



Kalamazoo Wraps News

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH COLLABORATION

Dr. Caitlin Ryan Visits Kalamazoo

“Tolerance Isn’t Enough Says California Researcher” On Thursday, November 5, Dr. Caitlin Ryan, Director of the Family Acceptance Project at the Marian Wright Edelman Institute of San Francisco State University, told a standing room only crowd of family members, young people, professionals and community leaders that “tolerance isn’t enough, LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) young people need support, not just to be tolerated”.

Dr. Ryan’s research involves interviews with LGBT youth and family members, surveys with LGBT youth and cross-cultural research.

Dr. Ryan’s evening presentation at the Fetzer Center was the third presentation in her two days of workshops about how to improve the mental and physical well-being of LGBT youth.



Dr. Caitlin Ryan met with over 40 of Kalamazoo’s Faith-Based Leaders at the Kalamazoo Public Library.

Dr. Ryan’s appearance in Kalamazoo was sponsored by Kalamazoo Wraps, of Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, in partnership with The Kalamazoo Gay/Lesbian Resource Center, PFLAG (Parents, Friends and Family of Lesbians and Gays), Advocacy Services for Kids, Project Inclusion of Planned Parenthood of South Central Michigan, Gryphon Place, CARES, and The School of Social Work of Western Michigan University.

Some Behaviors that Increase Your LGBT Child’s Risk for Health & Mental Health Problems

Behaviors to Avoid

- Hitting, slapping or physically hurting your child because of their LGBT identity
- Verbal harassment or name-calling because of your child’s LGBT identity
- Excluding LGBT youth from family and family activities
- Blocking access to LGBT friends, events & Resources
- Blaming your child when they are discriminated against because of the LGBT identity
- Pressuring your child to be more (or less) masculine or feminine
- Telling your child that God will punish them because they are gay
- Telling your child that you are ashamed of them or that how they look or act will shame the family
- Making your child keep their LGBT identity a secret in the family and not letting them talk about it

Reprinted with permission from Caitlin Ryan, *Supportive Families, Healthy Children: Helping Families with Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Children*, © 2009

Dr. Ryan stressed the importance of working with families to help them support their gay or transgender child. In each of her four Kalamazoo workshops, Dr. Ryan shared the message that how families respond to learning that their child is gay, dramatically impacts that child’s development and survival. “Families don’t want their child to become a victim of violence but they may respond to a gay child by trying to convince them that they’re not really gay or by keeping them away from other gay people or LGBT information,” said Dr. Ryan.

She went on to surprise many in the audience by explaining that limiting a gay child’s access to LGBT friends and information is equally as damaging to their mental health as physically or verbally abusing the child.

Such limitations are perceived by the child as rejection, and result in a nearly nine times higher rate of suicide attempts by gay or trans-gender children. It also results in higher levels of depression, substance abuse and HIV risk behaviors. (Continued on page 2.)

Dr. Caitlin Ryan Visits Kalamazoo

(Continued) “The good news is that even small steps by families can make an enormous difference in these same risk factors” said Dr. Ryan. She noted that when families moved from being highly rejecting to only moderately rejecting (had some negative reactions but also had positive reactions to their gay or transgender child) the suicide and other mental health risks dropped dramatically (to only twice as likely to attempt suicide).

Dr. Ryan asked the audience to imagine what it would feel like “if your family didn’t want you to come to family activities or made you feel ashamed of who you are”. She indicated that families are often worried and fearful when their child “comes out” to them but that their efforts to protect them by isolating them or trying to shame them into changing can actually worsen the outcomes for their child.

Dr. Ryan’s message was underscored by a moving video documentary featuring the family of a gay Latino child whose family went from an initial reaction of distress and rejection of their son’s acknowledgement that he is gay to a position of acceptance and tremendous support.

Many in the audience were visibly moved by the video and one father commented that from viewing the video he could see that he’d done some things that weren’t helpful when he learned that his child was transgender.

Everyone who participated in Dr. Ryan’s workshops received a copy of “Supportive Families, Healthy Children” a recent publication to help families of LGBT children.



New City Commissioner Terry Kuseske, Dr. Caitlin Ryan, and KCMHSAS Regional Cultural & Linguistic Competence Coordinator Sharon Roepke.

