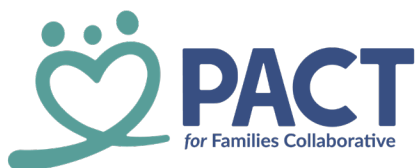




# 2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

*Building Family Resilience:*  
Strength Through Connection



*A vision of healthy, safe, and resilient communities*



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A photograph of a family of four standing in a field of tall grass, looking out over a landscape with hills in the background. The family consists of a man, a woman, and two children. The man is on the left, wearing a red and white checkered shirt and blue jeans. The woman is on the right, wearing a striped shirt and a red and white checkered skirt. They are both holding hands with the children. The children are standing in front of them, also holding hands. The background shows a vast field of tall grass and distant hills under a clear sky. The image has a soft, warm tone and is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue rectangle containing text.

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

*Partners working together to strengthen families and support children in achieving their highest potential.*



## SARAH VONDERHARR

### Executive Director



As we reflect on this past year, I want to take a moment to celebrate our successes and the collective impact of our work. This year, we strengthened our **system of care** by securing additional federal funding to expand support for transition-aged youth programs and enhancement of our cultural initiatives. These resources will allow us to further address critical needs and create more inclusive, effective services for the communities we serve.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all our partners for your dedication, hard work, and commitment to the mission of **PACT for Families Collaborative**. Your contributions have been essential in securing funding, particularly through providing letters of commitment, support, and sharing vital data about service gaps. These efforts enable us to present a strong case for the current and future funding we received, ensuring we can continue addressing the needs of the families and communities we serve. I am deeply thankful to those who continue to engage in conversations that strengthen our system of care across our service region.

As a collaborative, we were designed to build bridges and identify service gaps, and this remains our core mission. However, this work cannot be done alone. It requires the active engagement of every partner across our system of care. We continue to call on all of you—our community-

based, education, family services, public health, and mental health partners—to work together to fill these gaps and strengthen the services available to youth and families.

Your collaboration is not only appreciated, it is essential to fulfilling our purpose. Together, we will drive meaningful change, strengthen connections, and ensure that every family has access to the support they need.

Your participation has been key in driving positive change across the PACT service region. Your involvement has been instrumental in identifying service gaps and working together to develop more effective solutions and initiatives. These contributions have been critical in strengthening the overall impact of our work. Thank you for being a change maker and for helping us achieve meaningful progress in our shared goals.

Looking ahead to the coming year, I am confident that with your continued partnership, we will build on these achievements, strengthen our system of care, and expand our reach to those who need our services the most. Together, we are not just filling gaps—we are creating lasting change, shaping a future where every family has the support they need to thrive. Let's continue this vital work and make an even greater impact in the year ahead.

# THANK YOU SOCIAL WORKERS!

## *A Heartfelt Thank You to PACT's Dedicated School Social Workers*

**BY: SARAH VONDERHARR**

As we transition contracted school social workers to school-funded positions in the 2025-2026 school year, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated professionals who have played a key role in supporting students, addressing mental health needs, and promoting social-emotional well-being over the past two decades.

*We want to specifically recognize the following individuals for their years of service:*

- **BLHS School District** – Lori Jensen Hagert: 29 years
- **ACGC School District** – Misty Langseth: 24 years
- **BOLD School District** – Tom Kroes: 19 years (transitioned Fall 2024)
- **NL-S School District** – Elizabeth Kruger Hommerding: 19 years (transitioned Fall 2024)
- **Canby School District** – Brian Skogen: 19 years
- **Litchfield School District** – Tamara Minton: 18 years
- **Cedar Mountain School District** – Paula Sturm: 17 years
- **Hutchinson School District** – Sara Nelson: 13 years
- **Willmar School District** – Monica Crow: 1 year (transitioned Fall 2024)

These professionals have been critical to the success of our school engagement efforts and have made a lasting impact on students and families. Their resilience, flexibility, and commitment have shaped the collaborative services we provide.

As we work with school districts to determine the best approach for this transition, we want to assure everyone that, while some school social workers may transition to school employment, others will remain in their current positions with PACT but will be fully funded by their respective school districts. The exact details of these transitions are still being worked out, as schools are evaluating budgets and practices to ensure the most effective use of resources.

To our school social workers—thank you for your tireless dedication and the profound impact you have made in our community. We look forward to continuing to work together to support youth and families.

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### *Meet the Social Workers!*



**BRIAN SKOGEN**  
Canby Schools K-12



**LORI JENSEN HAGERT**  
Buffalo Lake, Hector,  
Stewart Schools



**MISTY LANGSETH**  
ACGC Jr and Sr School



**PAULA STURM**  
Cedar Mt. Schools



**SARA NELSON**  
Hutchinson School Middle &  
High School



**TAMMY MINTON**  
Litchfield Schools; Ripley Elementary



# STAFF RECOGNITION

## *Honoring Our Committed Team*

BY: SARAH VONDERHARR

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to our dedicated staff for their years of service and the invaluable contributions they have made to our organization. Their unwavering commitment, hard work, and passion have been fundamental to the success and growth of our collaborative efforts. Each one of you has played a crucial role in shaping the positive impact we have on the communities we serve.

Your dedication does not go unnoticed. It is your years of service, your day-to-day efforts, and your belief in our mission that help us thrive. We are proud to honor and celebrate your contributions, not only in this booklet but also at our annual meeting.

Your hard work has created lasting change and continues to influence the lives of countless individuals, families, and communities. We are grateful for the knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm you bring to our organization. We are excited to continue this journey of success together, knowing that we can rely on your continued passion and expertise.

