

**Parent Partners:  
Here to support your success!**

## **A Handbook**

# **Framework to Forming a Parent Partner Network**



**Children's Justice Initiative  
Alcohol and Other Drugs Project**

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In January 2005 the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW) awarded Minnesota, along with a limited number of other states In Depth Technical Assistance. The National Center contends that effectively serving families affected by substance abuse and addiction in the child welfare and family court systems is complicated yet critical.

Minnesota convened a group of stakeholders to form a State Advisory Committee to inform this project. Minnesota's Children's Justice Initiative Alcohol and Other Drugs Project (CJI-AOD) Advisory Committee held a kick-off meeting January 26 and 27, 2005. An outcome of the meeting is a work plan, the Scope of Work (SOW) that is being used to guide the technical assistance activities through March 2006. Participants also identified the following mission of this In-Depth Technical Assistance (IDTA) Project: To ensure that, in a fair and timely manner, abused and neglected children involved in the juvenile protection court system have safe, stable, permanent families by improving parental and family recovery from alcohol or other drug problems.

Each year over 14,000 families in Minnesota will receive some formal support from child welfare due to difficulties with alcohol and other drug problems. Juvenile courts have been experiencing an extreme increase in families' involvement due to a rise in methamphetamine use by parents or caregivers. As alcohol and other drugs systems plan and create more opportunities for accessible treatment for individuals and families, a new partner is quietly making its way to the table. That new component is Parent Partners.

In the Statement of Shared Values and Guiding Principles of the CJI-AOD Project, the section entitled Partnership with Parents addresses the importance of involving parents:

- **Connected:** The interests of the parent and the children are directly connected;
- **Keeping Children Safe:** Most parents want to keep their children safe, but sometimes circumstances or conditions interfere with their ability to do so;
- **Parents are the Most Knowledgeable:** about their family and their circumstances;
- **Active Involvement:** Parents are actively involved in decision-making and need to have a voice throughout the process as well as be supported and encouraged to use their voice;
- **Support:** The parent-child relationship will be supported throughout case planning and monitoring within each service delivery system;
- **Engaged:** Participating agencies will engage community members in identifying solutions and assessing the community's readiness for change.

With these shared values in mind, Minnesota has taken the step of involving parents to keep children safe. Minnesota continues to look at the child welfare, juvenile court and alcohol and other drugs systems "through the eyes of the child." Parents are rallying to help families address alcohol and other drug problems and successfully navigate the court and treatment processes. They also want to help our families remain in tact. This handbook should provide the basic information needed to explore, identify, define and create a Parent Partner Network tailor-made especially for your community.

Good luck with your endeavors.

# **I Wish**

By Sarah Shannon

I wish I was a crack pipe  
That my Mom and Dad hold so dear  
I'd never be forgotten  
I'd be kept so close and near  
I wish I was a shot of gin  
They would surely purchase me!  
I wouldn't have to do bad things to get  
Attention  
They would sip and swallow me  
I wish I were a  
Horror movie from the nearby video store  
They would love me more!  
I wish I was a pack of cards or a lottery ticket  
Their fingers would caress and hold me  
I'd be part of their every waking minute  
Sometimes I wish I were a T.V. set  
Where they sit for hour upon hour  
They'd look at me so long  
I'd be their source of power  
If I could be their brand new clothes  
So I'd be with them when they strut about  
They would take me everywhere they went  
And I wouldn't feel so left out  
I wish that I could just be me  
And know right where they are  
It's really scary when I see Mom go off  
In some stranger's car  
Or when Dad is handcuffed  
By a policeman with a gun  
Where can a little child run?  
I wish that I could have a family that...that...

## **Prologue**

In 1996 I began one of the toughest journeys of my life. Although there were others along on this journey, it didn't seem as though they were with me. This journey was through the child welfare, juvenile courts and alcohol and other drugs' systems.

Months prior to that, my children had been removed from my care. Fourteen years prior to that, I began experiencing issues in my life that progressed to the point of my children being in need of protection or services. With a minimal desire to live, I walked into a treatment program for the fourth time hoping for my life to change. When the chemical dependency (CD) assessment was complete, the recommendation was for 14 days of inpatient treatment.

Truly, 14 days of treatment seemed an insult. Didn't the assessor know that I had been using drugs for fourteen years? Didn't the assessor understand that I not only had an issue with drugs, but I was suicidal? Didn't the assessor understand that I needed treatment for this drug induced mental illness? Didn't the assessor understand that if I wasn't able to get it right this time that I would lose custody of my children? It was at this point I realized I had to be accountable for my own recovery.

