

Community Partnership Enhancement Forum Legacy in Strathcona County

Our local Community Partnership Enhancement Forum consisted of three agencies, Strathcona County Family and Community Services, Child and Family Services, Region Six and McMan Youth, Family and Community Services. Our local group felt that the most successful legacy of this partnership has been our series of lunch and learns and larger professional/public events. These events resulted in enhanced relationship building between the member agencies and community service providers.

From 2005 to 2009 a series of noon hour training sessions were provided for various organizations and agencies throughout Strathcona County, including the three member agencies, health, education and non-profit groups. These workshops were offered over the lunch hour to increase the likelihood that busy professionals could attend.

A variety of professional development topics were chosen based on key areas identified by staff who work directly with children and families. Topics included eating disorders, drug trends, borderline personality disorder and emotional intelligence. The response to these noon hour workshops was very positive and members of the committee still receive feedback about many of the events.

Participants also enjoyed the ability to network with staff from other agencies and indicated that good connections were created through these community-based events. This allowed for more local connections to be fostered between agencies and their staff.

The local CPEF group in Strathcona County also held a series of larger speaker events from 2005 to 2009. Again these topics were selected based on feedback from front line staff, as well as issues identified within the community. Topics included building stronger communities, dealing with childhood disorders and real discipline. These professional development opportunities differed from the lunch and learn events in that it was a full day of training for staff. Where possible, separate evening sessions were planned to increase accessibility for community members. These larger events were very well attended, ranging from approximately 120 to 200 people.

Relationship building is the foundation of collaborative work; our CPEF activities provided opportunities to strengthen these relationships, which in turn has led to more integrated service for children and families.