



Crossroads Treatment Center, Pierce County Washington State Incentive Grant 1st Year Community-Level Evaluation 1999-2000

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Executive Summary

Crossroads Treatment Center in Pierce County is one of eighteen Washington State Incentive Grant (SIG) community grantees. Eighty-five percent of State Incentive Grant funds are allocated to communities to prevent the use, misuse, and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drugs by Washington State youth.

This document is a baseline community-level evaluation report, examining the history of substance abuse prevention efforts in Pierce County within the last decade, the community's partnership efforts, and their initial challenges and successes in providing prevention services for youth. Reports are provided as feedback on the United Communities Coalition's efforts to date and as a record of those efforts for state and federal funding agencies.

Challenges

Pierce County's SIG sites, Gault Middle School (Tacoma School District) and Keithley Middle School (Franklin-Pierce School District) are both located in areas that are noted for high levels of drug activity. Gault is located in Tacoma's Eastside neighborhood, an urban, mostly low-income area, which is part of a United States Department of Justice Operation Weed and Seed site; and Keithley is located in south Pierce County, in a densely populated suburban neighborhood of unincorporated Parkland, abutting Pacific Lutheran University. Large numbers of methamphetamine labs have earned Parkland inclusion in the federally designated Northwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area.

Prevention History

Prior to SIG, various partnerships were operating to bring substance abuse prevention services to children in the Tacoma and Franklin-Pierce schools. Tacoma Public Schools contracts with the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department and Franklin-Pierce School District contracts with Crossroads Treatment Center to provide prevention and intervention for alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs one day a week at each of their schools. Pierce County Human Services funds and mentors youth teams in area high schools and middle schools to provide prevention education at their schools. Crossroads had a history of working with Franklin-Pierce Schools, Pierce County Human Services, and Child and Parent Resources, which provided social service referrals and parenting

classes. Safe Streets works with communities to help residents mobilize against drugs and violence. Safe Streets provides Safe School Zones, which includes the Drug Education for Youth (DEFY) program at six Tacoma schools, including Gault Middle School.

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 strategies to prevent substance abuse. This project is the first time that all of the member agencies have worked together as a group. The coalition identified the following risk factors as priorities:

- Favorable attitudes toward drug use
- Early first use
- Low commitment to school
- Low school and neighborhood attachment
- Community disorganization.

The prevention programs chosen are designed to strengthen **protective factors**. Programs are categorized by a rigor scale, created by the federal Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. Rigor is the extent to which the program has been shown, through scientific research methods, to be effective in different locales and with multiple populations. The highest rating is rigor 5, the lowest, rigor 1. Below is a list of programs selected by Crossroads:

- Families and Schools Together (FAST) (selective; rigor 5)—School and family bonding, health beliefs and clear standards. FAST is designed to support bonding and communication between parents and their children, among participating parents, and between families and schools to enhance children's academic and social performance.
- Media Literacy (selective; rigor 3)—Social skills, opportunity for involvement, recognition, and healthy beliefs and clear standards. Students learn to deconstruct media messages about alcohol and tobacco, and make their own video advertisements against alcohol and tobacco use for use in their community and schools.
- Project ALERT (universal; rigor 5)—Healthy beliefs and clear standards, and social skills. All sixth grade students at Gault and Keithley receive 11 fifty-minute sessions of education designed to provide a clear set of norms against the use of tobacco, alcohol, and marijuana through question and answer

sessions and group activities. Two of the sessions are given in the year following the first exposure as reinforcement.

- Safe School Zones (universal; no rigor rating)—Social skill development, healthy beliefs and clear standards, and opportunities for involvement with recognition. The DEFY program is designed to provide leadership skills training for youth, while the Safe Streets Campaign promotes community leadership through education programs for neighborhood residents, as well as facilitating formation of a community coalition against drug use.

Successes

Fall and spring eight-week cycles of FAST were provided at Gault and Keithley in Year 1. FAST providers reported that some parents faced issues in which their children needed help and got appropriate referrals because of their participation in FAST. Some FAST parents and children have become more connected to the schools, and are accessing support systems there. Several FAST parents felt that the program had definitely improved communication with their children; and a small number of FAST children made immediate improvements in their school behavior and performance.

FAST providers started recruiting for FAST Year 2 in May 2000, and all SIG program providers set up informational booths at fall sixth grade orientations to recruit students and parents for their programs. FAST participation is expected to be higher for Year 2 than it was in Year 1, and will be offered for nine weeks, rather than eight, to more closely comply with the ten-week FAST middle school model.

In addition to FAST, all sixth grade students at both schools received the Project ALERT curriculum, while Media Literacy and DEFY were offered to students of all grades at both schools on site after school. Ideally, all SIG providers at each school, work together to refer students needing services to each other's programs. This was a challenge for the Safe School Zones Specialist at Keithley this year. For Year 2, she will be responsible for the Safe School Zones at both schools. She plans to attend all sixth grade teaching team meetings, and will be included in the FAST programs at both schools. Some coalition members did not attend meetings regularly during Year 1, which prevented the coalition from tackling new projects. It is hoped that increased contact between providers will bring participating agencies to the table more consistently. A striking strength of this coalition is that each meeting participant is given an opportunity to speak out on whatever topic is important for them, and they can be sure that their input will be met with careful consideration and support from the group.

