

# Entry Form

Deadline: All entries must be postmarked by Friday, February 26, 2010.

# 2010 ECCO Recognition Program

Celebrating Excellence in Community Communications and Outreach

Please include this form with one sample of each entry(s). Label each of your entries with the entry category, community name, and contact information.

## Entry Procedures

Please see the Call for Entries for complete entry instructions. To access this form electronically, contact your Campaign technical assistance provider at 202-331-9816 or via e-mail.

Copy form and fill out entirely for EACH entry. Photocopy form as needed.

ECCO entries will not be returned; they will be added to the Campaign Resource Center to serve as examples of communications and social marketing for reference by other system of care communities.

★ **Category:** (For complete category descriptions, see the Call for Entries.)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Outreach                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Media Outreach                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Partnership Development                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Outreach: Parents and Caregivers      | <input type="checkbox"/> Communications/Social Marketing Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Outreach: Children and Youth          | <input type="checkbox"/> Internal Communications                  |

★ **Title of entry:** (Please type or print clearly and keep to 10 words or less.)

Marion County Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

★ **Submitted by:** (Note: The person submitting will be the point of contact.)

Name: LaShana Sorrell

Title: Social Marketing/Cultural and Linguistic Competence Coordinator

Organization: commUNITY cares

Address: PO Box 18679

City: Hattiesburg State: Mississippi Zip Code: 39404

Telephone: 601.582.1111 Fax: 601.582.1607

E-mail: lsorrell@mycommunitycares.net

★ Please PRINT organization name exactly as it should appear on the recognition plaque:

commUNITY cares

★ Was the entry created with or by an external consultant?  Yes  No

Approximate budget for entry: \$295.30



# Entry Questions

Please answer all of the following eight questions while adhering to the allowed maximum word count. Answers can either be typed on a separate sheet or completed electronically. (Individual descriptions that exceed the maximum word counts will not be considered beyond the number of words indicated for that section.)

## 1. Relevance to Category (30-word maximum) (5 points)

Why have you chosen this category for your entry?

The Ribbon Cutting was a way to inform the community of new services available to youth, families and professional youth/family serving agencies in the county.

## 2. Planning (90-word maximum) (10 points)

What were the specific objectives of the entry? How does your entry relate to your social marketing plan and your overall program strategic plan? What overall strategy was employed to meet the objectives?

Objectives

- 1) To inform residents of Marion County of new services available
- 2) To show it is a community initiative and promote community interests and involvement.

This is related to social marketing and strategic plans because it met the goals of increasing awareness about children's mental health needs and increasing parental and community involvement.

We held the event at the Friendship Park, widely used by residents, to physically show that commUNITY cares is not one agency but a collaboration of many agencies and people (i.e. families, schools, court, mental health, community, business leaders, etc.) uniting together to help our youth.

## 3. Cultural and Linguistic Competence (70-word maximum) (10 points)

How did you ensure that your entry was culturally and linguistically competent? What resources or methods did you use?

As one way to ensure cultural competence, we chose a location that was familiar and receptive to diverse gathering. The event was held at Friendship Park. We invited families, various agencies and community members such as Department of Human Services, school district officials, mental health providers, business owners, the mayor, and the district attorney,

#### **4. Youth, Family, and Partner Involvement (70-word maximum) (10 points)**

How did you involve youth, families, and partners in the planning and execution of your entry?

Youth, family and partners are on social marketing task group and gave input on location, food, and order of program. Also a family member currently in services (from another county) spoke to the audience about how commUNITY cares has helped her and her family. The Chamber of Commerce provided the ribbon and oversized scissors. They also assisted in sending electronic invites to business leaders.

#### **5. Message (50-word maximum) (10 points)**

Explain why the message of your entry is appropriate to your target audience.

The message is that commUNITY cares is here to help Marion County. This is an appropriate message because Marion County is widely known for drug activity and also children with unmet psychosocial and mental health needs.

#### **6. Execution/Presentation (70-word maximum) (15 points)**

How was your entry implemented? How were unexpected circumstances—positive or negative—addressed, and how did they affect the overall presentation of your entry? Please note: To evaluate the written quality of a printed piece (brochure, poster, etc.) or video script, the judges will consider whether the writing is logical and concise.

