POHLAD CAMPERSHIP DOLLARS STILL AVAILABLE!

The Carl and Eloise Pohlad Family Foundation has awarded $12,000 to PACT for Families to be used for summer camp scholarships! The guidelines for the scholarships as established by the Pohlad Family Foundation are as follows:

- Funds are to be used for a child to attend only residential camps that have been approved by the Pohlad Family Foundation. A complete list can be found on the following websites at: acacamps.org or wildernessinquiry.org or summercamp.org. The scholarship dollars are for children who live in one of the five counties (Kandiyohi, Meeker, McLeod, Renville or Yellow Medicine) served by PACT for Families, or attend one of the school districts that are members of the collaborative.
- Priority from the Pohlad Family Foundation and PACT for Families is for children who have never attended a residential summer camp.
- Scholarships are for children ages 8-15 (PACT for Families’ priorities are for children ages 11-15) who have not been to a camp in prior years. A maximum of $500 is available for each scholarship for first time campers. A maximum of $350 is available for kids who have attended a camp in previous years.

If you have a child you would like to see attend a summer camp, please have the parent complete the Camp Scholarship Application. Requests can come from parents as well as community professionals. Parents and referring community professionals will need to be part of the camp selection, help arrange transportation, and sort out the other issues that are part of any child attending a summer camp. With summer fast approaching, timelines are short. We will be accepting applications immediately, and approving them on a first-come, first-serve basis. The Camp Scholarship Application is available on the PACT for Families website: pactforfamilies.org

Please contact Jill at the PACT for Families office with any questions:
Jill Meyer: 320-231-7030 ext. 2962; jill_m@pactforfamilies.org

SUMMER OFFICE HOURS:
Mondays through Thursdays: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Fridays: 8:00 a.m. to Noon
Do you remember attending summer camp? The nights around the campfire, telling scary stories in the tent or cabin, learning paddling songs while trying to keep the canoe from tipping? I have some vivid memories about learning to build a fire and trying to keep the mice out of my suitcase. But the memories that stick with me most are those that caused me to have to have to deal with real life issues that were only brought to light by the fact that I was away from home, like the year my parents forgot to pick me up at the end of camp because they thought I was not due to return until the following day. And perhaps the most powerful memory, when my best friend whispered to me during introductions, asking if she should say she had three siblings or four since her younger brother had recently been killed in a vehicle accident.

Psychologists have pointed out that that summer camps are great places for children to optimize their psychosocial development—situations away from home where they have to negotiate all sorts of trials beyond how to build a fire or manage a ropes course. Summer camps challenge youth to get along with a new group of peers, learn how to ask for help from others, and to take manageable risks on one’s own.

Michael Ungar1 notes that the best camping experiences offer opportunities for manageable amounts of risk and responsibility, what he terms “the risk takers advantage.” He says that camps help our children develop great coping strategies when they provide seven things all children need:

1) New relationships, not just with peers, but with trusted adults other than their parents.

2) A powerful identity that makes the child feel confident in front of others.

3) Camps help children feel in control of their lives—children who experience themselves as competent will be better problem-solvers in new situations long after their laundry is cleaned and the smell of the campfire forgotten.

4) Opportunities to just be kids who are valued for who they are.

5) At camp kids get what they need to develop physically. Ideally, fresh air, exercise, a balance between routine and unstructured time, and all the good food their bodies need.

6) A chance to feel like they belong. All those goofy chants and team songs, the sense of common purpose and attachment to the identity that camps promote go a long way to offering children a sense of being rooted.

7) And finally, camps can give kids both cultural roots and the chance to understand others who have cultures very different from their own.

We know that resilient children are hopeful, possess high self-worth, are aware of their weaknesses and recognize their strengths. So whether it is a camp to learn a new skill, a church related camping venture, or a day camp at the local Y or childcare center, there is evidence that positive summer experiences away from home can add to a youth’s problem-solving skills and promote the ability to make independent decisions.

Camps can be great for parents too—allowing time to regroup and regenerate. But if you are a parent sending your child to camp, just remember to record the date and time that camp ends, or one of your child’s longest lived memories can be that of being left at camp when everyone else has returned home.

Debb Sheehan, Director
(320) 231-7030 ext. 2965; debb_s@pactforfamilies.org

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EVALUATION UPDATE

In early May an email was sent out by Anne Kinney of the Minnesota Center for Health Statistics asking for suggestions on ways to improve the Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) which is due for another data collection in 2013. The email included the following:

The 2013 MSS will be administered online to students (and on paper for those districts that can’t do online yet); and the grades to be surveyed will change in 2013 from 6-9-12 to 5-8-9-11. With the increased emphasis at MDE on school engagement, they felt that surveying should start in 5th grade. Also, the hope is that we will get larger participation rates among 11th graders than we were ever able to get with 12th graders. The 5-8-11 choice will maintain the "cohort like" structure of the data, since the survey will still be administered every three years. And keeping 9th grade will allow for some continued comparisons to the past.

