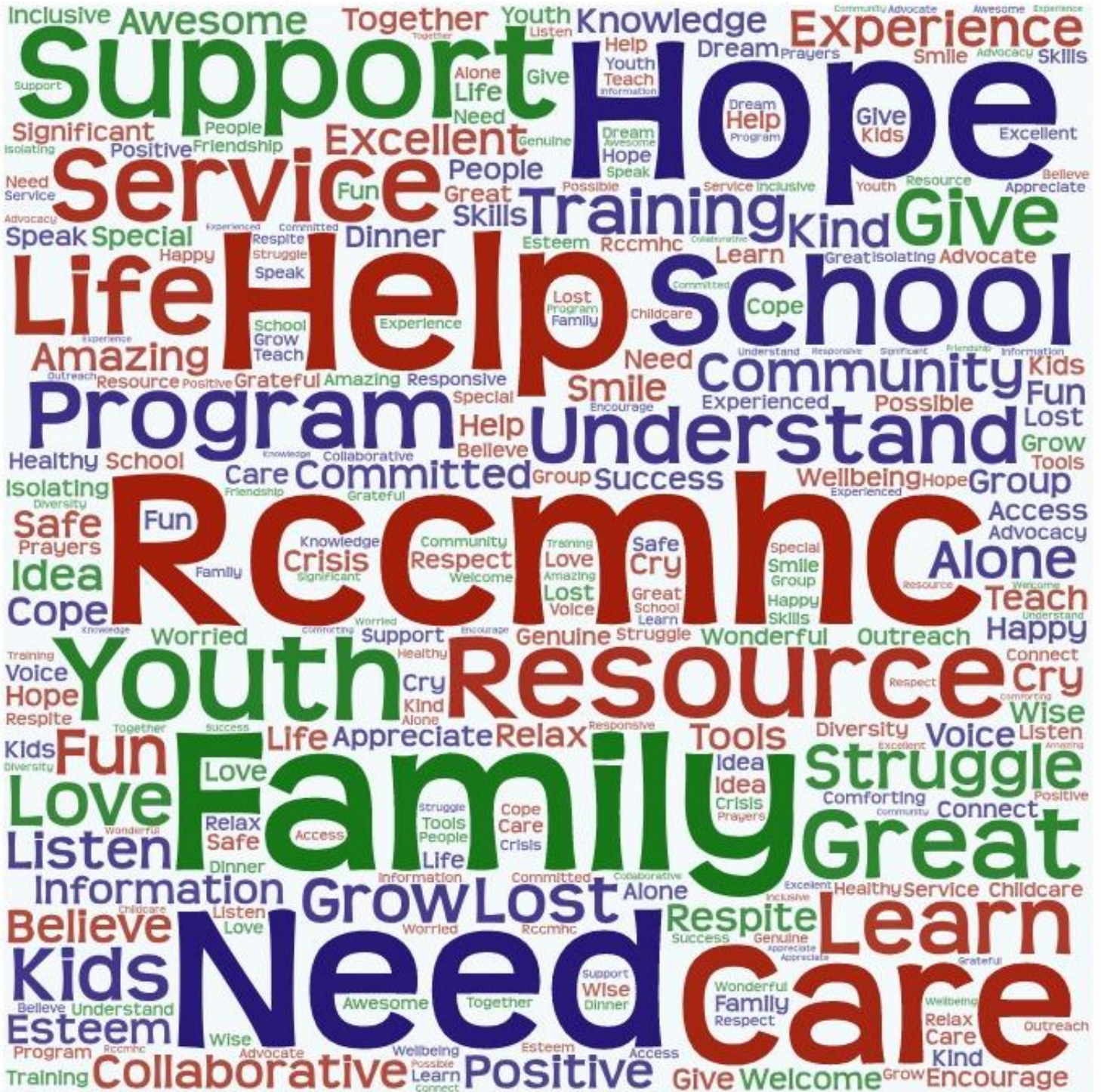


RCCMHC- Family Engagement Experiences

“They were an answer to my prayers...they gave me hope and knowledge.”