Invitations were mailed out to stakeholders, partners, and community leaders in Marion County by the social marketer and the Marion County Chamber of Commerce. The program consisted of the Project Director introducing commUNITY cares to the area, a welcome by the Pine Belt Mental Healthcare Resources County Administrator of Marion County, MS Families As Allies Site Director and a parent. The ribbon cutting followed immediately after the presentation and light refreshments were served. commUNITY cares staff were greeters, signed attendees in and presented them with a information folder about commUNITY cares. A positive unexpected circumstance was that the city mayor and the district attorney accepted our invitation and wanted more information about commUNITY cares and how they could be involved.

#### **7. Creativity (70-word maximum) (15 points)**

How was creativity used in the development of this product or activity? How does the design enhance or detract from the message? Please note: Given that all production components, including budget, are considered, the most expensive entry does not necessarily win.

The social marketing task group brainstormed about how to introduce the services in the new county on a way that would catch the residents attention. A ribbon cutting was chosen because it represents something new. The group decided it would be creative to use the ribbon cutting figuratively to represent new services in the area. Also by using the Friendship Park, the name alone would be more inviting because it represents unity.

## **8. Effectiveness and Evaluation (90-word maximum) (25 points)**

**What methods of evaluation were used? How well did the entry succeed in reaching its target audience and meeting other objectives?**

To evaluate we looked at the number of people in attendance. Our goal was 25 and 33 people were present. Also the representation on the television station as well as the local newspaper demonstrated success and additional opportunities to expand our message. The ribbon cutting was a success because people began to ask for more information and one local business owner decided to join the social marketing task group.

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**Total Points Possible: 100**

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**PLEASE MAIL ENTRIES TO:**

Scott LaLonde  
Caring for Every Child's Mental Health Campaign  
c/o Vanguard Communications  
2121 K Street, NW, Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20037

**commUNITY cares  
and**

**The Marion County Development Partnership**

**cordially invites you to the ribbon cutting  
of new family services in Marion County  
Wednesday, September 30, 2009**

**Friendship Park ♦ Columbia**

**9 a.m. to 10 a.m.**

**For more information contact:**

**LaShana Sorrell  
601.582.1111**



Columbian Progress  
Saturday, October 10, 2009  
Front page, Below fold

# At-risk youth program opens in county

By Josh Mitchell  
Managing Editor

A new program funded by the federal government to help at-risk children in Marion County opened last week.

The program, CommUNITY Cares, offers an array of services to help children between the ages of 10 and 18 who are struggling with alcohol, drugs or behavior problems.

CommUNITY Cares officials held a ribbon cutting in City Park last week to celebrate its opening in Marion County. Crystal Varnado of Lamar County said her 17-year-old son's behavior has



Officials cut the ribbon to mark the opening of CommUNITY Cares in Marion County.

Photo by Josh Mitchell

greatly improved because of CommUNITY Cares in her county. Prior to getting involved in the program, her son was in trouble a lot and "trying to drink," said Varnado.

District Attorney Hal Kittrell said he hopes the program can keep children out of the juvenile justice system.

"Anything we can do to take at-risk youth and give them positive direction helps the community and makes my job easier," said Kittrell.

Kittrell added that if the system reaches troubled children early they are less likely to become criminals as adults. Services offered by CommUNITY Cares include family,

individual and group therapy as well as mentoring services. There is no charge for the services.

"We're here because we care about the welfare of children in Marion County," CommUNITY Cares Project Director Sharon DeBerry said at the ribbon cutting ceremony.

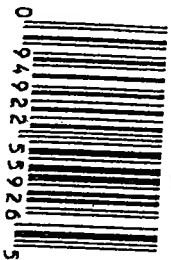
All socio economic groups, races and genders are affected by alcohol and drug problems, said DeBerry, adding these issues can be deadly and require serious attention.

CommUNITY Cares officials say the program is unique because families have the primary decision making role in the care of their children. The program is also different from other social services because the children have a voice in the care they receive.

The program is a result of a \$10 million grant that the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration issued in 2006 to the Mississippi Department of Health. The Department of Health collaborated with Pine Belt Mental Health Care Resources and Mississippi Families as Allies and came up with the idea of CommUNITY Cares.

