

SPRING & SUMMER 2021

State Opioid Response 2 Grant Expands Prevention Efforts

We are very excited about a new opportunity to advance our work in making northeast Iowa a healthier and safer place. **State Opioid Response 2 (SOR2)** is a two-year grant awarded to the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in September 2020. The SOR2 project aims to address the opioid crisis by increasing access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT) using the three FDA-approved medications for the treatment of opioid use disorder (OUD), reducing unmet treatment needs, and reducing opioid overdose related deaths through the provision of prevention, treatment and recovery activities for opioid use disorder. This program also supports evidence-based prevention, treatment and recovery support services to address stimulant misuse and use disorders, including cocaine and methamphetamine. Northeast Iowa Behavioral Health was awarded this grant from the Iowa Department of Public Health, and Helping Services works under a subcontract on the prevention aspects of the grant.

The State Opioid Response 2 Grant started last fall and will continue for two years. The grant aims to increase awareness of opioid and stimulant risks through statewide prevention efforts.

Our efforts include prevention work in five northeast Iowa counties: Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette, Howard, and Winneeshiek. We will be working with healthcare providers, first responders, and businesses in order to provide training to the community and increase knowledge about local resources for individuals, and family and friends of those with a substance use disorder. Narcan, also known as Naloxone, is another aspect of this grant. Narcan is used for the treatment of known or suspected opioid overdoses.

Since 2016, Iowa has had a standing order of Narcan in order to allow easy distribution. With this grant, we will also be promoting Tele-Naloxone, which is a partnership through the Iowa Department of Public Health and the University of Iowa in order to distribute Narcan to Iowans for free. Tele-Naloxone is a program set up to prepare individuals for an overdose incident. In order to do this, the person would call **319-678-7825** to set up an appointment with a pharmacist, in which they will assist the person in getting Narcan sent to their home. ■

To join our efforts for a safer community, attend your county's upcoming coalition meeting. For more information or any questions about this grant, contact Prevention Specialist Brooke Kunkel at bkunkel@helpingservices.org



You can also visit our website at:
www.helpingservices.org



◀ We are proud to have completed an opioid prevention training with the Waukon Police Department. The staff covered opioids, stimulants, Narcan, how to store medication properly, and mental health awareness. If you are interested in having a training for your organization contact us at **563-387-1720**.

Thank you to the Iowa Department of Public Health and Northeast Iowa Behavioral Health for providing funding and partnering with us on this project!



Innovative Thinking by Youth Leadership

Maquoketa Valley High School has an active group of students who work to provide peer education, create awareness on trending issues and serve as leaders in their community called Teens Eliminating Lies (TEL). The students have adapted to the pandemic restrictions that have been put upon them. After brainstorming many initiatives to implement during the school year, TEL started to navigate ways to continue their education and leadership work.

One of their popular events is hosting the Hidden In Plain Sight display from the 5C (Clayton County Community Collaboration Council) in Clayton County. This is a mock teen bedroom that is doused with drug-related items including clothing, paraphernalia, stash containers, etc. Parents/guardians are invited to explore the bedroom and determine what is drug-related with assistance from law enforcement. This tool educates parents/guardians on what to look for, how to search a room if there are signs or concerns of substance use, and also to start conversations with their teen about expectations when it comes to alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use.

Instead of canceling the event held during Parent-Teacher Conferences, TEL decided to create a virtual version of the Hidden In Plain Sight display. They set up the display and created a video that walks and talks parents/guardians through each part of the room, showing them the items and where they can be “hidden” in plain sight. The video will also contain educational information about the signs and symptoms of use and will be shared with all middle school and high school parents/guardians. ■

To learn more about prevention initiatives, visit www.helpingservices.org/prevention

Drug-related items that were “hidden” in plain sight found in the bedroom.



Maquoketa Valley High School students organized the virtual Hidden In Plain Sight event.

Tobacco Prevention Updates

Helping Services for Youth & Families has been providing tobacco use prevention and control services since 2000, with funding through the Iowa Department of Public Health. We provide a comprehensive approach with a focus on policy, cessation resources, and community involvement to Allamakee, Delaware, Fayette, Howard, and Winneshiek Counties.

We are excited to announce that these services will continue in the current counties and expand to Clayton County starting in July. Next year policies will focus on childcares and businesses, promoting the cessation resources of *My Life My Quit* for ages 13–17 and *Quitline Iowa* for 18+, and working with local youth leadership groups and community coalitions.

Thank you to the Iowa Department of Public Health for providing this funding opportunity.



