



Hippocrates Medical Clinic received a \$2,200 Communityworks Grant to purchase a portable blood pressure/temp/pulse ox monitor for expectant mothers.

New Fund with Herscher School Board

Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley has created a new fund with Herscher CUSD#2 School Board to handle and streamline the scholarship monies they receive from various donors. More information will be available soon.

Ready to Lead the World

The Community Foundation and the City of Kankakee awarded African American Civic Leader Scholarships to three outstanding high school students. Each recipient showed excellence in education, community involvement, and desire to help others. The scholarships will be used to assist with their college expenses.



(left to right) Chasity Wells-Armstrong, Mayor, City of Kankakee; Lo'Rovlle Robinson; Eltiana Jefferson; De'Asia Love; Elizabeth Kubal, CFKRV

Connecting People Who Care with Causes That Matter:

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FOR GOOD. FOREVER.

Please consider including CFKRV in your will and estate planning. It is a wonderful way to continue your legacy in our communities. For information, call Nicole at 815-939-1611.



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commYOUunity

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Summer 2019

News YOU Can Use



Dear friends,

Here in Kankakee and Iroquois Counties, summer is in full swing. From small-town festivals to backyard barbecues to family reunions, we're reveling in every second of summer's sun and fun.

Just before the season began, more than 100 guests attended our Annual Awards Luncheon to celebrate programs and projects put in place to improve quality of life, education, and well-being in our communities. From Project SUN to scholarships and grants to the Navigator Society, we're on pace to continue the momentum into the months ahead.

All of these endeavors and initiatives to come showcase the value and importance of a commYOUunity that works together. Of course, **YOU** are at the very heart of all of CFKRV's goals, programs, and dreams. With passion and purpose, we enrich the lives of everyone we reach out to and touch, and I am proud to be part of this holistic mission.

Have a wonderful and safe summer!

Nicole Smolkovich

Nicole Smolkovich
Executive Director

2019 Annual Awards Luncheon

2019 Annual Awards Luncheon:

A Round of Applause for Our Sponsors

Amita Health St. Mary's Hospital • Community Art's Council • Deck & Baron – Attorneys at Law • Economic Alliance of Kankakee County • First American Bank Graystone Consulting • Health Alliance • Homestar Bank • Iroquois Federal • Kankakee Community College Kankakee Chamber of Commerce • Olivet Nazarene University • Riverside Healthcare • Stifel Investment Services – The Heartland Group • Van Til Chiropractic



(left to right) Dr. Deb Baron, Project SUN; Amy Starin, Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation; Nicole Smolkovich, CFKRV; Jackie Haas, Helen Wheeler Center for Mental Health



Recipients of the 2019 Communityworks Grant Competition

Project SUN: Strong and Unified Network

by Dr. Debra Baron, Project Director

Project SUN (Strong and Unified Network) is dedicated to strengthening Kankakee County's behavioral health system of care so that children and their families flourish.

Last spring, great strides were made in gathering information from community members and organizations about their behavioral health system experiences and needs.

Focusing on teen mental health and wellness, more than 230 high school students, teachers, and social workers gathered for a Meeting of the Minds Summit. In addition to 15 presentations, the teens offered suggestions for implementation of Project SUN. Costs for the event were covered by the Kiwanis Club of Kankakee.

In late May, more than 100 teens, family members, caregivers, and service providers participated in the Children's Behavioral Health Community Summit. Michele and Terry Carmichael, long-time champions for children's mental health services in Illinois, facilitated the two-session event and discussed the history and philosophy of the children's mental health care system in our state. They also guided participants through exercises to help shape Project SUN in Kankakee County.

Meeting of the Minds Summit for Teens



Children's Behavioral Health Community Summit
Terry Carmichael, Facilitator

Right: Eliseo Sandoval, Speaker,
Grant Park High School



- At the conclusion of the summit, participants identified two priorities for Project SUN.
- 1. Focus on prevention/early intervention *before* problems become severe.
- 2. Expand our provider network beyond community mental health centers to create a broad array of services and supports.
- Approximately 90 teens, 200 parents/caregivers, and 240 community members responded to our online survey. Their invaluable input is being used to complete Project SUN's implementation application for the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation. The application details our planned activities over the coming six years. It will be submitted on August 15, 2019, to the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation.
- For more information about Project SUN and its projects and plans, please contact me at debra@cfkrv.org or 815-304-5933.
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Youth Learn to Turn the Tables of Their Lives

Thanks to a Communityworks grant, Nexus Onarga Academy is helping several young men dish up success. The grant has been used to create a computer lab with two workstations for clients to complete their vocational education. Since its installation eight youth have earned their Food Handler Certificates, and others are enrolled in the training program.

Nexus Onarga Academy provides holistic care and vocational training for boys to address emotional and behavioral issues and to achieve educational, recreational, and vocational goals.

The vocational program is structured to recognize the mental health challenges youth face and to find ways to utilize their strengths. It allows them to explore hands-on careers and to gain valuable skills to help them obtain meaningful and productive employment.

Jason is a prime example of a young man who has benefited from the Communityworks grant. His personal history of severe depression and trauma marked him as lazy, unmotivated, and lacking self-confidence. Basic daily tasks were difficult for him and were met with groans and a reluctant attitude.

With some helpful prompting, Jason began working one-on-one with the academy's vocational supervisor to complete his Food Handler Training and Certification. Even though it took multiple sessions, earning his certification was a moment of sheer pride for him and serves as a physical reminder of his progress and confidence in his abilities.

Jason began working at the Cornerstone Café, an on-campus restaurant that is open to the public. Here, he has direct contact with community members and is able to work on his job *and* social skills.

Jason was instrumental in the construction of the café's commercial grade kitchen as well. Despite the physically exhausting labor, he experienced renewed motivation and expressed joy in the task. He commented that he was proud to say he helped in the café's construction.

Thanks to CFKRV and the Communityworks grant, youth like Jason are finding the right fit, the right skills, and the right motivation to serve up success!

**The name of the youth in this program is representative of a client's experience.*



Vocational Computer Lab

Construction of the Cornerstone Café