As my journey continued, it would prove to be one of the toughest of my life. Most of the time, I felt alone in it. I wished many times that I could share the helplessness I felt trying to navigate through the child welfare and court systems. I wished many times that someone would be there to help me understand the court process and hearings. I wished many times that someone could help me and explain the child protection case plans. I wished many times that someone would have been available to just hear me and be able to identify with what I was going through in a non-judgmental manner. It would have been so helpful for me at that time to be befriended by someone who had been successful on the journey that I was on now.

I consider myself truly fortunate to be a part of presenting this framework on behalf of others who are currently on this journey. I understand now that the same concerns and wishes I had while navigating through the systems are the same concerns and wishes that other parents have.

In preparation for this handbook, the Children's Justice Initiative, Alcohol and Other Drugs Project, conducted nine focus groups designed to give parents the opportunity to respond directly about services they received or would like to have received while on their journeys through the child welfare, juvenile courts and alcohol and other drugs' systems. Two of the focus groups were comprised of Native American parents. Another consisted of fathers. The other six were parents from different backgrounds and experiences. In addition to the focus groups, two parent workgroups were held to give parents the opportunity to be a part of shaping the framework for this network. The questions and some of the parents' responses are quoted throughout this handbook under the heading of, "What did the parents say?" If we really want to be there to support the success of parents on their journey through the three systems, the individual and collective voices of parents must continue to be asked for and heard.

Danisa Farley  
Parent Partner Consultant

## **Part I. What is the Foundation of a Parent Partner Network?**

A Parent Partner Network is a group of parents who have been successful in past personal involvement with child welfare, juvenile courts and alcohol and other drug systems. A Parent Partner Network models healthy and responsible parenting. A Parent Partner Network is designed to promote parents helping parents by sharing their experiences, knowledge and by giving hope to parents involved in child in need of protection or services (CHIPS) cases. Through civic and community engagement, a Parent Partner Network shares in the leadership and responsibility of keeping children safe.

### **Example of a Parent Partner Network Mission**

The mission of a Parent Partner Network is to help parents work towards recovery, educate parents on child welfare, juvenile courts and alcohol and other drugs systems' protocols and requirements, educate those who work in those systems on the realities of addiction and recovery and provide education and collaborate with other Minnesotans to keep children safe.

### **Sample Objectives of a Parent Partner Network**

- Partner with child welfare, juvenile courts and alcohol and other drug systems to form alliances to keep children safe and support families by taking a realistic look at and approach to family recovery
- Advocate for resources and provide valuable insights that those working within the systems may miss, and provide feedback on what is and is not working
- Provide outreach and education to schools and faith-based organizations to form alliances with parents and those in the schools and faith-based organizations
- Partner with communities to educate and form alliances to keep children safe and provide support to families
- Create an environment within the systems of respect for every individual involved.

### **What did the parents say?**

During our focus groups and parent workgroups we heard time and again that parents felt removed from decision making and having a voice when it came to the courts and child welfare. The mission of this network must continue to focus on education for all those involved to produce the best outcome. Educating parents to educate other parents might prove to be an avenue to strengthen families and strengthen the systems' interaction with families. In the Minnesota Statement of Shared Values document of the Children's Justice Initiative, Alcohol and Other Drugs Project, it states that it would be considered best practice to acknowledge, invite and encourage parent contributions to keep children safe.

### **What is a definition of a Parent Partner?**

A Parent Partner is an individual who has been involved with child welfare, child in need of protection or services (CHIPS) juvenile courts and alcohol and other drugs' systems. They have been successful at navigating those systems, have come to terms with their past involvement and continue to be successful in their recovery. Parent Partners have a willingness and genuine interest in sharing their experiences, expertise and wisdom to help other parents succeed and to educate the parents, those working in the systems and members of the community. Parent Partners are committed to help keep children safe.

### **What might a Parent Partner do?**

- Model and support success and recovery from alcohol and other drugs.
- Educate parents about systems' requirements and help them to understand the court process and terminology associated with their case.
- Work only with the parent(s) they are assigned to by the Parent Partner Network.
- Help other parents stay accountable for their recovery.
- Provide support as the parent goes through what can be a very confusing and fearful time with the child protection system.
- Accompany parents to court hearings and meetings with the child welfare worker (if requested by parent).
- Provide education and support through example and friendship.
- Meet with the parent(s) at least once a week to celebrate successes, be a listening ear and provide other practical support components.
- Promote a healthy relationship with both biological parents when that is in the best interests of the children.
- Form and maintain relationships with various government entities to keep children safe and help families to recover from alcohol and other drug use.
- Provide civic leadership to educate and help engage the broader community to keep children safe.
- Promote the mission and objectives of the Parent Partner Network.