Crossroads Treatment Center, Pierce County Baseline Community-Level Evaluation

Introduction

The Washington State Incentive Grant

Crossroads Treatment Center in Pierce County is one of eighteen Washington State Incentive Grant community grantees. Eighty-five percent of State Incentive Grant (SIG) funds are allocated to communities to prevent the use, misuse, and abuse, of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drugs by Washington State youth. The grant consists of a three year, \$8.9 million award from the federal Center for Substance Abuse Prevention to Washington State through a cooperative agreement with Governor Gary Locke's office. State agencies participating in the State Incentive Grant (SIG) have goals of coordinating resources and reducing duplication of effort. Communities will reduce key risk factors and promote protective factors in their efforts to reduce youth substance use, misuse, and abuse. Specific goals and objectives for state agencies and communities are stated in the *Washington State Incentive Grant Substance Abuse Plan*, pages 4 and 5, published in March 1999, by the Governor's Substance Abuse Prevention Advisory Committee. Appendix A contains a detailed list of those objectives. Here is a summary of them:

Goals:

1. Prevent alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drug use, misuse, and abuse by the state's youth.
2. Make the community-level system more effective.

Objectives:

1. Establish local prevention partnerships.
2. Use a risk and protective factor framework for the community prevention plan.
3. Participate in joint community risk and protective factor and resource assessment.
4. Select and implement effective prevention actions.
5. Use common reporting tools.

The SIG evaluation, of which this report is a part of, is a research evaluation intended to provide feedback to state agencies and communities on their progress toward the goals and objectives stated in the *Washington State Incentive Grant Substance Abuse Plan*. Interim reports are provided as an integral part of that feedback. Research methods are described in Appendix B.

This document is a baseline community-level evaluation report, examining the history of the area, relevant social indicators, and details about program implementation. Reports are provided as feedback on The United Community Coalition of Pierce County's efforts to date and as a record of those efforts for state and federal funding agencies. Future reports will include discussions of program effectiveness, community partnerships and plans for continued funding beyond SIG.

United Communities Coalition of Pierce County

The United Communities Coalition of Pierce County formed around the idea of sharing resources, rather than dividing them, to provide substance abuse prevention services in a more comprehensive manner than had been attempted before, taking advantage of the opportunity presented by the State Incentive Grant. The coalition chose to concentrate its efforts on two middle schools in the county, Gault Middle School, of the Tacoma Public Schools, and Keithley Middle School, in the Franklin-Pierce School District. The United Communities of Pierce County SIG project is unique in that it is the only SIG grantee in Washington State with a chemical dependency treatment center as the lead agency. This is a natural outgrowth of Crossroads Treatment Center's interaction with other community organizations in envisioning a proactive, global approach to substance abuse prevention, intervention, and treatment. Crossroads contracts with seven school districts in Pierce and King counties to provide prevention and intervention services, with the exception of Tacoma Public Schools, which contracts with the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department. The United Communities Coalition of Pierce County represents some new partnering of agencies that have been collaborating with other agencies in various roles. This is the first time that all of these agencies have worked together on a single project:

- Child & Parent Resources (CAPR), a now defunct private non-profit agency, until recently provided counseling and referral services for families, and provided parent education classes throughout the county in connection with the Family Support Centers.¹ The director of the agency was its coalition representative.
- Crossroads Treatment Center is a chemical dependency treatment agency, with treatment centers in Gig Harbor, Tacoma, and Parkland-Spanaway at which it provides outpatient treatment for youth and family, as well as adults. Crossroads provides prevention and intervention for many area school districts. Coalition members include the agency director and two FAST Site Coordinators.

¹ Twelve Family Support Centers in Pierce County are funded through Pierce County Human Services, the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD), and Puget Sound Educational Service District #121. "Families with young children who reside in neighborhoods of Tacoma and Pierce County, where a prevalence of high-risk behaviors have been noted, are served by partnerships of local schools, the Educational Service District (Readiness to Learn), service agencies, health care providers and Health Department staff" TPCHD Web Site, <http://www.healthdept.co.pierce.wa.us/family/services.html>, accessed March 2000.

- Franklin-Pierce School District contracts with Crossroads for Intervention Specialists, who provide prevention and intervention services as part of the Student Assistance program. Coalition members include the Student Assistance Coordinator and the principal of Keithley Middle School.
- Pierce County Human Services (PCHS), through its Chemical Dependency Treatment and Prevention division funds prevention programs for eleven agencies, Crossroads Treatment Center, Safe Streets Campaign, and Parent Party Patrol among them, as well as twenty-one schools in the county. This agency's coalition member is the Chemical Dependency Prevention Specialist.
- Safe Streets Campaign is a non-profit organization dedicated to community mobilization against substance abuse and violence through block organization, youth mobilization, Safe School Zones, and participation in the City of Tacoma's Operation Weed and Seed. Coalition members include the Assistant Director of the agency and two Safe School Zone Specialists.
- Tacoma Public Schools provides chemical dependency intervention and tobacco intervention at its middle and high schools, and ATOD prevention through its Student Assistance program. Coalition members include the Student Assistance Coordinator, a school counselor, and the principal of Gault Middle School.
- Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) collaborates with local schools, Puget Sound Educational Service District #121, service agencies, and health care providers to provide twelve Family Support Centers in Pierce County, including the areas covered by this grant. TPCHD has a strong emphasis on prevention of tobacco, alcohol, and violence, and coordinates the Tobacco Advisory Board, which includes twenty-two agencies in the county. Coalition members include the Prevention Coordinator and the Media Literacy provider.

