POST-ADOPTION MARRIAGE STRENGTHENING
IN FAMILIES WHO HAVE ADOPTED SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

SEMI-ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT - COVER SHEET

AWARD NUMBER: 90CO1008/04
BUDGET PERIOD: 10/01/07 - 09/30/08
PROJECT PERIOD: 10/01/2004 - 09/30/2009

GRANTEE NAME AND ADDRESS: Post Adoption Marriage Strengthening Program
Children’s Home Society of Florida
1801 Miccosukee Commons Dr.
Tallahassee, FL 32308

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 850-921-0772 / 229

PROJECT TITLE: Post-Adoption Marriage Strengthening in Families Who Have Adopted Special Needs Children

PERIOD COVERED BY REPORT:
April 1, 2008 thru September 30, 2008

NAME AND PHONE NUMBER OF PROJECT DIRECTOR OR PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

PROJECT DIRECTOR
Leah Kulakowski
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DATE OF REPORT: OCTOBER 1, 2008

REPORT NUMBER: (NUMBER SEQUENTIALLY BEGINNING WITH 1) 2

NAME OF FEDERAL PROJECT OFFICER: Carole A. Thompson

COMMENTS: None
Adoption Opportunity Grant
Post Adoption Marriage Strengthening Program

Children’s Home Society
1801 Miccosukee Commons Drive
Tallahassee, Florida 32308

Semi-Annual Progress Report
September 30, 2008
Award No. 90-CO-1008

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MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING THIS PERIOD:

The following have been accomplished this period:

- The program has been increasing proactive efforts of community population and agency awareness. As a result, the program has seen an increase in referral intake from various agencies.

- PAMS continues to develop partnerships with primary agencies and community associations throughout Leon, Wakulla and Gadsden Counties.

- The program continues to provide introductory presentations to intra-agencies with Children’s Home Society of Florida. This has provided insight on the need for relationship enrichment services like PAMS for other programs.

- Over 90% of clients that have participated in the PAMS program were satisfied with the overall services that they have received.

- Over 200 families in the 2B area were reached through mailout of the quarterly newsletter and subsidy check flyer.

- Over 250 prospective couples were informed of the program through MAPP training, recruiting information and community group presentations with incentives to participate (raffles for respite weekends and other giveaways), and presence on the community’s electronic “billboards” and other referral resources.

- PAMS is currently discussing (post-grant) future opportunities for the program. One possibility is opening the program to service more than just subsidy adoptive families. This would include private and international adoptive families, which are also Special Need adoption families. The program will continue to brainstorm on future plans for PAMS.
OUTREACH ACTIVITIES:
The program participated in the following outreach activities within the past six months:

- In April, the program participated in a Children’s Day celebration at the Capitol. The program was also provided the opportunity to share exhibit space with Florida Coalition for Children (FCC) for the remainder of that week. Estimated Attendance: Undetermined

- **Early Steps Staff Meeting:** Counselors met with the Early Steps Intervention Program of Children’s Home Society of Florida to present the program and encourage referral activity. The counselors also provided the Early Steps program with brochures, newsletters as well as a flyer regarding the couple’s workshop scheduled for May.

- In May, PAMS participated in the Couples Workshop, providing a presentation based on the programs curriculum. Evaluations were completed by all attendees, who gave a 99% satisfaction rate. They enjoyed presentation and look forward to future presentations. Estimated Attendance: 32

- **MAPP Training with Special Needs Adoptions:** Facilitator participated as panelist and discussed the benefits of the program as an important service for couples that are either planning or currently are adoptive parents. There were a few couples that were potential clients present at this event. Estimated Attendance: 16

- The program has been invited to participate in a community project that will assist adoptive and foster families with necessities and wish lists. PAMS anticipates providing their client list with this opportunity as well as informing other programs that target this population such as Special Needs Adoptions and Florida Baptist Children Homes.

GRANT ACTIVITIES:

April 2008:

**Marriage Education:**
In-Home Gottman Sessions: 7 Participants: 4 couples
Completions: No Completions

Booster Sessions: 6 Participants: 3 couple(s)
Completions: No Completions

OTHER SERVICES:

- Intra-agency relations are addressed by providing presentations to various programs in CHS. Program related material was provided to all attendees along with sheets for referring clients.
May 2008:

Marriage Education:
In-Home Gottman Sessions: 6 Participants: 3 couple(s)
Completions: No Completions
Booster Sessions: 5 Participants: 3 couple(s)
Completions: N/A

OTHER SERVICES:

Program Presentations
- Program presented for a Couple’s workshop on May 17th. Facilitators received positive feedback from couples who participated. Attendance: 35

Summer Quarterly Newsletter
- 300 sent to all 2B District Families in the Leon, Gadsden, and Wakulla counties.
- 60 were placed throughout the Children's Home Society of Florida program areas at the Tallahassee main location

June 2008:

Marriage Education:
In-Home Gottman Sessions: 3 Participants: 3/4 couple(s)
Completions: No Completions