## *Recognizing Years of Service*

- All of our Social Workers
- Jolene Lambert: 30 years | Finance Coordinator
- Lynnette Sommers: 5 years | LCTS & Office Coordinator
- Meghna Subba: 5 years | Evaluator

As we reflect on the years of service and dedication each of you has given, we are reminded of the incredible impact your hard work has had on our organization and the communities we serve. Your contributions continue to drive our success and inspire positive change. We look forward to many more years of collaboration and growth, knowing that together, we will continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we touch.

*Thank you for your unwavering commitment, and for being such an integral part of our shared journey.*



# 2024 BRAIN CONFERENCE

## Reflecting on the 2024 PACT Community Conference on the Brain: *Before It's Too Late: Conversations on Bullying and Suicide Prevention*

BY: MEGHNA SUBBA

*The 2024 PACT Community Conference on the Brain* brought together 73 participants for an impactful event focused on mental health, resilience, and community connection. Despite its modest size, the conference earned high praise for its engaging sessions, meaningful networking opportunities, and practical takeaways. Feedback from attendees has provided valuable insights for shaping future events.

All the sessions of this year received strong ratings and positive feedback. **Jaime Bremseth's** session on sextortion and adolescent suicide was a standout, earning the highest score. **Brian Skogen's** session on school tragedy aftermath and

**Tom Thelen's** keynote on resilience also resonated strongly. Attendees described the sessions as “**eye-opening**,” “**practical**,” and “**relatable**,” emphasizing their immediate relevance to personal and professional contexts. Networking emerged as a key benefit, fostering meaningful collaboration and dialogue among attendees. The event's structure allowed participants to exchange ideas and build professional relationships, enhancing its overall value. An impressive 91% of attendees expressed a desire to return next year, even with a potential fee increase. Feedback highlighted the event's thoughtful organization, practical tools, and relevant topics as key drivers of satisfaction.

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### Recommendations for 2025:

1. **Strengthen Outreach:** Begin promotional efforts earlier and diversify channels. Detailed flyers, targeted email campaigns, and social media strategies can expand reach.
1. **Optimize the Format:** Transition to a daytime or full-day schedule to accommodate more sessions and networking time. Expand breakout options to allow greater participation.
1. **Diversify Content:** Incorporate new themes such as early childhood mental health, resilience and grief, self-care, spirituality as a protective factor, and ethics to keep the program dynamic and relevant.
1. **Enhance Logistics:** Address comfort concerns by managing room temperatures and noise levels. Streamline registration and ensure attendees can access more breakout sessions.

The 2024 PACT Community Conference on the Brain demonstrated its value as a platform for learning and connection. With overwhelmingly positive feedback and strong intentions for future attendance, the event solidified its role in addressing mental health challenges. By implementing suggested improvements, the 2025 conference can build on this year's success and have an even greater impact on the community. The committee is actively incorporating feedback to enhance the 2025 event – stay tuned for exciting updates!





## 2024 Youth Leadership Academy: *Amplifying Youth Voice & Empowering Future Leaders*

BY: JEREMY RADTKE

*The Youth Leadership Academy* continues to be a cornerstone program for developing confident, engaged young leaders who advocate for positive change in their schools and communities. This year's event theme, "Youth Empowerment, Youth Voice," focused on equipping students with the tools to lead, communicate effectively, and support their peers in making healthy choices.

Held at the WEAC event center, the Academy featured dynamic guest speakers, interactive breakout sessions, and team-building activities designed to strengthen leadership skills. Participants particularly enjoyed the Circle of Connection and Team-Building Adventure sessions, which fostered collaboration and self-reflection. Throughout the day, students engaged in discussions about social media influence, stress management, and the importance of strong peer connections.



Circle of Connection Breakout

With an overall event rating of 4.09 out of 5, attendees described the experience as eye-opening, fun, and an opportunity to connect with like-minded peers. The interactive nature of the sessions helped reinforce the event's core message: that youth voices matter and that young leaders have the power to make a meaningful impact.

Looking ahead to 2025, we plan to expand the Youth Leadership Academy by enhancing interactive workshops, peer-led discussions, and real-world application exercises. By fostering a culture of youth-led prevention and leadership, we continue to empower the next generation to create lasting change in their communities.



Keynote Speaker: David Iverson

# TRANSITION SERVICES

BY: JENN PAUFF

*The Transition Services* program administers two SAMHSA-funded initiatives designed to support youth who are at risk of, or currently experiencing, severe emotional disturbance (SED) or severe mental illness (SMI). *The Journey to Independence (JTI)* program serves individuals aged 14 to 21, while the *Road to Success (RTS)* program provides services to youth and young adults aged 16 to 25. Staff members within the RTS program also receive specialized training to assist youth with developmental disabilities in achieving independent living goals.

Though the JTI program began late in the year, goals for enrollment of youth aged 14 and 15 have already been met. As this demographic increases, peer group activities will be tailored to meet the needs of the younger program members. Monthly peer group opportunities offered to youth enrolled in both JTI and RTS promote a sense of

community and belonging among participants.

During 2024, the RTS program entered into Interagency Agreements with **Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Renville, and Yellow Medicine counties** to assist in youth transitions from children's mental health services to adult services. To further capacity building efforts while improving referral pathways in rural Minnesota, steps have been taken to create and implement data sharing strategies that will enhance program reporting and inform future funding efforts.

