

St. Louis Healthy Families

Building Stronger Relationships, Marriages and Communities



ending violence
one green dot at a time.

Green Dot Certification Training:

St. Louis Healthy Families is proud to partner with several local universities and organizations to bring violence prevention to the St. Louis area. The Green Dot Certification training will be held at Washington University's Danforth Campus April 4 – 7. The Green Dot Strategy was formed by Dr. Dorothy Edwards and is a new way of thinking about violence prevention. The St. Louis community has a huge need for a shift in thought about violence against women. This is evident in the number of women served at domestic and sexual violence agencies in the St. Louis metropolitan area. In 2009 alone, domestic violence organizations provided 1,655 victims of domestic violence with emergency shelter and 20,695 victims with supportive non-residential services. The training will provide area universities and agencies with the ability to promote this social movement that harnesses the power of peer influence and individual bystander choices.

- Katie Whalen: AmeriCorps VISTA



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A Special Thanks goes out to Washington University, The University of Missouri—St. Louis, St. Martha's Hall, Woman's Place and The St. Louis County Domestic and Family Violence Council .

This very important training would not be possible without your help and support!

Allow us to introduce our newest board member, Joe Mueller!

Joe Mueller is the director of public relations for the Greater St. Louis Area Council, Boy Scouts of America. He began working for the council as a field executive in 1991 and became the director of public relations in 1994. He is responsible for all marketing and communications initiatives and serves as the organization's spokesperson. He provides strategic counsel to the council's management team and executive board. Each year, the Council touches the lives of more than 67,000 youths in Eastern Missouri and Southern Illinois.

Mr. Mueller is an Eagle Scout and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville with majors in television and radio broadcasting and print journalism. He worked in daily newspapers for more than seven years, including a four-month assignment at *USA Today* in 1988. He was a media relations specialist at Washington University Medical School's Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology before he joined the Boy Scout Council.

Mr. Mueller received 23 National President's Awards for Marketing Excellence from the National Council of the BSA during a 10-year span, the most of any of the BSA's 300 councils. He also received awards for writing and reporting from the Missouri Press Association, the Missouri Associated Press Managing Editors News Writing Contest, and the William Randolph Hearst Foundation.

Relationship Education Works

As an Adjunct facilitator for SHLF, I have the privilege to work within the community and meet so many wonderful people. Each time I have the opportunity to present within the community, I am reminded of my own struggles and successes. When presenting to couples, singles or the entire family, I experience the joy of family. The participants are given tools to build and/or repair relationships.

I can recall several workshops when I witnessed relationships repaired after hearing the information we shared from the curriculum. Two particular workshops come to mind; I will always remember a family who learned skills, which allowed them to have a balanced conversation, one that allowed effective speaking and listening...something that had not happened in their household in a long time. After hearing the session from the Within Our Reach Curriculum about Speaker/Listener Techniques, this family used their new tools (a card with instructions) to connect. A plan was developed to start a family game night every Wednesday evening. The next relationship that comes to mind is a couple that had been married for over 25 years, but never really learned to love each other. He stated that theirs was a marriage of convenience and obligation. Well let me tell you, after a mere 8 hours of instructions, this couple told me how helpful the information from the PREP curriculum assisted them in understanding each other better and they were excited to use their new tools (how to address events, issues and hidden issues) to build new joys. Addressing several events and hidden issues allowed this couple the opportunity to identify some barriers in their relationship. When the walls were removed to allow boundaries, this couple enjoyed laughter and even dancing after the workshop. Now, I know SLHF is only a small part of several wonderful community projects in various neighborhoods, but as an Adjunct facilitator, supporter and recipient, I must say that I am thrilled to be part of such a great team. I enjoy presenting and I sincerely look forward to giving back (paying forward) to the community. We are building healthier families and having fun. - *Beverly Mann*

Focus the Spotlight: What's Right with the Region

On May 5th, FOCUS St. Louis® will honor SLHF for the tremendous contribution it has made in fostering regional cooperation. The *What's Right With the Region* award will be presented to Bridget Brennan, executive director of SLHF, along with 19 other organizations and individuals who have made a difference in St. Louis. This is the 14th anniversary for *WRWR* tribute, which acknowledges those who have made meaningful community contributions. A locally-based nonprofit, FOCUS St. Louis is committed to creating regional solutions through community leadership and offers programs in three areas of service:

- Developing Leadership
- Influencing Community Policy
- Promoting Community Connections

Several months ago, FOCUS St. Louis solicited nominations from community and civic leaders of organizations and individuals who had made significant contributions in five categories: education, innovation, cooperation, racial equality and social justice, and lastly stronger communities. The judges were pleased when learning about St. Louis Healthy Families' success:

- Over 8,000 people touched by SLHF relationship building classes.
- A dozen cooperating agencies teaching relationship skills to singles, couples, and teens.
- Dedicated marriage educators working with small groups at churches, community centers and schools.
- SLHF was among the first agency to receive a \$1million annual grant from the Federal Healthy Marriage Initiative. This funding provides for development, promotion and continuing support of SLHF programs

On behalf of SLHF, Bridget Brennan is proud to accept this *What's Right With the Region* award.

