

Southwest Iowa Families, Inc.

Annual Report

Jan 2019 – Dec 2019



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“Enhancing the Lives of Children and their Families in southwest Iowa”

Mission and Vision

“Enhancing the lives of children and their families in southwest Iowa”

Our vision is that all children will live in a safe and nurturing environment. We are dedicated to provide services that prevent child abuse and neglect, and treating children and adults who have an abuse history. We make a commitment to high-quality programs and staff. We strive to maintain a high level of responsiveness to the needs of our clientele and the community. We believe that is it most effective to prevent problems rather than focus exclusively on treating existing problems.



Highlighted Project...

Back to School project for flood effected children

In the summer of 2019, Southwest Iowa Families in Clarinda made an appeal to the community for Back to School support for children whose families were impacted by the flooding in Mills and Fremont Counties. The response to the appeal was overwhelming. Individuals, churches, corporations, and organizations who truly have a heart for the community and our families stepped forward to sponsor a child or children. By surpassing our goal and raising over \$28,000 we were able to give each child \$125 instead of the \$100 which was the original plan. Students in the Hamburg, Fremont –Mills, Glenwood and Sydney schools impacted by the flood received money for back to school expenses. Some families were totally displaced by the flood and now have children attending school in Omaha, Nebraska City or Council Bluffs. These children were also assisted. Southwest Iowa is a great place to live and work.

Meet our newest staff member Marcy Taylor! Marcy has been involved with the agency since 2016 when she headed up the Scary Guy presentations in southwest Iowa. After that, Marcy joined the Board of Directors while she continued to finish her Master’s in Social Work program. Marcy recently completed her student internship with Southwest Iowa Families and has received her LMSW. We are pleased to have such a champion for our services and programs on our team. Marcy has a passion for grief work and loves helping others make changes in their lives.



What We Do...

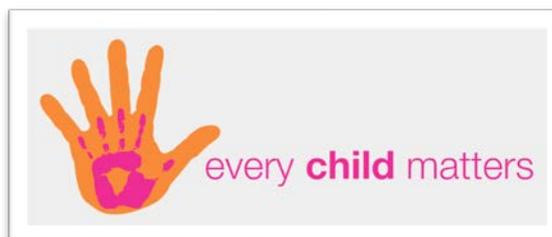
Counseling / Behavioral Health Services

Professional counseling is available for children and adults, individuals, couples, and families. BHIS (Behavioral Health Intervention Service), is an available in-home service for children with a mental health diagnosis who are Medicaid eligible.

Parent Child Interaction Therapy serves children ages two to seven. This therapy works with the parent and the child together. Currently, three full-time and five part-time therapists see clients in Clarinda and Lenox. Dinosaur School is a treatment group for very young behavior disordered children. Foster After Care provides support to young adults aging out of the Iowa State Foster Care Program.

Child Abuse Prevention Programs

Two programs are available for families to offer support, education, and community resources in the early stages of their child’s life. **Positive Family** is a family support partnership program that helps parents become the best possible parent they can so that their children get the very best start in life.



Family Support Specialists provide information about child development, age appropriate discipline, and share resources with the family. **Nest** is an incentive-based parent education program that allows parents to earn points by attending educational classes and other activities that promote healthy outcomes for babies. The points can be used for basic necessary and safety items that every family needs for their infants.

The number of children who are abused/neglected in our area is high: Page and Montgomery Counties are in the ten highest ranked rates of DHA reported cases (120 cases in Page County and 67 in Montgomery County in 2017). The very youngest children are most vulnerable. Home Visiting programs have been proven to prevent child abuse and neglect for those persons enrolled in intensive home visiting.

Iowa's Child poverty rates are 12.6%. Page County poverty rate is almost 24%. 12.6% of all persons live below poverty. The Nest program is an immediate resource to families of things that cost money and are necessary to meet the needs of their children. The Home Visiting program connects families to programs and services to improve indicators associated with poverty and access to resources.

Programs and services have touched many this past year...

1,707 | Home Visits were completed for 175 families by Positive Family workers

5,098 | Counseling hours used by clients

38 | Children attended Dinosaur School with Wally and Dina

15 | Foster AfterCare clients received services

125 | Families enrolled in Nest and participated in educational classes

1,000+ | Individuals received professional counseling services

31 | Children had Behavioral Intervention Services in their home

1600 | clients were engaged in agency programs or services

How We Do It...

Southwest Iowa Families is funded in many ways. Counseling services are paid by the client or covered under their insurance plans. The Early Childhood Areas in Page, Fremont, Taylor, and Montgomery Counties along with Prevent Child Abuse Iowa help fund the Child Abuse Prevention Programs like Positive Family, Preschool Mental Health Screenings, and the Nest Program. Donations from individuals, churches, clubs and organizations are very important to the success of the agency. Grants from foundations, and fundraisers are utilized for incentive items for Nest and other program expenses. The Board of Directors and staff hold four to five fundraisers a year to try to fill the needs not met by other contracts.

Raising Awareness Every Day – Moving Into The Next Year

At both the state and federal level, there is an emphasis on community based services for mental and behavioral health. As a community based (outpatient) provider, we certainly believe in the value and power of community services. We continue to work with local agencies, insurance companies, state legislators, and our federal representatives to raise awareness about the need for a system of care that meets the needs of prevention, early intervention, short-term and long-term treatment services, on-going services for chronically mentally ill, and access to higher levels of care for acute crisis or psychiatric symptoms. One in every five persons has a mental illness. A recent study found that 69% of people report that they would hide their mental health problems and 21% said they would delay or not seek services. By raising awareness, stigma related to mental illness will be reduced and more people will engage in services. Most people who seek services go on to lead healthy, happy and productive lives.

It has been a big year of change for the agency and we have continued to strive to make the agency stronger and more responsive to the needs of the community and our clients in all of our programs. Whether it is helping a mom with diapers and formula or creating a treatment plan for a client struggling with depression, everyone person is treated with respect and care. We pride ourselves that our staff are well-trained, compassionate, and dedicated to those we serve.

Your support and advocacy is appreciated as we all work together to be sure that all families and individuals in southwest Iowa have the opportunity to access services. Some are looking for help with parenting, some are aging out of foster care, others might be going through a life change and find themselves in need of a counselor. Whatever the reason they come to us – we hope we are able to assist, to guide, to listen and help them find a solution. We are looking forward to another great year!

Bernie and Sandy

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