The United Communities Coalition of Pierce County Philosophy

Finding global solutions to community problems is a common goal of the coalition member agencies. While these agencies had not all worked together on a single project before this time, their actions in Pierce County communities reflect a belief that to help children they must also help parents meet their challenges, and help families to eliminate problems in their communities. The coalition chose as its SIG project to use a comprehensive approach to prevention, believing that this will yield more positive long-term outcomes than providing lower dosages of unconnected prevention services. The goal of the United Communities Coalition of Pierce County is to work together to wrap communities at two schools with a multi-directional approach to substance abuse prevention.

At the heart of this plan is parent education to help empower parents to deal constructively with their children, to be actively involved in their children's schools, and to take responsibility for the safety of their communities. To this end, Pierce County SIG project targets two middle schools to receive substance

abuse prevention services under SIG: Gault Middle School in Tacoma's urban eastside and Keithley Middle School in suburban Parkland.

The Communities

Of Washington's cities, Tacoma, with a population of 187,200, is second in size only to Seattle, some thirty miles to the north. Tacoma is located in Pierce County. Of Pierce County's 700,000 inhabitants, 383,434 live in cities and towns, while another 316,566 live in unincorporated parts of the county, ranging from heavily populated areas, such as the Parkland-Spanaway area, to very rural areas (Office of Financial Management, 1999).

Tacoma has been undergoing some major downtown renewal in the last several years, including remodeling historic Union Station to become the new Pierce County Courthouse, the building of the adjacent Washington State History Museum, and the opening of a new Tacoma branch of the University of Washington downtown. In addition to this, the Tacoma Art Museum is building a new facility, scheduled for completion in 2002, and that same year, the Museum of Glass plans its opening. Tacoma is home to world famous glass artist, Dale Chihuly, who will be collaborating with architect Arthur Andersson to build the Chihuly Bridge of Glass, which will connect the Museum of Glass to the Washington State History Museum across the Thea Foss Waterway.

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 of Pierce County SIG project. Both schools' neighborhoods experience high rates of poverty, more than 75% of Gault students and 55% of Keithley students are eligible for free and reduced lunch, compared to the county rate of 34%, and a state rate of 31% (Becker, 1999).² Gault is located in the racially and culturally diverse urban Eastside neighborhood of Tacoma, with a nearly 57% minority student body. Keithley Middle School, with a 34% minority student body, is located in south Pierce County, in a culturally and economically diverse, densely populated, suburban neighborhood of unincorporated Parkland.

The Eastside neighborhood of Tacoma is an old, well-established neighborhood, with large numbers of low-income residents. Although the area has many stable, long-term residents, a large number of more transient residents move through the area, who are thought to be responsible for many of the area's problems. Respondents noted that this neighborhood has had severe problems with gang activity and drug sales.

The Hilltop area, of which Eastside is one end, is noted as a site of violent criminal activities. Hilltop has been designated as an Operation Weed and Seed site, which is a cooperative effort of the United States Department of Justice, the

² Food stamp rates for Gault and Keithley are from the United Communities Coalition grant proposal (Crossroads Treatment Center, 1999).

State of Washington and the City of Tacoma through the office of the Safe Streets Campaign to reduce crime and drug trafficking.

We have selected for our target the area of Central Tacoma known as the Hilltop. It is our goal to restore neighborhoods in these areas by developing broad economic and social opportunities in cooperation with Federal, State and Local agencies, as well as private organizations and community groups (Safe Streets Campaign, <http://www.safest.org/weedseed.html>).

The Franklin-Pierce School District serves the outlying areas of south and east Pierce County, including Parkland. Efforts to incorporate the Parkland-Spanaway area, to increase cohesiveness and services, have been unsuccessful so far. Respondents noted that this area is in transition from a rural area to a more urban area. With military bases nearby, McChord Airforce Base and Fort Lewis, and the Army National Guard's Camp Murray, Parkland has a large number of military families, many of whom are short-term residents. Parkland is also home to Pacific Lutheran University (PLU), which is located just a few blocks away from Keithley Middle School. The proximity of the college is a constant source of tension in the Keithley neighborhood. Party behavior of college students contributes to litter in the neighborhood, in addition to being blamed by residents for increases in alcohol and other substance abuse among area youth.

Due in part to the large number of methamphetamine labs in south Pierce County and north Thurston County, along the I-5 corridor in Washington State, this area has been federally designated as a Northwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA), one of only 31 areas in the United States to be classified in this manner.