*The Local Advisory Council (LAC)* meets six times a year to serve as the Advisory Council for both the Journey to Independence (JTI) and Road to Success (RTS) programs. During these meetings, the Council reviews program progress, assesses the goals and objectives outlined in the grant submission, and collaborates on strategies to develop sustainable funding streams for the continued success of both programs. This integral committee includes youth within the age of program participants and family members who offer critical insight for continuous program improvement efforts.

## Meet the Transition Services Team!



JENN PAUFF  
Transition Services Supervisor  
& RTS Program Coordinator



KELL MALOYD  
RTS Lead Family Coordinator



NYSSA STIEN  
RTS Youth & Young  
Adult Coordinator



LIZ FISCHER  
RTS Youth & Young  
Adult Coordinator



MARIA MORENO RODRIGUEZ  
JTI Lead Family Coordinator



NEEVA AUBERT  
JTI Program Coordinator



LONNIE SANCHEZ  
JTI Transition Facilitator



JESSICA ROELOFS  
JTI Transition Facilitator



TERENCE JACKSON  
JTI Transition Facilitator



KISHA MALECEK  
Youth Support Specialist

# FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

BY: JAYDE SMITH

In 2024, PACT experienced several key transitions and continued to enhance its support services across various programs, focusing on both family and cultural outreach.

**Wraparound:** Jayde Smith transitioned into the role of Family Support Services Supervisor, and Jeremy Evans was welcomed as the new Wraparound Coordinator. Evans has been undergoing MiiWrap training and has already begun meeting with families, making a positive impact within the PACT Wraparound program. Additionally, Smith is currently participating in the MiiWrap Coach's process, which will enable her to train PACT staff as MiiWrap facilitators. This will allow the integration of MiiWrap concepts and philosophies into staff practices, enriching the services provided to families and youth.

**Family Liaison:** The Family Liaison program continues to offer voluntary services to parents and caregivers who are facing a range of family challenges. In 2024, Debbie Gerrety took on the role of General Family Liaison, working with families to help them identify their strengths and achieve their goals. Through this program, families receive tailored support to navigate various life challenges, fostering growth and resilience.

**Connecting Families:** This Networking Support Group remains an essential resource for parents of children with special developmental, physical, or mental health needs. Over the past year, PACT has continued to offer sensory movie opportunities in partnership with Spicer Cinema 4 and the State Theatre in Hutchinson. These activities have been made possible by the Willmar Area Community Foundation and SWIF. Additionally, the program provided 54

weighted blankets to youth in 2024, with a steady flow of new referrals coming in 2025. In a bittersweet moment, PACT bid farewell to Becky Sook, who had served as the Connecting Families Coordinator for 12 years, leaving behind a legacy of meaningful connections and support for countless families.

**COSI (Cultural Outreach and Support Initiative):** The COSI program continues to provide culturally responsive support to youth aged 11-24 and their families across five counties: Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Renville, and Yellow Medicine. The initiative addresses mental health and substance use challenges while reducing barriers to care through community liaisons, trauma-informed education, and interpreter services. By fostering trust and engagement within diverse cultural communities, COSI aims to encourage career paths in mental health and substance use fields, thereby promoting a more inclusive future. The program is supported by two dedicated community liaisons, Virginia Leyva and Amina Kharie, who continue to facilitate access to culturally and linguistically appropriate services, furthering the program's mission to uplift and empower marginalized groups.

These developments and transitions reflect PACT's ongoing commitment to providing comprehensive, accessible, and culturally sensitive support to families, individuals, and communities in need.

## Meet the Family Support Services Team!



JAYDE SMITH  
Family Support Services Supervisor



JEREMY EVANS  
Wraparound Coordinator



DEBBIE GERRETY  
FSS Family Liaison



AMINA MOHAMMED KHARIE  
Somali Community Liaison



LEYVA DE AMOS  
Latino Community Liaison



# PARTNERSHIP FOR SUCCESS

## BY: JEREMY RADTKE

Over the past year, the *Partnership for Success (PFS) grant* has empowered our coalitions to take meaningful steps toward reducing youth substance misuse across **Kandiyohi, Renville, and Yellow Medicine counties**. Guided by the Strategic Prevention Framework, we have implemented innovative, community-driven strategies to foster healthier choices among young people.

**One of our key achievements** was the expansion of vape disposal and cessation resources in local high schools, a project made possible through collaboration with our **SHIP partners**. Their support, alongside PFS, was foundational in ensuring that schools had the necessary resources to provide students with a tangible way to disengage from nicotine use. This partnership highlights the power of collaboration in driving meaningful, system-wide change.

Additionally, we organized the Youth Leadership Academy, an initiative designed to empower young people to become peer mentors and advocates for substance misuse prevention. Through leadership training, skill-building workshops, and community projects, students are taking an active role in promoting positive choices and fostering a culture of support among their peers.

Building on our commitment to early prevention education, we are expanding The Blue Polar Bear book into a multi-cultural video series in 2025. This adaptation will bring the story to life in a way that resonates with diverse audiences, ensuring that young people from various backgrounds see themselves reflected in its powerful message about addiction, resilience, and making healthy choices. By incorporating culturally inclusive narratives and multilingual voiceovers, we aim to reach even more children and families with this engaging, evidence-informed prevention tool.

Our efforts are making a difference. Surveys indicate a growing awareness of the risks of substance use, and engagement with our programs has steadily increased. By working closely with educators, parents, and public health partners, we are not only changing conversations but also shaping healthier futures for young people.

As we move forward into the next year, we remain committed to adapting strategies, strengthening community partnerships, and expanding prevention education to create lasting impact.



