items that will be up for bid. Expressions is one of two major fund raising events during the year for the Sinnissippi Foundation. The other is the Golf Open (see story below).

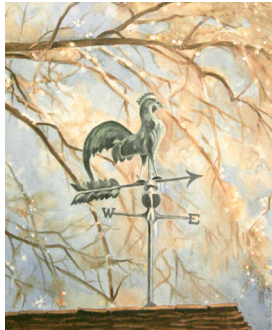
"One of the items we are particularly excited about," adds Jackson, "is a package that includes driving or riding in a Lamborghini Gallardo for three laps around a race track. The very lucky winner of that auction item will have an experience they will never forget," adds Jackson

Expressions couldn't take place without the participation of dozens of organizations, businesses, and individuals. "We are very fortunate and grateful for everyone that plays a part," says Jackson. "The event has been held at The Next Picture Show for all eleven of its years and they do a fantastic job for us."

"Our artists that have supported us over the years have been amazing," says Jackson. "There are so many incredibly talented artists in our area that have been willing to

support this event for over a decade."

"Our sponsors have been wonderful in their support as well, and we welcome **Sauk Valley Bank** back as Expressions cosponsor this year. They are a great supporter



Pat Lathe's "Weather Vane", one of the pieces featured at Expressions



of both the Sinnissippi Foundation and the local arts community and do a great job helping us promote Expressions."

"We thank all of our sponsors through the years for their support in making this a wonderful event. Without all of this support, Expressions just would not be the same," adds Jackson

Expressions begins when art and silent auction items go on display at The Next Picture Show Tuesday, April 7th. They remain on display during regular gallery hours through Friday, April 24th. Art can be purchased and bids placed on silent auction items at any time during that period. The event **concludes** with a **reception** on Friday, **April 24th, from 5:00 pm** at The Next Picture Show.

All proceeds support the various programs of the Sinnissippi Foundation which helps individuals and families in need.

For more information about Expressions, contact Andy Jackson at the Sinnissippi Foundation at **815-284-9380**. You can visit online at sinnissippi.com and click on Expressions. You can check **Facebook** for updates about Expressions by finding the Foundation and "liking" us and by joining the Expressions event.

Golfing "Fore" A Good Cause

Before Punxsutawney Phil the groundhog came out of his hole in February to predict winter's end, event organizers at the Sinnissippi Foundation were already thinking warmer thoughts and were busy planning for the August Golf Open.

The Golf Open has enjoyed a long run of success. This will be its 23rd year. "I think we have as much fun planning and hosting the Golf Open as the golfers do participating in it," says Sinnissippi Centers' President/CEO **Patrick Phelan**. "It's given me a great excuse to better my golf game too."

"The funds raised over the years have benefitted hundreds of individuals and helped them achieve a higher level of mental wellness," adds Phelan.

The Golf Open is set for **Thursday, August 13, 2015, at Timber Creek Golf Club**. Tee-off is at 12:30 sharp and dinner and an awards ceremony follows golf.

A save the date card was sent out in early March. Also a golf open registration form has been posted at sinnissippi.com. "If you did not receive a post card, and are interested in taking part, please visit online or contact the Foundation," says Phelan. "We can take your registration and also put you on the mailing list or add you to an e-mail list if that is your preference." **For more information** contact the Foundation at **815-284-9380**.



"Team Dixon Family YMCA" looking sharp and enjoying the 2014 Foundation Golf Open



Foundation News

Nearly \$155,000 in Support

The Sinnissippi Foundation continues its fund raising efforts throughout the year. However, the first six months of each year are particularly active with planning for two major fund raising events (Expressions and Golf Open) and conducting the annual Employee, Board, and Alumni Campaign. The May-June campaign was first launched in 2006 and has raised a total of nearly \$155,000 in support of the Foundation's programs and initiatives. Hopes for this year's campaign are high: The 2014 Employee, Board, and Alumni campaign raised the highest amount to date.

Gardenstock Art and Music Festival

Plans are already underway for the Annual Gardenstock Art & Music Festival that supports the Sinnissippi Centers' Youth Garden Project. Last year, Gardenstock showcased nine bands and over 40 artists. Gardenstock also offers great food on site from several vendors, or you can bring your own. Admission this year will be \$6.00 for adults and \$1.00 for kids 12 and under at the gate. For more information, visit Distinctive Gardens online at diggersdelight.com and click on "Community" then "Festivals".

Youth Garden Project

April showers bring May flowers, but some gardeners get started earlier in the year. That's what Sinnissippi Centers' Youth Garden Project staff have already been doing; preparing for the 2015 gardening season. One of the critical components of the garden is to keep at-risk kids out of trouble and, hopefully, out of the juvenile justice system. The garden does that by connecting youth directly to their community. It also teaches youth the importance of accountability and reliability.

May is Mental Health Month

Declared in 1949, Mental Health Month seeks to increase awareness of mental illnesses and to decrease the stigma that surrounds these chronic treatable diseases. How far have we come since 1949? Quite a long way. The existence of community mental health centers like Sinnissippi Centers is evidence. But more remains to be done to ensure all Americans better understand the diseases of mental illness and can get the treatment they need. More also needs to be done at the state and federal levels to make sure mental health treatment has adequate financial support.

The Digest Newsletter

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