Personal Stories & Comments

- This organization is **VITAL** to the mental health needs of the children in our communities. My family is one of the many success stories as it opened doors and opportunities for us that we were unaware of.
- It's been a God send for my son it Has been a place for us to go and be with other families who are just like us. **There is no other place like this for us and will be lost without it**
- Sometimes as a parent who has a child who is struggling with mental health you feel like you are alone and always hitting dead ends, but because of RCCMHC I feel supported! I am able to get many resources that I was not aware of before and the trainings are amazing!
- So great! I wish we had found this amazing resource 12 years ago, when we were new parents and we had to figure everything out on our own. The trainings are **PRICELESS**
- I've been supported and educated along this sometimes terrifying road of parenting a child with significant mental health needs and the staff and board's commitment to our whole family is obvious in everything they do- offering dinners and childcare at meetings and trainings and allowing space for questions and fear. **I know RCCMHC is a safe space to be.**

*“Their help has helped to keep my family together
and my child out of group homes.”*

- Before the R CCCC HC, I didn't know of any services, I didn't know any other parents who had children like me, **I felt alone and lost.** With them, I know that I have some one to turn to for help, answers, and resources when I need it.
- Given me the tools to help improve my family and others that may need help as well.
- I have myself have seen and worked in my family and have witnessed family growing into healthy family's and to use tools to help support there children in difficult situations.
- I haven't come across or been able to talk with very many other parents that are going through some of the same things with their children. So it is very **COMFORTING** to see that so many others are dealing with these same issues. That it's taking a big tole on their lives as well. And they **completely understand without judgment.** Especially when it comes to how difficult it can be dealing with schools and other services so that your child can be successful. And just a feel like you're being treated with respect and what your child's going through is real.
- The groups and resources are very knowledgeable and helpful especially for mental health and low income families like mine
- My wife and I were lost when we found out that our now 15 year had mental health problems and we didn't know where to turn and we didn't know where to seek help. **I was the dad who was ready to walk out and not come back** because I couldn't handke the fighting and the behaviors that my 15 year old was doing and him fighting with his mom and calling her names and etc. Then my wife said please come and see what he is going through please well I attended one meeting and then I see what was going on with

my son. He was like me when I was growing up but my mental health was always denied because black families always hide it because back then and still today society looks at us wrong. **At the ripe age of 55 I finally am getting the mental health I need to help improve my two sons mental health.**

- There is too much mental illness and there is too many of us who are searching for hope, resources, and knowledge...**THEY ARE THE WHOLE PACKAGE...**
- Many families have benefited from these programs, many of which are low-income families who have no other outlets! These programs drive clients to see the light at the end of a long dark tunnel!
- We have the connections and the support of our families and schools, **let's not lose momentum**
- I believe the RCCMHC should continue its work, because while Allowing for direct access doesn't necessarily mean best access. And I would prefer that our parents get the best possible help instead of, having to dig through the viable sources.

"I think RCCMHC should continue is because it has helped grow into a young caring person, that had mental health issues, showed me how to care and make others smile and be happy, bring up my self esteem, taught me how to be happy and stay happy."

- I think it is very important this really **helps us families otherwise would not seek out help** or sometimes it's a child care issue its nice to have a sit down meal as well as learning new tools I helping our children with mental health to grow and prosper and to hopefully get handle on it now so they don't grow up with that lable.
- My experience with RCCMHC has been very positive. The committees, resource fairs, and grant activities have been family centered with youth involvement. This is where the money from LCTS dollars is intended to go, directly to improving services for families. Well done Wendy and Jaime.
- They are **a huge help and resource to the community.** They assist with the knowledge to help parents and the children to cope and to be the very best they can be while dealing with their mental health concerns. It would be a great disappointment to see them leave and not to have them to help with resources and advocacy for families.
- I've been a long time member and **I have put a lot of time and effort into this collaborative.** I do not understand why we face so many challenges lately with Ramsey County
- That RCCMHC is very committed to youth and families and as a whole. They helped my family with being well and helped mom and me better understand the school districts and iep's, bip,. Helped have a different out on life and my health.

"My mom used to cry all the time and ask where do I turn to and how do I get the help for my brothers and I in our struggle with mental health"

- I have a 3 year old who struggles with sensory processing and I had no answers to where to turn. I went to a resource fair and at that fair we found Theraplay, they work with kiddos with sensory processing. **If I hadn't went to this fair my daughter would not get the services she gets now.** I also learned that there was a scholarship that I could apply for childcare. I would have never known about this either.
- I will tell you now, that with out RCCMHC in my families lives, I didn't think my mom would be fighting and tell the schools no that right . RCCMHC has helped with self esteem , has helped me grow and still is helping me and raises my self esteem , my behavior and my attitude.
- I love the programs and my family enjoyed attend them. **It has help us bond more and communicate better.**
- My little grandkids went to a camp last summer provided by RCCMHC. They had so much fun indoors and outdoors. I would never have been able to afford this for them. And their experience there was unforgettable in a very positive way. 😊
- I think RCCMHC should continue because they have always supported me. They are always working towards helping families and youth and each staff member plays a vital role in their organization
- **Taught me how to rethink my actions and attitude.** It also helped my mom, get back in college and go for her dream to be soical worker / phycologists. Also taught my mom how to speak up and taught her how yo fight for my mental health and my brothers.
- **I have participated in other collaboratives and have found the work of RCCMHC the most involved directly with families.** The director is very caring and truly listens to youth and families, with genuine concern for continually improving the family voice.
- I believe that RCCMHC should continue working with families that have children with behavior an special needs, I think the support system an education continues to teach us that we are not alone An how to accept an understand this behavior.