## Meet the Partnership for Success Team!



**JEREMY RADTKE**  
PFS Grant Coordinator



**RACHEL CLARK**  
PFS Prevention Specialist



# FINANCIAL UPDATE

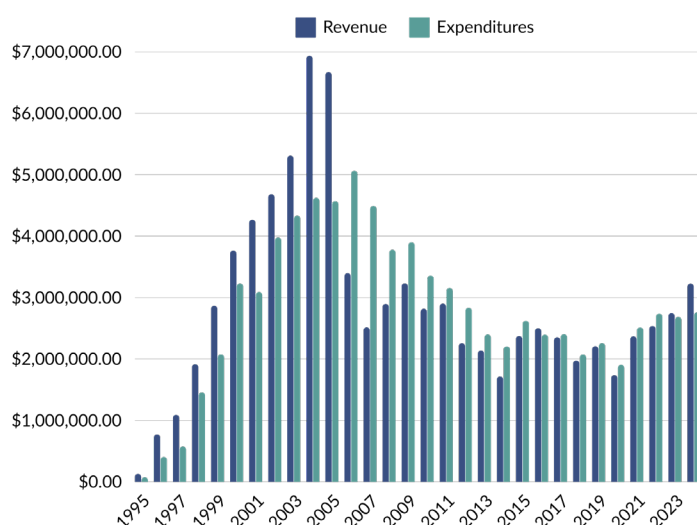
BY: JOLENE LAMBERT

*Since its establishment in 1993*, PACT for Families has remained dedicated to supporting its partners and delivering high-quality services that exceed expectations. Guided by its mission, vision, and values, PACT's Chief Elected Officials–Joint Powers Board and Executive Board engage in an annual strategic retreat to develop and adopt a focused approach that directs the collaborative's efforts. PACT continuously seeks opportunities to enhance its effectiveness and responsiveness to its members, ensuring its ongoing impact within the community. Over the years, this commitment has driven strategic improvements in personnel utilization, infrastructure, and technology.

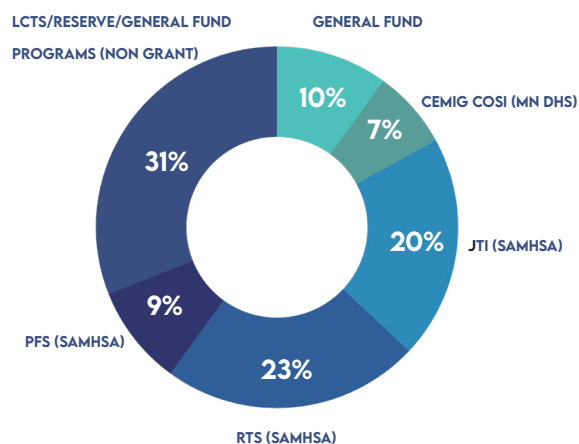
The PACT for Families budget is supported by a diverse funding portfolio, including state and federal grants, foundations, local contributions, and membership fees. These funds are consolidated into an Integrated Fund and strategically allocated to advance the collaborative's goals and programs. With more than 30 years of experience, PACT has demonstrated that system integration maximizes existing resources while fostering the development of new ones. By working closely with partners, PACT has successfully reduced service duplication and expanded support for families.

To ensure fiscal responsibility and transparency, PACT for Families undergoes an annual audit by the Minnesota Office of the State Auditor. The budget is carefully developed by the Executive Board and formally approved by the Chief Elected Officials–Joint Powers Board each year. PACT upholds a standard of excellence that distinguishes it from other collaboratives in Minnesota, reinforcing its dedication to accountability, strategic resource management, and exceptional service delivery.

REVENUE & EXPENDITURES HISTORY BY YEAR



2025 BUDGETED EXPENDITURES BY FUND



# LCTS

## Local Collaborative Time Study (LCTS)

BY: LYNNETTE SOMMERS

**PACT for Families Collaborative** is a five-county Family Service and Children's Mental Health Collaborative serving Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, Renville, and Yellow Medicine Counties.

### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE LCTS?

The Local Collaborative Time Study (LCTS) program enables the Collaborative to earn federal reimbursement. These funds are designated to expand services for children and families across our service region. PACT has participated in this time study since 1996.

### UNDERSTANDING LOCAL COLLABORATIVE TIME STUDIES (LCTS)

A Local Collaborative Time Study is a process that documents the time select staff spend on various work activities. Referred to as a "random moment time study," it captures randomly selected days and times as "snapshots" of the activities performed by participating staff. During these "random moments," staff members select from a predefined list of codes and definitions to describe their activity at that specific time. An updated list of codes, including two new codes, was recently distributed to Public School and Public Health participants and training on their use has been provided. These "random moments" snapshots serve as the statistical foundation for estimating the total time spent on various types of activities. The Minnesota Department of Human Services uses data from the time study—along with cost reports and eligibility ratios for Medical Assistance (Title XIX) and Foster Care and Adoption Assistance (Title IV-E)—to calculate the federal reimbursement earned.

### WHO MAY PARTICIPATE IN THE LCTS?

Collaborative members within our five-county service area are eligible to participate in the time study. Primary participants include staff in Public Health, County or Community Corrections and Public School Districts involved in coordination and case management activities for children at risk of out-of-home placement, as well as those addressing children's physical and mental health needs. It is important for all partners who are eligible to participate in the LCTS, as their efforts help maximize reimbursements to the Collaborative, which in turn supports children and families in our communities.

### HOW DO WE USE LCTS FUNDING?

LCTS revenues enhance and expand programs supporting early intervention and prevention services for children and families at risk. These funds return to the community collaborative, ensuring they prioritize youth and family needs. The voices of youth and families are central to our mission. We actively encourage our partners and community members to engage with us as we strive to make a meaningful impact in developing a seamless service system and augmenting local community-based collaborative endeavors.