Some Family Behaviors that Reduce Your LGBT Child’s Risk for Health & Mental Health Problems & Help Promote Their Well Being

Behaviors that Help

- Talk with your child or foster child about their LGBT identity
- Express affection when your child tells you or when you learn that your child is gay or transgender
- Support your child’s LGBT identity even though you may feel uncomfortable
- Advocate for your child when he or she is mistreated because of their LGBT identity
- Require that other family members respect your LGBT child
- Bring your child to LGBT organizations or events
- Connect your child with an LGBT adult role model to show them options for the future
- Welcome your child’s LGBT friends & partners to your home
- Support your child’s gender expression
- Believe your child can have a happy future as an LGBT adult

Reprinted with permission from Caitlin Ryan, *Supportive Families, Healthy Children: Helping Families with Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual children*, © 2009

Over 250 people from southwest Michigan participated in the two days of workshops with Dr. Caitlin Ryan. Dr. Ryan expressed her gratitude that Kalamazoo became the first System of Care project to invite her to present the research of the Family Acceptance Project.

Dr. Ryan’s appearance in Kalamazoo ended with her day long training at the WMU School of Social Work. Over 90 area human service professionals learned about the Family Acceptance Project’s research on how to reduce risks for LGBT youth and support their families. During the afternoon session at WMU all participants were asked to develop a plan for how they could use this important information in their daily work.

Ideas ranged from “tell families about these findings”, to “develop a support program for parents of LGBT youth” and “get this information to educators and school counselors”.

The Kalamazoo Family Acceptance Collaborative will continue explore plans to create greater support for LGBT youth. If you are interested in being part of this effort please contact: Sharon Roepke at sroepke@kazooemh.org or 269 553-8118; or contact Dave Garcia at 269 349-4234 or dave@kgllrc.org.

IN THIS ISSUE:

CULTURAL & LINGUISTIC	1-2
PARENT INVOLVEMENT	3
YOUTH VOICE...	4
EVALUATION...	4-5
COMMUNITY NEWS...	6
JUST FOR FUN PUZZLE	7

The Lives Of Their Families So That They Have The Opportunity To Reach Their Full Potential.

Kalamazoo Wraps' Parent Advisory Group (PAG)

Since the last writing of the Kalamazoo Wraps Newsletter, we have enjoyed the presence of several wonderful people within our system of care at our bi-monthly PAG meetings.

Dianne Shaffer and Michelle Houtrow paid us a visit to do an overview of Kalamazoo Wraps. We felt that it was important to do this, due to all of the great new people who have joined our group who may not fully understand what Kalamazoo Wraps is and what it is all about.

The training was well received and everyone's questions were answered. For those of us who have been a part of the Parent Advisory Group for awhile, it made for a nice refresher course. Thanks again to Diane and Michelle for the great information.

We also had, not one but two visits by Renee Huff, our wonderful Social Marketing guru. As usual, she didn't come empty-handed. Renee was asking for input from us, as well as the Calling All Youth Group, on what we thought would be some good marketing tools for the Public Education and Social Marketing workgroup, as well as each of the other Kalamazoo Wraps workgroups.

Between the two groups we came up with a list of almost 30 items, and yes, we even picked some of the same ones. Great minds think alike. We had to narrow our decision down to our Top 10. She also brought photos and information on as many of the items as possible which helped us make our decisions and ultimately narrow it down to our Top 6.

As usual, Renee was able to make this task enjoyable and really took our feedback to heart. You'll have to wait and see what we chose. Thank you Renee and come back anytime.

To learn more about PAG, please contact Advocacy Services for Kids (ASK) 269-343-5896.

State-wide "Building A System of Care" Conference

Over 300 people from across Michigan attended our very successful and educational state-wide system of care conference held at the Lansing Center, in Lansing, Michigan, on October 29 & 30. The conference provided a broad overview of systems of care creation, including details regarding the implementation of evidence-based and promising practices within the framework of system of care values: ***Family Driven *Youth Guided *Accessible and Effective Services *Culturally and Linguistically Competent Services *Individualized Care *Coordinated and Collaborative Care.**

Among the highlights of the event were the Youth Panel and the Family Panel. Both were informative and inspirational, as parents, youth and family members shared personal experiences of receiving services, both before and after system of care implementation in their communities.

The afternoons were filled with excellent workshop sessions, whose presenters are experts in the topics of: Mental Health, Juvenile Justice, Child Welfare, Youth & Family involvement, Public Schools, and more.

