

Kalamazoo Wraps News

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH COLLABORATION

Kalamazoo Wraps 5th Annual National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day Carnival

On Thursday, May 6, over 1,500 gathered to celebrate children's mental health with hot dogs, cotton candy, live music, dancing, and (of course) a mascot race at Kalamazoo Wraps' 5th annual Carnival!

The Carnival was created to share information with the community regarding children's mental health issues, the services available to youth with serious emotional disturbances and their families, and how best to access those services.

Another important goal was to create a fun and relaxed atmosphere where service providers and community members were able to meet and have fun together, while establishing relationships that would promote "goodwill" and trust between service providers and the public they serve.

We're proud to say these goals were achieved.

Inside the Hazel Gray Building and outside on the lawn, there were 50 booths staffed by more than 185 people who shared information about their

business or agency which serves youth and families.

In addition to information, each booth provided a fun activity or game for youth. The games and activities helped to provide a catalyst for conversation and interaction between service providers and attendees, which is one of the great aspects of the successful Carnival.

Nearly all of the Carnival Volunteers were staff members from businesses and agencies that serve youth and families. Each of the hardworking Volunteers helped to make the Carnival possible.

Thank you to the Carnival's Volunteers, Booth Participants, and Co-Sponsors for creating such a beneficial and fun event, and providing it at no cost for the community!

SAVE THE DATE FOR 2011: Thursday, May 5!

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Our Vision: To Improve The Lives of Youth With Serious Emotional Disturbances (SED) And

Parent Advisory Group

The Parent Advisory Group (PAG) had a very popular booth of information at Kalamazoo Wraps, 5th Annual, National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day Carnival, on May 6, 2010.

Hundreds of community members visited the PAG booth and learned about how parents can become involved in the positive changes taking place within our system of care and, more specifically, services

for youth with serious emotional disturbance and their families.

Thank you to the 13 members of PAG who helped to staff the booth and shared information with the community!

To learn more about PAG, contact Kathy Howard, of Advocacy Services for Kids (ASK), at kathyh@askforkids.org or 269-343-5896.

Our Evaluation Team surveyed Carnival attendees and asked, "What did you appreciate most about the carnival?" Here are a couple of responses they received:

- **I enjoyed and was pleased with the way people were patient enough to tell you about the services.**
- **I have a child who I am afraid might have mental health issues that I need to deal with. I was just going to go through the school, but now I know of several services I may be able to use.**

Cultural & Linguistic Competency

This has been a busy spring for the Cultural & Linguistic Competency (CLC) workgroup of Kalamazoo Wraps.

In April, Kalamazoo Community Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services and Kalamazoo Wraps were pleased to co-sponsor the appearance of Immaculee Ilibagiza at this year's annual "Respecting Differences" event. Other sponsors included the Cities of Kalamazoo and Portage, Kalamazoo County, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo College, the Kalamazoo Human Resource Management Association (KHRMA), and the Fetzer Institute.

Ms. Ilibagiza, a survivor of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, described her emotional journey from wanting to destroy her tormentors to forgiving them for what they had done. Since this horrific experience, Immaculee has worked with the United Nations and has gone on to establish the Left to Tell Charitable Fund for the orphaned children of Rwanda. She currently lives in the United States but returns frequently to Rwanda to help her community and share their story with visitors.

For the past several months, Kalamazoo Wraps' CLC Committee has been working with the Southwest Michigan Affiliation's Regional CLC Committee to conduct a survey to assess the cultural competency of KCMHSAS (as an organization), as well as the other three community mental health service providers of the Southwest Affiliation (St. Joseph, Cass and Allegan counties). The results of the survey will be shared in a future newsletter.

Other activities over the past couple of months included the continuation of our partnership with PFLAG, WMU School of Social Work, Gryphon, St. Lukes Episcopal Church, Planned Parenthood, and the Resource Center to provide public education and support for gay and transgender youth and their families.

The planning group, FACT (Family Acceptance of Children and Teens), hosted a booth of information at Kalamazoo Wraps, 5th Annual, National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day Carnival, on May 6. FACT will continue the community education/prevention work that was kicked off by the workshops with Dr. Caitlin Ryan of the Family Acceptance Project this past Fall.

To learn more about how you can become involved, please contact Sharon Roepke at 269-553-8110 or sroepke@kazooomh.org.

Crowds at the May 6 Carnival were fascinated by the Latin folk dancing group, Ballet Folklórico Guanajuato, who took a short break to model their beautiful costumes.



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

Calling All Youth

Calling All Youth (CAY) is the youth advisory board for Kalamazoo Wraps. Young people involved in CAY are between the ages of 11 – 17 and are dealing with the day to day stress of having a mood, emotional or behavior challenge.

