



Network News

Summer 2007* Cedar Rapids, Iowa

NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARD

On July 17, Brian Stutzman, Young Parents Network (YPN) Executive Director and the Four Oaks Vice President of Prevention Services, was awarded the Corridor Business Journal Nonprofit Leadership Excellence Award. This award was designed to identify and recognize an exemplary nonprofit leader, within the counties of Iowa, Johnson, Linn and Washington, whose accomplishments have advanced their organization. The recipient had to personify outstanding leadership characteristics such as personal integrity and ethics and have the ability to engage, inspire and motivate board and staff. Brian credits his staff and board of directors in receiving the award. "One of the things that is special about YPN is the engagement of a very proactive board of directors and leadership staff," said Mr. Stutzman.

Brian has led YPN by example according to his nominators as he rose from being Young Dads Coordinator in 1997 to Director of Outreach Services a little more than a year later, to stepping up to Acting Executive Director in early 2000. A few months later he was chosen to serve as the Executive Director at the age of 27.

Several people nominating Brian for the award commented on his strengths in building relationships and motivating staff and volunteers within the organization, emphasizing collaboration. Under Brian's leadership YPN has expanded programming doing more long-term, comprehensive planning, such as with the Four Oaks Bridge Dummermuth Intergenerational Center in Cedar Rapids. The center's purpose is to bring together people of all ages, races, and economic backgrounds in a learning atmosphere, where youth, seniors and working adults connect and contribute through the arts, technology and other opportunities.



*Brian Stutzman
(pictured at left)
accepting the
Corridor
Business Journal
Nonprofit
Leadership
Excellence
Award*

In accepting his award at the awards ceremony at Hancher Auditorium, Brian said, "The other important thing we've done is being self-critical and asked how we could do a better job. I think we've evaluated what we've done well and received a response with a high level of respect regarding our ability to deliver services."

Congratulations Brian on this outstanding recognition award, and thank you for all you do to strengthen families and children within eastern Iowa.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Entering the new fiscal year is a time of transition and of great significance for not for profit agencies. It is critical that all of the yearly goals stated to funders get accomplished during this time. There is not a fifth quarter to push off these well intentioned goals and it is now crunch time.

This year, not only were there the usual demands at play, but the winds of change were upon us in a more dramatic way. Agencies such as YPN whom have partnered with United Way over the years are preparing for a change called the "Community Impact Model.

There are numerous programs across many organizations that are funded through United Way. For a variety of reasons, some programs have remained unchanged and may choose to remain the same. However, this shift in funding implementation offers boards and staff the opportunity to look within their agencies and evaluate the need for program change and to ask themselves several critical questions: Do the services we provide truly have community impact and, if so, what is it and how do you measure it?

These seem like common sense questions, but the reality is organizations are just like people. If they are not challenged, the potential for complacency becomes higher and the desire to change becomes less of a priority. The communities served by YPN and many other organizations are rapidly changing. We must continue to monitor these changes and evaluate the effectiveness of our mission. I commend United Way for being proactive and helping to make this evolution a more global effort. I am optimistic that many will see this as an opportunity to challenge what has been done and evolve for the future.

Best Regards,



*Executive Director
Young Parents Network*



**Brian Stutzman,
Executive Director**

KAREN GORSH CELEBRATES 10 YEARS AS A YPN VOLUNTEER

Karen Gorsh started with Young Parents Network in 1997 when she signed up for facilitator training. In March 2003, she became a Certified Childbirth Educator, at her own time and expense, and has become our Childbirth group facilitator.

Karen is a dedicated and valued YPN volunteer who always goes above and beyond for the participants she works with. Karen quickly builds strong relationships with the young prenatal participants. They trust and respect her and appreciate the emotional support she provides them.

In addition to leading Tuesday evening prenatal group meetings, Karen provides extra support to families by providing transportation to doctor appointments and responding when she receives calls in the middle of the night in the case of domestic violence situations. As part of this role, she has also been the hospital support person for some of our young mothers who have no other support person for them at the time of their child's birth.