### COMMITMENT TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Through continuous improvement efforts, our boards and committees prioritize innovative and evidence-based strategies to enhance outcomes for youth and families. Recognizing the importance of adaptability, we embrace change to address evolving community needs.

*To learn more about the LCTS random moment process or schedule a meeting/training with PACT's LCTS Coordinator, contact Lynnette Sommers at [lynnette.sommers@pactforfamilies.org](mailto:lynnette.sommers@pactforfamilies.org) or scan the QR code.*



# DISCRETIONARY GRANTS

**Discretionary grants** are small-scale grants of up to \$5,000 made possible through funds generated by the Local Collaborative Time Study (LCTS). These grants are intentionally designed to be flexible, encouraging creativity and innovation in addressing the needs of children and families. They are available to all PACT for Families Collaborative members. Applications can be submitted at any time during the year through a simple process, accessible via the PACT office or website.

These grants are typically intended to support new, unique, or one-time programs or services. Applicants are encouraged to avoid requesting discretionary funds when other funding sources are available or if the activity is something the agency would normally be expected to provide as part of its regular operations.

Our goal is to address the needs of children and families with as much flexibility and responsiveness as possible.

In 2024, a total of \$94,897.68 in Discretionary funding was expended for projects designed to enhance services for children across our service area. **A few of the projects funded in 2024 are highlighted below:**



## MENTORSHIP MEET UP

The grant supported a program that helped youth participate in structured monthly gatherings to work on projects for the county fair and engage in community service. This initiative fostered creativity, teamwork, and volunteerism, while providing opportunities for personal growth and community involvement.

*LAMP Kinship | Judy Hultstrom*



## ADDICTED TO HOPE WORKSHOP

The grant funded a free 4-hour workshop for parents, caregivers, and mental health professionals working with at-risk children, youth, and young adults struggling with mental health challenges like depression and anxiety. Led by Penelope Rivera, author of *Addicted to Hope*, the workshop provided tools and strategies for finding hope and fostering resilience in those facing difficult circumstances.

*Olivia House of Hope | Janine Kramer, Wendell Veurink*



## SUPPORTING FAMILIES, BUILDING LASTING RELATIONSHIPS AND KEEPING YOUTH AT HOME

The project helped build trusting relationships between families and mental health case managers, supporting physical, social, and emotional needs. Funds were used to promote emotional regulation, reduce isolation, and prevent mental health crises, providing a holistic support system for children and families.

*Yellow Medicine Co. Family Services | Janis Shea*



## YOUR STORY MATTERS 2.0

The program empowered youth to foster respect, build inclusive school cultures, and make healthy, informed choices. By encouraging reflection and resilience, it provided students with the tools to navigate life's challenges, promoting personal growth and helping them develop the strength to overcome obstacles and thrive.

*ACGC Public School | Luke Braaten, Kip Lynk, Hutchinson Middle School | Sara Nelson, Dan Deitte*



## GROWING HEALTHY FAMILIES

A community event and school presentations promoted positive childhood experiences (PCEs) through activities for children and families. It reached 165 individuals, strengthening communication and trust between parents, children, and child welfare practitioners. The program also engaged 300 students and staff across five local school districts, fostering a healthier community..

*Renville Co. Human Services | Amber Pierce, Rachel Johnson*



## RIVER'S EDGE ART ADVENTURE

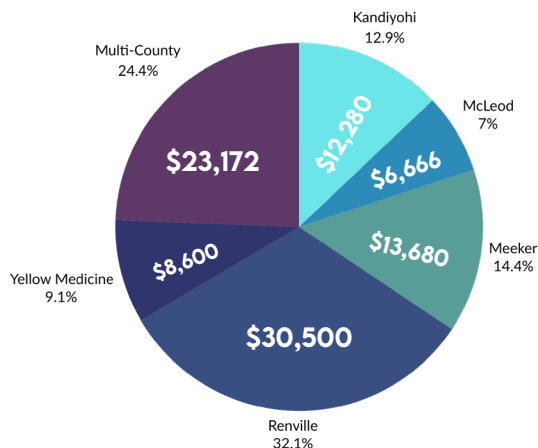
The River's Edge Art Adventure program provided youth and families with creative opportunities in painting, drawing, and ceramics. By fostering a safe, engaging environment, it helped reduce the risk of substance use, encouraged positive involvement, and contributed to community beautification through artistic expression.

*YME Public School | Tamara Isfeld*

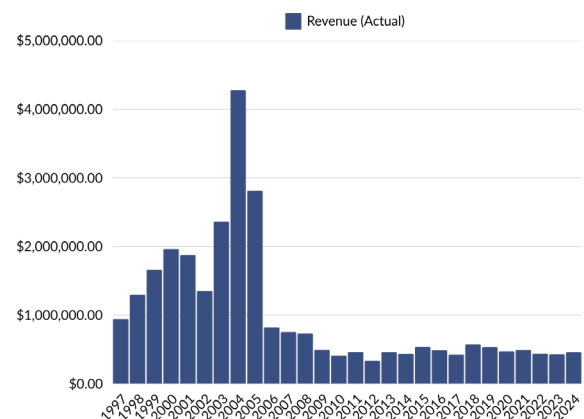
# DISCRETIONARY GRANTS

Funds generated through the **Local Collaborative Time Study (LCTS)** have been vital in supporting innovative and visionary projects that address the diverse needs of children and families within the communities served by PACT for Families. Our discretionary grant opportunities will continue into 2025 with an annual budget of \$100,000, ensuring the continued ability to respond to the community's evolving needs.