Thank You Luther College Interns

As our mission is “Helping support healthier and safer families and communities,” it is important that we contribute to the education of our future workforce so this legacy can continue. This spring, the Decorah office of Helping Services welcomed two interns from Luther College, *Amrita Khadka* and *Grace Weinrich*. Amrita and Grace are both majoring in Social Work and completing their senior year field practicum. We enjoy hosting interns while enhancing their learning experience.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am going to start this message with something I should say more often—*thank you*.

Thank you for taking some time out of your day to read through this newsletter, pass along our **Resource Line (1-800-383-2988)** to a friend or neighbor, volunteer for one of our programs, send a donation in support of our organization, attend a presentation offered by our team, or visit our annual Holiday Lights fundraiser. You are why we exist, and you are why we continue to provide programming in Northeast Iowa. Together we are making a difference.

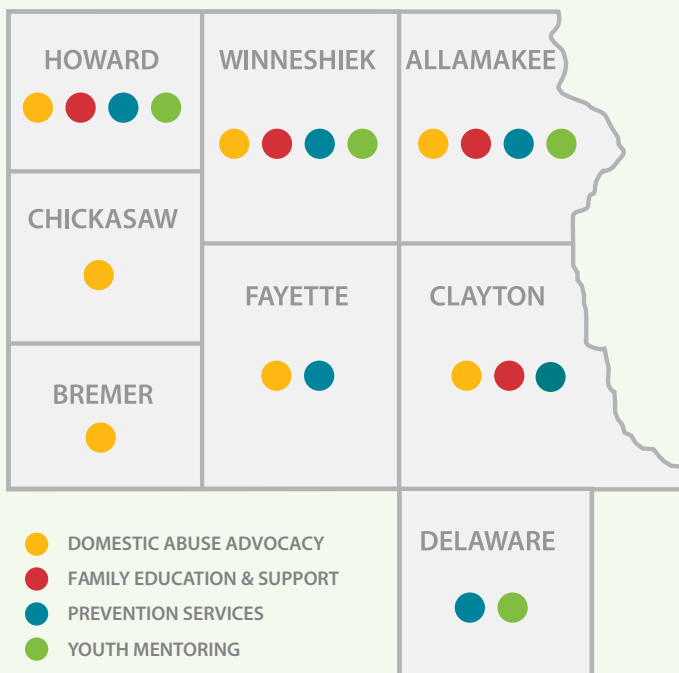
As we've continued to adapt during COVID-19, I can proudly say that our team is still here and still in your community providing services. In fact, our team has even expanded thanks to a new grant from the Office on Violence Against Women and the State Opioid Response 2 Grant Project. The past year has been a challenge, but programs are continuing to gain momentum as we carry forward in 2021.

I will say again, *thank you* for your commitment to Helping Services for Youth & Families!



—Carson Egglund, Executive Director

SERVICE AREA MAP



Are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?
If so, please contact Carson at:
ceggland@helpingservices.org
or **563-387-1720** to learn more!

Helping Services' Board of Directors

Deb Novak, *President*
Andy Eastwood, *Vice President*
Chris Hoffert, *Treasurer*
Dr. Scott Bohner
Jim Bower
Sam Castro
Jennifer Hahn
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Learn more at helpingservices.org



Chance and his mentee, Kevin, enjoy complimentary ice cream from Sugar Bowl at Tasty Thursday.

Youth Mentoring Feels the Warmth of Compassion

January marked the beginning of a new year! With the newness of 2021 upon us, excitement fuels a desire to make resolutions and challenge ourselves to be better humans this year than we were in the last. January may have brought some snow, ice, and frigid temperatures, but the warmth of compassion can be felt throughout the many miles of Allamakee, Howard, Delaware and Winneshiek counties.

When COVID-19 began wreaking havoc throughout the nation, Youth Mentoring was affected in major ways. One of the most disheartening effects from the pandemic was that our matches couldn't meet for three long months. Eventually, with various safety measures in place, mentors and mentees returned to seeing each other. However, several people ended their mentoring experience due to health and safety concerns. Understandably, people were not comfortable with what was happening in the world and relationships everywhere were suffering.

There have been some great success stories over these months where we have seen determined dedication to these precious relationships. Mentors have become skilled, like many of us, in how to meet up on Zoom. They play games, do crafts, watch movies, share stories, and laugh a lot!

Pen Pal Packs are being used by approximately 18 mentoring participants. The packs contain materials for mentors and mentees to write each other as a way to enhance their relationship.

January was National Mentoring Month; a time to celebrate mentoring and amplify our Mentor recruitment efforts. We are thrilled to share that the daylight is beginning not only to glimmer, but to fill the counties with the warmth of a compassion-fueled wildfire! We've had such a tremendous response from our recruitment efforts this year! Mentor applicants are beginning to pour in and it's amazing to see that more people are feeling safer to meet. People want to be involved in a movement that is wrapped around bettering the lives of others, and that's what makes the mentoring world a great place to be!