“There is no one else that focus their time surrounding mental health like the collaborative. Many parents and caregivers will take a significant struggle without these services. The collaborative is like a second family to most members. Don't take that away from us!”

- My son in daughter we're struggling in school very badly. I had signed up for this program a few years back. Now my 18 year old son is on the right track getting help he needs in school in order to succeed. With the extra attention and help resources available to him. I would have never found out my son was struggling it's school due to me getting him tested for an IEP my daughter as well. **I wouldn't have never learned about any of these program and help resources if it was not for this program.** I will always be grateful and appreciate this service program. They have changed my life in a positive healthy way I'm learning how to deal with kids with mental health issues thank you.
- **Without RCCMHC in many cases there would be nowhere to turn for help** and advice in many potential crisis situations facing families in Ramsey County. RCCMHC with its trainings and support of families more

than pays for itself by helping to prevent so many crisis situations. Please keep RCCMHC funded, because they provide services to families that would never be provided otherwise. ♡🙏♡

- RCCMHC Help me too understand mental illness Behavior, my grandson Behavior was really bad.now i can help him more and to help his teacher too undetstand what he is going threw...."

"When I first heard of this program I was at the end of my rope with my daughter, I didn't know where to turn and I was already on every wait list to get her help! We were that family that always fill through the cracks and RCCMHC changed that and gave me all the tools and help I needed to keep my family together and healthy! Thank you RCCMHC for all you have done and all you continue to do."

- As a parent of a special needs child with mental health issues **it is crucial to feel a sense of acceptance** and belonging. The resources this collaborative provides to people like me is phenomenal. Its necessary for the well being of myself and my child to have resources like this that go **ABOVE AND BEYOND** within our community to provode an outreach to us families that daily struggle with the demanding needs of emotionally unstable youth. I find that this collaborative is supportive of a unique opportunity for fostering self preservation for individuals and families like mine.
- I am 15 old year young man that has mental health issues and suicidal thoughts, serve depression, behaviors issues. I was on the creed program in elementary, middle, and high school. I am in the creed program now in high school and if it was not for RCCMHC and all the support and help they gave me and my family, **I don't think I wouldn't of made it to high school.** My teachers are awesome and they understand me and help me all the can. **RCCMHC taught me how to become the young man I am.**
- The more we learn about children's mental health the Better our community will be.
- Rcc should continue it's work as **a lifeline for understanding**, and helping parents with their kids. Why shut down something that works altogether as wonderfully as it can.

"They are providing resources and information not available anywhere else."

- I believe that RCCMHC is crucial to the community because it's for children. I think children's mental health needs to be brought to the forefront and this organization is doing that. **We will be failing our children and our community by not providing the resources.**
- Every session we hear so much from families that really appreciate the services RCCMHC offers and how their kids love the experience.
- This organization has been invaluable in **helping us through very difficult times.**
- It helps family's solve problems to help deal with mental health

- We struggle with one of our kids and **have been able to keep her in our family because of rccmhc resources.**
- We didn't know a whole lot about mental health issues before we came here and had a daughter with ADHD. It has been able to provide a lot of information to us and **also helps our daughter understand what is going on.**

“My son was diagnosed with Autism at age 13. RCCMHC helped me understand the disorder, they helped me learn how to cope with the disorder and help my son, and they gave me excellent resources to advocate against my son being expelled from school. He went on to graduate and is doing well now.”

- I felt so alone. I felt like no one knew what I was going through. I heard about RCCMHC and started going to the meetings and continued to get more and more evolved. With that, I am so much more knowledgeable. I don't feel like my family is alone anymore. **Not having RCCMHC would be life changing for many lives and to think of it not existing is sad.** Many families already evolved and many more to come will have their lives changed.
- Resources Fairs are wonderful and very helpful. We need the kind of support RCCMHC provides. **I haven't experienced this level of outreach or help anywhere else**
- I found out about RCCMHC when I was in custody battle. They helped me better address my child's needs and I was able to meet parents going through a similar struggle.
- Children with mental health issues and their families receive needed support through this program. It gives these children and families **a sense of community and acceptance they don't receive otherwise**
- Amazing, helped get a lot of it started, like the resource fair, & the family trainings, shame to lose them
- Does mental health matter....do kids matter...**why the heck would u get rid of a program that gives people a voice and a place to grow and achieve greatness**

“Because being a parent of a child with mental health needs can be extremely isolating and stigmatizing. Just walking into a room of other caregivers who are experiencing some of the same difficulties you can remove that isolation and help lift the stigma. Because there are so few safe spaces for families with children with mental health needs and we need this space.”