### **What wouldn't a Parent Partner do?**

- Parent Partners would not make recommendations to the Court during the juvenile child in need of protection or services court proceedings, unless specifically asked by the judge to do so.
- Parent Partners would not make formal written or verbal reports.
- Parent Partners would not be responsible for identifying and providing resources for families as it pertains to individual family case plans. (For example: child care, referral to treatment and services, evaluations and assessments, etc...)
- Parent Partners would not make recommendations to the child welfare case planning process, unless specifically asked by the worker to do so.
- Parent Partners would not provide direct social services to parents and their families.
- Parent Partners would not provide transportation for parents and their family members.
- Parent Partners would not conduct visitation or custody evaluations.
- Parent Partners would not arrange for the visitation of parents and their children.
- Parent Partners would not supervise visitation between parents and their children.

There is clearly the unmentioned race against time that might be a barrier to successfully engaging families in the recovery process. That information has been included for you in the handbook. (See appendix 13—"The Five Clocks")

### **What did the parents say?**

Nine focus groups of parents were held designed to give parents the opportunity to talk about the services received and the need for additional services through the child welfare, juvenile courts and alcohol and other drugs systems. Ten questions were presented to each group and an additional two questions about the tribal courts and representatives were presented to the two focus groups with Native Americans. The questions and some of the parents' responses are quoted throughout this handbook.

### **What would have been helpful to you in your recovery that was not provided by the child protection system?**

- A network of women who understand addiction and recovery
- I needed someone that could speak openly without flinching at details
- A buddy system, someone that has been in the system and is now out.

### **How can the child protection, court and alcohol and other drug use systems improve to engage families better?**

- Provide more accurate information to community partners about child welfare
- Court forms – someone has to be able to explain them
- Educate the family on issues, concerns and procedures of child welfare.

## **Part II. Forming a Parent Partner Network**



The first step in forming a Parent Partner Network is for staff members of child welfare, juvenile courts and alcohol and other drug use to meet to determine the feasibility of developing and supporting such an initiative. Things for them to consider might include and are not limited to the following:

- Develop consensus and an agreement among the three systems.
- Determine the current procedures for sharing information among the three systems and evaluate if changes are needed. If so, how will those changes be implemented?
- Determine the process for recruiting, screening, training and supervising a parent (past consumer of services) to work with the systems and manage or coordinate the local Parent Partner Network.
- Determine administrative and space considerations.
- Discuss and devise creative, collaborative funding and a budget for the Parent Partner Network.

Counties or Tribes exploring this venture might want to have conversations with other community organizations such as churches, transitional housing communities and others to form alliances to house and support a Parent Partner Network. Other collaborative resources to accomplish this goal could also be explored. (See appendix 14—Research Report on Parent Mentor/Leader Models)

### **What did the parents say?**

It is important in defining the Parent Partner Network that you not lose the requirement that parents have past experience with the three systems and have been successful.

One measure of success might be reunification of the family after intervention from child welfare. During our focus groups and parent workgroups, it was often said that reunification was *the* measure of success. Parents pointed out that this discredited the family that made the decision to transfer custody or give their consent for adoption. As you define success, you must define it individually with each parent and family.

### **What would you suggest to improve communication and information sharing among child protections, court systems and chemical health staff that would make things better for the parents and children?**

- Engage the client more in the process instead of giving a list of requirements
- Promote system accountability and prevent the run around that parents get from social services
- Each agency should understand the requirements of other agencies to help alleviate stressors for parent.