These changes have implications for us as we continue to implement the PACT/School Survey on an annual basis. The first issue is that their switch to grades 5-8-9-11 and our practice of surveying grades 5-7-9-11 means that instead of having one grade of overlap every three years, we will now have three. And if we continue to administer the two surveys in the spring as we have in the past, it will mean a giant burden for the schools at the same time that they also do academic testing. It will also mean three grades of youth answering many similar questions in a short period of time.

One option of course would be to skip the PACT/School Survey in the year that the MSS is completed but that causes us problems in having the data that some of our counties need for reporting Drug Free Communities Coalition data. A second option that we can explore with the schools is to move the PACT/School Survey to late fall, approximately mid-November. We used to do the Olweus Bullying Prevention Survey at that time before consolidating it with the PACT/School Survey and the time seemed to work fine. Many of our survey questions ask students about their behavior during the last two months so having the reference of behavior since the beginning of school may be helpful.

A second implication for the MSS change is actually a loss for us as we analyze data and I think will be a loss for the state as well by giving up surveying 12th graders.

Yes, the state is right that more 11th graders will take the survey than will 12th graders but in looking at the 2010 MSS data the total 12th graders completing the survey was only about 22% less than the 9th grade rate, not a big loss in the world of surveys when you are talking 47,000 kids per grade. When we have analyzed our own 11th grade data it has always been helpful to compare those results with the most recent 12th grade MSS data on similar questions. We consistently have found a big jump in usage of chemicals from 11th grade to 12th grade. For example, using data for our five counties, in 2011 23% of 11th grade males and 20.1% of 11th grade females reported some usage of alcohol on our survey compared to 39% of 12th grade males and 36% of 12th grade females on the 2010 MSS. That one year gap between 11th grade data and 12th grade data is almost as large as the three-year gap between 9th graders and 12th graders on the 2010 MSS. It will be unfortunate to lose that perspective.

Dr. Ed Downey, Ed.D.; Evaluator
(320) 231-7030 ext. 2977; ed_d@pactforfamilies.org
One of the things that was really stressed during staff development for 21st Century program teachers was reflection. No matter how engaging and educational our activities were, if you didn’t have time at the end for students to reflect, you missed your opportunity to “cement” their learning. So today, as we have wrapped up school year programming and are about to begin our last summer, we are reflecting on what this program has brought to the students of ECHO Charter School.

The first of the three stated goals was increased academic achievement. We have seen this. Not only have our kids built their knowledge base but their interest base as well. We have seen an excitement about discovery and a confidence from achievement that has been transferred into their classrooms. A quote from a parent survey: “My son says ‘It’s fun and it makes me proud!’” Success!

The next goal was building skills that would help our students become productive adults. Sometimes these skills were specifically targeted in our classes. But as we reflected on what we have done in the last five years, we see they are woven into every experience we offered, from discovery-based science to cooking classes to mentoring opportunities to cleaning up after ourselves at snack time. Success!

The goal of school connectedness, we believe, has been our greatest success. The connections formed between staff and students have changed the way we think about and relate to each other in a lasting way. In turn, it has positively impacted how students feel about school. One parent told us, “Program is the reason my child looks forward to school.” Success!

The staff, students, and parents of ECHO Charter School would like to thank the wonderful people at PACT For Families for five great years of fun and learning. Thank you for what you have done for our kids, and so many kids in rural Minnesota.

Pat Jacobson, Site Coordinator
PJacobson@echo.charter.k12.mn.us

*Funding for the PACT for Families Collaborative 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant program is provided by the federal government through the No Child Left Behind Act and is administered by the Minnesota Department of Education.
LCTS/RESERVE-FUNDED GRANTS:
Safe Avenues—Harmony Visitation Center

Harmony Visitation Center, a program of Safe Avenues, provides Parenting Time Services to Kandiyohi County and the surrounding area. Services consist of Supervised Visits and Monitored Exchanges. Harmony Visitation Center is a member of the Minnesota and International Supervised Visitation Networks, which sets standards and guidelines for the operation of parenting time programs.

The purpose of supervised visitation is to:
- provide children safe access to their non-custodial parent;
- reduce the risk of children’s further exposure to harm in cases of domestic violence, sexual abuse, or child abuse;
- maintain the parent-child connection and preserve the continuity of that relationship;
- improve the parent’s ability to communicate and make decisions with the best interest of the child in mind;
- foster the emotional and behavioral well-being of the child;
- assure the child that he/she has not been abandoned;
- improve parenting skills through staff modeling and education;
- provide opportunities to heal damaged relationships; and,
- maintain connections to the child’s cultural heritage.

During supervised visits, staff are always present for the safety and security of the children and to observe and objectively document all parent-child interaction.

Monitored exchanges are available to families when there are no concerns about the child’s safety when spending time with the non-custodial parent, but there are concerns about the child witnessing hostility between parents during transfer of the child from one parent to the other. During monitored exchanges, parents wait on opposite sides of the building, while Harmony staff transfer the child from one parent to the other, thus eliminating the risk of the child witnessing hostility or abuse between parents.