These challenges often lead them to become involved with multiple systems of care including the mental health system, the juvenile justice system, the child welfare system (child protective services, foster care) and/or educational systems and supports such as special education, individualized education plans, 504 behavior plans, alternative schools, etc.

Living with these challenges and trying to navigate through these services can be extremely stressful for young people and their families.

CAY was designed to help youth cope with these stresses by empowering them to use their voices to advocate for things they need to experience success in their lives. **CAY members believe:**

- **Power should be given back to the young people who are receiving services;**
- **Young people should be included in any decision making that affects their lives (nothing about us without us); and young people should fight to be seen, heard, and valued by their community.**

CAY members *fight to be seen by their community* by attempting to break the stigma associated with the term “troubled youth”, *fight to be heard by their community* by learning to advocate for themselves and the accommodations they need, and *fight to be valued by their community* by helping adults and authority figures to view young people as valuable partners and resources.

In order to gain the leadership skills they need to achieve “the big 3” listed above, CAY members identified a need for more opportunities to build skills in public speaking, communication, and conflict resolution. We are thrilled to share with you that CAY was recently awarded \$6,700 in grant funds to do just that! Thanks to Western Michigan University’s Students4giving program and Greater Kalamazoo United Way’s Youth United Way program, their dream has become a reality! For the next eight months, each and every CAY member will have the opportunity to gain leadership skills while doing

outdoor adventure activities with the Adventure Centre at Pretty Lake Camp. We can’t wait to update you on all of their progress!

For more information about how to become involved, contact Mackenzie Hunter, Youth Involvement Coordinator at Advocacy Services for Kids (ASK) at mackenzieh@askforkids.org or 269-343-5896.

Kalamazoo Wraps is hosting a Sibshop!

Saturday, June 26, 2010, 10am to 1pm.

Sibshops are a place where brothers and sisters of a person with serious emotional disturbance come together to have a good time and be themselves.

We provide the youth with 3 hours of fun activities, an opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings about having a sibling with special needs, and a yummy lunch. Join us!

Contact Mackenzie Hunter, before June 18, at 269-343-5896.



Above: As always, the MRC Drummers delighted Carnival goers at the Kalamazoo Wraps, 5th Annual, National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day Carnival, May 6. Below: It seemed everyone took a turn at Bair Lake Bible Camp’s Ga-ga Pit (a form of dodgeball) during the event.



Thank You To Our Carnival Co-Sponsors!

Each year, our Carnival celebrating National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day grows in size and impact. The Carnival offers a fun and relaxed atmosphere, where everyone is welcome, and attendees have an opportunity to learn about children's mental health issues and the services and resources available, for youth with serious emotional disturbance and their families, in Kalamazoo.

The Carnival is absolutely free to attend, however it is costly to host and has largely been funded by the 6-year federal grant awarded to Kalamazoo in 2005, to fund the *Kalamazoo Wraps* initiative. In addition, many area businesses and organizations have donated funds and materials to help cover the costs and to plan for the future, when the *Kalamazoo Wraps* grant funding is no longer available.

We'd like to thank the following system of care community partners, who have donated a great deal of time, funds, and energy to make the Carnival fun for everyone.

Thank you for your support of Kalamazoo's youth and families!

Donation Levels: Bronze: \$101-\$250 Silver: \$251-\$500 Gold: \$501-\$750

GOLD LEVEL SPONSOR:

The Kalamazoo County Department of Human Services partnered with Home Depot and hosted a booth that provided pots, soil and beautiful flowers. DHS staff shared information about its Foster Parent Program and the knowledgeable staff from Home Depot shared information about the best ways to grow healthy plants and offered potting tips.

The booth was a favorite at the Carnival! Everyone learned more about being a Foster Parent and left with a lovely plant for Mother's Day.



Thank You To Our Carnival Co-Sponsors!

SILVER LEVEL SPONSOR:

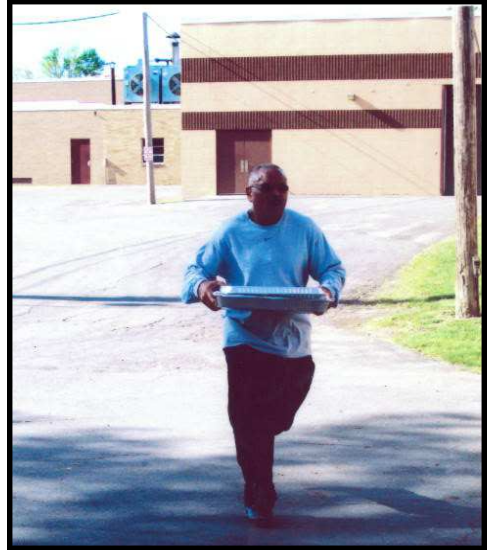


Bronson made a very generous donation of funds, which helped to cover the cost of renting the Hazel Gray Building and lawn at the Kalamazoo County Fairgrounds.