## **A suggested structure for a Parent Partner Network**

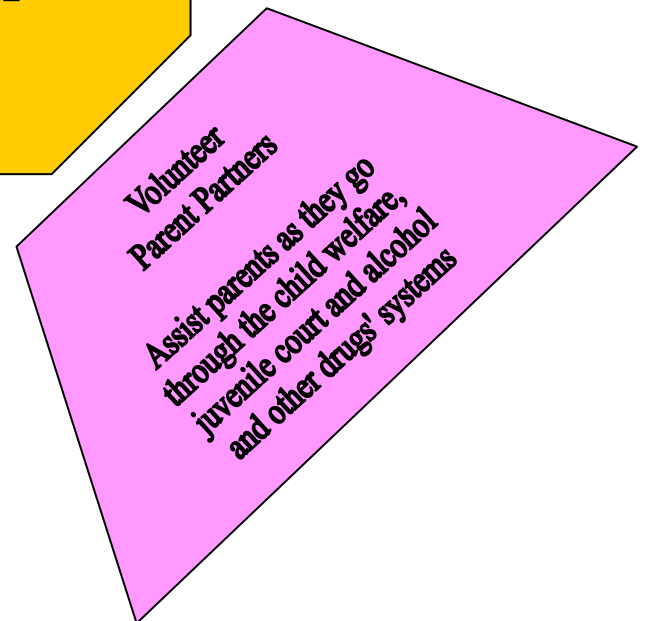
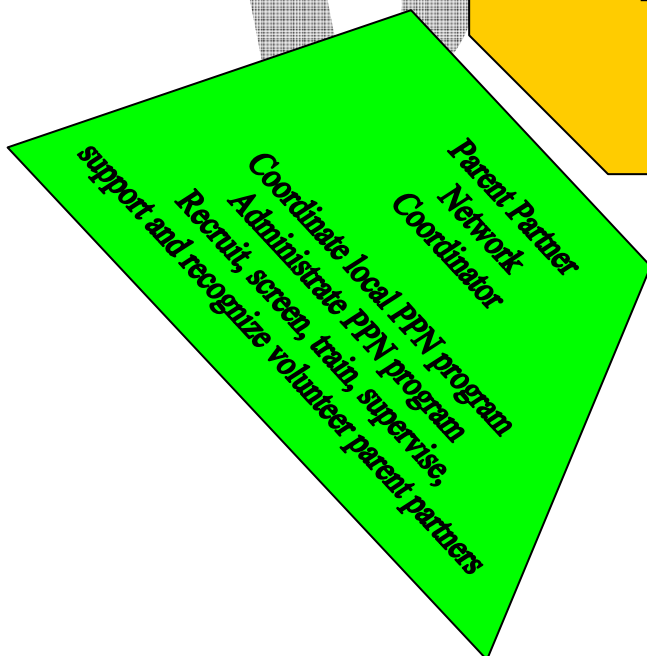
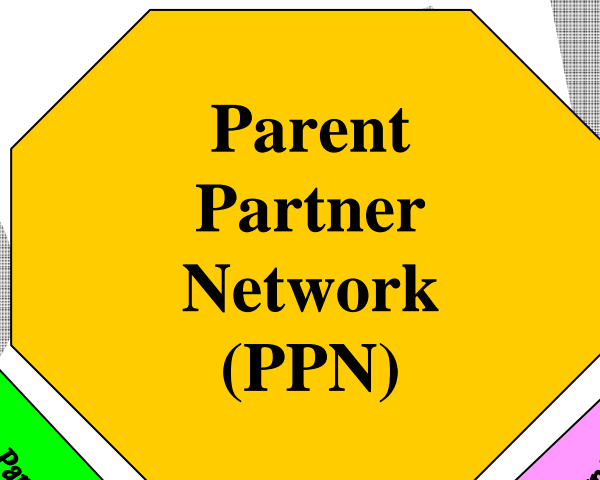
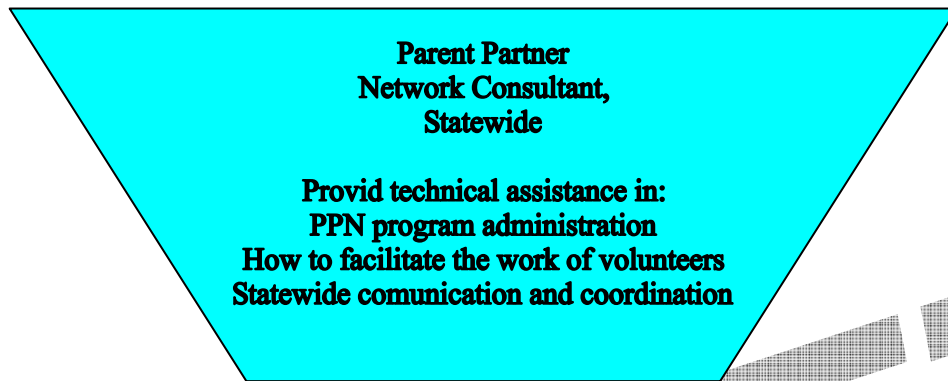
One possible way to structure a Parent Partner Network would be to have parents who have successfully navigated the child welfare, juvenile court and alcohol and other drugs systems serve in the following positions:

- A statewide, paid Parent Partner Network consultant who would provide technical assistance to the local county or judicial district Parent Partner Network coordinators on how to establish and administrate a Parent Partner Network in their community, how to recruit, screen, train, support, supervise, evaluate and recognize volunteer parent partners, coordinate information among the Parent Partner Networks in the state, evaluate the effectiveness of the Parent Partner Network and promote the best interests of children involved in the Parent Partner Network
- A local, paid Parent Partner Network coordinator who would be responsible to coordinate the administration of the local Parent Partner Network; recruit, screen, train, support, supervise, evaluate and recognize volunteer parent partners and promote the best interests of children involved in the Parent Partner Network
- A volunteer parent partner who would help other parents go through the child welfare, juvenile court and alcohol and other drugs' systems.