To qualify as a HIDTA site, an area must: be a major center of illegal drug production, manufacturing, importation, or distribution; have state and local law enforcement agencies already engaged; have a harmful impact on other areas of the country; and require a significant increase in federal resources (Office of National Drug Control Policy, 2000).³

In addition to Gault and Keithley middle schools being chosen on the basis of need, the qualities of the principals of the two schools played a role in their selection as SIG sites. Charlotte Carr is well known in the Tacoma School District for her competence, energy, and enthusiasm, and was chosen by the school district to head the Gault Magnet Middle School of Engineering Systems project, which has made Gault Tacoma's magnet school for math and science. Thomas O'Keefe, with a similar reputation for excellence in the Franklin-Pierce School District, recently applied for and received a Gear Up (Gaining Early

³ The High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas program (HIDTA) was authorized by the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 and is administered by the Office of National Drug Control Policy, <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/enforce/hidta/overview.html>, accessed January 2000.

Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) grant for Keithley Middle School, which is designed to prepare middle school students for college.⁴

During the formative stages of application for the State Incentive Grant, coalition members discussed which schools would be the most appropriate targets for the kind of intensive preventative actions that they were planning, and the consensus was that Gault and Keithley, with their highly capable and highly supportive principals and vice principals, would be the two schools most willing and able to help successfully implement the SIG project programs.

Community Attitudes toward Schools

Several respondents noted that parents, who have had unpleasant experiences in school themselves, are reluctant to enter a school. This was cited as a contributing factor to lack of involvement in a PTA at either Gault or Keithley. “Some of those parents had negative experiences and weren’t successful in education, so to go back into a building where their kid is, and try to be involved, where you’re not really feeling like you can give anything is really difficult. You’re not going to want to go in that building regardless. It just brings back too many bad memories...”

Respondents noted that there are some core parents and non-parents at each of the two schools who are highly supportive of schools, but for the majority, being involved in school is difficult, and perhaps more so at the middle school level than at the elementary level. Respondents connected with Gault reported that, while there is a very active group associated with the nearby McKinley Elementary School, that there is less parent involvement at Gault. Respondents who spoke of the Parkland-Spanaway area noted that these communities are without any center, except for the schools, so that the area schools, including Keithley become the social hub of the neighborhood.

Existing Prevention Services

Prior to SIG, various partnerships were operating to bring substance abuse prevention services to children in the Tacoma and Franklin-Pierce schools.

Gault Middle School

- Boys and Girls Clubs of Pierce County, Salishan Branch, provides after school activities, athletics, and late night activities for children in grades six through twelve.
- Tacoma Public Schools Student Assistance Intervention Specialists provide prevention and intervention services for ATOD one day a week, including assessment and referrals for treatment.

⁴ “The mission of GEAR UP is to significantly increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education,” Gear Up web site, <http://www.ed.gov/gearup/>, accessed March 2000.

- The school counselor provides counseling and referrals.
- School prevention team, supported by PCHS, Tacoma Public Schools, and TPCHD. These three agencies, fund and mentor youth prevention teams in area high schools and middle schools to provide prevention education at their schools.
- Safe Streets provides Safe School Zones, which includes the Drug Education for Youth (DEFY) program at six Tacoma schools, including Gault Middle School. The Safe Streets Campaign also works to mobilize the Gault community to work together to prevent drug use and violence in their neighborhoods, teaching such skills as how to recognize houses being used for drug sales or manufacture.

Keithley Middle School

- Crossroads Treatment Center contracts with the Franklin-Pierce School District to supply the Intervention Specialist, who provides prevention and intervention services for ATOD one day a week, including assessment and referrals for treatment.
- School counselor provides counseling and referrals.
- The Gear Up grant, by emphasizing a long-term academic and career goals, may have some impact on ATOD use at Keithley, based on outcomes of similar programs, which have decreased behavioral problems and increased academic achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2000).
- Sprinker Recreation Center offers softball fields and tennis courts and a variety of athletic classes, including ice skating and hockey in the ice skating rink, as well as classes in arts and crafts and dance, for moderate fees.

Parenting classes for parents of young children were offered at Family Support Centers in the Eastside neighborhood and in Parkland by CAPR, with an ATOD prevention education component provided by Crossroads. CAPR also provided referrals for mental health and other human services.

Crossroads Treatment Center's Intervention Specialists are on call to elementary schools in the Franklin-Pierce School District, and have provided some violence prevention services at the elementary level.

Pierce County Human Services funds youth teams in area high schools and middle schools to provide prevention education at their schools, and organizes the annual Teen Prevention Conference, in which students share their ATOD prevention knowledge and brainstorm to create a prevention plan that they will implement in their schools.

Age-appropriate substance abuse treatment services for children in the sixth and seventh grades has been missing, which was of particular concern with 22% of Gault 6th graders reporting prior drug use, and 40% reporting prior use of

alcohol⁵; and Keithley students averaging 27 ATOD (Alcohol, Tobacco, and other drug) assessments per year in the two-year period from 1997-1999, with 29 diagnoses or referrals for treatment in that time.⁶ No substance abuse treatment centers were present for teens, nor was local funding available for treatment. 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.

Most respondents feel that there is a lack of places where youth can hang out, particularly in Parkland, which is in the process of starting up a Boys and Girls Club. Some respondents felt that not having enough to do was more a function of being a teenager, than a measure of the environment. Several respondents expressed concern over the high numbers of casinos in close proximity to both neighborhoods and the lifestyle choices that these businesses represent in terms of risky behaviors including gambling, smoking tobacco, and consuming alcohol. The only bowling alley in Parkland-Spanaway is also a casino, so families who wish to bowl must do so in the same facility where adults are smoking, drinking, and gambling.