Youth Mentoring is built on the backs of our mentors. Without them, our program would not exist. Though we are making great strides in reducing our youth waiting list, there is always a need for more mentors, because there will always be children in our counties that need the extra love. As we go about our day-to-day tasks working together to serve our local youth, we are proud of the many volunteers in our counties and their warmth, compassion, and willingness to make a difference. ■

—Amrita, Colinne, Kathy, and Meg
Youth Mentoring Support Team

Thank you to the Iowa Department of Public Health for its support of this project through the **"Improving Tomorrow: Prevention Focused Mentoring"** grant awarded to Helping Services.

Khalie and her mentor, Lauren, are excited to see *Raya and The Last Dragon* at March's youth mentoring group event.





Kyle and Zach had a great time playing games and getting to spend some quality time together at Family Game Night!

Donation Allows Youth Mentoring to Dream Bigger!

Wonderful news! An anonymous family has pledged \$45,000 over the next three years to support Youth Mentoring at Helping Services. The family stated that it takes a village to raise a child, so we can all do our part by helping provide new experiences that develop their interests and skills. Youth Mentoring can play a role in reaching out and listening to a child when life gets busy.

An obstacle that Youth Mentoring often faces is the transportation and admission costs associated with group events in larger nearby communities. Attending a hockey game, baseball game, or a theater performance in a new city can create a unique experience for the youth and their mentor. This gift will allow Youth Mentoring to overcome the cost barrier and provide these special events more frequently. Kathy Schwartzhoff, Mentoring Coordinator in Allamakee, Howard and Winneshiek counties, shares, "This donation relieves the stress that staff feel when we need to recruit new mentors, support our current mentors, and fundraise. Now we are able to dream bigger!"

This donation will also support individual outings for mentor matches such as renting bikes, grabbing an ice cream, or swimming at the local pool. "A donation like this is not only an investment in the life of local youth, but also in the life of our community. When youth that feel loved and valued are raised in our neighborhoods, they bring health, vibrancy, and life to our communities," says Meg Gelner, Mentoring Coordinator in Delaware County.

Youth Mentoring matches a caring adult with a youth in the community. Mentor matches spend a minimum of four hours with their mentee each month attending group events or participating in activities. ■

Take 1 Simple Step: Become A Mentor today! Contact us at mentoring@helpingservices.org or 563-387-1720. You can also make a donation by visiting: HelpingServices.org/Donate or mailing a check to P.O. Box 372, Decorah, IA 52101

We Need Mentors! We Need You!

Ask for an application at mentoring@helpingservices.org

Become A Mentor

- Spend a minimum of 4 hours per month with a youth
- Commit to being a mentor for a minimum of 1 year
- Have a caring and positive attitude

Become A Mentor For A Day (MFAD)

What is a Mentor For A Day?

A MFAD is a person who has agreed to attend a scheduled mentoring event to be a role model and friend to a youth whose regular mentor could not attend or a youth who's on the waiting list for a mentor.

What does it take to be a MFAD?

- Have a caring and positive attitude
- Enjoy being with youth

Become A Mentee

- You must be age 6-16 and live in or attend school in Delaware, Howard, Winneshiek, or Allamakee County
- Both you and your parent(s)/guardian(s) agree for you to have a mentor

Thank you to the Iowa Mentoring Partnership for its support of Youth Mentoring at Helping Services.



Family Game Night is a great opportunity for mentors to communicate and build a relationship with their mentee's family! Zeta, her mentee, and her mentee's family loved the "photo booth!"



“Be There” Through Advocacy

As the pandemic winds on, advocacy continues to be a prominent individual and societal need. While guidelines may not recommend social interaction in close proximity to each other, it is crucial that we “be there” for each other, and advocate for one’s safety and well-being. How do we do this?

When it comes to being an advocate, being a good listener is the most important role. Actively listening to each other’s needs and feelings is essential. Remember that each person is the expert of their situation. Help people determine their options, but don’t make decisions for them. Seek clarification when necessary and reflect their statements back with empathy. Being a good listener takes practice, yet it helps you become a better advocate.

It is not new news that COVID-19 has caused many individuals to stay at home. This may exacerbate domestic violence. Being an advocate for individuals who may be experiencing domestic violence during this time is the best way to “be there” for them. Perhaps you know someone who needs you to be a good listener right now, or maybe you want to become a trained advocate. The Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence offers an online course entitled Victim Counselor Training. This advocacy training gives you the ability to volunteer for our Resource Center Hotline. This training and volunteer opportunity is a great way to learn about the challenges faced by members of society, and “be there” through advocacy. ■

—Article written by Grace Weinrich, Luther College intern.