Mary Bechtel, Positive Behavior Support Facilitator at KRESA (middle right); **Molly Hamman**, District Behavior Specialist at Portage North Middle School (PNMS) (top right); **Michelle Houtrow**, Kalamazoo Wraps Co-Project Director (top left); **Kim Kirshman**, Vice Principal PNMS (left); and two PNMS school students **Nicholas** and **David**, presented a session about Positive Behavior and Literacy Supports (PBS).

Each spoke about the benefits of PBS implementation from firsthand experience. The presentation was made even more impactful because of the youth's personal accounts of how PBS implementation has benefited them personally.

Thank you to everyone who participated!



Calling All Youth (CAY) - Kalamazoo Wraps' Youth Advisory Group

Youth voice was brought to the forefront at last month's System of Care conference, as seven youth volunteered to sit on the youth panel and speak about their experiences with Systems of Care.

The panel, comprised of two youth from Kalamazoo (Angel and Jessica), two youth from Detroit, and three youth from Lansing, integrated youth perspective from all over the state.

Another youth participant from Kalamazoo, fifteen year old Angel stated, "I think you really have to want to change before anything will get better. It all comes down to what you want for yourself."

As the panel discussion came to an end, the audience

rose to applaud the youth for sharing their experiences and insight. "I've never felt so powerful," one youth commented after presenting. "I have a powerful story and it felt good to share that with others," she continued.

As the Youth Involvement Coordinator for Kalamazoo Wraps, I could not be more proud of the strides that have been made to include youth in our efforts. This panel was the epitome of what "family-driven, youth-guided" care is all about, and we should all be proud to be a part of something that places such a strong emphasis on this.

To learn more about Calling All Youth and how you can make a difference in the lives of youth in Kalamazoo, please contact Mackenzie Hunter at Advocacy Services for Kids (ASK): MackenzieH@askforkids.org or 269-949-5896.



Youth Representative, Angel; Youth Involvement Coordinator, Mackenzie Hunter; and Youth Representative, Jessica; after a very impactful youth panel presentation.

The audience of over three hundred quickly fell silent, as the seven youth bravely took the stage. Parents and professionals alike listened attentively to these youth as they shared their touching stories of transition.

Fourteen year old Jessica, a member of Kalamazoo Wraps' youth advisory board, Calling All Youth (CAY), stated, "System of Care helps youth find support in their communities. If everyone comes together, than we can make the world a better place." She continued, asserting, "When I turn 19, I want to be involved in the System of Care and help kids who have had a life like mine. I know that I am not alone anymore and I want to help people with knowing that."



Two Kalamazoo youth, Jessica (above) and Angel (below), presented on the youth panel at the Conference.



It's Time! Time to start planning for Kalamazoo Wraps 5th Annual National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day Carnival

Thursday, May 6, 2010

At the Kalamazoo County Fairgrounds

Each year, the carnival is bigger and better. We need volunteers to help plan the carnival and help during the carnival on May 6. We need YOU.

If you'd like to be a part of the fun in planning next year's carnival, contact Renée Huff at 553-8123.

One goal of Kalamazoo Wraps includes equitable treatment for everyone regardless of race or ethnicity. About half the people in our study are African American and about half are Caucasian. (There are a small number of other ethnic groups, but not enough to make generalizations about their experiences with the System of Care.)

The Kalamazoo Wraps Evaluation Team recently examined whether there were differences among the families of African American and Caucasian youth. Here is what we found:

According to the Child Behavior Checklist, a survey that is used to measure functioning in a lot of different areas, there were no significant differences among African American and Caucasian youth at intake with respect to the following types of problems: Anxiety, Depression, Somatization (physical complaints), Social Problems, Thought Problems, Attention Problems, Rule Breaking, Aggressive Behavior, Internalizing (e.g., worrying), or Externalizing (e.g., acting out). Further, the youth in the two groups improved at similar rates on each of these scales.

When it came to satisfaction with services, there were similar, and generally high, levels of satisfaction among African American and Caucasian youth. The same was found for their respective parents.

There were some notable differences between the African American and Caucasian youth and their families. African American youth in our study were more likely to live in families that were at or below the poverty level. Caucasian youth who were just starting treatment reported higher levels of anxiety.