Ginger Cooksey, psychology director for CommUNITY Cares, said CommUNITY Cares is an attempt to "think outside the box" when it comes to caring for at-risk youth.

People can refer youth to the service by calling 601-736-6799 or at the Web site at [mycommunitycares.net](http://mycommunitycares.net). The CommUNITY Cares office is located at 217 Dewey St.



P.O. Box 272  
 412 Courthouse Square  
 Columbia, MS 39429  
 Phone: 601.736.6385  
 Fax: 601.736.6392  
 Email: info@mcdp.info

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

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**FYI:**  
**Columbia Sales Tax  
 Collections:**  
**August 2009-**  
**\$285,335.53**  
**August 2008-**  
**\$361,421.63**

**Unemployment Rate:**  
**August 2009-**  
**Mississippi 9.5%**  
**U.S. 9.6%**  
**Marion County 10.7%**



**Gerald B. Frazier,**  
**President**  
  
**Carolyn Burton,**  
**Vice President**  
**Chamber of Commerce**  
  
**Angela Harper,**  
**Administrative Assistant**

## Household Hazardous Waste Day

Back by popular demand is Hazardous Waste Day for the second consecutive year. The Marion County Board of Supervisors will sponsor the event on Saturday, October 31 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Marion County Activities Center on Highway 13 South. Household hazardous waste is any product labeled: toxic, poison, corrosive, flammable, combustible or irritant. A typical home can contain a variety of household hazardous products used for cleaning, painting, beautifying, lubricating and disinfecting the house yard, workshop and garage. The health and safety of our families, neighborhoods, and environment is threatened when household hazardous waste is stored or disposed of improperly.

**Items Accepted:**

Paint, aerosols, cleaners, ammonia, anti-freeze, auto cleaners, batteries, brake fluid, chlorine bleach, pool chemicals, glass cleaner, disinfectants, drain opener, furniture polish, gasoline, herbicides, insecticides, pesticides, rodent poisons, rubber cement, silver polish, tub & tile cleaner, water seal, wood finish, detergents, fertilizers, lighter fluid, glass, oven cleaner, paint thinner, photographic chemicals, tires, old appliances, fluorescent light bulbs, computers, and televisions.

**Items Not Accepted:**

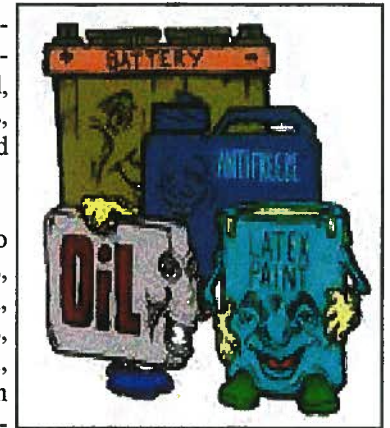
Explosives, radioactive materials, PCB's, medical waste, syringes, and ammunition. No commercial waste will be accepted.

**Household Hazardous Waste Facts:**

Americans generate 1.6 million tons of household hazardous waste per year. The average home can accumulate as much as 100 pounds of household hazardous waste in the basement, garage, and storage closets.

**Remember Your 3 R's:**

Reduce. Recycle. Reuse. Recycling one ton of paper saves 17 trees, 2 barrels of oil, 4,100 kilowatts of energy, 3.2 cubic yards of landfill space and 60 lbs. of air pollution. For the health and safety of our families and community, remember to bring your household hazardous waste products to the Marion County Activities Center on Saturday, October 31, 2009 from 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. For more information, call 1-800-689-5656.



## The 10th Annual Winterfest

Plans are underway for the arts, crafts and car show event, Winterfest, on Saturday, December 5, 2009 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. inside the Columbia Expo Center. In it's 10th year, it should be the best ever! MCDP members are offered a discounted rate on booths. The event is perfect for business promotions; fundraisers for schools, churches, and organizations. If you are interested in participating, call the MCDP office at 601-736-6385.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**R & R Sheet Metal, Inc.**  
Steve Rowell  
8 Sunflower Road  
Foxworth, MS 39483

**ChamberPlus, Inc.**  
Lindsay Buford  
201 South President St.  
Jackson, MS 39201

**B & E Fine Wines & Spirits**  
Erik Harkey  
1003 Hwy. 98 E Suite 4  
Columbia, MS 39429



- When consumers know that a small business is a member of the chamber of commerce, they are more likely to think favorably of it and 63% more likely to purchase goods or services from the company in the future.

