Letter from the Principal

As I look back at 2015 and our many accomplishments, there are many reasons to be grateful. Let’s start with our commitment to Teen Pregnancy Prevention programs (TPP). Our five clients were successful in getting the word out that federal funding should be maintained for the U.S. DHHS funded TPP and Title X. Due to the efforts of many stakeholders, Congress approved full funding. We appreciate the work of our colleagues at The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, an invaluable resource that provided continuous updates and guidance. Thanks for keeping the lines of communication open and for all the hard work!

I am looking forward to building upon our existing partnerships for a prosperous year in 2016. This includes but is not limited to working to launch evidence-based teen pregnancy programs in communities with some of the most chronic rates of teen pregnancy, births and STDs in the nation: Broward and Miami-Dade County, Florida; St. Louis City and St. Louis County, Missouri; Milwaukee County, Wisconsin; and 19 counties throughout West Virginia. We will continue to face the challenging issue of teen pregnancy head-on by piloting and implementing evidence-based curricula, in-step with the needs of each particular community. Much work is already underway and is addressed further in this newsletter.

As efforts toward the TPP pilot year continue to gain momentum, we are also diligently working to launch two new grants entitled “New Pathways for Fathers and Families (Pathways)” and “Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education (HMRE).” Three of our clients are working towards these endeavors, two with Pathways and one with HMRE. Pathways projects include the Fathers’ Support Center, serving St. Louis City and St. Louis County, Missouri, and Milwaukee County Department of Child Support Services, serving Milwaukee County, Wisconsin. The HMRE grant will be implemented by the Family Workforce Centers of America, serving St. Louis City and St. Louis County, Missouri. A separate, brief description of Pathways and HMRE is included in this publication with greater details to follow in the next newsletter.

In this upcoming year, we will also continue our collaboration with our workforce development partners. Building upon past performance and evidence-based strategies, we will further develop industry-driven career pathways that strengthen families. Evidence-based workforce development programing involves, among others, cognitive-based employment curriculum, customized occupational skill training, and mentorships during employment.

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AMTC & Associates is grateful for our long-standing client partnerships. Founded in 1997, we expanded our capacities in 2001 to serve clients across the nation. Since that time, we have worked with diverse stakeholders in urban and rural communities to develop capacity in schools, community and faith-based organizations, and correctional settings. In so doing, we have impacted 94 communities nationwide, totaling 141 grants, leveraging more than $382 million in sustainable federal, state and local programs—making a real, positive difference in people’s lives.

We look forward to helping our clients grow in 2016. None of this work could be done without the collaboration of our amazing team of AMTC associates. Thank you for the privilege of being able to help organizations grow and sustain valuable programs and services throughout the nation.

Angela Turner, Principal

VALUES

• Integrity
  We do what is right and just.

• Pursuit of Excellence
  We continually strive to exceed expectations of our clients.

• Accountability
  We take responsibility for our individual and collective commitments.

• Collaboration
  We work together to achieve goals

Planning for Effective Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Evidence-based Teen Pregnancy Prevention programs (TPP) have a purposeful, targeted outcome—to prevent pregnancies, births and sexually transmitted diseases among teenagers. This ultimately improves the future of our youth, their families and our country. Those engaged in TPP understand that values and goals aligned with preventing pregnancies do not develop overnight. A framework based on sound evidence must be utilized to educate and build skills in early adolescence through adulthood.

AMTC & Associates has been guiding individuals through TPP every step of the way, through implementing programs, overcoming challenges and documenting successes to achieve goals. Currently, five agencies that are clients of AMTC were awarded 2015 TPP grants from the Office of Adolescent Health (OAH), a subsidiary of the U.S. Health and Human Services. AMTC & Associates will conduct program evaluations for those five agencies. Locations include Broward and Miami-Dade County, Florida; St. Louis City and St. Louis County, Missouri; Milwaukee County, Wisconsin; and 19 counties throughout West Virginia.

AMTC & Associates provided previous TPP evaluation services to these agencies and is attuned to each organization and the communities they serve.

In the first year of the new 2015 grant awards, OAH has established a 12-month planning period during which 24 planning milestones must be met. This must occur before full program implementation. Since July of 2015, these agencies have made progress toward meeting many of the initial milestones. While all share the common planning period tasks and due dates established by OAH, each agency is unique with its own set of goals, objectives and technical assistance needs. Each organization is working with AMTC to implement and measure planning period milestones. All five agencies are on track towards completing first year goals and project full implementation in July, 2016.

Particularly important at this stage is the establishment of a Community Advisory Group (CAG) and a Youth Leadership Council. The CAG helps sustain and guide the project, establishes expectations, provides curricula input, mobilizes the community and gets the word out about programs, among other responsibilities. For guidance with a CAG and YLC, the Office of Adolescent Health has pointed grantees to Strategies Guided by Best Practices for Community Mobilization1, a guide published by Advocates for Youth.

Whether an agency is new to community mobilization or has an established advisory group, the handbook may help strengthen the program’s effectiveness and help establish many long-lasting CAGs throughout the United States.

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Among AMTC’s five clients, a total of nine CAGs have already been formed. On average, CAGs have ten to fifteen members, although there is variance outside that range. CAGs comprise diverse members of the community that may include, but are not limited to, those vested in youth advocacy, trauma-informed care and private foundations. Some members represent faith-based organizations, state governments (including elected officials), school personnel (both teachers and administrators), other TPP agencies, LGBTQ advocates, juvenile justice, boards of education and the mental health and housing professions.