Sample job descriptions with suggested qualifications and responsibilities for the Parent Partner Network consultant, Parent Partner Network coordinator and volunteer parent partner positions are in appendices one, two and three of this handbook.

# Parent Partner Network:

## Here to support your success!



## **Recruitment of Volunteer Parent Partners**

### **What should be in place before recruitment begins?**

You will want to have the following in place before you begin to recruit volunteer Parent Partners:

- Commitment for the Parent Partner Network and support from those in the child welfare, juvenile court, alcohol and other drugs systems and the Children's Justice Initiative in your community
- A plan for sustainability
- A volunteer Parent Partner job description
- Screening forms (application, release of information for records checks and treatment verification, reference letters)
- Interview and placement process
- Supervision and evaluation procedures.

### **What are some basic recruitment principles?**

Consider the Parent Partner Network objectives, mission and the volunteer job description as you develop recruitment methods and materials. Parent Partners must include but are not limited to the following:

- Parents who have been involved in the child welfare, child in need of protection or services juvenile court and alcohol and other drug systems
- Parents who have been in recovery for two years and continue to be successful in their recovery
- Parents who are able to look at the system through the eyes of the child
- Parents who are eager to help other parents through the child protection, juvenile court and drug and other alcohol systems to be successful.

Who are you trying to recruit? Where and how might you reach them? Address the following:

- Identify methods to recruit volunteers that will ensure the Parent Partner Program includes parents from diverse backgrounds and neighborhoods in your community.
- At what agencies and organizations will you reach out to recruit Parent Partners?
- Write a short want ad to advertise for a volunteer Parent Partner.
- Where will you place that ad?
- To whom will you direct the potential volunteer to respond and what process will be used to screen, interview and place the Parent Partner?

Recruitment is an ongoing process. You will want to develop:

- A recruitment plan (sample recruitment plan is in appendix four)
- A recruitment PowerPoint presentation
- A standard recruitment speech outline
- A recruitment mailing list
- Sample recruitment press releases
- Sample recruitment public services announcements
- A good word-of-mouth recruitment network
- Recruitment brochures, flyers and posters
- Recruitment statements to be included in newsletters and other regular publications
- An application packet (more about that later).

## **What did the parents say?**

Initial recruitment to form a Parent Partner Network could begin with current committees and boards that have parent representatives. Parents should be given necessary support to research, recruit and implement recruitment components needed to move forward at a relatively quick pace.

### **Where to recruit:**

**Churches** – Recruit within churches that have recovery components and inform the larger body by offering a presentation.

**Parent support and self-help groups** – Recruit and do presentations to parenting groups, support groups for former prostitutes, battered women's shelters, food banks.

**Hospitals** – Make contact with pediatric units to inform them and circulate information about the Parent Partner project.

**Treatment Centers** – Treatment Centers may have an alumni list. Try to make contact with alumni or get on their list of speakers for their annual dinners or events to promote the Parent Partner Network.

### **Who to contact to recruit:**

Ask aftercare program providers, CD counselors and child welfare workers to recommend volunteers.

Recruit parents through those who work in the court system; ask judges, public defenders, prosecutors and guardians *ad litem* to make recommendations for volunteers.

Create some type of internship opportunity for college and graduate students to volunteer.

### **How to recruit:**

Write a grant or request for proposal that incorporates some type of a referral or relationship to the Parent Partner Network to receive funds.

Post flyers announcing the Parent Partner project at treatment facilities, halfway houses and circulate the flyers through 12 Step contacts.

## **Application Packet for the Volunteer Parent Partners**

### **What is included in an application packet?**

When interested people respond to the recruitment materials, you will want to be able to give or send them a packet of information with an application. Included in the packet could be:

- A cover letter that states:
  - the mission of the Parent Partner Network and the local program
  - the estimated amount of hours per week or month the Parent Partner can expect to work
  - the requirement of a two year commitment and of initial and ongoing training
  - the dates of the next orientation session
  - how to apply
  - a person and phone number to contact with questions
  - a deadline for when you would like the application returned
- The Volunteer Parent Partner Job Description
- A program brochure or fact sheet
- An application (sample application form is in appendix five)
- A self-addressed, stamped return envelope

## **Screening and Interviewing Volunteer Parent Partners**

### **What are some things to take into consideration as you develop your screening policies and procedures?**

In gathering information on the application and through releases of information, decide why you want that information and what you plan to do with it. Do not gather information you do not need. Do not keep data and information you will not use.