Ref: A scientific web-based survey of 2,000 adults nationwide conducted by the Schapiro Group.

## RIBBON CUTTINGS



**MCDP Ambassadors joined Paul and Donna Roberts and employees in the ribbon cutting celebration of their new restaurant. D-Kay's is located at 614 Broad Street.**



**Mayor Reed Houston assists Pine Belt Mental Health Resources officials in cutting the ribbon to celebrate the new program, commUNITY Cares. The program serves youth, ages 10-18 who are coping with serious emotional issues and alcohol and drugs misuse. For more information, visit Pine Belt Mental Health Resources at 217 Dewey Street in Columbia.**





# SALES MOVES

## Where is the new customer? He's in the new world

The customer is making a comeback - slow though it may be. When he (or she) returns, you're going to notice a big change.

**FAIR WARNING:** How you prepare for the new customer will determine your long-term success. While your customers were away, online has officially taken over. Yes, the Internet has been there for a few years, but it has taken a firm hold as a trillion-dollar option for consumers and customers every place in the world. Your world.

The details of what the new customer (both business and consumer) looks like:

- He's going to decide somewhat slower. He's been hesitating for more than a year; He's angry about the value of his home and investments.
- He will not be doing business the same way its been done before.
- He will not be advertising the same way he advertised before.
- He will not be buying a home the same way he did before.
- He's online. Checking out your website - and your competitor's website; he's socializing. Telling everyone what's happening in his world and the world.
- He's Tweeting, Facebooking and Linked-In-ing. Social media is still a firestorm; he's blogging about his experiences with you for the world to read.
- He's YouTubing about his experiences with you for the world to watch - by the millions; he's Googling, not yellow-paging.
- He's texting. A lot; he's using his mobile device to do almost everything.
- He's Wi-Fi-ing in his hotel room, on the plane, in Starbucks and at home.
- IF he's reading a paper, or getting the news, it's online.
- He's as likely to watch "The Daily Show," "The Colbert Report" or listen to Howard Stern for news as he is to watch a network "news" person read a tele-prompter.
- He's purchasing after midnight. By the billions; he's looking for ease of doing business with you.
- He is value oriented, but will look to price as part of the decision; he wants a relationship.
- He wants, needs, and expects GREAT service after the sale; he does not want to wait for anything or anyone.
- He needs help and expert advice; he's looking for ideas and answers.
- He can check your price and your facts in two seconds or less on Google; he knows as much about your product as you do.
- He knows more about your competitor's product than you do; he can pay right now IF you can take a credit card online.
- He expects someone to answer the phone when he calls that can actually help; he is SICK of off-shore call centers, erroneously called "help desks."
- He is SICK of you telling him how; he is SICK of your recorded hold message.
- He demands the truth. All the time; he no longer trusts the institutions he use to hold sacred.
- He expects you to be as computer literate as he is; he needs to be understood and feel your sincere concern.
- While you are qualifying him, he is qualifying you.
- If he needs a referral or recommendation, he'll go to Craig's list or Angie's list or Google or his next door neighbor, or anyone else but you...UNLESS you have video testimonials online.

As you are thinking about (and making excuses about) these statements, you better be thinking about your answers and responses to them. And you better be making the strategic decisions and game plans to make them happen. The economy is coming back, but not the way it was. Don't take my word for it. Ask any daily newspaper.

After reviewing these statements, ask yourself this BIG question: Will your new customer buy from you, or your competition?

Ref: MS Business Journal

Jeffrey Gitomer, author of *The Sales Bible* and *The Little Red Book of Selling*.



## Calendar of Events

### October

- 30 "Catchy Friday"  
MS Bee Keepers Convention
- 31 Household Hazardous Waste Day

### November

- 5 Prime Timers Tour Columbia
- 11 Veterans Day
- 20 "Catchy Friday"
- 26 Thanksgiving Day

### December

- 5 Winterfest
- 7 Annual Christmas Parade  
Sponsored by Kiwanis Club
- 18 "Catchy Friday"

## "YARD OF THE MONTH"

July 2009 - Mary McDaniel

August 2009 - Doyle and Tiger Bradshaw

September 2009 - Charles and Sadie Rogers

The Beautification Commission manages the "Yard of the Month" program. Thanks to Ms. Brenda Pounds, Ms. Scarlett Gafford, Ms. Carolyn Pittman and Ms. Teddy Plaisance. A program of the MCDP.