Date: Thursday, May 5th Time 5:30 – 8:00pm Location: Sheldon Concert Hall Tickets: \$35 per person

St. Louis Healthy Families and the S.T.A.R. Summit



On Wednesday March 15th, St. Louis Healthy Families staff attended the annual S.T.A.R. Summit. For those unfamiliar with S.T.A.R., it stands for the St. Louis Alliance for Reentry. It is a large group of individuals from a variety of backgrounds and sectors coming together with a common goal of lowering the St. Louis recidivism rate, or the rate at which ex-offenders return to prison (this can be measured multiple ways). It is widely held that there is a range of issues at play in determining whether an individual will return to prison.

Some of those include education level, age, substance abuse, mental health, employment, housing, and of course the strength of their relationships and support systems. While all of the above absolutely need to be addressed for success to be possible, without healthy relationships to provide a foundation to build from, an individual is less likely to succeed. As Corrections costs in this country continue to rise both in Missouri and Nation-wide, something clearly needs to be done to address this issue. No one individual or organization can fix this growing problem, but if we work together we can make sure more individuals succeed in staying out of the corrections system. St. Louis Healthy Families is proud to be a part of S.T.A.R. and we are proud to do our part when it comes to reentry. - *Ben Oberg : AmeriCorps VISTA.*

For more info, visit STAR on the web at www.stlreentry.org

Let's Talk About Relationships!

Starting last December, SLHF began a new series of relationship workshops titled, *Let's Talk About Relationships*. Full-time staff members Carla Hayes & Madeline Adams deliver the Within Our Reach curriculum in this series that takes place monthly on Tuesday nights from 5:30-8:30pm. Additional support is provided by our Americorps Vista Volunteers and Daycare Staff, resulting in a workshop that is both proficient and innovative. *Let's Talk About Relationships* is a 3-part series and is uniquely designed to suit anyone at any stage of a relationship, from singles to married couples and even expecting parents. Having such a diverse audience creates an exceptional and dynamic energy for participants to learn. *Let's talk About Relationships* is open to the general public, onsite daycare is available at no cost to those who register, food & prizes are included, and anyone can register on our website or by calling 314-367-HOPE (4673). Since it began, the *Let's Talk About Relationships* classes have been well-accepted by the community, and we are hoping they remain a core SLHF workshop for years to come! - *Madeline Adams*

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Tending Your Relationships: Reflections on Love in the Garden

Wednesday May 25th at the Missouri Botanical Gardens. 5:30PM-7:30PM

Please Save the Date

Marriage Prep. —Mardi Gras Style

While people from all over the United States poured into St. Louis to party Mardi Gras-style, twelve local couples spent the day preparing for their marriage! On March 5th, St. Louis Healthy Families hosted a one-day Marriage Preparation Retreat at Saint Louis University. Throughout the day, the couples shared their vision, values, requirements and needs with their partner and also learned more about each other's personality style. Additionally, they discovered their love languages and dreamed up ways to keep the fun alive in their relationship. With such an action packed day, there is no wonder why they chose to stay indoors instead of lining the wintery streets for beads! - *Carla Hayes*



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From the Director's Desk:

As the stories in our Newsletter explain, SLHF is not only working hard, we are working smart. SLHF continues to grow in its commitment and dedication to promote and support healthy relationships and thereby strengthen our community, our families, our schools, our places of worship.

Thanks to our media team, we are on the radio, TV, and outdoor billboards. Beverly Mann's article about couples who have participated in our workshops confirms that relationship education works. Brenda Bobo-Fisher, our outreach coordinator is currently developing a Mentor couple program for couples who have attended a workshop previously and are looking to return for more education (more on this in the next newsletter).

We have been approached by several agencies who serve Youth who have asked us to bring our healthy relationships workshops for teens to their youth programs. Our own staff, Carla Hayes and Madeline Adams are providing an outstanding program on Tuesdays at our office, *Let's Talk About Relationships*. Our Americorps-VISTAs, Katie Whalen and Ben Oberg are incredibly faithful to supporting and hosting our workshops and our partner workshops. And of course, our financial administrator, Terry Arthur makes sure every penny is accounted for. We spend wisely and carefully.

This edition I am perhaps most excited about the opportunity for SLHF to collaborate with the Domestic Violence Prevention Community and the University Community to learn effective ways to reduce sexual violence on our campuses. It saddens me that this learning is necessary but to partner with staffs who are so committed to reducing domestic and sexual violence in our homes and on our campuses has been a privilege. The joy of my work at SLHF is being able to partner with and learn from so many professionals who serve our community and who are driven by mission not money.

As we move into spring may we be grateful for the resurgence of our gardens and the renewal of our hearts. Please join us in celebrating spring at our May 25th *Tending Your Relationships Event* at the Botanical Gardens.

Budget Brennan

Upcoming Events:

- ◆ April 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th—
Taking it Home for Couples
- ◆ April 4th-7th—Green Dot Training
- ◆ April 9th—Bringing Baby Home
(Continued on April 16th)
- ◆ April 11th & 12th—Spring Cleaning
Your Relationship
- ◆ April 12th, 19th & 26th—Let's Talk
About Relationships
- ◆ April 16th—Teen Workshop
- ◆ May 5th—What's Right with The
Region Award
- ◆ May 25th—Tending Your
Relationships

Mark your Calendars!

See our website at www.stlhealthyfamilies.org

Find us on Facebook at

www.facebook.com/stlhealthyfamilies

Or call: 314.361.1222

for more details!

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