



Successes & Challenges

Prevention & Early Intervention

In FY 2014, ARCC delivered student and family services in 21 schools across 4 school districts in East and Central San Jose. Districts included Alum Rock, Oak Grove, Mt. Pleasant, and Luther Burbank. Services were delivered by a team of 25 including Clinicians, Family Specialists, Family Partners, and Intake Coordinators, all overseen by two Clinical Program Managers. Partnerships with schools, CBO's, Mental Health Department, and most importantly the children and families committed to the services, were key to a successful year.

Successes:

- **Strengthen Families Program**- Total of 8 Series were offered; Participant retention rate above 90% across the board; Average of 14 clients per workshop;
- **Client Engagement**- Caseloads stayed high all year- Clinicians averaged 18, but often carried more than 20; Family Partners and Family Specialists averaged 15; clients often engaged in multiple services
- **Triple P**- significant increase in the use of this EBP; 75% of Triple P clients engaged in additional services
- **Collaboration**- Strategic planning with schools during summer set up a strong year from the start; continued communication with district representatives through one-on-ones or monthly team meetings kept service provision smooth; formed partnership with Foothill Community Health Center to streamline services and avoid duplication; strengthened partnerships with Grail Family Services and Community Solutions to leverage services in shared districts.

Challenges:

- **Recruiting Clinicians**- recruiting qualified, bilingual Clinicians to fill vacancies takes a very long time;
- **Deeper end issues**- clients served often required more than early intervention or prevention services;
- **Visibility on Campus**- staff had a difficult time making themselves available and integrating themselves as part of the school's "family", filling their days with client visits either in the home or on campus; Program Managers need to make more time to visit school site principals;

Acknowledgements:

- **Santiago Gaitan, SLS Coordinator at ARUSD**- Santiago eases family engagement by making them aware of the referrals and ensuring proper documentation is executed; he also takes care of logistics for SFP, and secures space for staff to serve clients on campus; Santiago also addresses any challenges that we have, as well as brings challenges directly to our team when something needs to be addressed;
- **Laurie Clarque Breton, Director of Student Support Services at MPESD**- Laurie spent significant time with ARCC and Foothill over the summer to plan for the start of the year; She also led collaborative meetings with both agencies, and made herself available for one-on-one meetings throughout the year to ensure logistics were taken care of and address challenges;
- **Elizabeth Tjader, Special Ed and Mental Health Coordinator and Fiona Wu, School Psychologist at OGSD**- Elizabeth and Fiona meet with our entire OGSD assigned team on a monthly basis to discuss cases, troubleshoot, and provide direction; they are very involved and provide a great deal of input and leadership which helps guide what we do and how it can best be done with their student population.
- **April Kihara and Maretta Juarez, Mental Health Department**- April has kept us well informed providing direction from the departments perspective and has successfully kept all PEI providers collaborating throughout the year; Maretta has made herself available when ever needed; their site visit was very helpful answering our team's many questions and have since been very responsive to what our team shared as needs.



Adam's Story

Adam's mother and father separated when he was 8 years old. His father started a new family and was no longer a part of Adam's life. Adam's mother, Christina, was hurt by the separation, and decided to leave everything behind in Puerto Rico and come to California to start a new life with Adam and his two brothers. Adam's mother shared that as a family they had to adjust to a new environment, culture, language and lifestyle. Adam's family struggled financially since arriving in California and had been renting rooms from people to keep Adam and his brothers safe. Christina shared that Adam had a difficult time accepting that his father was no longer going to be around and often cried and became upset. Throughout the years, Adam became very difficult to handle and was always in trouble both at home and in school. Adam's behavior caused stress within the family, and his mother found herself consistently arguing with him. She shared that Adam was unable to express his feelings appropriately and would often express himself in an aggressive disrespectful way. Christina wanted to learn ways to connect with Adam and communicate more effectively in order to assist him in expressing himself in a safe and respectful manner. She decided to reach out for support from ARCC when Adam began failing the 8th grade and getting into trouble daily due to his disruptive, defiant and aggressive behavior.

After meeting with Adam and discussing his experiences, it was clear that he missed his father and was angry and confused as to why he left. He often blamed his mother for the separation which affected their relationship and his daily life. Adam had low motivation and was very angry. He struggled with completing his school assignments and following directions. He was at risk for not graduating the 8th grade, due to having a GPA of 1.6 for the majority of the year. Adam and his mother agreed to attend the Strengthening Families Workshop to build their communication skills and establish a healthier relationship with one another. Adam met with me, his Family Specialist, weekly to learn and practice new coping strategies, express his feelings appropriately, and to follow directives from authority figures. Adam learned how to increase his motivation and began to care about his academic success. He practiced steps to take when he was feeling angry and learned how to accept responsibility for his actions. Adam and his mother learned how to communicate with one another using "I messages," having weekly family meetings, and spending more quality time with one another. Although PEI cannot change family history and absence of Adams father, the respectful, nurturing relationship created and services provided positively impacted Adam and his mother's life. Adam shared that because PEI believed in him and supported him through a tough time, he was able to graduate from the 8th grade with a GPA of 3.4. Adam expressed that he will continue to use the skills learned to support him through difficult situations and stated, "This is only the beginning for me I am going to do great things". Adam's mother shared that she has gained so much from PEI that will "last a lifetime," and she is proud of Adam's achievements in both his behavior and academic success.

Note: Story written by an ARCC Family Specialist. Names have been withheld or changed to protect client confidentiality.