Marion County Development Partnership  
412 Courthouse Square  
P.O. Box 272  
Columbia, MS 39429

BULK MAIL  
Permit #85  
Columbia, MS 39429

Kenny Breakfield  
Quality Manufacturing Group  
2171 Hwy. 98 East  
Columbia, MS 39429



















commUNITYcares  
uniting neighborhoods - integrating through youth

Date: 9/30/09

Meeting Title/Type: Urban Safety

Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ End Time: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please print clearly

|    | NAME            | AGENCY               | ADDRESS   | TELEPHONE    | EMAIL                           |
|----|-----------------|----------------------|---|--------------|---------------------------------|
| 4  | Reed Austin     | MAYOR                | 201 Second Street<br>Columbia, MS 39429<br>1814 Orchard | 601-444-5004 |                                 |
| 5  | Paula Mathews   | Designing<br>Gallery | 9 Lakeshore Dr.<br>Columbia, MS.                        | 601-444-9191 |                                 |
| 6  | Anna Copeland   | PBMHR                | 217 Dewey St.<br>Columbia MS                            | 601-736-6799 |                                 |
| 7  | Prokeshia Wells | PBMHR                | <del>10 Fern Dr</del><br>217 Dewey St<br>Columbia, MS   | 601-736-6799 |                                 |
| 8  | Constance Mingo | PBMHR                | 217 Dewey St  | 601-736-6799 |                                 |
| 9  | Missy Roberts   | PBMHR                | 11  | 11           |                                 |
| 10 | Sige Kitten     | PBMHR                | 217 Dewey St  | 601-736-6799 |                                 |
| 11 | Angel Burton    | PBMHR                | 217 Dewey St  | 601-736-6799 |                                 |
| 12 | NICOLE BARTON   | SCSCLY               | P.O. Box 647<br>H36, MS 39403-0647                      | 601-583-9282 | SCSCLYNICOLE@<br>BELL SOUTH.NET |
| 13 | Jamie Steele    | PBMHR                | 217 Dewey   | 601-736-6799 |                                 |
| 14 | Aimee Cotton    | PBMHR                | ↓   | ↓            | Aimee @<br>pbmhr.com            |
| 15 | Leah Williamson | PBMHR                | 110 Patton Hwy  | 601-544-4222 |                                 |



commUNITYcares  
uniting neighborhoods · integrating through youth

Date: 9/30/09

Meeting Title/Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ End Time: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please print clearly

|    | NAME                  | AGENCY                | ADDRESS                               | TELEPHONE      | EMAIL  |
|----|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|--|
| 6  | Carolyn Burton        | Marion Co. Dev. Part. | 412 Courthouse Sq.                    | 601-736-6385   | cburton@mcdev.info                               |
| 17 | Kevin Wheeler         | WDAM                  |                                       | 601-450-8303   | Kwheeler@wdam.com                                |
| 8  | Charles McKinney      | PBMHR                 |                                       | 601-604-2979   | Psychoshrink13@net.com                           |
| 9  | Crystal Varnado       | Parent                | 5451 W. 4th St.                       | 601-606-1629   |  |
| 10 | Patricia Simmons      | PBMHR                 |                                       | (601) 264-2111 | Patricia.Simmons@gmail.com                       |
| 21 | (Mrs) Donald Hales    | MCDP                  | 1409 Rowan Ave.                       | 601-736-7430   | dthales@bellsouth.net                            |
| 22 | Shelly Segalini       | Columbia School Dist. |                                       | 601-310-5883   | Ssegalini@columbia schools.org                   |
| 13 | Debbie Hood           | CSD                   | 1101 Broad St.<br>Columbia            | 601-736-5336   | <del>debbie</del><br>d.hood@columbia schools.org |
| 4  | Kim Stringer          | CSD                   | 613 Bryan Ave, Columbia               | 601-736-2366   | kstringer@columbia schools.org                   |
| 15 | Nicki Watts           |                       |                                       | 601-466-8939   | nwatts10@columbia schools.org                    |
| 6  | Chief Ayodele Okankwa |                       | 269 E. Marion Sch. rd<br>Columbia, MS | (601) 736-1157 |  |
| 7  | Jandra K. Peters      |                       | 49 Boone Lane<br>Columbia, MS         | (601) 441-5485 |  |