## 2024 DISCRETIONARY FUNDING DISTRIBUTION



## LCTS INCOME



## Meet the Finance & LCTS Coordinators!



**JOLENE LAMBERT**  
*Finance Coordinator*



**LYNNETTE SOMMERS**  
*LCTS Coordinator*



# THANK YOU PARTNERS!

## Thank You to Our 2024 Community Partners

### COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS:

- Goodwill Easter Seals MN: Kandiyohi
- Litchfield Area Mentorship (LAMP-Kinship): Meeker
- Olivia's House of Hope: Renville
- United Community Action Partnership: Kandiyohi, Renville, McLeod
- Youth for Christ : Kandiyohi

### CORRECTIONS:

- 6W Corrections: Yellow Medicine
- Kandiyohi County Community Corrections
- McLeod County Court Services-Probation
- Meeker County Probation
- Renville County Probation/Department of Corrections

### HEALTH CARE:

- Centra Care: Kandiyohi

### HUMAN SERVICES:

- Kandiyohi County Human & Human Services
- McLeod County Human & Human Services
- Meeker County Human & Human Services
- Renville County Human Services
- Yellow Medicine County Family Service

### MENTAL HEALTH:

- Greater MN Family Services: All
- Western Mental Health Center: Yellow Medicine
- Woodland Centers: All

### PUBLIC HEALTH:

- Countryside Public Health: Yellow Medicine
- Kandiyohi County Public Health
- McLeod County Public Health
- Meeker County Public Health
- Renville County Public Health

### SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT:

- Project Turnabout: All

### SCHOOLS:

- Atwater Cosmos Grove City Public Schools
- Bird Island-Olivia-Lake Lillian District Public Schools
- Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart Public Schools
- Canby Public Schools
- Cedar Mountain Public Schools
- Eden Valley-Watkins Public Schools
- Gibbon, Fairfax, and Winthrop Public Schools
- Glencoe-Silver Lake School District 2859
- Hutchinson School District
- Litchfield Public Schools
- Maynard, Clara City, and Raymond Public Schools
- New London-Spicer Public Schools
- Renville County West Public Schools
- Willmar Public Schools
- Yellow Medicine East

### UNIVERSITY/EXTENSION:

- University of Minnesota Extension: Kandiyohi

# EVALUATION

## *Strengthening Services through Program Evaluation*

BY: MEGHNA SUBBA & FORREST RICE

In 2024, **PACT for Families Collaborative** conducted multiple evaluation efforts to assess the effectiveness of programs, community readiness, and collaborative impact. These efforts, including the Community Partner Readiness Assessment, updates to the Share Survey (in preparation for its administration in Fall 2025), and the introduction of Ripple Effect Mapping (REM), informed strategic decision-making and addressed service gaps across the five-county service area.

### ***Key Benefits of Evaluation***

- Identifying What Works and What Doesn't: Findings from the 2024 Brain Conference led to structural improvements for the 2025 Conference to enhance its impact.
- Demonstrating Program Effectiveness to Stakeholders: The SHARE Survey tracks trends in mental health, substance use, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and other critical factors, offering valuable data to inform decision-making.
- Enhancing Frontline Practice: Evaluation highlights staff strengths and areas for training, ensuring high-quality service delivery and participant engagement.

### ***Needs Assessment: Past and Future***

The 2024 Community Partner Readiness Assessment evaluated the preparedness of 42 partner organizations to serve transition-aged youth with Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) or Serious Mental Illness (SMI). The assessment identified key strengths, including strong awareness of existing initiatives, a high level of leadership commitment to youth mental health, and broad recognition of the importance of supporting this population. However, it also highlighted significant challenges. Few partners had comprehensive, integrated programs for transition-aged youth, and many rated their current efforts as only somewhat effective. A limited depth of understanding of SED/SMI among community partners was also noted, alongside persistent barriers such as staffing shortages and insufficient resources.

To create a more responsive evaluation process, PACT will begin conducting an Annual Needs Assessment starting in 2025. This shift will provide ongoing insights into service gaps, strengthen strategic planning efforts, and enhance engagement with community partners by collecting and analyzing data on a regular basis. The first step in this transition will be developing a standardized assessment framework that ensures consistency while remaining adaptable to emerging needs.

### ***Share Survey Update and Future Plans***

In 2024, PACT's evaluation team updated and realigned the Share Survey with validated measures to improve the accuracy and relevance of the data collected. The survey, which is conducted in schools and completed by students, has been redesigned to better assess student well-being, mental health needs, and access to support services. This update ensures stronger alignment with evidence-based assessment tools and enhances the ability to track trends over time. It is scheduled for full administration in Fall 2025. The data collected will provide insights into student experiences, inform school-based mental health initiatives, and guide collaborative efforts to improve youth services across the region. The results will also help identify priority areas for

intervention and program development, ensuring that schools and community partners are equipped to address emerging needs effectively.

### ***Ripple Effect Mapping***

In January 2024, PACT, in collaboration with the **Improve Group** (a Twin Cities-based evaluation firm), facilitated three in-person Ripple Effect Mapping (REM) workshops across **Yellow Medicine, Kandiyohi, and Renville Counties**, followed by virtual follow-up sessions as part of the **Partnership for Success Initiative**. The intent of REM is to collect the untold stories and behind-the-scenes activities that can ripple out from a specific program or activity.

**Yellow Medicine County CHC:** Focused on prevention, systemic change, outreach and collaboration.

**Kandiyohi County DFC Coalition:** Highlighted community empowerment, education, and resource-building.

**Renville County RAPAD Coalition:** Identified declines in youth substance use, strengthened partnerships, and increased advocacy.