As stated in our PACT for Families/LCTS-Reserve Funds grant, a primary goal of Harmony is: during parenting time services, children separated from their parent(s) through out-of-home placement or other court order will be able to visit their non-custodial parent in a safe environment. An additional objective is: 90% of non-custodial parent-child contacts at Harmony will occur without significant incident. In the first six months of this grant cycle (July 1 – December 31, 2011), program data showed that 98% of non-custodial parent-child contacts at Harmony occurred without significant incident. Harmony Visitation Center served 90 children during the referenced grant period.

For additional information, please contact Elaine Bolland, Director at: 320-214-0799; elaineb@harmonyvisitation.org
May Full Collaborative Highlights

Jean Johnson from McLeod County Public Health presented on MEADA and its work. Methamphetamine Education and Drug Awareness (MEADA) Coalition of McLeod County was developed to educate youth, families, and citizens on the dangers of drugs with a focus on methamphetamine. The coalition was started on August 17, 2005. Since that time, MEADA has created the Battle of the Bands annual event at the McLeod County Fair, Zero Adult Provider and Take it to the Box Medication Disposal Program. The coalition has organized and sponsored presentations regarding methamphetamine use, prescription drug abuse and synthetic designer drugs. MEADA is a non-profit 501(c)(3) and keeps providing to McLeod County by grants and donations. For more information, go to their website at: http://mcleodmeada.org.

Committee Reports:

Executive Board – reviewed and approved financial reports and bills. Additional discussion included: the upcoming audit – we’re no longer an at-risk auditee and considered a low-risk entity; lease and space issues for the Willmar office; different options for upcoming annual meetings; received an update on current LCTS grantees and other grant opportunities; and approved a new Paid Time Off (PTO) policy for staff.

5 to 25/5 – shared information about what’s going on throughout the counties: Renville County is working on getting the beer garden moved away from entertainment at the county fair; Fairfax kids are going to visit the city council to request the parks be declared tobacco-free; the bullying committee talked about information that came out of the April discussion; and the mental health committee talked about creating stickers or something to put on popcorn bags sold at school events and also something to send to schools to put in their fall registration packets.

Early Childhood – continued to talk about early childhood mental health grants which were awarded to LSS, Greater MN Family Services, and Western; the Race to the Top grant, the Medica grant for Incredible Years classes, and heard about a new application PACT will be putting in affecting kids in the 0-5 age range that focuses on children in or at risk of being placed in foster care.

Wraparound – due to low attendance, committee did not meet.

Parent Advisory - met in April and worked on board task and finalizing a topic for a training opportunity for parents.

Wired Weird; An Asperger’s Story—Becky Romosz, Executive Board member and psychiatric nurse, shared her son Eric's story and the stories of other kids with Asperger's and provided information about techniques to handle the uniqueness of this disorder. Two important tips that she has learned are: explain, explain, explain; and keep your sense of humor. She also distributed five copies of letters from parents of children with Asperger's, which are also available at the PACT for Families office.

Self-Injury/Suicide; Results from recent PACT-School Survey - aggregate summary data from all schools that participated in the 2011 school survey was distributed for review. This is also available on the PACT website.

Other:
Next Meeting – June 13th at the Meeker County Courthouse in Litchfield; lower level.
### June / July

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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Summer office hours begin (see cover)</td>
<td>5 Executive Board Mtg; 11:30-2:00; #2057</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Brain Conf. Planning Mtg; 3:00-4:30; #2045</td>
<td>12 Parent Advisory Mtg; 5:30-7:30; Kandiyohi Co. Y in Willmar (RSVP)</td>
<td>13 Committee and Full Collaborative meetings-Meeker Co. Courthouse, Litchfield; Early Childhood &amp; 5-25/5 meet at 10:00; Wraparound at 10:30; check website for details on committee locations (RSVP)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3 Executive Board Mtg; 11:30-2:00; #2057</td>
<td>4 Independence Day Holiday observed—office closed</td>
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<td>Parent Advisory Mtg; 5:30-7:30; Kandiyohi Co. Y in Willmar (RSVP)</td>
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<td>20 Social Svcs Directors Mtg; Noon-1:30; The Oaks, Willmar</td>
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For the most up-to-date list of events, check the PACT for Families website at [www.pactforfamilies.org](http://www.pactforfamilies.org).

All Willmar meetings are held at the Kandiyohi County Health and Human Services Building (KCHHSB) unless otherwise noted.

(MPR=Multi Purpose Room; RCOB=Renville County Office Building)
**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

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### 2012 Executive Board

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
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**Chief Elected Officials**

- Bob Fox, Renville County; (507) 557-8265
- Dick Larson, Kandiyohi County; (320) 235-5805
- Greg Renneske, Yellow Medicine County; (507) 925-3117
- Bev Wangerin, McLeod County; (320) 587-6869

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If you have any questions regarding the content of this newsletter or would like to be included on the email list, please call (320) 231-7030, ext. 2961.

It is the policy of PACT for Families to provide equal employment opportunity for all, without discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, disability, sexual orientation, or age.