EXPENSE REPORT FROM RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY

| Business                  | Items purchased  | Amount Budgeted | Actual Spent    |
|---------------------------|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Columbia EZ Rental</b> | Two 6ft tables<br>w/delivery   | \$50            | <b>\$45</b>     |
| <b>WDAM</b>               | DVD Copy of ribbon<br>cutting ceremony   | 0               | <b>\$25</b>     |
| <b>Wal-Mart</b>           | Streamers, helium tank,<br>table clothes, plates,<br>napkins, streamers, gift<br>card, ice | \$150           | <b>\$125.30</b> |
| <b>Jody's Bakery</b>      | Breakfast nibble tray,<br>coffee, orange juice,<br>condiments                              | \$100           | <b>\$100</b>    |
| <b>TOTAL</b>              |  | <b>\$300</b>    | <b>\$295.30</b> |

### Additional Resources for Educators

- Assistance with student transitions (from one school or program to another)
- Coordination of partners to help a student and family (relatives, friends, neighbors, community supports, and faith-based organizations)
- Collaboration with appropriate School District representatives
- Provision and maintenance of relationships

### Fewer Disciplinary Problems

- Expulsions fell by more than 19 percent.
- Suspensions fell by about 36 percent.
- Detentions fell by about 34 percent.

### Improved and Stable Performance and Attendance

|   | <u>Improved</u> | <u>Stable</u> |
|---|-----------------|---------------|
| % improved/stable academic performance after 6 months           | 35%             | 42%           |
| % improved/stable grades after 30 months                        | 42.2%           | 29.1%         |
| % of all children with better/stable attendance after 30 months | 18.8%           | 65.8%         |

### Expanded Services

- Systems of care can help students and their families outside of the school environment, which may facilitate learning at home.
- Systems of care are an additional resource for getting mental health services and supports for students.

### Improved Communication and Coordination

- Systems of care help improve communication among all those serving children and families (i.e., juvenile justice, child welfare, mental health providers, primary care, etc.), which allows educators to better understand and more effectively meet a student's needs.
- Systems of care can coordinate a wide range of services and supports for students, including education services, which may reduce the administrative burden on educators.

### SYSTEMS OF CARE AND EDUCATORS SHARE COMMON GOALS

- Higher academic achievement and accountability
- Lower absenteeism
- Fewer behavior problems
- More time for teaching and learning
- Increased parent involvement

- Children and youth are diverted from the juvenile justice system whenever possible**
  - Juvenile justice no longer serves as a provider of last resort.
  - Children and youth with mental health needs are able to receive services and supports in the least restrictive setting.
  - Children and youth are able to receive services and supports from within their communities, whenever possible.
- Positive youth outcomes can result relative to the issue of juvenile crime**
- Positive outcomes for children and youth who have been referred to systems of care through the juvenile justice system**

### **SYSTEMS OF CARE AND JUVENILE JUSTICE PROFESSIONALS SHARE A COMMON GOAL:**

- Improve the ability of at-risk youth and juvenile offenders to live productively and responsibly in their communities

### **WHAT OUR PARTNERSHIP COULD ACCOMPLISH**

- Coordinated, community-based services that support families in need
- Collaborative, individualized plans of action for families in the community
- A community support structure that is accessible and family-focused

### **Reduced self-harmful and suicide-related behaviors**

- Significantly fewer children and youth engaged in self-harmful and suicide-related behaviors 6 months after entering services. 36% of children and youth decreased self-harmful or suicide-related behaviors.

### **Reduced emotional and behavioral problems**

- Clinical outcomes for children and youth improved after 6 months in a system of care. Emotional and behavioral problems were significantly reduced or remained stable for nearly 90 % of children.

### **Reduced arrests resulted in per-child cost savings**

- The reduction in the average number of arrests per child from intake to 6 months resulted in substantial reductions in associated costs.