The REM workshops, part of the Partnership for Success (PFS) initiative, provided valuable insights into the impactful work being done across our target counties. The identified themes highlight the collaborative efforts aimed at addressing community needs and fostering sustainable change. PACT and PFS teams are committed to leveraging these findings to advance our mission and drive positive outcomes within the communities we serve.

### ***Conclusion***

PACT's 2024 evaluation efforts reinforced data-driven decision-making for both emerging and established programs. Annual Need Assessments will enhance service tracking and adaptation, while the SHARE Survey will provide valuable long-term data. Combined with REM insights, these evaluations reaffirm PACT's commitment to delivering high-quality, evidence-based programs that make a lasting difference in the lives of children, transition-aged youth and their families.

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## ***Meet the Evaluation Team!***



**MEGHNA SUBBA**  
*Evaluator*



**FORREST RICE**  
*Program, Assessment, Training,  
& DEI Coordinator*

# SOCIAL MARKETING

## Enhancing Impact: A Year of Growth in Social Marketing

BY: HANNAH MCFARLAND

PACT's *social media presence* has grown so much over the past year! Engagement jumped from **548 in December 2023** to **1,965 in December 2024**, with content views reaching **68.8K** and over **2K interactions**. More people are connecting, sharing, and engaging with important conversations—exactly the kind of impact that's been the goal all along.

A huge part of this growth came with a fresh rebrand, designed to be more modern and recognizable. The updated colors and logo have gotten great feedback, making marketing materials and social posts stand out in a way that feels inviting and memorable. Marketing materials have also been shifted to include translations in **Spanish and Somali**, ensuring more inclusive outreach.

The launch of an Instagram account has opened up even more ways to connect, reaching new audiences and strengthening online presence. This past year also brought some incredible social campaigns, like *May is Mental Health Month* and *Mental Health During the Holidays*. These efforts sparked meaningful conversations, spread awareness, and helped people feel supported when they needed it most.



**Inclusivity and accessibility remain top priorities.** The website has been redesigned to align with new branding while also improving access with more language options and features to support individuals with disabilities. These updates make it easier for everyone to engage with important resources and information.

Looking ahead, the focus is on continuing this momentum—expanding translation efforts, increasing engagement, and creating even more impactful content. **The goal is simple:** keep growing, keep connecting, and keep making a difference in the community.

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## Meet the Social Marketing Coordinator!



**HANNAH MCFARLAND**  
*Social Marketing Coordinator*



# DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

## *2024 DEI Progress and Future Commitments*

BY: FORREST RICE

In 2024, **PACT for Families Collaborative** advanced **diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)** across our services, programs, and outreach. Our commitment to addressing systemic barriers remained strong, with a focus on creating inclusive environments for families and service providers in the rural communities we serve. This year marked significant progress in integrating DEI principles into our organizational culture and operations.

A major development was expanding the **GUÍA Program** into the **Cultural Outreach and Support Initiative (COSI)**, prioritizing culturally relevant engagement. Although COSI's funding was awarded in 2024, the contract was finalized at year-end, making much of the year a foundational period. This initiative will enhance our capacity to support families from diverse cultural backgrounds in ways that are respectful and responsive to their needs.

We also prepared for the 2025 launch of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to assess the cultural competence of staff, board members, and key partners. IDI assessments will provide personalized growth plans, enhancing cross-cultural communication and cultural awareness. This initiative will strengthen our ability to interact effectively with individuals from diverse backgrounds, reinforcing the inclusivity and impact of our programs.

Additionally, we completed the **Culturally & Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)** Standards assessment to evaluate our cultural and linguistic responsiveness. This process identified strengths and areas for growth, guiding our efforts to provide equitable services that reflect the needs of the communities we serve. The CLAS Standards will continue to shape our commitment to culturally and linguistically appropriate practices.

To further enhance cultural competency, three staff members became certified Family Development Credential (FDC) Instructors. As FDC becomes standard training for frontline staff, it will equip them with culturally informed skills to improve cross-cultural communication and address systemic barriers to cultural competence.

Looking ahead, PACT for Families remains committed to refining our practices to ensure culturally and linguistically responsive services. By embedding DEI principles into every aspect of our work, we are building a more inclusive and equitable future for the families and communities we serve.

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## Growing Connections: *Engagement and Expansion in 2024*

BY: AALIYAH ROBINSON

Throughout 2024, our Full Collaborative meetings across the five counties have seen a steady increase in participation. The highest attendance at a single meeting reached an impressive 60 attendees with a mix of partners, staff, community members, and potential collaborators. On average, each meeting attracted 43 people, a great reflection of the growing interest and involvement in our initiatives. We're thrilled about the momentum this has generated and can't wait to welcome even more new faces in the coming year, contributing to the continued success and growth of our mission!

Throughout the year, we've had the pleasure of connecting with our community in a variety of exciting ways. We've

engaged with countless youth, inspired by their enthusiasm and ideas, and showcased our initiatives at popular events such as Kids Connection, Welcome Weeks, Rockin' Robbins, and local County Fairs. At these gatherings, we reached out to a diverse range of people, sharing our mission and sparking new connections. These interactions have allowed us to build stronger relationships with the community, raise awareness about our initiatives, and spread our message far and wide.

The positive energy and feedback we've received has been incredible, and we're eager to continue this momentum as we move forward. Here's to even more community engagement and growth in the year ahead!