Current successes and life-circumstances should hold the greatest weight in considering an applicant for a Parent Partner position. Past records should help you and the applicant decide if they are appropriate for the position. Be open to the fact that past actions don't predict current or future behavior. Go into the screening process trying to screen potential Parent Partners in to the program, not out of it.

Make sure all applicants are asked for the same information and are treated in a similar manner. Screening and interviewing procedures and policies should be consistent. You don't want to give the appearance of discriminating, or actually discriminate against any individual or group of applicants.

### **What are some of the positive outcomes of carefully screened prospective volunteer Parent Partners?**

Volunteers who are carefully screened and interviewed promote the following:

- A clear understanding by the volunteer of what the volunteer position entails
- A stronger commitment from the volunteer
- The credibility of the Parent Partner Program and of the volunteers within the systems and with the parents
- Retention of well-trained, respected, appreciated, committed volunteers

## **What screening tools can be used to screen volunteer Parent Partners?**

You will need to consult with your local legal representatives to make sure the forms meet local and state standards and legal requirements. Samples of the screening forms below are in appendices five through twelve of this handbook.

- The application form
- Release of information forms for:
  - State Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) records checks
  - County-based child abuse and neglect records checks
  - Alcohol and other drug treatment program verification releases
  - Releases to talk to social workers and treatment providers
- Reference letters
- Interview questionnaire
- Tennessee Warning
- Volunteer agreements
- Confidentiality agreements

## **Recognition and Retention of Volunteer Parent Partners**

### **What are formal and informal ways to recognize volunteers?**

It is important that the recognition provided to Parent Partners is meaningful to them. One way to determine what is meaningful to individual volunteers is to figure out what motivates them to be a Parent Partner. What is the main reason for their involvement? We can assume their desire to help other parents and help children return to their parents in a timely manner is a common reason volunteers are attracted to the Parent Partner position. Other things that might motivate volunteers include a desire to learn, to meet people, to share their expertise, it provides an opportunity to give something back, to make a difference and to make needed changes. Appreciation can and should be expressed formally and informally. Be sure and advocate for a line item in the budget for Parent Partners' appreciation.

- What are informal ways appreciation can be shown to the volunteers?
- What are formal ways to recognize the Parent Partners for their efforts and contributions?
- Design a formal annual recognition plan.

### **Ideally, where should the Parent Partner Network and Programs focus their energy and resources?**

Ultimately, resources should be focused on retaining volunteer Parent Partners. Volunteers who have been carefully screened are more likely to stay. Well trained, supported and appreciated volunteers will refer others to the Network. When Parent Partners are given the information and resources they need to do their jobs, they will want to continue to work with other parents. Keeping well trained, experienced Parent Partners who are invested in the Network and in helping other parents and families to succeed should be the goal of the Parent Partner Network consultant and coordinators.

## **What did the parents say?**

**When asked about ways they would like to be recognized for their efforts if they Were volunteer parent partners, the parents suggested:**

**Monthly Meetings** – Meetings can be used for various reasons. Monthly potlucks could be held for volunteers to voice concerns and to discuss difficulties and successes. Opportunities for training and workshops could also be made at the monthly meetings.

**Communication** – Remember to communicate through greeting cards, thank you cards, birthday cards... Quarterly newsletters about what is happening around the state with the Parent Partner Network would be helpful. Success stories of families would be good to share.

**Family Celebrations** – Organize periodic celebratory ceremonies with families and volunteer Parent Partners to recognize successes and the progress being made towards recovery.

**Incentives** – Present volunteers with gift certificates on a regular basis or as an extra incentive. You might recognize a volunteer of the month with a gift certificate for instance.

**Annual Statewide Event** – Every year hold a gala affair that is statewide to recognize, fundraise, recruit and recognize volunteers from all of the counties.

## **Part III. Suggestions for Parent Partner Orientations and Training**

Developers of, trainers and participants in the orientation and training for the Parent Partner Network should include those who work in the child welfare, juvenile court and alcohol and other drug use systems, parents and other interested community members. Initial staff orientations to the Parent Partner Network for those who work in the three systems could be organized by the Parent Partner consultant and delivered regionally. They could also be delivered in conjunction with other events, such as at an annual Children's Justice Initiative Conference or at a statewide or regional social service conference or chemical health conference.

There could be three basic types of training developed and used as models:

- An hour-long orientation to the Parent Partner Network and the role of the Parent Partner for the staff who will be working with the Parent Partners
- A two-hour-long orientation to the role of the parent partner for those interested in volunteering as a parent partner. It would be presented at the local level on a regular basis (monthly, quarterly or as needed) to educate staff, community members and recruit volunteer parent partners
- A six hour (or three, two hour) training session(s) for the volunteer Parent Partner. It would be presented at the local level a couple of times a year or as needed.