Thank you, Karen, not only for your dedication and commitment to YPN, but also for the passion you put into the time spent with us!



**Karen Gorsh
YPN Volunteer**

2006 YPN Donors

We would like to acknowledge the friends of YPN who have supported our agency and our mission in 2006. We greatly appreciate both the monetary and in-kind support from these donors. On behalf of the children and families served by YPN, thank you for making a difference.

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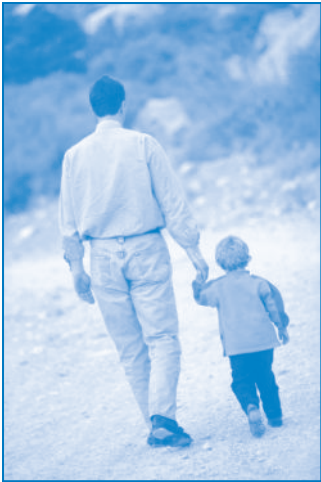
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NATIONAL FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE GRANT



The National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) awarded Young Parents Network, Linn County Parenting Programs and Jane Boyd with a capacity-building award, in the amount of \$25,000 to increase their ability to serve area families and fathers. In total, 387 applications were submitted from organizations throughout the country and only 20 were chosen for this initiative.

The grant will be used to design a comprehensive fatherhood program with the overall goal of recruiting and retaining fathers. “At YPN, we believe that fathers play a unique and irreplaceable role in the lives of children,” said Brian Stutzman, YPN Executive Director. “The NFI grant will allow us to reach out to more fathers, promote the importance of their role, and to strengthen families.”

Jim Judd, of Cedar Rapids, has recently been hired as Fatherhood Project Coordinator. Jim is currently Itinerant Orientation and Mobility Specialist at the Iowa Braille School in Vinton and has a long history in education of young children. In addition, he is a volunteer facilitator for the YPN Dads Group on Tuesday evenings. Jim will be coordinating activities related to the capacity building grant that continues through November, 2007.

An Advisory Council is being developed to provide vision and guidance to this Fatherhood Project. Additional activities within the next three months include developing a comprehensive program design, developing a marketing plan, developing new marketing tools, providing staff training on fatherhood issues and planning a Fatherhood Summit to be held within the next 6-8 months.

The NFI awards the grant in pursuit of its mission of improving the well-being of children by increasing the proportion of children growing up with involved, responsible, and committed fathers in their lives. YPN and Jane Boyd are excited to get started on this wonderful and much needed program.

FIRST ANNUAL BIG TRUCK NIGHT

Iowa County Parents as Teachers/Young Parents Network hosted its First Annual “Big Truck Night”, Tuesday August 7, at the Mary Welsh Elementary School parking lot. Despite the near 100 degree temperatures, a large crowd of PAT participants and other community members attended. Up close and personal experiences were offered by eight local businesses with nine different service vehicles for kids and families to explore. Parents also had the opportunity to see how their placement and type of car seats worked with the Car Seat Safety Check. Those volunteering their time and vehicles included:

- Williamsburg Fire Department-tanker and pumper trucks
- Williamsburg Police-squad car
- Williamsburg School District-school bus
- Cox Sanitation-garbage truck
- Weiser Precast-boom truck
- Post Office-mail truck
- City of Williamsburg-street sweeper
- Hummer-semi tractor
- Michelle Malloy-Car Seat Safety Check



Young Parents Network and Parents as Teachers is an early childhood family education and support program that begins prenatal through kindergarten. It is a comprehensive program, offering parents a combination of personal visits, group meetings, developmental screenings, and resource referrals. A strong research-based curriculum is used by certified parent educators who provide age-appropriate information to parents and help them lay a solid foundation for their children’s school and life success.

The staff at PAT/YPN would like to thank those who volunteered their time, knowledge, and equipment. A great time was had by all!



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YOUNG PARENTS NETWORK MISSION

Young Parents Network is dedicated to the prevention of adolescent pregnancy and building successful families.

YPN serves families in Benton, Cedar, Delaware, Dubuque, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, and Washington Counties.