## *Meet the Administrative Support Specialist!*



**AALIYAH ROBINSON**  
*Administrative Support Specialist*

# THANK YOU SPONSORS!

*Thank You for Supporting Our Initiatives & Events with  
Your Generous Contributions!*



# OUR CERTIFIED TRAINERS

*We are proud to showcase the expertise and dedication of our certified trainers who play a vital role in delivering impactful training and fostering growth within our communities. Their qualifications and commitment to continuous learning help empower those we serve.*

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## CERTIFIED TRAINERS:

- **Debbie Gerrety:** ACES
- **Forrest Rice:** FDC, ACES, QPR, IDI Qualified Admin
- **Jayde Smith:** MiiWrap
- **Jenn Pauff:** FDC, TIP
- **Kell Maloyd:** IDI
- **Leyva De Amos:** ACES
- **Maria Moreno Rodriguez:** YMHFA
- **Neeva Aubert:** FDC
- **Liz Fischer:** ACES

### *Key:*

**ACES:** Adverse Childhood Experiences

**MiiWrap:** Motivational Interviewing/Wraparound

**FDC:** Family Development Credential

**QPR:** Question, Persuade, Refer

**TIP:** Transition to Independence Process Model

**IDI:** Intercultural Development Inventory

**YMHFA:** Youth Mental Health First Aid



# 2025 TRAINING CALENDAR

## MARCH

### Youth Mental Health First Aid Training

Date: **March 13th**

Time: 9:00am-4:00pm

Location: McLeod Gov Building, Boardroom & Bergen Room

### Law Enforcement Training

Date: **March 19th**

Time: 9:00am-12:00pm

Location: Kandiyohi HHS, MPR

### Adverse Childhood Experiences Training

Date: **March 27th**

Time: 1:00pm-3:00pm

Location: Kandiyohi HHS, MPR

## APRIL

### Youth Mental Health First Aid Training

Date: **April 10th**

Time: 9:00am-4:00pm

Location: Renville County Building, Room 117

### Question, Persuade, Refer Training

Date: **April 15th**

Time: 10:30am-12:30pm

Location: Hutchinson Library

### Law Enforcement Training

Date: **April 17th**

Time: 9:00am-12:00pm

Location: Renville County Building, Rooms 116/117

## MAY

### Trust Based Relational Intervention - General Training

Date: **May 9th**

Time: All Day

Location: Kandiyohi HHS, MPR

## JULY

### Question, Persuade, Refer Training

Date: **July 15th**

Time: 11:00am-12:00pm

Location: Renville County Building, Room 116

## OCTOBER

### Trust Based Relational Interventionl - Teen Focus

Date: **October 10th**

Time: All Day

Location: Kandiyohi HHS, MPR

### Question, Persuade, Refer Training

Date: **October 14th**

Time: 11:00am-12:00pm

Location: Meeker County Government Center, Suite 200

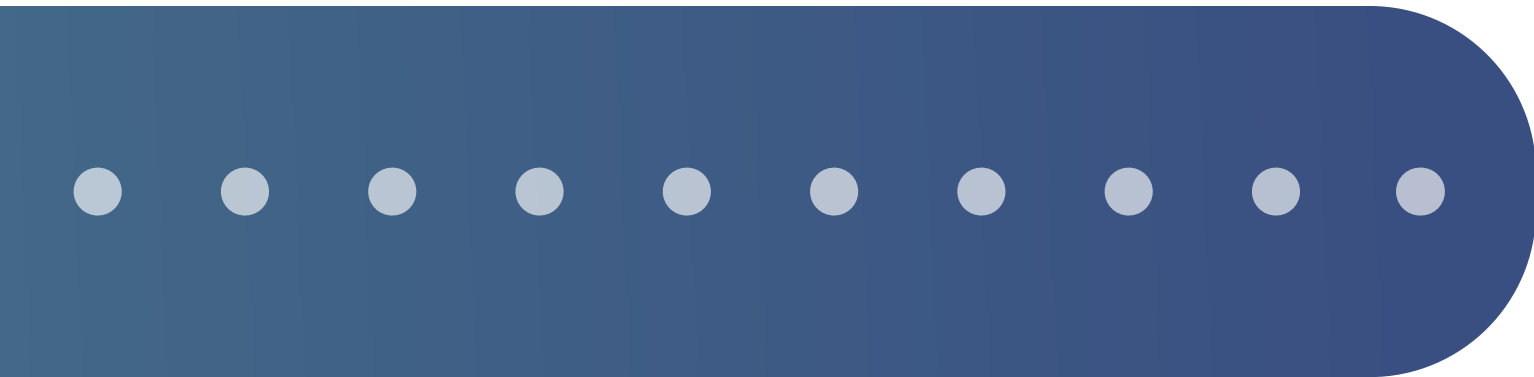


### ***PACT Trainings: Learn, Grow, Connect, and Support***

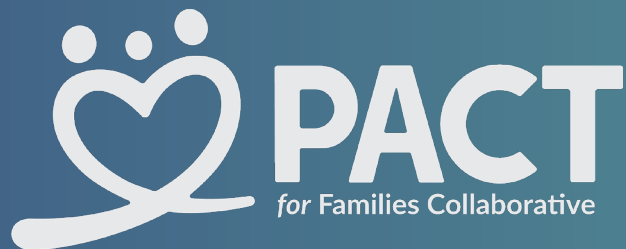
At PACT, our trainings are designed to equip you with the skills, knowledge, and cultural awareness needed to support children and families effectively. Together, we're building a stronger, more inclusive community where everyone can thrive.

# NOTES





# THANK YOU



## LET'S CONNECT!



320-231-7030



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