State Incentive Grant Activities

David Hawkins, Richard Catalano, and others at the University of Washington developed a research framework about community, school, family, peer, and individual influences that either increase the likelihood that a child will someday abuse substances or that help lessen the impact of those risks. Influences that increase the likelihood of substance abuse are known as risk factors; those that lessen the impact of risk factors are known as protective factors.

The United Communities Coalition identified the following risk factors as priorities:

- Favorable attitudes toward drug use
- Early first use, low commitment to school
- Low school and neighborhood attachment
- Community disorganization

The prevention programs chosen are designed to strengthen protective factors. The protective factors addressed by each program are listed in italics after the title of each program listed below. Programs are categorized by a rigor scale, created by the federal Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. Rigor is the extent to which the program has been shown, through scientific research methods, to be effective in different locales and with multiple populations. The highest rating is rigor 5, the lowest, rigor 1.

⁵ Student report of drug use from 1998 Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behaviors (WSSAHB). 1998 was the first year in several years that the Tacoma Public Schools participated in the WSSAHB. Keithley participated for the first time in the fall of 1999.

⁶ Keithley students had not participated in the WSSAHB prior to fall 1999.

- Families and Schools Together (FAST) (selective strategy; rigor 5)— Addresses protective factors *school and family bonding* and *healthy beliefs and clear standards*.

Provided by Crossroads Treatment Center, FAST is a family education curriculum designed to support the development of relationships among parents, schools, and the community to enhance children's academic and social performance. FAST meetings are structured around social activities for parents and families. In this eight-week program, families gather together for a family meal and a variety of social activities, which include music, drawing, family games, children's sports, a parent group, and a chance for parents to interact with each other. It is hoped that, after participating in FAST, students will experience fewer social or behavioral difficulties, which may also promote children's academic performance, and that the FAST parents will have become friends and will offer social support for one another over time (McDonald, L, 2000)⁷.

Since school staff are included in the FAST team, the program is expected to improve relationships between families and schools, After the eight weeks are over, it is hoped that families will continue to meet in the self-directed two-year follow up program, FASTWorks.

- Project ALERT (Adolescent Learning Experiences in Resistance Training) (universal strategy; rigor 5)— Addresses protective factors *healthy beliefs and clear standards* and *social skills*.

All sixth grade students at Gault and Keithley receive nine fifty-minute sessions of Project Alert, including video instruction, question and answer sessions, and group activities. Two more sessions are given in the year following the first exposure as reinforcement. Project ALERT, provided by the FAST Site Coordinators, is designed to enable students to develop reasons not to use drugs, identify pressures to use them, counter pro-drug messages, learn how to say no to external and internal pressures, understand that most people do not use drugs, and recognize the benefits of resistance (Western Regional Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies (WestCAPT), 1999).

- Media Literacy (selective strategy; rigor 3)— Addresses protective factors *social skills, opportunity for involvement, recognition, and healthy beliefs and clear standards*.

Media Literacy, provided by the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, is a program designed to help students recognize how media messages may affect them, and teaches students to manipulate media themselves, producing their own video advertisements with prevention messages to be shown in their communities. Students learn to deconstruct media messages about alcohol and tobacco, and make their own video advertisements against alcohol and

⁷ See FAST Goals, Appendix C.

tobacco use for use in their community and schools.

- Safe School Zones (universal strategy; no rigor rating)⁸— Addresses protective factors *social skill development, healthy beliefs and clear standards, and opportunities for involvement with recognition.*

The DEFY (Drug Education for Youth) program, part of Safe School Zones, was designed by the U.S. Navy to provide leadership skills training and self-esteem building for youth, and includes group discussions around prevention and other safety issues. The Safe Streets Campaign promotes community leadership through education programs for neighborhood residents, as well as facilitating formation of a community coalition against drug use.

In addition to SIG funding and the agencies listed above, the following partners provide additional funding, facilities, and services: the Commission on Children, Youth, and Families, Franklin-Pierce School District and Tacoma Public Schools, in kind, space, referrals, and funding; Pierce County Human Services, funding; Safe Streets Campaign, in kind, community mobilization, placing youth generated advertising in communities; Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, funding.

Research-based programming is relatively new to most of the United Communities Coalition of Pierce County member agencies. While there has been a shift taking place over the last several years to using risk and protective factors to plan substance abuse prevention actions, and pre- and post-testing has become an accepted component of many prevention programs, the SIG project represents the largest coordinated effort at providing research-based programming in the Pierce County's history.

SIG Programs Year 1

FAST – Families and Schools Together

In its first year, the United Communities of Pierce County/Crossroads State Incentive Grant project provided two cycles of the FAST curriculum at both Gault Middle School and Keithley Middle School.

Challenges

Two challenges faced by the United Communities Coalition of Pierce County in implementing their SIG proposal were due to a limited amount of information available about the FAST program. The first challenge was meeting the unexpectedly high training costs for FAST. As there were no FAST trainers available in Washington State, FAST trainers had to be flown in from Wisconsin, fed, and housed at a cost of \$7500.00. Crossroads Treatment Center applied for funding from the Commission on Children, Youth, and Families and received a grant for \$3000.00, while the remaining training costs came out of Crossroads'

⁸ While Safe School Zones at Keithley is funded by the State Incentive Grant, Gault's program is funded through another source; it is, however, included in the coalition's planning and coordination efforts.

budget. Had the coalition known that another SIG site had also chosen to use FAST, the two sites could have coordinated a single training and shared training costs.

