



**Pine River-Backus Family Center  
2011 Annual Report**

**“Strengthening Families and Building a Strong Community”**

The Pine River-Backus Family Center is a collaborative effort that strives to provide local children and their families with support they need to function as strong, healthy family units. Our vision is that all families will have what they need to reach their full potential and contribute to their community. We are community based, and seek to meet the changing needs of families and children as they arise, as well as to build upon the strengths that are already present within the community. In the 15 years the Family Center has been open it has become a hub of activity and has been proven to be an effective way to offer services and programming tailored to our community. Investing in children and families by supporting coordinated services and prevention programs builds healthy families and communities.



**Alcohol, Tobacco &  
Other Drugs Prevention**

A community wide approach to prevention lead by the Working Together Coalition - a group of concerned individuals working together to address issues relating to underage use/abuse of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs in the Cass County school districts of Pine River-Backus, Northland Community and Walker–Hackensack-Akeley. The Family Center serves as the grantee of Coalition’s main source of funding a Drug Free Community Grant, employs Coalition staff and works with the Leadership team in implementing strategies to create healthy safe environments for each area youth. Highlights of 2011 include:

- Capacity Building – increased community coalition involvement in all three communities, over 130 persons invested their time creating safer healthier communities for our youth.
- Project Northland Curriculum delivered in all three school district 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade students
- Active “Teens Leading the Way” groups in all three school districts
- Strong collaboration with Law Enforcement implementing Zero Adult Providers (ZAP) and Compliance checks to decrease availability
- Training of local partners to create supportive environments for students (SEARCH)
- Communities invested their time and resources resulting in \$151,803 of additional support for the coalition’s work.

[www.workingtogethercoalition.com](http://www.workingtogethercoalition.com)

In 2011 the Working Together Coalition was funded by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division, United Way and the Drug Free Community Support Program.



## **Family Center Home Visiting Program**

### *Hand in hand for early success*

The Family Center Home Visiting program is a strength based Home Visiting program for first time prenatal moms/families. The goals of the program are children and families are safe, nurtured and healthy and children arrive at school ready to learn. Our program helps families develop knowledge, skills and confidence to meet the unique needs of their babies. In 2011 the Pine River-Backus site served 24 families, with a total of 298 visits. In over half of our case load mom is between 15 – 19 years old.

In 2011 the Home Visiting Program was jointly funded by; The Better Way Foundation, Initiative Foundation, Crow Wing Power Operation Roundup, United Way, Medica Foundation and private donations. An advisory board helped guide the work of the Home Visiting Program and assisted with our five year celebration which brought our families, funders and community stakeholders together to learn how the program has impacted families in the Pine River-Backus, Pillager and Northland Community. Check out our photos and join us on face book [www.prbfamilycenter.org](http://www.prbfamilycenter.org)

### **Hidden Jewels – Thrift Store**

Hidden Jewels is a Family Center thrift store. Our mission is to enhance the lives of every family/individual by providing affordable clothing and household items at the time of need, and to provide a fun work/volunteer atmosphere for adults/youth in our community. Any funds that are earned above the cost of operating the program are invested back in to the programs and services which the Family Center provides. In 2011;

- 31 community volunteers provided 1720 hours of service to the store. The value of that service to the Family Center is \$37,582.
- Recorded donations totaled 419 boxes and 470 bags. 132 individuals shared their name for the donation book.
- Hidden Jewels provided \$758 worth of clothing and household items at no cost to families in need.
- 2 CEP Workers provided 441 hours of service totaling \$3,197.

### **Parent Education Classes**

**The Parent's Toolkit** – is a parent education program that offers parents a variety of ways to provide guidance, nurturing and discipline techniques for pre-school and elementary age children. In order to accommodate busy families, a light supper and child care are provided. 10 parents attended the parent tool kit class (11 children came with their parents and received a light supper and child care).

The Parent's Toolkit is funded jointly by Pine River-Backus School District and Radiothon to End Child Abuse proceeds.

### **Family Support**

The overall goal of this program/service is to meet the changing needs of families and children as they arise, as well as to build upon the existing strengths in the community. A total of 137 families with 80 children received family support services. The Family Center distributed over \$15,787 in funds to help families make it through tough economic times. Areas which we helped families included gas vouchers, utility expenses, medications, rent deposits and food.

The family support program is funded by Otto Bremer Foundation, United Way, Family Support loans paid back to fund and private donations.

### ***Terrific Tuesdays Summer Program***

Terrific Tuesdays is a summer program for elementary age youth. The program allows children to stay connected with other children while participating in fun stimulating activities throughout the summer months. Family Center provided 9 weekly, 3 hour sessions to 98 children in 2011.

Terrific Tuesdays is funded by activity fees and private community donations.

