



Community

Partnerships between Catholic Health Care Organizations, Catholic Charities, and Other Groups

Like other health care organizations in the United States, Catholic health care facilities are developing new relationships with a wide array of partners to extend their ministry and to improve efficiency, coordination, and quality of care.

In forming these partnerships, Catholic-sponsored organizations may have an advantage over others. Through Catholic Charities and other social service programs, the Catholic Church in the United States is the largest provider of human services. In addition, the church's network of almost 20,000 parishes enables health care organizations to reach into communities where little infrastructure exists. The current movement toward integration of community-based health and social services creates opportunities for church-sponsored organizations to work together as never before.

Health Progress publishes an ongoing series of case studies of such partnerships, hoping they might serve as models for those creating integrated systems of care. These case studies of partnerships between Catholic health care organizations, Catholic Charities agencies, and other groups were prepared by the Catholic Health Association as part of New Covenant, an initiative designed to promote collaborative efforts of the Catholic health ministry at the national and regional levels.

Here is another case study. *Health Progress* will present others in future issues.

If your health care organization is involved in a similar collaboration, we would like to know about it. Please contact Julie Trocchio by phone at 202-296-3993 or by e-mail at jtrocch@chausa.org.

Networks

Youth Recreation and Self-Esteem Enhancement Initiative

Little Falls, MN

Organizational Structure

The initiative is cosponsored by St. Gabriel's Hospital and Little Falls Community Services, an agency cosponsored by Little Falls' municipal government and its school district.

Goals of Affiliation

The program's goal is to give local youth a positive alternative to delinquency and "vegetating in front of the TV."

The Project

Little Falls is a rural community with a population of some 7,300. In the mid-1990s, St. Gabriel's, the county's only hospital, conducted a community health needs assessment whose results showed that area residents considered the lack of positive activities for children to be one of the area's top health problems. St. Gabriel's leaders learned that money to help pay for such activities might be available from the new Mission and Ministry Fund created by the hospital's parent system, Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI), Denver.

In response to a proposal from the hospital and Little Falls Community Services, CHI awarded the youth initiative a three-year, \$79,000 grant.

Beginning in 1997, the initiative sponsored athletic events and arts and crafts activities for the community's elementary school pupils. The school district and the town's two Catholic schools provide the gym space and playing fields. Before each practice session or game, coaches lead a brief discussion of one of six values-based topics: good sportsmanship, respect, goal setting, attitude, responsibility, self-image, and motivation.

About 2,000 children currently participate in the program, and 140 parents are involved as volunteer coaches.

According to statistics kept by the county sheriff's department, major youth crime and general juvenile delinquency have dropped significantly over the years since the initiative began.

Governance Structure

Little Falls Community Services manages the initiative.

Staff

A salaried youth recreation coordinator is assisted by the parent volunteers.

Budget

The CHI grant paid for the initiative's first three years. Since then, the program has been partly funded by St. Gabriel's and Little Falls Community Services. Participants pay a \$15 to \$20 fee for each activity; scholarships are available for those who need them.

Effect on Community

The community response has been enthusiastic because the initiative has reduced risky behaviors among area children.

Contact:

Pat Rioux

Manager of

Development and
Communications

St. Gabriel's Hospital

Little Falls, MN

320-632-1209



Practical Advice

Be sure to get parents involved because that reinforces positive behaviors. Programs like this are great because they subtly reinforce the good behavior that faith communities traditionally promote.