

## Project PONY Accomplishments and Highlights

**Non-Offending caregiver sessions to educate and support the non abusing parent of children who allege abuse.** Three 12 week sessions are provided in a Fiscal year. To support this program several brochures and handouts have been developed at the CAC which are geared specifically to the Choctaw community. A risk assessment has been identified and is used to base delivery of tailored sessions. Parents are provided 1:1 session if the sessions do not adequately address each family's needs for education on child abuse issues.

A curriculum for the sessions along with a facilitator's manual was developed and evaluated for consistency with teaching goals and expected outcomes. The evaluator also reviewed the cultural sensitivity in the subject matter and materials used in the sessions. The manuals were professionally printed and are being provided to each participant who attends sessions. The ease of program delivery has been improved since the manual includes all the materials needed for each session's topics, however each session can be tailored to the audience. There is no need for strict adherence to the outline.

The program is being evaluated through the Family Support Programs Outcome Survey developed by FRIENDS and tailored. Additional questions were added and recently revised to solicit responses to measure satisfaction of clients with programs, staff and services at the CAC. The FSPOS is conducted at the end of each session and delivered to those who successfully completed 8 of the 12 sessions offered. The surveyor obtains the same identifying information in the FSPOS, but only the questions applicable to satisfaction are asked in those clients who did not complete the sessions.

Linkages have been solidified with other partners through the multidisciplinary team (MDT). The MDT is the source of reviewing child abuse reports and other reports of victimizations that occur in participant homes. The MDT is also become a client of the program, and training is being provided each month to maintain the group collaboration at a functional level.

Several awareness and prevention activities have been conducted through out the term of the program. These include partnerships with other programs in the community such as the Foster Families Day with approx 250 in attendance, an awareness golf tournament for 36 adults, Boys n Girls Clubs activities, and promotion of Child Abuse awareness in April at community events, the schools, and churches.

A multidisciplinary team training was sponsored in Year One, with partnerships for training in years two and three. Staff contributions and promotional items were provided in provider training where child abuse topics were presented by program staff. Local, state and national presentations have been conducted by staff with topics including, Starting a CAC in a Tribal Community, The CAC and Advocating for Children, and several Child Abuse presentations to local nurses, teachers, youth and churches.

An interview at the local television station was aired which highlighted Child Abuse prevention in April 2007 and TV “ blurbs” were aired in the same month during other telecasts. The Stewards of Children Program developed by Darkness to Light Foundation was brought to the Choctaw community as an intensive training on child abuse recognition, reporting and prevention effort. This 2 ½ training curriculum has been given to 431 adults in the Choctaw community. This number represents approx 9% of the total adult population that are registered members of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

Throughout the award period the CAC Staff have responded to set up informational booths with promotional items and informational handouts that focus on child abuse issues, parenting, and child safety. These activities occur in concert with other program partners which address other community problems such as domestic violence, substance abuse, teen violence, and diabetes awareness activities.

The greatest impact upon the community has been the efforts to raise the level of awareness of the need to improve the response to abused children and their families. This has been achieved through provider education, and efforts to assist in the revision or improvement of guidelines that address abuse for each agency. The CAC has been able to reach the level of tribal legislatures with messages that saw the fruition of multidisciplinary guidelines that were sanctioned by the tribal government in April 2006. This action has served as a catalyst which has drawn more attention and spawned new efforts to develop children’s codes for the Choctaw Tribe in the future.

Although the numbers of families reached through the Non-offending caregiver sessions has not been significant, the impact upon the community has been more dynamic. Tribal laws exist to regulate the protection of Choctaw children to reinforce parental expectations or to encourage change. These laws are more effective when they are consistent with the most generally accepted societal norms. In a recent Community Readiness Assessment, the Choctaw community ranked at the level of No Awareness to Denial of child abuse issues as a community problem. The impact of program activities through utilization of funding, is that providers and leaders have greater awareness and acceptance of child abuse as a community problem. This increased awareness provides the needed platform to the need to bridge the gap between child abuse prevention, and generating sound public policies to help strengthen families and protect Choctaw children.