### ***Wonderful Wednesdays***

Wonderful Wednesdays is a summer program for children 3 – 5 year olds, who have not yet entered Kindergarten. Children receive 2 hours of pre-school classroom activities once per week June – August, 9 weeks. The program is offered at a nominal fee and staff work to coordinate transportation.

11 children participated in Wonderful Wednesdays.

In 2010 the family center participated in Bremer Give to Kids on-line fundraising challenge. Otto Bremer matched dollar for dollar (up to \$6,000) of on-line giving. With generous donations from the community and the Enkel Foundation we ended up with a total of \$11,975 for our summer programs. In 2011 we operated our summer programs with this funding.

### ***Food Programs***

- **MAC Mothers and Children** program provides a box of food monthly to families who leave the WIC program with children at age 5 the child is eligible for this supplement until they turn 6 years old. Staff coordinate this program with Second Harvest Food Bank, **31 children received this monthly food supplement.**
- **NAPS Nutrition Assistance for Seniors** program provides a box of food for seniors who are 60 years old and income eligible. Staff coordinates this program with the Second Harvest Food Bank, **114 seniors were provided with this monthly food supplement. 34,220 pounds of food was distributed to NAPS and MAC participates through the Family Center.**
- During the Fall of 2011 the Family Center participated in a strategic planning session with the **Pine River Area Food Shelf.** A mutual decision was agreed upon at the November Board meetings of the Pine River Area Food Shelf and the Pine River-Backus Family Center to join together to better meet the needs in the Pine River-Backus community. The Pine River-Area Food Shelf has been in existence for over 30 years. Many volunteers have worked tirelessly to ensure community members have access to food. Due to the economic climate, the demand for services continues to grow. The Food Shelf and the Family Center will work together to build the capacity to provide food to those who need it. Building capacity will include; fundraising and donor management, bookkeeping and volunteer management.

### ***Child and Teen Check-up Outreach***

Cass County Public Health contracts with the Family Center to provide Child and Teen Check-up outreach and scheduling of well child check-ups and immunizations. 106 children attended well child clinics held at the Family Center.

### ***Collaborative Events/Programs***

- **Week of the Young Child** event, annual event to celebrate early childhood programs, children and families, 98 children and 64 adults participated.
- **Christmas for Kids** (formerly Toys for Tots) Family Center staff coordinated distribution of Christmas toys for children in need, fundraised approximately \$3200 to purchase children's gifts and clothing, created a data base for volunteers to use in shopping and distribution of gifts to children, distributed Christmas gifts to 193 children.
- Family Center staff schedule appointments February through April for persons who wish to have volunteers assist them with their income tax filing, 139 individuals accessed this service.

- The 2011 **Radiothon to End Child Abuse** earned over \$1173 in auction items. Two Salty Dog Restaurant fundraisers earned \$1820 which is used to help support families and children in our community.

### ***Building Use***

The Family Center provides community groups and individuals use of meeting room space and office on a daily basis. Note that the Family Center does not coordinate the services listed below however it does provide a hub for service delivery which benefit all persons in our community. Some of the programs that utilize the family center for this purpose are:

- Cass County Public Health; Women Infant and Children program (WIC)(monthly), Child & Teen Check-up Clinics (monthly) site for the Rural Health Clinics offered monthly and Early Childhood Screens done in the Spring and Fall of each year
- Cass County Social Services, a place to meet locally with clients
- Family Safety Network, a place to meet locally with clients
- Kinship Partners, partner interviews
- Minnesota Workforce Center (CEP) staff office space one – two days per week, orientations and interviews
- Birch Lake Counseling – available to meet with clients one day per week.

### **Pine River-Backus Family Center 2011 Board of Directors**

***Threasa Braker, Tristan Borland, Vanessa Bye, Tammy Exum,  
Kathy Gilchrist, Joan Helms, Doris Knot, Carol Lovro  
Jacob Mongan, Linda Rasinski, Kathy Stephan  
Pat Trask***

During the 2011 year the Family Center participated in the Initiative Foundations Healthy Organization Partnership Strong (HOP) Program. With resources provided through the HOP Strong Program board and staff created a strategic plan and identified the skills and tools needed to lead our organization’s work into the future.

As we move into 2012 we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for investing in the important work we do in Cass County Communities. Your donations are used to improve and often change lives of children and adults in our community. If you or someone you know wishes to continue to invest in our work please have them call the Family Center at 218-587-4292 you may also find links on our website.

Our website is [www.prbfamilycenter.org](http://www.prbfamilycenter.org) You may also find us at



### ***Organizational Recognitions:***

***2007 - “Outstanding Nonprofit Organization” Initiative Foundation***

***2008 - Touchstone Energy Community Commitment Award***

***2009 - Governor’s Council on Faith and Community Service Initiatives “Best Practices”***