



Crossroads Treatment Center, Pierce County Executive Summary of the Community-Level Progress Evaluation Reports

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Crossroads Treatment Center in Pierce County is one of eighteen recipients of the Washington State Incentive Grant (SIG). SIG funds are allocated to communities to prevent the use, misuse and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and other drugs by Washington State youth. Community grantees are expected to make their local prevention system more effective by establishing prevention partnerships, using a risk and protective factor framework for data driven needs assessments, and by implementing and monitoring science-based prevention programs.

Project Site

United Communities Coalition is the name that Crossroads Treatment Center and its partners chose for the group that directs their SIG activities. Gault Middle School, in the Tacoma School District, and Keithley Middle School, in the Franklin-Pierce School District, are the focus of the substance abuse prevention efforts of the United Communities Coalition SIG project. High rates of poverty affect students: more than 75% of Gault students and 55% of Keithley students are eligible for free and reduced lunches, compared to the county rate of 34%.¹ Gault is located in a culturally diverse, urban neighborhood of Tacoma. Keithley Middle School is located in a culturally and economically diverse, suburban neighborhood of unincorporated Parkland.

Prevention History

Prior to SIG, various partnerships were operating to bring substance abuse prevention services to children in the Tacoma and Franklin-Pierce schools. Although 22% of Gault sixth graders report prior drug use, and 40% report prior use of alcohol, and Keithley students averaged 27 ATOD (Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug) assessments per year in the two-year period from 1997-1999, with 29 referrals for treatment in that time, no age-appropriate substance abuse treatment services for teens or younger children were available. Both communities lacked after school programming for children in the middle school age group. Existing parenting programs were not designed for parents of middle school-aged youth or those youth already having problems in school. The United Communities Coalition of Pierce County was created to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to wrap at-risk children and their families with multiple

¹ Food stamp rates for Gault and Keithley are from the United Communities Coalition grant proposal (Crossroads Treatment Center, 1999).

strategies to prevent substance abuse. This project is the first time that all of the member agencies have worked together as a group. Science-based programs were introduced to the are through SIG.

Progress toward Community Level Objectives

Objective 1: Establish partnerships...

Crossroads Treatment Center, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, Tacoma Public Schools, Franklin-Pierce School District, Pierce County Human Services, and the Safe Streets Campaign joined to form the United Communities Coalition of Pierce County. As its first joint venture, the United Communities Coalition is providing substance abuse prevention programming at Gault Middle School in the Tacoma Public Schools and Keithley Middle School in the Franklin-Pierce School District.

Objectives 2 and 3: Use a risk and protective factor framework for planning and participate in joint community risk and protective factor and resource assessment.

Prevention partners in Pierce County have been using a risk and protective factor framework since 1996 to plan substance abuse prevention programs. Major risk factors identified by the coalition in their two school communities include favorable attitudes toward drug use, early first use, low commitment to school, low neighborhood attachment, and community disorganization. Every two years since 1996, the Safe Streets Coalition, Pierce County Human Services, and county school districts assess county substance abuse prevention needs and resources using a risk and protective factor framework. Pierce County's fiscal year starts January 1st, but county profile and Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior data are usually not released until later in the year. This means that the partners generally have to use older data.

Objective 4: Select and implement effective prevention actions...

The SIG process encouraged the choice of programs shown through published research to be effective in different locales and with multiple populations. These are known as research-based programs. Three research-based programs, Families and Schools Together program, Media Sharp, and Project ALERT, were chosen. Safe School Zones was added to augment those programs and to address community organization. The package of programs is being tested at Gault and Keithley middle schools. The plan is to identify effective strategies for providing comprehensive substance abuse prevention services in Pierce County.

Objective 5: To use common reporting tools...

One of the requirements for participating in the SIG project was to participate in the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior (WSSAHB). Survey data provide cross-sectional substance abuse prevalence rates and measures of

risk and protective factors among 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students. Gault and Keithley middle schools both participate in the survey.

For program level evaluation, United Communities Coalition prevention program coordinators used the surveys provided in their curricula. Data from the Families and Schools Together (FAST) program is forwarded to and analyzed by the Alliance for Children and Families, national providers of FAST training and materials. Starting with Year 3 of SIG, 2001-2002, Crossroads Treatment Center will also use the Everest program outcome monitoring system, developed by the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, Washington Department of Social and Health Services.

Success Highlights

Crossroads Treatment Center FAST teams have provided two nine-week cycles of FAST at both middle school sites in Year 2, with active FASTWorks follow-up groups at both middle schools. All sixth graders at the two schools have received the Project ALERT curriculum as part of the schools' health science curricula, and all seventh graders have received Project ALERT follow-up sessions. FAST/Project ALERT coordinators are fully integrated with school staff.

Upon request, Crossroads Treatment Center is now using alternative funding to provide the SIG-style prevention package at one additional Franklin-Pierce school. Two more Tacoma schools are requesting the same services. Positive outcomes from the Project ALERT program have led Tacoma Public Schools and the Franklin-Pierce School District to institute Project ALERT at all of their middle schools starting in SIG Year 3.

United Communities Coalition has shown progress toward meeting its internal SIG goals and objectives, and toward achieving the community level objectives established by the Governor's Substance Abuse Prevention Advisory Committee. During the third and last year of SIG community funding, the local prevention community intends to move toward institutionalizing some of the changes they have achieved in the system of prevention planning, funding, implementation, and monitoring that they developed under SIG.



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