Further, there were indications that African American youth and their families may find it more difficult to discuss issues related to mental health. Our earlier study on attitudes towards youth with mental health issues showed how important it is for youth and their families to have support. We hope our findings will encourage people from all backgrounds to reach out and get the help they need – because according to most of our families, our system is effective and equitable.

To learn more about the Kalamazoo Wraps Evaluation Workgroup and how you can become a part of making a difference in the lives of youth, please contact Carolyn Sullins, Lead Evaluator for Kalamazoo Wraps, at Carolyn.sullins.wmich.edu.

WHAT IS A KALAMAZOO WRAPS EVALUATION REPORT?

- It's a short summary of findings based on available System of Care data. Reports are posted *monthly* on the Kalamazoo Wraps Evaluation Website: <http://www.wmich.edu/sociology/kzoowraps-reporting.html>

WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

- The Kalamazoo Wraps evaluation is a big study, with a lot information about Kalamazoo Wraps including who is being served through the initiative, service experiences, and outcomes for youth and families involved.
- We want to produce information through our reporting process that is helpful to your role and involvement with Kalamazoo Wraps.
- Anyone can request a reporting topic, at any time, and we'll work with you to develop something that captures your interest.

You don't need to know anything about research or evaluation or this study to get the ball rolling!

HOW TO REQUEST A REPORT?

Start the process with an e-mail or phone call to: Becca Sanders, PhD, Local Evaluator, Kalamazoo Wraps:

beccaanddan@gorge.net (269) 290-7772

Looking forward to hearing from you!

December '09—January '10 Community News

KRESA's '09—'10 Transition Round Table Series: An opportunity for students, parents, teachers, and community members to learn about current topics affecting students with disabilities in the transition from school to adult life.

- What are the current curriculum requirements for graduation in Michigan?
- What are the Personal Curriculum options available to all students?
- What modifications are allowed for student with an IEP?
- What are the roles of the parent/student/school staff in the initiation and development of a Personal Curriculum?

Join Laurie Jefsen, KRESA's Planner/Monitor, and Kim Laing, Project Manager for KRESA's Instructional Center, in an informative discussion with answers to these questions and more!

Thursday, December 3, 2009, 7—8:30 pm

HS Graduation Requirements and the Personal Curriculum Option

Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency (KRESA) 1819 E. Milham

(-between Lover's Lane and Portage Rd.)

On **January 7, 7-8:30 pm**, KRESA's Transition Round Table Series meeting will be: **Services and Supports for Young Adults with Developmental Disabilities or Mental Illness: Options Available Through Community Mental Health with Kathy Lentz/David Jenks, Kalamazoo Community Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services (KCMH&SAS).**

Reminder: Kalamazoo Communities in Schools (KCIS) and Kalamazoo RESA **Parent Engagement Community Advisory Committee Meeting** occurs monthly. Meetings take place at Kalamazoo Communities in Schools (KCIS), 247 N. Rose Street. Phone Jessie Herron at 269-337-1601 ext. 221 or April Goodwin at 269-488-5211 for details.

Kalamazoo Nature Center presents Buy Local Art & Gift Fair

The Kalamazoo Nature Center invites you to the first Buy Local Art & Gift Fair on Saturday, December 12 from 10 am-4 pm at the Kalamazoo Nature Center, 7000 N. Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49009.

Admission to this one day event is FREE. Buy Local Art & Gift Fair is a unique opportunity to support local artists and fair trade vendors while doing your holiday shopping surrounded by good company, fun, and the relaxing beauty of the Kalamazoo Nature Center. Buy Local Art & Gift Fair is a part of the year-long series of events and programs celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Kalamazoo Nature Center.

The day's event starts at 10am with vendors throughout the upper level of the Interpretive Center. Buy Local Art & Gift Fair presents works that are inspired by nature, beneficial to nature (for example: art made from recycled or repurposed materials), and/or eco-friendly. Visitors will enjoy the variety and creativity of products produced by local artists such as jewelry, lighting, fiber art, garden art, vintage bird baths, apparel, photography, and much more. In addition, local fair trade vendors offer unique hand-crafted products that provide livable wages and good working conditions for artisans from around the world.