Due to the coalition's understanding of the FAST program as an eight-week program (see description above), funding was planned for a program of that length. After receipt of SIG funding for Year 1, the United Communities Coalition learned that the eight-week FAST model is for use at the elementary level, while the middle school program is ten weeks long. As it was too late to acquire more funding for this period, the coalition decided to provide an eight-week FAST program for Year 1.

The choice of the Keithley Intervention Specialist as the Drug and Alcohol Partner for their FAST program presented another challenge. Since this specialist is a school district employee, although employed through a contract with Crossroads Treatment Center, this was in conflict with the FAST requirement that this partner be from an outside agency. The coalition requested and received permission from Lynn McDonald, creator of FAST, to retain the Intervention Specialist as their FAST Drug and Alcohol Partner, based on the rapport that she already had with the Keithley community.

Two major challenges faced the FAST Site Coordinators in recruiting and retaining families for the FAST program: program length and transportation. The Site Coordinators found that it is difficult for families, especially when many are single-parent families and many have organizational difficulties, to commit to come to a program every week for eight weeks. They felt that the meals provided by FAST were a large factor in helping families meet their commitment, and that perhaps, next time, a larger portion of the FAST gift allowance would be used for a completion gift, as increased incentive for families to stay with the program. Transportation still presents a big challenge to many low-income families.

Minor challenges have included family responses to the FAST song and the FAST game. For Keithley, the FAST song felt inappropriate, so the school counselor put the FAST song lyrics to new music, which she felt would be more palatable to her youth and their families. At both schools, there was some complaint that the FAST game becomes monotonous when played week after week. While other activities may not be substituted for this game, designed by Lynn McDonald, new questions may be substituted for the original questions in the game. The Pierce County FAST Site Coordinators plan to take advantage of this opportunity to create some variation in the game, without violating its structure or intent.

Several coalition members suggested adding some ropes challenge activities to the FAST program, but, since adding to or deleting from the FAST curriculum has been prohibited by the program's creator, the coalition plans to explore other avenues to provide this activity to the FAST students and their families.

FAST Successes

The United Communities Coalition of Pierce County provided two eight-week cycles of FAST at both Gault and Keithley middle schools in Year 1. FAST providers reported that some parents who had never before faced issues in which their children needed help began to do so, during their FAST participation, and through contact with the school counselors and FAST Mental Health Partner were able to get appropriate referrals. FAST Site Coordinators noted that some FAST families have become more connected to the schools, and are beginning to access school support systems. Several FAST parents reported on post-program surveys that the program had definitely improved communication with their children. Some FAST children made immediate improvements in their school behavior and performance.

FAST providers started recruiting for FAST Year 2 in May 2000, and all SIG program providers set up informational booths at fall sixth-grade orientations to recruit students and parents for their programs. FAST participation is expected to be higher for Year 2 than it was in Year 1, and the program will be lengthened to nine weeks to more closely fit the original middle school model.

Project ALERT, Media Literacy, and DEFY

In addition to FAST, all sixth grade students at both schools received the Project ALERT curriculum, while Media Literacy and DEFY were offered to interested students of all grades at both schools on site after school.

While attendance varied for DEFY, the Safe School Zones Specialists reported that ten students attended the Gault DEFY program regularly, and Keithley's DEFY attendance averaged eight students. Media Literacy served 53 students in Year 1, blank at Gault and blank at Keithley. The Safe School Zones Specialist for Gault reported that four Media Literacy students joined DEFY for the second half of the school year.

Ideally, all SIG providers, at each school, work together to refer students needing services to each other's programs. This was a challenge for the Safe School Zones Specialist at Keithley this year. For Year 2, she will be responsible for the Safe School Zones at both schools. She plans to attend all sixth-grade teaching team meetings, and will be included in the FAST and Media Literacy programs at both schools.

Conclusions

Some coalition members did not attend meetings regularly during Year 1, which may have compounded the difficulties that providers experienced setting up regular channels of communication with each other. In one case, the coalition meeting attendance issue appears have discouraged the coalition from tackling new projects. A funding opportunity for a related prevention project was mentioned in one meeting, but one coalition member felt that, with some

members not participating regularly, the coalition would not have the capacity to take on additional projects. It appears that there has been some discussion of this issue, and it is hoped that, with the increased contact between providers planned for Year 2, this will bring all agencies to the table consistently.

A striking strength of this coalition is the egalitarian nature of its meetings. At each meeting, all participants are given the opportunity to speak out on whatever topic is important to them. The group carefully considers each participant's input, and a member with a problem is often presented with several options for action, or may receive offers of help from other members. This dynamic, open-ended approach to meetings allows the group to address problems as they arise, whether or not they have been planned for in the agenda.