### **What might the hour-long staff orientation include?**

This session could include the history of the Parent Partner Network, the role of the Parent Partner, the qualifications and responsibilities of the Parent Partner, the screening, training and supervision the Parent Partner will receive and how it has worked in other states or counties.

### **What might the two-hour-long orientation for the perspective Parent Partners include?**

This session could explain the history of the Parent Partner Network, the role of the Parent Partner, the qualifications and responsibilities of the Parent Partner, the time commitment required and expected, the Five Clocks, and what the next steps are to apply and be screened, interviewed and trained as a Parent Partner.

### **What might the initial training for the volunteer Parent Partner include?**

#### **Session One**

15 minutes: Introductions and get acquainted – Parent Partner Coordinator

15 minutes: What is the role of the parent partner? – Coordinator

10 minutes: How are the parents matched and when will I start? Coordinator

5 minutes: Overview of the initial training for the Parent Partner – Coordinator

One hour: Alcohol and other drug use – Local chemical health expert

- What does a chemical assessment entail and what are some of the recommendations that can result from an assessment?
- What treatment resources are there in our community?
- What are some of the barriers to becoming successfully sober?
- From your perspective, what do parents need to know that can help them succeed?

10 Minutes: Wrap up and evaluations

#### **Session Two**

10 Minutes: Welcome and introductions – Coordinator

90 minutes: Juvenile Court CHIPS proceedings – Local attorney from the County Attorney's office and or the juvenile court judge

- What is a CHIPS petition?
- How does a case make its way through the court system?
- What is concurrent permanency planning?
- What are the Indian Child Welfare Act and the Heritage Act?
- From your perspective, what do parents need to know to help them succeed?

10 Minutes: Read and sign the Confidentiality and Volunteer Agreements

10 Minutes: Preview of next session, wrap up and evaluations

### **Session Three**

5 Minutes: Welcome – Coordinator

60 Minutes: Child welfare services – Representative(s) from the local human service child protection agency

- Overview of child protection response system.
- What is the role of the child protection worker in CHIPS cases?
- What is involved in developing a case plan and what goes into it?
- What are the barriers parents face in completing a case plan?
- From your perspective, what do parents need to know to help them succeed?

35 Minutes: Communication tips – Coordinator

30 Minutes: Movie: Multiple Transitions: A Young Child's Point of View on Foster Care and Adoption and reactions

Award certificates, wrap up and evaluation

#### **What else might be considered in addition to the training content?**

PowerPoint presentations can be developed and used at the orientation and training sessions. An information packet can be developed for the staff member orientation. The information packet and an application packet can be distributed at the orientation for prospective Parent Partners. A training manual can be developed for the Parent Partner initial training.

#### **What did the parents say?**

##### **What suggestions do you have to improve recovery when leaving treatment or transitioning to another service?**

- Stop the revolving door! When parents don't make outlined goals, the process starts all over again and it may not be necessary to start all over again, but add some extra supports to help regain focus.
- Social workers need to be clearer on expectations and informative regarding what can happen when a plan is not met even if attempts to comply have been made.
- Someone to help me be accountable to recovery.

## Final Thoughts

All individuals are equally important for the Parent Partner Network to succeed. While to some, the parents may seem to be in most immediate need of education and resources, those working in the systems also need education and resources to successfully and effectively engage families. Creating an environment of mutual respect among all involved would be ideal.

Parents must understand that although the resources were created to assist their family through hardships, they too have the responsibility to educate themselves and others while working towards the same outcomes. Taking an “us against them” attitude is clearly not going to help everyone reach the objectives of the Parent Partner Network. Everyone listening to each other, respecting each other and working together will produce the best results.

### What did the parents say?

**We asked parents that participated in the workgroups to share with us why they believe this parent network is needed. This is what they had to say.**

For parents coming out of this “living hell” of drug addiction, to have an empowerment group and support of folks who understand what it’s like to come back to life, and to help them find their purpose. Lydell W.

It would be easier for a parent to trust another parent who has been through what they are going through because they may be able to see that parent as more of a friend who wants to see them succeed rather than someone who is superior over them. Beverly H.

There are too many women and men in the system who lose their children because they weren’t offered specific resources or programs to benefit their walk with getting healthy. I believe they are pushed and pressured so hard that they can’t keep up and have nobody to turn to, so they give up. Tiffany P.

I feel this network should become a reality because it hasn’t been done. It is so clear that it is the next logical step to help save families. Grace A.