From 11am-1pm, local author/photographer Mark Cassino will be on hand to discuss and sign copies of his new children's book, *The Story of Snow*. At 1pm, visit the Glen Vista Gallery for a reception for KNC's first PhotoBlitz exhibit. View the entries from the one day PhotoBlitz contest held in September where photographers were challenged to capture an image during the one-day event at the Kalamazoo Nature Center.

Prizes will be awarded for the winning photographs at 1:30 pm. The PhotoBlitz exhibit will run through January 29, 2010. **Phone (269) 381-1574, or visit www.naturecenter.org for more information and a list of 50th Anniversary events and programs.**

Our puzzle-loving readers asked for more of a challenge and this word find is it!

Can you find all of the words hidden in the puzzle below?

Hint: There are no spaces between the words when they are listed in the puzzle.

TALK
LGBT
YOUTH
BELIEVE
FAMILIES
PARENTS
CONNECT

ADVOCATE
EVALUATION
CAITLIN RYAN
HEALTHY CHILDREN
KALAMAZOO WRAPS
KALAMAZOO LIBRARY

SUPPORTIVE FAMILIES
TRANSITION ROUND TABLE
KALAMAZOO NATURE CENTER
FAMILY ACCEPTANCE PROJECT
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
PUBLIC EDUCATION AND SOCIAL MARKETING

X D D Q P N G X Z U K W F A K C H C E R H X V V E V E I L E B Z T P K S M I G Y
M K U B G Y N X Y H E H S C O O D I B N T E A N M I S B B A Q P R Y E P B Z B H
M P T R C S I Z T R A T U N T Q I Z O I D C X R F O R B L H Q D A J D A I M F D
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B O K Z I X A M Y H R F R P S A R O D C X F F X L H T V C B J Y I K N Z Q H Z V
U Z Y I P X M G H H B P I N J P T Y R Q Y I J F O U K A K Q T W O U W A D C G J
E J I S V T L Q L S D M M H N M I E O R E X V Y L J D G C I P D N Q E M D J M A
N P S V S J A R M R A J M L T J G H B G Q F G Y S O P U S C F D R B O A C K V V
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D J C J C Q T B H E A N O P A R T H G W N P C W L D H Q J D T C P S F I K G Z Y
W G F Z Z L A C Y H E I G O N Z C V I X P A N B F P J A E N M I R D Q G F Z Y W
U E A C Z X C A N W N G K I L I O Q L O O J F X S F U C N W A F F Z F F R R J G
E M F X N Q U P H E B G L M M W B O R J X G G F N J G C G D D T A L K F Q Y B O
V A C X L J D S J H R T L N A Z I T N A M N G X Y S W O W S Z I Q N L I K C Q O
X I T X W O E Y Y G I D R F A M I L Y A C C E P T A N C E P R O J E C T E D N B
K Q U Q J P C D Q A Z E L W J V K V J C T T G U U T G C J Y F U R B C X G U R Y
F E D B L R I Y C T T F D I E W N P I J V U Q M C L P I U A E X H S K N A I N Q
J L F P N C L C Z S U J Q F H Q P K U L M A R M Y R A R B I L O O Z A M A L A K
H R R B Y N B Y E H J A A E I C E H W E J V X E V A L U A T I O N G L N K S F Y
Y M U Z E K U W U B U M E T G Z Y J B C O S D T C E E B P F U H T K H R F G J U
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Z B W Y B W G I O L S X A Q D Z D I T C H X J K H M N K F H J J W C S A Z U C A
S M K Y M X E R I Q U V B P O O W H M L G V N U Q B Y T I D H Q Z V D K Y P B F
G R F Z Q Y S E W T H Q K M H E O F X D A F L Q Y B T W E I E W H V O E Y F N H
E H F U A V S T S Q Y L Q K P B J T R H R E A L A P Z Q U R Q G B W I H O T Z U
D A H U U S T B B T C V K U X R B H G Q N V H L U F S F J E S O N I I V Y V Y W
P P I C Z B F L A C E W B J M G W O H M Q F R K T G R I M Z E G B Q D P L O P Z
C H N D F K B C A F D P N V L E Y H O F S S J Y F F W M U D Y P L T P K W C A A

Advocacy Services for Kids
414 E. Michigan Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

The Family Resource Center for KALAMAZOO WRAPS

WHO IS KALAMAZOO WRAPS?

Parents, Youth, Citizens of Kalamazoo County, Private and
Public Agencies serving Kalamazoo County...

....AND YOU!