There are other expectations associated with SIG, in addition to carrying out substance abuse prevention services. These involve changes in the system by which local prevention services are planned, delivered, and evaluated. The United Communities Coalition of Pierce County has already begun a major change to this system by collaborating to plan and implement a unified approach to substance abuse prevention at Gault and Keithley middle schools. It is the goal of this coalition to demonstrate that providing integrated substance abuse prevention actions will significantly strengthen children's chances of succeeding in school and resisting destructive behaviors. An additional benefit of this approach is bringing parent education and contact with community social services providers to families in a comfortable and accessible format at their neighborhood schools through the FAST program. Working together, these agencies are utilizing the FAST program as a starting point for parents to get help in meeting the challenges that they and their children face.

As a way of measuring progress toward the goals for communities of the *Washington State Incentive Grant Substance Abuse Prevention Plan*, grantees are expected to participate in the SIG community-level evaluation. This evaluation has four components:

- **Process evaluation**, which examines organizational capacity and prevention planning.
- **Program implementation fidelity**, what was actually done and how it compares to what was planned.
- **Program effectiveness**: how effective the program was, measured by participant pre- and post-tests.
- **Long-term community-wide changes in substance abuse prevalence and risk and protective factors**, which are assumed to result from changes in community organization and planning and the provision of prevention program services to targeted populations, measured by the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior (WSSAHB). For long-term outcomes, the WSSAHB will be administered to sixth, eighth, tenth, and twelfth, graders at Gault Middle School, Keithley Middle School, and their respective high schools every two years through 2006.

For the United Communities Coalition of Pierce County, seven items will be important during Year Two:

1. Continued implementation of prevention programs.
2. Continued participation in program effectiveness monitoring (Everest database and other agreed upon measurement methods when the Everest database is inappropriate for use with a particular program).
3. Participation in program implementation fidelity measures.
4. Continued development of a system for community-wide prevention planning, delivery, and evaluation.
5. Continued participation in process evaluation, consisting of interviews and document review.
6. Ensuring Gault Middle School and Keithley Middle School participation in the Autumn 2000 administration of the Washington State Adolescent Health Behavior Survey (WSSAHB).
7. Developing specific plans to track progress toward and achieve anticipated immediate changes from the Community-Based Prevention Action Plan Implementation Matrix (column 7) and the community-level goals from the *Washington State Incentive Grant Substance Abuse Plan* (see Appendix A).

Appendix A:

Community-Level Goals and Objectives⁹

Goal:

Communities selected to receive State Incentive Grant funds will work to prevent alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drug use, misuse, and abuse by the state's youth in these communities. They will develop and implement prevention plans which will foster changes in the prevention system at the community level to make the system more effective.

Objectives:

1. To *establish partnerships* which include existing agencies and organizations, and families, youth, school, and workplaces to collaborate at the local level to prevent alcohol tobacco, marijuana, and other drug use, misuse, and abuse by youth.
2. To *use a risk and protective factor framework* to develop a community prevention action plan which reduces factors which put youth at risk for alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drug abuse and increase factors which protect or buffer youth from these risks.
3. To *participate in joint community risk and protective factor and resource assessment* by collecting, assessing, and prioritizing community-level information for: a) youth alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drug use, misuse, and abuse; b) risk and protective factor indicators; and c) existing resources and service gaps.
4. To *select and implement effective prevention actions* that address priority risk and protective factors in the community by filling identified gaps in resources.
5. To *use common reporting tools* which provide information on what works and what does not work to reduce youth alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drug use, misuse, and abuse.

⁹ Governor's Substance Abuse Prevention Advisory Committee. 1999. *Washington State Incentive Grant Substance Abuse Prevention Plan*. Olympia, WA: Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, State Incentive Grant Project.

Appendix B: Methods

Information Sources

Interviews

Audiotaped interviews were conducted with lead agency contacts, as well as prevention service providers and community members. Interviewees were informed at the beginning of each interview that the audiotapes were confidential, were for the purpose of ensuring accuracy, and would be erased as soon as notes were taken from them. Questions were based on an interview guide, as well as related topics that arose during the interviews. Interview guides were modified after initial site visits were completed based on the evaluation team's ability to obtain the desired information from the questions asked, and a shift in the evaluation focus toward more background history for this initial baseline report. Interview responses were compared and tallied to identify majority and minority opinions.

Document Review

- a. Crossroads Treatment Center/United Communities Coalition of Pierce County Approved State Incentive Grant Community Matrices (1999): Prevention programs intended to address desired outcomes and associated risk and protective factors are described in detail in matrices created by the Crossroads Treatment Center, as lead agency, and the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA) State Incentive Grant administrative staff. These matrices were used to guide inquiry into the process of achieving anticipated local outcomes.
- b. Crossroads Treatment Center/United Communities Coalition of Pierce County State Incentive Grant Application, 1999.
- c. Becker, L., et al (1999): *1999 County Profile on Risk and Protection for Substance Abuse Prevention Planning in Pierce County*, DSHS Publication # 4.33-14, Department of Social and Health Services, Research and Data Analysis Division for the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse.
- d. Boys and Girls Clubs of Pierce County (2000): Web site, <http://www.bg-clubs.com/>.
- e. De Richie, Cindi (2000): *FAST 1999-2000, Keithley Success Stories*. Crossroads Treatment Center, Tacoma.
- f. Governor's Substance Abuse Prevention Advisory Committee (1999): *Washington State Incentive Grant Substance Abuse Prevention Plan*.
- g. Johnson-Conley, C., Parker, L. (1996): *Coventry Court Community Assessment: Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, Summer 1996*.
- h. Keithley Middle School (2000), annual report.