Booster Sessions: 3 Participants: 3 couple(s)
Completions: N/A

OTHER SERVICES:
None Reported

July 2008:

Marriage Education:
In-Home Gottman Sessions: 2 Participants: 2/4 couple(s)
Completions: No Completions

Booster Sessions: 2 Participants: 1/3 couple(s)
Completions: No Completions

OTHER SERVICES:
Number Issued:
- 500 flyers regarding the program sent to all 2B District Families in the Leon, Gadsden, and Wakulla counties.
August 2008:

Marriage Education:
In-Home Gottman Sessions:  5  Participants: 2/3 couple(s)
Completions: No Completions

Booster Sessions:  2  Participants: 2/3 couple(s)
Completions: 1 Completion

OTHER SERVICES:
MAPP Training
  • August 16th – MAPP Training with Special Needs Adoptions; Facilitator participated as panelist and discussed the benefits of the program as an important service for couples that are either planning or currently are adoptive parents. There were a few couples that were potential clients present at this event. Attendance was consistently between 12-16 attendees.

2B Subsidy Mailing List
Number Issued:
  • 900 flyers regarding the program was sent to all adoptive and foster families in the Big Bend area

September 2008:

Marriage Education:
In-Home Gottman Sessions:  2  Participants: 2/3 couple(s)
Completions: 1 Completion

Booster Sessions:  2  Participants: 2 couple(s)
Completions: No Completions

OTHER SERVICES:
Fall Quarterly Newsletter
  • 300 sent to all 2B District Families in the Leon, Gadsden, and Wakulla counties.
  • 60 were placed throughout the Children's Home Society of Florida program areas at the Tallahassee main location

MAPP Training
  • PAMS facilitators participated in MAPP panel presentation with an outcome of 8-10 couples who signed up to receive more information about the program.
PROBLEMS – CHALLENGES/BARRIERS

Challenges/Barriers:

- Recruitment: Referrals from programs with Children’s Home Society have remained fairly low, primarily due to the staff turnover.
- Client activity is low primarily due to various schedule conflicts of the clients.
- Facilitators experience resistance from couples for reasons ranging from the assumption that couple’s work is not essential to their needs to confidentiality issues.

Steps to Resolve identified challenges/barriers:

- The program has met with various Interagencies with the purpose of presenting the program and demonstrating the benefits that their families will receive in participating. Though feedback has been low, the program continues in proactive efforts directly speaking with various staff and supervisors.
- Staff is regularly contacting the Special Needs Adoption program to follow up on client eligibility for the program. Despite the resignation of the Special Needs Adoption Program Director, the program has made contact with the new director and will continue the partnership of both programs.
- Staff is regularly contacting clients and working out availability issues to meet the needs of the families.
- PAMS has been consistent with the quarterly newsletter and subsidy mailout, which is distributed every quarter to families in the 2B district counties.
- Presentations at couple orientations and other similar events have resulted increased interest from other clients who may not be in the target population but do see a need for the service.

Current Outcome: %80 Resolved / %20 Not Resolved

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/COMMENTS:

Activities and ideas for improvement have been planned for the future. The following briefly state these activities:

- PAMS program was approved to provide 24 Foster Parent Training hours to foster families once they have completed the program. This allows families to receive the required 8 hours per year within a shorter amount of time.
- Provide more opportunities for facilitators to attend adoption and marriage enhancement related conferences to increase knowledge of adoption related issues and stay up to date with the field of study.
• Continue in the creation and maintenance of relationships with community partners to increase referrals.

• Participate in subsidy check mailings at BBCBC. A one-page program flyer has been included with the family’s subsidy checks every other month for the 2008-2009 year. This effort has increased consistency in program visibility for potential participants.

• Continue to produce quarterly newsletters that are mailed to special needs adoptive families in Leon, Gadsden, and Wakulla counties. It has been decided to transition into a one-pager, which will allow newsletter mailout in subsidy. This effort will increase consistency in program visibility for potential participants.

• Create and maintain community partners as potential referral sources by attending support group meetings and establishing relationships and rapport with the leaders of these organizations and their constituents.

• Maintain revisions of program brochures and pamphlets to provide more details about the purpose and importance of the program.

• Plan focus groups for the purpose of gathering information that will benefit the advancement of program development.
## SERVICE LEVEL SUMMARY

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<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>In-Home Sessions</th>
<th>Booster Sessions</th>
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<td>Apr-08</td>
<td>Participants 4</td>
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<td>Participants 3</td>
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</table>

**Total Service Level During this Period**

- **In-Home Sessions**
  - Participants 6 Completions 2
  - Participants 4 Completions 3

**Total Service Level Fiscal Year to Date**

- **In-Home Sessions**
  - Participants 9 Completions 3
  - Participants 10 Completions 6

**Total Service Level Award to Date**

- **In-Home Sessions**
  - Participants 28 Completions 10
  - Participants 12 Completions 8

*Booster Sessions did not begin until late October of 2006.*