

PREVENTION FIRST 

SUCCESS STORY

Keys to
Successful
Partnerships in
Jo Daviess
County



Collaboration and Capacity Building

COLLABORATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING



At A Glance

FHN Family Counseling Center (FHN) and the Jo Daviess County Juvenile Justice Council, moved slowly, but strategically towards effective collaboration that increased evidence-based prevention programming in local schools.



Joanne Muzzey, Prevention Specialist with the FHN Family Counseling Center in Jo Daviess County.



Defining Issue

In 2014, the Jo Daviess County Juvenile Justice Council and FHN were awarded the multi-year, highly competitive Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnerships for Success Grant, to build upon and leverage community collaboration. Well into the planning phase, a major problem arose—a vacancy of the grant program’s key position. As the lead agency, FHN recognized coordination was critical to collaboration and ultimately to the goal of increasing evidence-based prevention programs and practices. According to the *Community How-To Guide on Coalition Building* developed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, “The absence of a coordinator or a coordinator that does not have sufficient time or interest can make or break the work of a coalition.”

Well-known and respected in the community, FHN was not dealing with a grant management issue but a workforce issue. Moreover, like other rural communities, FHN faced stark realities regarding recruitment and retention. With job ads posted, they hoped for a candidate familiar with the region and requirements for the position. An expectation set forth by the state and federal funding agencies was “quickly build capacity and enhance community-level infrastructures” using a strategic planning process.

When a sole application arrived, the partners rejoiced. A retired registered nurse had recently relocated to the area. Prevention Specialist Joanne Muzzey reminisced, “I had been a frequent tourist but knew little else about the community and nothing about the underage drinking problem or corresponding prevention needs.”



Steps to a Solution

Through technical assistance services provided by Prevention First, Joanne grasped the importance of making connections and collaborating with key stakeholders to ultimately infuse evidence-based prevention programming, policies, and practices into the community.

At her first few coalition meetings, Joanne reflected, “I said little but listened a lot.” She surmised, “They had done their best without a coordinator but everyone at the table were volunteers with full-time careers.”

During a technical assistance session, two crucial questions arose:

1. Who was at the table?
2. Who was not at the table?

In addition to participating in regular coalition meetings, Joanne discovered the answers from going through previous meeting minutes, by setting up key informant interviews, and drawing from her experience in the community healthcare field. “Bringing people together, boosting sector involvement, and focusing on sustainability became my aim.”

The local Kiwanis Club was a pillar in the community. Joanne had been a longstanding member and knew serving youth was a top priority. She began attending meetings. Over time as Joanne described her work in schools and a desire to see the evidence-based prevention program extend beyond the state’s funding cycle, club members understood the end goal. A fellow Kiwanian pitched the idea of working with the coalition to not only sustain the school-based program but to ensure every student would have the opportunity to participate and learn essential life skills. Between the two groups, money would be allotted, and schools would be “adopted.” Because of her reputation as a bridge-builder and role as coalition coordinator, the members nominated Joanne to present the concept. It was officially voted upon by both groups and thereby became the “Adopt-a School Program.” Parents, students, principals, and teachers were thrilled at the announcement.

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Collaboration represents the highest level of working relationship that two or more organizations can enter into.

Frances Dunn Butterfoss, Author of *Coalitions and Partnerships in Community Health*



Results

The newest addition (Kiwanis Club) to the existing partnership (FHN and the Jo Daviess Juvenile Justice Council) resulted in leveraged resources and expanded evidence-based prevention programming. Joanne still delights in saying, “Community collaboration is the reason the County went from one to all six of its schools receiving evidence-based prevention programming.”



Bringing people together, boosting sector involvement, and focusing on sustainability became my aim.

Joanne Muzzey, Prevention Specialist

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Contact Info

For more information about the collaboration between FHN, the Jo Daviess Juvenile Justice Council, and other community partners or about prevention programming delivered in Jo Daviess County Schools, please contact:

Joanne Muzzey
Prevention Specialist
FHN Family Counseling Center
421 W. Exchange St.
Freeport, IL 61032
815-599-8123

Jo Daviess County Juvenile Justice Council
330 N. Bench
Galena, IL 61036
815-777-0161



jmuzzey@FHN.org



www.FHN.org/SUP
www.jodaviess.org/



<https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Government-Organization/Jo-Daviess-County-Juvenile-Justice-Council-271239321028/>

SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

<https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/20190620-samhsa-strategic-prevention-framework-guide.pdf>

https://one.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/alcohol/community%20guides%20html/Book1_CoalitionBldg.html#Intro