- i. McDonald, L. (2000): *Fast Tour*, FAST web site: <http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/fast/tour/index.html>
- j. McDonald, L. (1999): *Families and Schools Together (FAST): 1988-1998, Ten Years of Evaluation*, Wisconsin Center for Education Research, University of Wisconsin—Madison, Madison, Wisconsin.
- k. McDonald, L., et al (1999): *Evaluation Report for Communities in Schools of Crossroads Treatment Center, Tacoma, Washington, Gault Magnet School*.
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- m. Ramirez, R. (2000): *Safe School Zones Report, Gault Middle School*. Safe Streets Campaign, Tacoma.
- n. RAND (Research and Development) (1998): *Helping Adolescents Resist Drugs: Project ALERT*, <http://www.rand.org/publications/RB/RB4518/>.
- o. Tacoma Public Schools (2000): *Gault Middle School, 1999-2000 School Performance Report*, <http://www.tacoma.k12.wa.us/perf/gault.pdf>.
- p. Tanglewood Research, Prevention Knowledge Base *Longitudinal Test of Project ALERT*, <http://www.tanglewood.net/services/knowledgebase/24.htm>.
- q. Thoman, E. (accessed 7/00): *Skills and Strategies for Media Education*, Center for Media Literacy, <http://www.medialit.org/ReadingRoom/keyarticles/skillsandstrat.htm>.
- r. U.S. West (1999). *Tacoma/Pierce County White and Yellow Pages*. Local and area phone books were consulted for listings of social service agencies. These listings were checked for bilingual content.
- s. Western Regional Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies (1999). *Best Practices and Promising Practices*, Reno, Nevada, University of Nevada, Reno.
- t. Washington Employment Security Department (2000): *Washington State Labor Market Information, Labor Market Information by Area, Selected Economic Data*, <http://www.wa.gov/esd/lmea/labrmrkt/sed/piersed.htm>.
- u. Washington State Office of Financial Management (1999) *State of Washington 1999 Data Book*. Also available online at: <http://www.ofm.wa.gov/databook/index.htm>.

Meeting Observations

- a. United Communities Coalition of Pierce County meetings on December 13, 1999, March 13, 2000, and June 12, 2000.
- b. Pierce County Human Services, Prevention Team Youth Conference, December 7, 1999.
- c. Safe Streets Ropes Facilitator Training, March 28-30, 2000.

Survey

Sub-recipient Checklist: COSMOS Corporation designed the Subrecipient Checklist under contract with the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention to conduct a cross-site evaluation. It is intended to document prevention activities semi-annually. Questions are asked about the subrecipient's most important prevention program or actions; more than one form can be completed if the subrecipient wishes to describe other programs. The "most important" prevention program is defined as that which is most likely to produce measurable outcomes.

Accessing Informants

- a. Key Informants: Initial informants were identified through the Aberdeen School District SIG proposal.
- b. Snowball Sampling Strategy: Key informants were asked for names of community members who could provide insight into Pierce County's history of challenges, successes, and substance abuse prevention services.

Analysis

This report is the first step in a case study. Data analysis occurs throughout the research process in a case study, from the process of formulating the topic through the write-up. During and after interviews, information gathered is weighed in light of previous information. Questions and topics are modified as indicated by the new information. Data verification occurs through cross checking information from informants with that from other informants, documents, observation, and the researcher's journal entries.

Data analysis in a case study occurs by creating categories of information, broad at first, then becoming more specific. As familiarity with the study topic occurs, categories are related to one another and to theory. CSAP and COSMOS Corporation created broad data categories, around which interview questions and inquiry topics were framed. Data were gathered in the process of this evaluation with the intent of answering specific questions about system change in planning, providing, and evaluating prevention services for youth in local communities. Additional categories were added, as it became apparent that they were of importance to the SIG community grantees.

Appendix C:

Families and Schools Together (FAST) Program Goals¹⁰

Families and Schools Together (FAST) Program Goals*

Enhance family functioning

1. Strengthen the parent-child relationships in specific focused ways.
2. Empower the parents to help them become the primary prevention agents for their own children.

Prevent the target child from experiencing school failure.

1. Improve the child's behavior and performance in school, both short-term and long-term.
2. Empower the parents in their role as partners in the educational process.
3. Increase child and family's feelings of affiliation toward their school.

Prevent substance abuse by the child and family.

1. Increase the family's knowledge and awareness of substance abuse, and the impact of substance abuse upon child development.
2. Link the family to appropriate assessment and treatment services, as needed.

Reduce the stress that parents and their children experience from daily life situations.

1. Develop an ongoing support group for parents of at-risk children.
2. Link the family to appropriate community resources and services, as needed.
3. Build the resilience and social networks of each family member

¹⁰ McDonald, Lynn. 1999. *Families and Schools Together (FAST): 1988-1998, Ten Years of Evaluation*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Center for Education Research, University of Wisconsin—Madison.



**Research and Data Analysis
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