The location of the Carnival is very important. We are sure to create a barrier free environment, so everyone is able to move about easily and safely.

The Kalamazoo County Fairgrounds are clean and spacious, the staff are helpful, and the walking surfaces (parking lot, floors, and lawn) are all one level, which makes it the perfect location for the Carnival.

Proving that true success is only realized when all of us work together, KCMHSAS Executive Director, Jeff Patton, volunteered as a "Hot Dog Runner" (a hot and very tiring task) at our Carnival on May 6. Hundreds of hotdogs were served at the event. Thank you Jeff!



BRONZE LEVEL SPONSORS:

Advocacy Services for Kids (ASK) sponsored a Bouncy Castle.

Family & Children Services sponsored the Magical Balloon Guy & Suzi Q.

Forest View Hospital sponsored the 100% all Beef Hotdogs.

Gordon Water donated Water Coolers and Jugs of Water.

Kalamazoo Area Rehabilitation Services, P.C. sponsored Face-Painting by Clash's Kalamazoo Party Crew.

Merry Battles Counseling Center sponsored a Bouncy Castle.

Residential Opportunities Inc. sponsored the Cotton Candy and provided Volunteers to serve.

**Merry Battles
Counseling Center**



Thank You To Our Carnival Co-Sponsors!

Each of our Carnival's Booth Participants is a Co-Sponsor of the Carnival. Many businesses and agencies that serve youth and families in Kalamazoo host booths of information about the services they provide and include a fun game or activity for youth. In addition, each booth participant contributes financially to the Carnival by donating a booth fee of \$50.00.

Thank You to all this year's Booth Participants/Co-Sponsors:

Advocacy Service For Kids (ASK), **Arcadia Institute**, Association for Children's Mental Health, **Bair Lake Bible Camp**, Borgess Medical Center - Adolescent Behavioral Health, **Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kalamazoo**, Bronson, **Calling All Youth**, Care Source, **Catholic Family Services**, Children's Advocacy Resources for Education (C.A.R.E.S.), **9th Circuit Court-Family Division**, City of Portage, **Edison Neighborhood Association**, Elizabeth Upjohn Community Healing Center, **E.S.C.A.P.E. Fire Safety Trailer**, Family Acceptance Collaboration, **Family & Children Services**, Forest View Hospital, **GFM Enrichment Center**, Great Lakes Health Plan, **Gryphon Place**, Head Start of Kalamazoo County, **Housing Resources Inc.**, Kalamazoo Area Rehabilitation Services P.C., **Kalamazoo Community Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services' Adventure Group**, Kalamazoo Community Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services' *Services for Children & Families*, **Kalamazoo County Department of Human Services**, Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services Dept. - Healthy Homes Lead Poisoning Prevention, **Kalamazoo RESA - Positive Behavior and Literacy Support**, Kinetic Kids, **Learning Village Inc.**, Life Ambulance, **Lindsey Neal—Massage Therapy**, Lyons Club Kids' Sight, **Merry Battles Counseling Center**, New Latino Visions, **New York Life**, Parent Advisory Group, **Parent to Parent of SW Michigan**, Program for Special Skiers, **Residential Opportunities Inc.**

When our Evaluation Team surveyed attendees and asked, "What did you learn?", these were some of the responses:

- I learned that even if you don't have a child with a mental illness you can still be involved.
- I learned that there are many agencies that offer help.
- I learned that you should let your child's voice be heard more because they are people who maybe know things that you might not know.

The Kalamazoo Wraps Public Education & Social Marketing Workgroup and the Carnival Planning Committee worked hard to create another wonderful event celebrating children's mental health. If you'd like to help organize next year's event, please contact Renee Huff, Kalamazoo Wraps Public Education & Social Marketing Coordinator, at rhuff@kazooemh.org or 269-553-8123.

A special thank you to: Renee Huff – Carnival Coordinator, **Rebecca Clore** - Volunteer Coordinator, **Arlene Ferguson** - Entertainment Coordinator, and **Stephanie Thompson** - Booth Participant Coordinator. Rebecca Clore had an amazing group of Volunteers at this year's Carnival. Each year we refine plans and processes to become even more efficient while welcoming (and serving) an ever-growing number of attendees. Stephanie Thompson worked with Carnival Volunteers to ensure our Booth Participants had the help they needed throughout the Carnival, which resulted in an overwhelmingly positive responses from all. This year's Booth Participants stated that they not only had a great time meeting and having fun with community members, but also learned a great deal themselves about our system of care.

