“Individualized mentoring and training is at the core of ASK’s Family Support Program. In 09-10, 2246 contacts on behalf of 473 youths were made to ASK’s Family Support Program. 96% of individuals contacted for follow-up indicated that the information ASK provided was useful. Family Support Partners provided 1751.5 hours of support to families in 09-10 and attended 360 meetings (as requested by families).

Support groups are an integral element to empowerment as families are encouraged to share, learn, network, and provide support to each other. In 2009/2010, 82 parents and 31 youth participated in ASK Support Groups including:

- Monthly Parent Support Groups with a general focus
- Weekly support group for parents/caregivers of youth involved in Juvenile Drug Court
- Weekly support group for youth involved in Juvenile Drug Court

In effort to reduce barriers to services, ASK provides childcare during support and advisory group meetings; ASK cared for 59 children in 2009/2010.

"I went from being a frazzled, frustrated parent, to being an effective advocate."

**Family Support**

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**Community Outreach**

Community outreach is essential to system transformation; education serves to raise awareness of children’s mental health needs and resources, and reduce stigma placed on youth and families. This year Advocacy Services for Kids (ASK), Parent Advisory Group (PAG) and Calling All Youth (CAY) collectively reached over 8,612 individuals at local, state, and national levels.

A focus on providing consistent and quality educational opportunities for families was the foundation of new initiatives such as the Parent Project and Sibshops, as well as strengthening ASK Family & Community Trainings. This year 82 family and community members participated in Advocacy Services for Kids’ training opportunities.

**Outreach by Type**

- Presentation Total
- Training Total
- Booth Total
- Panel Total
“I’m someone younger people look up to, and that makes me feel proud.”

Shaunie hone her skills during Leadership Training at ACPL.

“My name is Shaunie Hill and I am a member of Calling All Youth (CAY).

As a young woman I am gaining skills that I will need later in life and I do believe that I have gathered many skills from Calling All Youth. I have learned to advocate for myself, I’ve learned to speak up and use my voice because it was given to me for a great reason.

CAY has helped me stretch my faith in myself and be open to new things. Being a member in CAY has allowed me to participate in leadership trainings to develop my leadership skills, be able to communicate with others, work with others and help others effectively. CAY has also helped me overcome one of my biggest fears; to speak in front of a large group of people. Now I can speak on panels and at conferences without being afraid. CAY has helped me accomplish my goal to be a better people-person. Now I feel so much more connected to many people.

In CAY I have grown. I’ve grown from being the shy, new kid who sits in the corner to now being a leader and a mentor. I’m someone younger people look up to and that makes me feel proud. CAY has given me a huge sense of accomplishment that I want to share with the world. I’ve been involved in a service learning project in my neighborhood and I have been able to travel to Atlanta, Georgia to use my voice. I feel so strong.

I can communicate with whomever I choose, I can speak up on a topic to make change, I can work with a group of people to get a task done; and all of these skills I have gained from CAY. Because of CAY I can use my voice with confidence."

Family Voice

ASK continues to host and facilitate Parent Advisory Group (PAG) and Calling All Youth (CAY), the parent and youth advisory committees for Kalamazoo Wraps. In 09-10, 45 parents and 56 youth participated in systems advocacy.

The purpose of these committees is to infuse parent and youth voice into the system of care for children’s mental health. They provide invaluable feedback and guidance to system partners within our community, but also at the state and national levels.

Generous funding from Western Michigan University Students4Giving and Kalamazoo Youth United Way, and funding and mentoring from Youth Driven Space, enabled Calling All Youth to pilot a leadership training program in collaboration with the Adventure Center at Pretty Lake (ACPL). The program aided members to increase their skills in cooperative teamwork, community engagement, effective leadership, communication, and increase self-confidence.

