

Children, Youth & Family Consortium

CYFC Monthly

CYFC Monthly — October 2016

CYFC Team to Take Lessons From the Field on the Road to Address Transgender Youth Issues

Judy Myers, Extension Educator — CYFC

Imagine that you are an adolescent who feels unsafe everywhere you turn — at home, at school, and in your community. This is the situation for many transgender youth who are at higher risks for homelessness, abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, and suicide than other gender nonconforming young people.

Transgender youth live throughout Minnesota, in rural and urban communities alike. CYFC educators and staff believe that addressing the issues that transgender youth face in Minnesota is critical to improving both their health and the health of communities in which they live. CYFC is in a unique position to address these issues in collaboration with our resident visiting scholar, Jenifer McGuire, Ph.D. Dr. McGuire, associate professor in the University of Minnesota Department of Family Social Science, is an internationally known expert in transgender youth research. Her research spans three unique domains: clinic-based research with children and adolescents, school-based research with middle and high school-age youth, and family-based research with adolescents and young adults.

In the coming months, CYFC will host a number of Lessons From the Field seminars on the topic of transgender youth. In lieu of a broadcast conference this year, the seminars on transgender youth will be held at various locations around the state. During these visits, Dr. McGuire and a team of graduate students and Extension educators will meet with professionals and families to discuss topics relevant to transgender youth. The team will host the first seminar January 24 in Andover, with subsequent seminars planned for Minneapolis, Bemidji, St. Cloud, and Morris. We are still working to identify one or two more Minnesota locations for Lessons From the Field.

During visits around Minnesota, Dr. McGuire and the CYFC team will discuss gender as a spectrum and where transgender youth fit on that spectrum. The team also will address topics such as:

- Why discussion of challenges faced by transgender youth is relevant for both urban and rural communities.
- Definitions and vocabulary around transgender youth, including how terms show up in everyday interactions.
- Standards of practice for professionals who work with transgender youth.
- The stages of development for transgender youth, as well as how the medical system and mental health community care for them.
- How communities can support families and families can support their transgender youth.

In conjunction with the Lessons From the Field seminars, Dr. Vanessa Laci, a researcher from Ireland, will spend two weeks visiting and talking with professionals and parents in the Twin Cities in February 2017. She will discuss the innovative work being done with transgender youth internationally. While in Minnesota, Dr. Laci will meet with individuals and groups such as educators, parents, community agencies, and others providing support for transgender youth. Those meetings will address transgender youth-related issues, such as creating a supportive school climate and ensuring these youths' safety; finding and using appropriate and effective community resources, and equipping families (of transgender youth) with education and support that promotes resilience and mediates stress. CYFC Educators will use information from Dr. Laci's meetings to inform our work on transgender youth.

Breaking Down the Challenges

So, what are the physical and mental health risks that transgender youth confront and how "big" of an issue is this? According to a small sampling of recent community-wide surveys of homelessness in Minnesota youth, rates of homelessness ranges from 12 to 35 percent among LGB youth. As many as 7 percent of these youth identify as transgender ([National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)). On a larger scale, national estimates indicate that more than nine million people identify as GLBT, roughly the population of the state of New Jersey. The national or state statistics of transgender youth are less available because data is less reliable; adolescents who depend on parental care may choose to remain "closeted" until they are older. This puts youth at risk of resorting to high-risk behaviors to obtain puberty suppressant medication, such as engaging in [survival sex](#), i.e., trading sex for cash or shelter.

Transgender youth report higher rates of bullying and physical abuse than their lesbian, gay, and bisexual peers (as well as their heterosexual peers), and they represent higher numbers of homelessness. Unfortunately, standard homeless shelters are too often unsafe harbors for transgender youth, who are often assaulted and suffer discrimination. What's more, there's a shortage of specialized shelters with trained and supportive staff for transgender youth because of lack of funding. All this means transgender youth are at great risk of engaging in [survival sex](#).