### **Improved economic status of caregivers**

- Among those caregivers who reported they were unemployed because of their child's behavioral and emotional problems, 24 % obtained employment during the first 6 months of system of care services. Over half (51 %) of these caregivers gained full-time employment.

### **The education sector was the highest-referring child-serving sector to systems of care**

- Schools referred 26 % of all children participating in systems of care.

### **School performance improved significantly**

- The percentage of children with a passing performance (i.e., C or better) increased 14 % from entry to 6 months after beginning services, with 68 % of children achieving a passing performance at 6 months after entry.

### **Suspensions and expulsions decreased**

- Delinquent behaviors decreased among 17 % of children and youth, with significantly fewer children and youth suspended or expelled from school during the first 6 months after entry into a system of care.

### **School attendance improved significantly**

- The percentage of children with regular school attendance (i.e., 80 % of the time or more) increased nearly 7 % from entry into services to 6 months after beginning services, with 87 % of children attending school regularly at 6 months.



**Q.** How is commUNITY cares different than other services and programs?

**A.** commUNITY cares is different from other services because it offers a family-driven, youth-guided approach to delivering services. Families have a primary decision-making role in the care of their children as well as the policies and procedures governing care for all children in their community. In commUNITY cares, young people are empowered, educated and given a decision-making role in the care of their own lives, as well as the policies and procedures governing care for all youth in the community.

**Q.** Who qualifies for commUNITY cares?

**A.** commUNITY cares is open to youth between the ages of 10 and 18 who lives in Forrest, Lamar or Marion Counties, have a serious emotional issue, and use drugs or alcohol. Substances include but are not limited to alcohol, marijuana, methamphetamines, prescription medicines, etc.

**Q.** Who pays for services?

**A.** Medicaid, MS CHIP and Third Party Insurances are accepted. Some grant funds are available to pay for services.

**Q.** How do I refer someone to the program?

**A.** If you know of someone who would benefit from the services of commUNITY cares, you can do one of the following:

- 1) Complete referral form
- 2) Call ACCESS at 601.544.4641
- 3) Visit Pine Belt Mental Healthcare Resources at 110 Patton Avenue in Hattiesburg or Pine Belt Mental Healthcare Resources at 805 HWY 589 in Purvis or at 217 Dewey St in Columbia. Tell them you are interested in commUNITY cares.

**Q.** How long is a person involved with commUNITY cares?

**A.** The length of time one is involved with commUNITY cares varies depending on the needs of the youth. A child can participate in commUNITY cares until they complete treatment, opt out, move out of the service area, or turn 18 years old.

**Q.** What is respite?

**A.** Respite is planned short-term relief care for families who have children with disabilities or chronic illnesses living at home. Respite helps family members cope with daily responsibilities, maintain stability, take needed breaks and feel less isolated from the community, family and friends. For more information about Respite Services, contact Demetria Hudson at 601.450.2144.

**Q.** I don't live in Forrest, Lamar, or Marion Counties. Can I still be involved with commUNITY cares?

**A.** This particular initiative is only offered in Forrest, Lamar and Marion Counties. However, if a youth needs services, Pine Belt Mental Healthcare Resources provides comprehensive mental health services in nine counties throughout the Pine Belt region. For more information on Pine Belt Mental Healthcare Resources visit [www.pbmhr.com](http://www.pbmhr.com).

**Q.** Who can I speak to for more information about commUNITY cares?

**A.** Please contact the Project Director for commUNITY cares, Sharon DeBerry, at 601.582.1111 for more information about commUNITY cares.

### **Homes are stable**

- The percentage of children and youth who lived in multiple settings decreased by 11 percent over 12 months.

### **Families are stronger and feel supported**

- Caregiver strain is reduced in many families.
- More than a quarter of families had higher functioning after 30 months; more than half remained stable.

### **Families have more resources within their communities**

- Caregiver job, vocational, and educational skills improve.
- Incomes increase.
- Families have more time and support.

## **WHAT OUR PARTNERSHIP COULD ACCOMPLISH**

- Coordinated, community-based services that support families in need
- Collaborative, individualized plans of action for families in the community
- A community support structure that is accessible and family-focused