Financial Report

ASK is able to provide services with the help of various funding sources, donors, volunteers, and strong community partnerships. Together we seek to build and maintain a comprehensive supportive system of care for children’s mental health.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Expenditures</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants &amp; Contracts</td>
<td>Program $434,090</td>
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<td>GKUW Support</td>
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Board of Directors:

- Thomas G. King, Chairperson
- Donald Roberts, Vice Chairperson
- Sue Chartier, Vice Chairperson*
- Michael Ankley, Treasurer
- Laura Mercadal, Secretary
- Mary Hoekstra*
- Duane Feldman
- Nadine Godin-Nassaney
- Susan Potts
- Simone Snyder

* Denotes retired from service but active during 2009-2010 fiscal year

Staff:

- Administrative:
  - Dianne K. Shaffer, Executive Director
  - Shellie Bosma, Operations Manager
  - Kate Gross, Development & Communications Coordinator
  - Jazmin Williams, Administrative Assistant

- Family Support Program:
  - Kathy Howard, Team Leader
  - Christine Edrich
  - Mary Beth Mapes
  - Anthony Poplar
  - Ginger Skidmore

- Youth Voice:
  - Mackenzie Hunter, Youth Involvement Coordinator
  - Deondra Magett, Youth Involvement Coordinator Assistant
  - Justin Hartness, Peer Mentor

- Kent County Initiative:
  - Beth Henry, Lead Family Contact
  - Taj Burgen, Youth Engagement Specialist
Dear Friends,

Growth seems to be the resounding theme for ASK over this past year as we have worked to serve more families in the most effective ways. We expanded our efforts beyond Kalamazoo County into Kent County and began partnering with Network 180 on their federal SAMHSA grant, Community Family Partnership (CFP). ASK hired the Lead Family Contact and Youth Engagement Specialist for CFP and provided some technical assistance as well. We were also awarded a grant through Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services to hire an additional Family Support Partner to provide outreach in the Northside neighborhood and partner with the Northside Association for Community Development.

Providing additional trainings and support groups is another way ASK has grown this past year. We began providing Sibshops™ for typically developing youth who have a sibling with an emotional challenge. These Sibshops™ help youth connect with others in similar situations, have some fun, and share their experiences and feelings with others who understand. We launched the Parent Project™ in partnership with the 9th Circuit Court – Family Division. It is a 16-week parenting group targeted at families raising youth with behavior that is extremely difficult to manage. The response to this group has been incredible!

On behalf of the entire ASK staff, thank you for your continued support and partnership. Remember, raising kids can be tough. If you need help, just ASK!

Dianne.

Dianne K. Shaffer
Executive Director

A special Thank You to our generous donors, funders & partners:

1st Presbyterian Church, Ann Arbor Teen Center/The Neutral Zone, Arcadia Institute, Arcus Foundation, Association for Children's Mental Health, AWARE Support Group, Caitlyn Ryan, Calling All Youth, Community Advocates, Dee Callendar, Elizabeth Upjohn Community Healing Centers, Cynthia D. Green, Douglass Community Association, Family & Children Services, Goodwill Industries, Hanover Insurance, Joel D. Murr, John & Joyce Petro, Judy Mintel; WOFR-FM, Kalamazoo 9th Judicial Circuit Court, Family Division, Kalamazoo County Child Abuse & Neglect Council, Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Kalamazoo Community Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services, Kalamazoo County Substance Abuse Task Force, Greater Kalamazoo United Way, Kalamazoo Gay & Lesbian Resource Center, Kalamazoo Great Start Collaborative, Kalamazoo Baby & Family Expo, Kalamazoo Wraps, Kalamazoo Kiwanis, Kalamazoo Public Schools, Kalamazoo Department of Human Services, George & Kelly Williston, KRESA, KydNet, Maureen Corts, Michigan Association for Community Mental Health Boards, Michigan Career & Technical Institute Students & 4th Annual Dustin Robbins Fishing Contest, Monroe County Community Mental Health, MRC Industries, MSU Extension/Kalamazoo County; Kinship Care Families Program, MSU/KCMS, Nancy M. Hamilton, National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, National Georgetown Training Institute, Network 180, Northside Association for Community Development, ONEplace @ Kalamazoo Public Library, Parent Advisory Group, Parent to Parent of Southwest Michigan, Pfizer Employees, Portage Community Center, Portage Public Schools, Prevention Works, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Stryker Employees, Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), The Gilmore Center at Bronson Hospital, Volunteer Center of Greater Kalamazoo, Western Michigan University, Students4Giving, Wolverine Pipeline.
“Education is a social process. Education is growth. Education is not a preparation for life; education is life itself.” — John Dewey

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