School is especially challenging for transgender youth because of a lack of effective anti-bullying interventions, safe bathroom and locker room facilities, and student clubs such as those sponsored by the [Gay Straight-Alliance Network](#). When schools lack these resources and supports, transgender youth report higher incidences of physical attacks from peers and they experience poorer academic performance and higher dropout rates than their heterosexual peers. As a result, transgender youth experience all the problems that any high school dropout would, including few employment opportunities and high rates of criminal actions, such as drug and alcohol abuse.

Watch for More Information

Helping professionals and families help transgender youth meet the risks they face is why CYFC is taking Lessons From the Field on the road over the coming months. The challenges of homelessness, poor health and nutrition, abuse and lack of necessary resources that transgender youth encounter too often is a topic that deserves opportunities to build knowledge that empowers and supports youth and families. These regional Lessons from the Field discussions are intended for parents, educators, and professionals who work with families and youth. If you live or work in the Andover region, please join us January 24th. More details will follow Watch future issues of *CYFC Monthly* for details on the Andover seminar, as well as dates and details on the Bemidji, Morris, and Minneapolis visits and for information about Vanessa Laci's February meetings.

Finally, if you want more information about specific issues related to transgender youth, please contact me at myers463@umn.edu. Following the visits, CYFC plans to create videos and resource lists that will be available on our [CYFC website](#).

Consortium News

Bruce Vento School Garden Updates

- Students now have a three-tier rolling stand where they can grow seedlings or keep outdoor plants under lights. This will extend experiential learning for students about climate changes, growing cycles, soil, and moisture content.
- Kirsten Saylor, Bruce Vento's schoolyard garden coordinator, has been working with students to put outdoor gardens "to bed" for the winter and has begun planning for next year's garden.

Learn more about the partnership between CYFC and Bruce Vento Elementary School on the [Healthy Bodies. Healthy Minds. Healthy Learners web page](#).

CYFC Staff to Present at National Council on Family Relations Conference

The 2016 National Conference on Family Relations (NCFR) annual conference will be held Nov. 2–5 in Minneapolis, and will focus on family and human rights. Extension Educators and CYFC staff [Judy Myers](#) and Sara Langworthy, along with Sarah Sannes and Vikki Johnson, will present "Trauma-sensitive Environments: Two Schools' Approaches to Repairing and Restoring Student Wellbeing to Enhance Learning" at the poster symposium. Sara will also join [Sara Benning](#) and [Rebecca Schlafer](#) in presenting "Communicating Research to Inform Practices and Policies on Incarceration."

Extension Educator and CYFC staff member [Cari Michaels](#), along with co-presenter Deb Cavitt, will present "Mental Health and Human Rights: Building a New Approach that Reaches Everyone" at the conference, as well as online on the [Cultural Providers Network](#) with [William Allen, Ph.D.](#) Register for the conference on the [NCFR website](#).

CYFC Scholar in Residence's Work Featured on CE+HD Connect Website

The article "Body as Canvas" reflects on how some transgender youth use body art as a constructive and creative way to document their changing identities and relationship with their bodies. CYFC's scholar in residence, [Jenifer McGuire, Ph.D.](#), wrote the article based on a recent study she led of 90 transgender youth who were interviewed on their use of body art. Read the entire article on the [College of Education and Human Development website](#).

Center for Family Development Announcements

Celebrating Minnesota's Schools and Farmers

October is National Farm to School Month, a time during which University of Minnesota Extension and statewide partners recognize the importance of farm to school programs as a means to improve child nutrition, support local economies, and educate children about the origins of food. Learn how Minnesota is celebrating Farm to School Month on the [Family Matters blog](#).

University & Community Conferences, Training, and Resources

Bringing STEM to Nepal in the Wake of an Earthquake

[Bhaskar Upadhyay, Ph.D.](#), science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) expert for [CYFC's partnership](#) with Bruce Vento Elementary School, recently traveled to Nepal to research how science education in indigenous and rural areas fosters food security and local actions. Read more about this project on the [College of Education and Human Development website](#).