Arlene Ferguson did an outstanding job in scheduling a wide variety of wonderful musical entertainment.

THANK YOU! ...See you next year on Thursday, May 5, 2011!

Evaluation of the 2010 Carnival

Kalamazoo Wraps Annual National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day Carnival is about learning while having fun. Carnival Booth Participants had fun games and activities, but also shared information about children's mental health and the services available to youth and families.

The Kalamazoo Wraps Evaluation Team also had a booth of information to help carnival attendees learn about how much Kalamazoo Wraps is helping the community. Our reports can be found at www.kalamazoowrapsevaluation.org.

How much did Carnival attendees learn? Our survey for adults showed that approximately 90% of respondents learned about services available for children with mental health challenges. Of those who learned something, 75% found the information "very helpful." A full report of the survey findings can also be found on our website listed above.

We asked both adults and youth open-ended questions about what they liked about the carnival and what they learned from it. Here are their responses when asked,

"What have you learned or what did you like best?"



It was cool!
Wraps is working.
I love the carnival.
Great! I learnt a lot.



Magician! The cotton candy.

I learned that the carnival is fun!!

The Experiential Learning Classroom!

You get to eat and go on the bouncy castles!

The carnival was fun. LOL. The stations were cool.

I learned that there is an attorney for children's advocacy.

Spending time with people that I love and learning new things together.

The Marching Band music provides a great energy and sound. Good Going K-Zoo!!

I think this is a great event for the kids and family where they all can have a good time. Great job. Keep it up!

I enjoyed how patient the people at the different booths were. This is my first time attending. I was pleased!!

I enjoyed the food. I enjoyed the games we played. I enjoyed everything today!

There is a lot of cool stuff here. I like the face painting and the hot dogs.

It was an amazing volunteer experience, I enjoyed it a lot!!

It is a wonderful day, very good for parents and kids.

Everything was cool. Thanks! Let's do it Again!

There's lots of food! Food was awesome!!

The whole carnival. It's nice for the kids.

The alligators and face painting.

The dice games.

The music!



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

The Family Resource Center for KALAMAZOO WRAPS

Kalamazoo Wraps National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day Carnival is made possible, through the generosity and support of our system of care partners including the following local businesses and agencies who serve youth and families in Kalamazoo:

Advocacy Service For Kids (ASK), Alan Kazam, Arcadia Institute, Association for Children's Mental Health, Bair Lake Bible Camp, Ballet Folklorico Guanajuato, Borgess Medical Center - Adolescent Behavioral Health, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kalamazoo, Bronson, Buffalo Wild Wings, Burdick's Restaurant, Burger King, Calling All Youth, Care Source, Catholic Family Services, Children's Advocacy Resources for Education (C.A.R.E.S.), 9th Circuit Court-Family Division, City of Portage, Clash's Kalamazoo Party Crew, Comstock High School, Continental Lanes, Critchlow's Alligator Sanctuary, Denny's, Edison Neighborhood Association, Elizabeth Upjohn Community Healing Center, E.S.C.A.P.E. Fire Prevention Trailer, Family Acceptance Collaboration, Family & Children Services, Forest View Hospital, GFM Enrichment Center, Goggin Rentals, Gordon Water, Great Lakes Health Plan, Gryphon Place, Head Start of Kalamazoo County, Holiday Inn West—Kalamazoo, Home Depot, Housing Resources Inc., Kalamazoo 10 Theatre, Kalamazoo Area Rehabilitation Services P.C., Kalamazoo Community Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services' *Adventure Group*, Kalamazoo Community Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services' *Services for Children & Families*, Kalamazoo County Department of Human Services, Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services Dept. - Healthy Homes Lead Poisoning Prevention, Kalamazoo Pipe Band, Kalamazoo RESA - Positive Behavior and Literacy Support, K-D Sales, Kinetic Kids, Learning Village Inc., Life E.M.S. Ambulance, Lindsey Neal—Massage Therapy, Lyons Club Kids' Sight, Magical Balloon Guy & Suzi Q, Merry Battles Counseling Center, McDonalds, Meijer, Menards, Millwood Middle School and Loy Norrix High School Marching Bands and Drumlines, MRC & Dunuya Drummers, New Latino Visions, New York Life, Parent Advisory Group, Oasis Hot Tubs, Olive Garden Italian Restaurant, Papa Murphy's Pizza, Parent to Parent of SW Michigan, Program for Special Skiers, Red Robin, Rentalex, Reserve Division of the Kalamazoo County Sherriff's Department, Residential Opportunities Inc., Rollerworld, Sam's Club, Taco Bell, The Magical Balloon Guy and Suzi Q, The Trip, Treat Street, Walgreens, Walmart, Western Michigan University.

Thank You For Supporting Kalamazoo's Youth and Families!