- They provide valuable resources to families that other wise may not have that access to them. They also help build positive and **EVER LASTING FRIENDSHIPS**
- Children need to be supported by their community , especially when they are struggling with their emotional and mental health , if they are to grow into adults who take part in our communities in a productive way. We are all a part of the problem and can be a part of the solution.
- Because it's take dedication and hard work to do that job and without that support. It's would be even much harder on some familys.

- The person I serve has many challenges which keep me busy 24/7. RCCMHC has provided me with real respite, such as the annual River Boat Dinner ride where **I can simply relax** and get away from the rigors of caregiving for a few hours. That buoys me up for another round. I have appreciated interfacing with the leaders. I have a lot of skilled background which I would like to share in some capacity, but my child's care is so intense it is difficult for me to get as involved as I would like. However, I am hopeful for that someday! My child has had many opportunities that might not otherwise have been available for him. I also appreciate those means of support for him. And for me!
- I am not sure what is happening, but **I believe in collaboratives, and in particular in the power that parents, youth, providers, schools, and local government can have together.** Collaboratives must work with local government, but must also be able to have some independence in order for both to hold each other accountable.
- By end of 4th grade and 5th grade he was starting to think suicidal and still didn't have no idea what to do or where to turn to for the help for him. So the school decided to get him into case management and then the case manger asked me if i needed help with anything and i said with understanding the Individual Education Plan, Parenting Classes or Training to help me understand my son's mental health issues. This is how i came about meeting RCCMHC staff and parents who were or has experienced mental health issues, with their children .I was so scared, worried, and didn't sleep at all because i was worried about him and why he was cutting. I was in tears because i felt like i was doing everything a parent would do for their child that needs the help.

“Since, I have been with RCCMHC , my depression, anxiety, worries, all have improved and disappear. I am connected with all kinds of mental health agencies, that is helping families and children with mental health that i never knew existed until attended RCCMHC. I am fighting now for mental health in all aspects of life especially children's mental health and that is because it keeps getting pushed underneath the rug and not really notice until sometimes it is to late.”

ONE LAST THING IS 700 hundred plus parents and myself need RCCMHC to keep teaching on us the individual education plan, the behavioral intervention plan and the 504 form, and **encouragement, strength, kind words, and sometimes just a quick smile from the staff at RCCMHC.** Lot of parents would agree with me about RCCMHC that without them , we would be lost again and scared again without RCCMHC.

RCCMHC is committed to youth and whole-family wellbeing

- I get alot of tips and resources to use with my granddaughter I adopted that has had alot of mental health issues.
- I have found at RCCMHC is very devoted to Gathering **the best possible resources** for the parent group and the children. In an effort to help those parents Reach out to services that nest help them

- Educational
- I have been attending Ramsey county family service committee meetings for a while now. These meetings have helped me share **MY YOUTH VOICE** and listen to families give feedback on the mental health systems in MN. RCCMHC has listened to every families wants and needs and respects each persons perspectives.
- I started coming when I was 5 and RCCMHC has always been helpful and taught my mom to fight more for me and my brothers mental health in the schools and at doctor appointments and with different mental health providers
- RCCMHC helped me, by helping my mom find the right mental health providers, case management and respite care for me. RCCMHC also **help me understand that it is not my fault** that I have mental health issues
- I have been educated
- They are always trying to help as many people as they can and be supportive
- I love it very helpful
- I have learned a lot from the trainings by RCCMHC, especially about resources I wouldn't have known about otherwise. The grandkids I care for look forward to gatherings provided also at the Boys and Girls Club, and other gatherings at other places which provide fun and recreation they wouldn't have had otherwise.
- Excellent
- Very positive, **LIFE-SAVING!**
- I have learned so much about resources and accessing help for my child with significant mental health needs from **RCCMHC's online library and in person meetings and trainings**. I truly don't know where we would be with her care without this support.
- Great. It has given us a lot of support
- I really appreciate all they do.
- The information is always applicable.
- Excellent
- **Without the support of RCCMHC my family would not even exist** we would not gotten housing...certain mental health services
- Amazing
- Educational
- They great ideas to help your child to be more successful in their life.
- The retreats are a great way to have a **family friendly way to connect** I use this time as a no phone no electronic fun zone!!
- RCCMHC staff will notice if something is wrong with the parents and if the parents are having a rough day or had rough week, they will talk with the parents and sometimes it could be both the parents and child