Trainings Offered on Global Citizenship, White Privilege, and Social Emotional Learning

Sponsor: University of Minnesota Extension Center for Youth Development

Global Citizenship and White Privilege

Co-sponsored by Youth Intervention Programs Association (YIPA)

Date: October 20, 2016

Cost: Free for YIPA members, \$60 for non-members

Location: Marshall, MN

Get a better understanding of the implications of white privilege and systemic racism by participating in this training featuring keynote speaker [Jennifer Skuza, Ph.D.](#) Learn about the advantages associated with race and build your awareness of systemic racism. More information and registration is available on the YIPA website.

Mapping Social Emotional Learning in Youth

Date: October 25, 2016

Cost: \$100 per organization (teams of 2 to 3)

Location: St. Paul, MN

Develop a deeper understanding of how your program offerings align with social and emotional skill building by “mapping” your own program. Participants will leave with tools to further social emotional learning (SEL) in their work, feedback from peers on their SEL map, and an action plan for next steps to further SEL. Learn more and register on the Center for Youth Development website. [no longer active]

Global Citizenship Starts with your Neighbor: Strategies for Working with Youth

Date: November 15, 2016

Cost: \$30-35

Location: St. Joseph, MN

[Jennifer Skuza, Ph.D.](#), will focus her keynote speech on global citizenship — how to develop globally minded young people using the resources in your own neighborhood. Professional development and networking opportunities will also be offered through a youth organization panel, world café, lunch, and workshops. More information and registration available on the [Center for Youth Development website](#).

Podcast Focuses on Living with Autism

Sponsor: MomEnough

[Marti Erickson, Ph.D.](#), founding director of CYFC, and her daughter, Erin Erickson, recently interviewed [Elizabeth Reeve, M.D.](#) and author [Elizabeth Verdick](#) about how they help their sons who have autism navigate the social and emotional challenges they encounter at home, school, and beyond. Listen to the podcast on the [MomEnough website](#).

CYFC Founding Director Marti Erickson to Present on Attachment

Sponsor: Minnesota Psychological Association

Date: November 4, 2016

Cost: \$15-75

Credits: 3 continuing education credits

Location: St. Paul, MN

[Marti Erickson, Ph.D.](#), will present the latest information on the major patterns of parent-infant attachment and how these patterns develop. Learn how attachment research applies to your practice and how to identify recent social and parenting trends that can impact the quality of parent-child attachment. More information and registration is available on the [Minnesota Psychological Association website](#).

Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health Offers Fall Training

Sponsor: Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health (MACMH)

Effective Intervention with Anxious Youth Using CBT, Acceptance, and Mindfulness-Based Techniques

Date: November 18, 2016

Cost: \$89

Credits: 3 continuing education hours

Location: St. Paul, MN

[Ann Layne, Ph.D., L.P.](#), will train participants on cognitive-behavioral intervention for anxious youth, emphasizing the use of graded exposure, desensitization, and habituation techniques. Dr. Layne will also discuss mindfulness-based meditation and acceptance-based techniques. Learn more on the [MACMH website](#).

Sexting, Snaps, and Social Media: Trends in Teens and Technology

Date: November 10, 2016

Cost: \$89

Credits: 3 continuing education hours

Location: St. Paul, MN

[Jennifer Londgren, Ed.D., L.M.F.T., N.C.C.](#), and [Thad Shunkwiler, M.S., L.M.F.T., L.P.C.C., R.P.T.](#), will explore social media applications that are popular with youth and explore the risks and benefits of using them. Learn how to make social media a safe, positive experience for teens. More information and registration is available on the [MACMH website](#).

Conference to Focus on Healing Communities

Sponsor: Minnesota Communities Caring for Children and Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota

Date: November 10-11, 2016

Cost: \$150

Credits: 10.5 continuing education units

Location: Eagan, MN

Join keynote speakers [Roy Wade Jr. M.D.](#), [Sam Simmons, L.A.D.C.](#), and [Henry Emmons, M.D.](#), for the 2016 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Summit that will address childhood trauma and promoting community-level healing. Breakout sessions on historical trauma, healing from trauma, creating trauma-informed schools and health care systems, and self-care will be offered. Learn more and register on the [Prevent Child Abuse Minnesota website](#).

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