

United Way of Laramie County End-of Year Report

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Agency Name: Laramie County Community Partnership Program: Connections Corner Reporting Period: Jan - Dec 2009

Agency Web Site (If Applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

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**Agency Mission/Vision:** To help people build resources as they move out of poverty; to maximize resources and influence change to improve conditions of well being for people in Laramie County.

**Priority Need Addressed:** Helping neighbors in crisis and strengthening families

**Purpose and Population Served:**

- Connections Corner serves individuals who are living at or below 225% of the federal poverty level
- Connections Corner was originally designed as an initiative to increase job readiness and/or job advancement skills for un- or underemployed individuals from multi-generational poverty backgrounds as a means to promoting self-sufficiency, but has now expanded to include developing all eleven resources necessary for self-sufficiency
- Connections Corner serves to educate the community and increase awareness on issues surrounding poverty

**Program Significance to the Community**

- There are 7,770 (9.5% of the estimated 2005 population) people in Laramie County whose income fell below the federal poverty level in 2005 (Source: Wyoming Center for Business & Economic Analysis).
- The poverty rate in Laramie County has remained fairly constant for the last ten years.
- 64% of single parent families and 43% of two-parent families report not having sufficient income to meet their basic needs without non-profit or charitable support. These families are not eligible for food stamps. (Source : Wyoming Self-Sufficiency Study as reported in the 2005 Laramie County Needs Assessment).
- 14% of Laramie County's 22,917 families make less than \$35,000 per year, which positions them only one or two paychecks away from a basic needs crisis. (Source: factfinder.census.gov).
- The inability to achieve self-sufficiency leads to serious social, political and economic consequences for the entire community, including:
  - Mismatched employment opportunities and wage inequality;
  - An increase in discrimination, crime, and decline in neighborhoods;
  - Adverse effects on individuals' physical, mental, and emotional well-being;
  - Individuals feeling alienated from mainstream society and lacking the skills necessary to build social capital;
  - Reduced public confidence in the prevailing system.

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Program Resources		Program Activities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two full-time staff members</li> <li>• Community participation and volunteers for 2009: 275</li> <li>• Five core volunteer teams sustain and support the Circles initiative</li> <li>• Facility and Equipment: 2 offices, conference room, standard office equipment</li> <li>• Donated facility for weekly meetings</li> <li>• Donated weekly meals</li> <li>• Collaborative relationships with community organizations and agencies</li> <li>• Laramie County Community Partnership resources</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of Circles model in order to:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Change mind-set of community so it wants to end poverty</li> <li>○ Change goals, policies, and approaches to end poverty</li> <li>○ Empower people in poverty to help solve community problems while working out of poverty</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Getting Ahead in a Just-Getting-by World</i> workshops</li> <li>• Investigating barriers that keep people in poverty</li> <li>• Exploring eleven resources necessary for self-sufficiency</li> </ul>	
Outcome	Performance Measure	Method of Measure	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents of Laramie County have their basic needs met and are economically self-sufficient</li> <li>• Investigate and build the eleven resources necessary for self-sufficiency: financial, emotional, mental, spiritual, physical, social, relational, language, integrity, motivation, knowledge of hidden rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of individuals and families served (leaders)</li> <li>• Number of mentors (allies)</li> <li>• Number of matches between leaders and allies</li> <li>• Percentage change in household income; employment status; education and training plans and achievement</li> <li>• Development of plan for self-sufficiency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circle Leader Progress Report at regularly scheduled intervals</li> <li>• Personal interview</li> <li>• Completion of <i>Getting Ahead in a Just Getting By World</i></li> </ul>	
Program Results		Results Analysis and Next Steps	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 43 weekly community meetings held; meal, childcare and training provided</li> <li>• Graduated first group of participants from <i>Getting Ahead in a Just Getting by World</i>; 81% completion rate; second <i>Getting Ahead</i> class started</li> <li>• Seventeen community training sessions held</li> <li>• 77% of <i>Getting Ahead</i> graduates moved on to become Circle Leaders</li> <li>• 83% of current Circle Leaders report having a plan for self-sufficiency</li> <li>• 85% of the Circles/Ally matches continue six months after initial match</li> <li>• 100% of current Circle Leaders report an increase in social capital</li> <li>• Those living in poverty have a voice and a forum to share their past and future story.</li> <li>Participants state:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ I'm making goals; I'm living for tomorrow! Before, goals meant failure, and tomorrow would never come.</li> <li>○ Getting Ahead has influenced me in my ability to set goals and make different choices. I'm steering my life in a different direction.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Connections Corner began the IRS application process to become a free-standing organization</li> <li>• <i>Getting Ahead in a Just Getting by World</i> approved for college credit at Laramie County Community College, to be offered initially in Fall 2010</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Circle Leaders will continue through training, exploring resources, and relationship building</li> <li>• Connections Corner will continue to emphasize the development of all eleven resources necessary for self-sufficiency</li> <li>• Connections Corner continues to increase community awareness of the complex issues surrounding poverty</li> <li>• Participants need a significant amount of time to reach self-sufficiency; it is not a fast process</li> <li>• Connections Corner continues to establish key community partnerships</li> <li>• Connections Corner has a solid volunteer base, with committed participants and teams</li> <li>• Recruitment strategies for <i>Getting Ahead</i>, Allies and volunteers will continue to be explored</li> <li>Next Steps:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finish current <i>Getting Ahead in a Just Getting By World</i>; match new Circle Leaders and Allies</li> <li>• Community training opportunities</li> <li>• Begin third <i>Getting Ahead in a Just Getting By World</i> session</li> <li>• Develop topics to explore all eleven resources for self-sufficiency</li> <li>• Continue to explore barriers that keep people in poverty</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	