"Families need support to raise our kids well, and to navigate a complex system. We also need the support and validation of other parents of special needs children. It's helped us feel like we're not alone in our struggles."

or children that staff will talk to both of them at same or different at times. I think that is family wellbeing and caring about the families including the youth. My sons love the staff and always tell me mom **never had someone from the outside care so much about us or our problems.** RCCHMC staff will even check up on you and your family to make sure that your wellbeing and families well being is being meet.

- My experience is RCCMHC commitment and whole family well being is strong, because the Collbrative makes sure that the youth are cared for and understood and the well being is being meet for both bthe family and youth and if not the staff find ways for the youth and families have their well being meet by giving ideas and by giving resources.
- My grandson loved coming there.
- **WELCOMES** the whole family
- My experience has been great. I've learned a lot of different things, that were very much needed in assisting me with my children on a day to day basis.
- It **brings families together** that have children that share similar behaviors.
- Having more information on mental health.
- I see positive leadership and support given directly to myself and to others while recieving care and training opportunities.
- I enjoy the whole family well bring they bring everything and everyone together from group events to **relaxing moments for caretakers** in need of a break.
- Amazing
- I believe RCCMHC does an excellent job with support to families with members who have assorted special needs.
- Very good
- **They bend over backwards** to do all they can to help families and they do not get enough credit for their hard work.
- Great monthly meeting are informative
- Family fun, resourceful
- Positive
- Excellent
- Thoughtful programming
- **Above and beyond what might be expected of such an organization.**
- We need them!! Wonderful trainings and support!
- RCCMHC has always been working on moving Mental Health for Children into Mental Health for the Family since the whole family is important in treatment.
- RCCMHC really wants kids to have fun while learning life skills and they want to give parents a break and give them resources for their families.
- Great
- I have had nothing but amazing experiences with RCCMHC - Wendy is fantastic in her position. I can't say enough great things about this organization.
- **Caring about everyone and wanting to help in anyway.**

- My experiences have been positive.
- Excellent
- It helps parents and other family members who face the challenges of raising a child with issues that handicap them in their social and educational life
- Providers are truly committed to not only client's well being, but the whole families!
- It allows parents to get out meet other parents of the same background to help find resources and services to help with they kids.

RCCMHC is committed to diversity, health equity, and cultural responsiveness

- Feel very welcome I have learned very many techniques to help my children do well.
- **We are all treated equally with respect and thoughtfulness.**
- They are open to all.
- I have been **impressed with the diversity of those involved....** I have gone to parent meeting, conventions and information sharing sessions.
- I've noticed how RCCMHC consider parents involvement and cultural awareness when working with families. RCCMHC **values the parents' voice** and encourage parents and community members to advocate for their families and their communities.
- My experience has with RCCMHC is awesome and i mean awesome (i have four sons who have diversity background), and that is why i say they are awesome. RCCMHC has helped me with **getting help for my son in two different health clinics that were in our cultural background**, which was very helpful cause i never knew that these mental health programs were out here in the Ramsey county and i never heard of them. RCCMHC has been the best experience in my life and my children's life and will always be the best for us.
- RCCMHC has helped my family alot especially cause my family is a mixed race and the staff has always always made sure my family has the cultural piece and we had the right health care for our children
- Always responsive, actively works on expanding
- RCCMHC's staff are wonderful at assisting any and everybody that they can. They have always been a great help to my family and others.
- They are very welcoming and **try to make every one feel comfortable** sharing their experiences so we can learn from one another. It's validating to see other families are struggling/dealing with these issues as well.
- They are truly amazing and **inclusive in all aspects.**
- They are very diversified and remain professional in all encounters.
- They have been doing a great job.
- **Everyone is treated fairly and equally.**
- Excellent
- Good and resourceful
- Very positive
- **I love the inclusiveness of the organization.**

- Their commitment has been outstanding!
- RCCMHC is devoted to these values and attempts to demonstrate it in all its actions. It works on keeping them in the fore front of all its conversations
- Everyone is so welcoming and excited to meet everyone. It's been a great experience to eat dinner with **new families every time and meet people in the community.**
- Is very focused on making sure that the **youth are safe**, and that they are well, and that they get help provide it to them
- The resource fairs are great