The Youth Leadership Council (YLC) comprises a segment of the target population served by the program. Like the CAG, it aims for authentic participation and shared decision making. The goal is that each participant is vested in the program and has a unique and significant role. Of the five current TPP agencies working with AMTC, there are a total of nine YLCs. These YLCs include 100 members and counting!

This is powerful progress! After all, everyone’s efforts count because the future of our youth is at stake. By developing the CAG, the YLC and other OAH milestones, more youth will be able to reach their lifelong milestones successfully and in good health. Keep up the great work!


2015 TPP Program Fidelity Conference was a Success

AMTC & Associates is privileged to work with clients nationwide. Although we usually network remotely, opportunities to meet in-person leads to enriched learning. On December 10 and 11, 2015, AMTC coordinated its annual training program for our five Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program (TPPP) clients in the exciting town of New Orleans, Louisiana. The goal of this year’s training was to provide a framework and strategies for the TPP grantees as they complete required planning year activities through June of 2016.

The conference was attended by approximately 70 participants and included agencies serving diverse communities from Missouri, West Virginia, Wisconsin and South Florida.

The first day of the conference opened with a warm welcome and conference overview by Angela Turner, Principal of AMTC. She then presented on program implementation and how to work towards an evidence-based evaluation plan for best possible outcomes.

Melanie Porterfield, Senior Evaluation Associate, followed with a discussion of performance measurement policies and data collection tools. Participants also heard from Ryan Adomavich, Evaluation Associate, on protocol for survey administration.

Attendees from OIC of South Florida and Fit Kids of America, enjoying lunch conversation

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After lunch, Lori Rolleri, Evaluation Consultant, presented a session titled, “What’s a Determinant Anyway?” Rolleri reviewed some of the common psychological determinants addressed in evidence-based interventions (EBIs) in order to prevent teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Research suggests many determinants can be addressed in the classroom. These determinants include: knowledge, perception of risk, attitudes and beliefs, peer norms, skills and self-efficacy, intentions and parent-child communication. Participants had the opportunity to identify determinants and examine curriculum-based learning activities that are designed to change the determinants, specifically through a lesson plan from the evidence-based curriculum, *Making Proud Choices*.²

Rolleri began the next day by delving into a Behavior-Determinant-Intervention (BDI) Theory of Change Logic Model. This approach begins with the end in mind—identifying desired outcomes. Then one examines the determinants (such as those listed above) and the intervention activities to affect behavior change that leads to intended outcomes. Participants learned the four steps to completing a BDI logic model. The presentation was very much appreciated, particularly among managers and educators.

“Guidance and Best Practices” focused on community mobilization and was co-presented by Torri Childs, Field Research Associate, and Crystal Agnew, of Trinity Church. Among other topics, the presenters addressed an OAH requirement that grantees ensure programs are “taken to scale” to ensure that all youth in the targeted community receive teen pregnancy prevention services. This requirement serves not only to ensure all youth receive the prevention message but also to encourage community mobilization.

One of the best parts of the conference came through the client presentations about their programs. Clients were asked to provide a five to ten-minute creative vignette about their program. Some expressed their message through skits, music and/or poems. Some were live, others recorded, but all presented with enthusiasm. “One of the biggest takeaways,” notes Porterfield, “was the excitement around the work and leaving the conference with plans in place to continue the planning year.” Childs agrees, “The collaboration between the partners was one of the most engaging, being able to bring them all together and share ideas.”

Many thanks to all presenters—as well as to each participant—for making the conference an overwhelming success. We look forward to seeing each partner at next year’s training.


New 2015-2016 Responsible Fatherhood and Healthy Marriage Grants Awarded to AMTC Clients!
By Ann Wolter

**Fathers’ Support Center (St. Louis), New Pathways for Fathers and Families**
The goal of this project is to provide evidence-based responsible parenting education, economic stability and mobility services and healthy marriage education to 2,320 economically disadvantaged parents over the five year grant period. The grant will focus on fathers in St. Louis, Missouri, in order to increase the well-being and economic stability of adults and children. **Local evaluator Washington University will provide impact evaluation.**

**Milwaukee Co Dept. of Child Support Serv. (CSS), New Pathways for Families and Fathers**
The goal of this project is to strengthen positive father-child engagement, improve employment and economic mobility opportunities, and improve healthy relationships and marriage by delivering an Integrated Responsible Fatherhood Program to 2,800 fathers over the five year grant period. **CSS has been selected as a potential participant in the federal government’s evaluation of New Pathways for Fathers and Families grant programs.**

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Family Workforce Centers of America (FWCA) (St. Louis), Healthy Marriage
The purpose of this project is to deliver evidence-based healthy marriage relationship education linked with economic stability/mobility services. FWCA will serve 1,000 low-income high school youth, 2,925 couples or individuals interested in marriage and 1,750 married couples (5,675 total over the five year grant). **FWCA has been selected as a potential participant in the federal government’s evaluation of Healthy Marriage grant programs.**

AMTC and Associates is working diligently in the planning period to help each of these clients confirm their models, coordinate training and implement federal performance measures in order to be ready for a pilot program launch later this spring.

**AMTC Welcomes Geneva Ware-Rice**

AMTC is pleased to welcome Geneva Ware-Rice, MSW, Family Strengthening Programs Consultant. Ms. Ware-Rice is a retired Branch Chief with the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance in Washington, DC. Her expertise is extensive, with over 30 years in the social services arena. This includes over 20 years of Federal discretionary grant experience, including program development, monitoring and oversight, training and supervision. She is adept as a trainer, facilitator, expert panelist, keynote speaker and workshop presenter. Ms. Ware-Rice will be featured more in depth in the following newsletter. Stay tuned!