Learn more at helpingservices.org or go to helpingservices.org/chat to chat with an advocate at Helping Services

For more information about Victim Counselor Training and volunteering, call our Resource Line at **1-800-383-2988** or email us at info@helpingservices.org.

Domestic Abuse Resource Center Resource Line
1-800-383-2988 or to chat: helpingservices.org/chat

The Domestic Abuse Resource Center Resource Line is free and confidential and answered 24 hours a day, 7 days a week! We are available for both emergency and non-emergency assistance related to intimate partner violence.

Thank You Giving Project Donors

The 2020 Giving Project was a success! The project matches business, organizations, families, and individual donors with children of clients that have been assisted by the Domestic Abuse Resource Center. These donors purchase gifts for the families by purchasing items off of wish lists that clients fill out.

This year, we were fortunate to donate presents and needed supplies to 23 clients and 71 children.

If you are interested in sponsoring a family in the future, please contact our Resource Line at **(800) 383-2988** or email us at info@helpingservices.org. ■

For more information about the Domestic Abuse Resource Center visit:
www.helpingservices.org/services/domestic-abuse-resource-center

Thank you to the Fayette Police Department for hosting a toy drive in support of the Giving Project!





Grayson (4) and Vaida (2) show the holiday stockings they decorated during a December group event.

Family Education & Support

Virtual Playgroups Bring Joy to Families

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought numerous changes to the Family Education program. Both staff and parents enrolled in our program adapted to virtual “home visits” since March of 2020. Another aspect of our program that has changed significantly is playgroups. Parent-child playgroups offered an opportunity for parents to socialize with other parents and for children to interact with other kids their age. During these playgroups, parents could share the joys and struggles of raising children, while also participating in activities focused on enriching their child’s developmental learning.

Throughout highs and lows of this past year, the need for meaningful connection remains. Holding virtual playgroups has been one of the ways for families to stay connected with each other. Each month, families are provided with a kit containing all the materials needed for the playgroup activity. In December 2020, families participated in activity decorating holiday stockings. The activity focused on fine motor and cognitive development through the placement of stickers and pom-poms and identifying shapes and colors. Parents who attended this virtual event said they enjoyed spending time doing an activity with their child, as well as seeing how other parents interact with their children.

Although we are anxiously awaiting the day when we can meet in person once again, we will continue to offer playgroups virtually until it’s safe to do so. ■

For more information about the Family Education Program or playgroups, contact: info@helpingservices.org or call (563) 387-1720.

Thank you to HAWC Partnerships for Children for its support of Family Education at Helping Services.



Blue pinwheels were displayed during the month of April in recognition of National Child Abuse Prevention Month. In 2008, Prevent Child Abuse America introduced the Pinwheels for Prevention® campaign. What their research showed, and what their experiences since then have reinforced, is that people respond positively to pinwheels, which represent childlike whimsy and lightheartedness and their vision for a world where all children grow up happy, healthy, and prepared to succeed in supportive families and communities (Source: <https://preventchildabuse.org>). Helping Services for Youth & Families would like to thank Prevent Child Abuse Iowa for supporting Family Education & Support services at Helping Services.



Thanks to Gundersen AIR for helping the Winneshiek County ERASE Coalition strengthen awareness on substance use and addiction by sharing the fact during National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week 2021.



HELPING SERVICES for Youth & Families

PO Box 372 • Decorah, IA 52101

Update your contact info at info@helpingservices.org



Thank you to over 400 volunteers for making Holiday Lights a success, including this group of volunteers from Decorah High School.

Holiday Lights Hosts a Record Year!

Helping Services for Youth & Families thanks all of the volunteers, sponsors, and visitors that made Holiday Lights' 16th season a record year. Holiday Lights continues to be a wonderful community event that also serves as Helping Services for Youth & Families' most important fund raiser. Helping Services for Youth & Families is a nonprofit organization with programs such as Domestic Abuse Advocacy, Family Education & Support, Substance Abuse Prevention, & Youth Mentoring. Helping Services has a team of 23 staff and a volunteer-run Board of Directors working to promote healthier and safer families and youth residing throughout eight counties in Northeast Iowa.

With the help of over 400 volunteers throughout the season, Holiday Lights brought in 6565 visitors for the 16th season. A special thank you to Winneshiek County Public Health for working with us to put on Holiday Lights safely for both visitors and volunteers.

Connect with **Ben Krouse-Gagne**, Director of Community Engagement, to reserve your spot as a sponsor at 2021 Holiday Lights today! Ben can be reached at: benkg@helpingservices.org or **563-387-1720**.

Thank you for making 2020 a record year. Save the date for the 17th annual Holiday Lights and opening Walk-through Night on Wednesday, November 24, 2021.

Learn more at helpingservices.org/holidaylights