## Nothing but Silence

By Ashley G., age 12

People all around me  
Calling out my name  
But no I cannot hear them  
For my heart is filled with shame

Nothing but silence

But only till the break of dawn  
Will I be feeling sad  
For wandering out on the streets  
Are my birth mom and dad

Why'd she do this to her and me  
With this we'll have to cope  
But while she's clean you never know  
There still could be hope

But in the perfect world I know  
There's no harmful stuff  
But now I've come to realize  
It's just a bunch of bluff

Nothing but silence

Sitting by the widow sill  
A tear rolls down my cheek  
Although it hurts I can't express  
My heart is just too weak

Nothing but ache

It's funny what one pill can do  
To a mother or a kid  
And now I know that for a fact  
I won't do what she did

Nothing but ache

Now I live a better life  
And drugs...I wouldn't dare  
Away from all the harmful things  
With a family who cares

Nothing but love

I know it hurts, it sure hurt me  
And that's why I'll remain drug free

Nothing... but hope

January 2005

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## Appendices

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# Sample Parent Partner Network Consultant Job Description – Appendix One

Title: Parent Partner Network Consultant

General Function:

Provide consultation, coordination and technical assistance for the Parent Partner Network in Minnesota. The Parent Partner Network Consultant serves in an advisory capacity on the Minnesota Children's Justice Initiative-Alcohol and Other Drugs Project

Qualifications:

- Past personal involvement and successful completion of services through the child welfare, juvenile courts and alcohol and other drugs' services
- Experience with program development, direct service, report writing, research and program implementation
- Working knowledge and understanding of CHIPS proceedings and terminology
- Working knowledge and understanding of child protection services
- Working knowledge and understanding of alcohol and other drug (AOD) recovery process
- Genuine concern and compassion for those with AOD concerns involved in the child protection and juvenile court systems.
- Genuine interest in keeping children safe from abuse and neglect
- Sensitivity to cultural, ethnic and economic diversity
- Ability to form and work within systems protocols
- Desire to promote needed changes in the systems that affect at-risk parents and children
- Ability to form and work within communities to educate and recruit parent partners
- Skills in event planning and workshop facilitation
- Working knowledge of computer and basic office software programs' skills
- Ability to articulate ideas, concerns and thoughts orally and in writing
- Alcohol and other drug free with a minimum of two years in recovery.

Duties and Responsibilities:

- Attend and participate in CJI-AOD Team meetings
- Participate in project planning and serve on ad hoc workgroups
- Develop written materials, workshops and presentations designed to educate parents currently involved in the child welfare, juvenile courts and alcohol and other drugs' systems
- Serve as a liaison and consultant to various Parent Partner Network Programs in Minnesota regarding developing programs in their communities
- Develop educational tools (video, DVD, CD, Brochures) for use with families
- Develop a parent hotline
- Develop parent introductory training to Parent Partner Network
- Provide technical assistance throughout state on recruiting, screening and training Parent Partners
- Make presentations in the community and to organizations that serve parents and families
- Plan regular volunteer recognition events and parent recognition events
- Write annual reports on the activities and progress of the Parent Partner Network
- Develop a program evaluation tool
- Other duties deemed necessary.

## Sample Parent Partner Network Coordinator Job Description – Appendix Two

Title: Parent Partner Network Coordinator

### General Function:

Work within the county or community where the network is organized under direct supervision and administrative supports of the county, tribe or community organization. Work with the Parent Partner Consultant to coordinate the local Parent Partner Network program. The Parent Partner Network Coordinator will implement the Parent Partner Network goals and objectives in their county or judicial district and community.

### Qualifications:

- Past personal involvement and successful completion of services through the child welfare, juvenile courts and alcohol and other drugs services
- Working knowledge and understanding of CHIPS proceedings and terminology
- Working knowledge and understanding of Child Protection Services
- Working knowledge and understanding of Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) recovery process
- Genuine concern and compassion for those with AOD concerns involved in the child protection and juvenile court systems
- Sensitivity to cultural, ethnic and economic diversity
- Ability to form and work within systems' protocols
- Desire to promote needed changes in the systems that affect at-risk parents and children
- Ability to form and work within communities to educate and recruit parent partners
- Skills in event planning and workshop facilitation
- Basic office software programs' skills
- Ability to articulate ideas, concerns and thoughts
- Alcohol and Other Drug free with a minimum of two years in recovery.

### Duties and Responsibilities:

- Coordinate the recruitment, screening, interviewing, placing, supervision and recognition of volunteer Parent Partners
- Be present and available for parents at juvenile court CHIPS proceedings
- Plan and organize Parent Partner orientations as needed
- Plan and organize monthly volunteer Parent Partner support sessions and training
- Attend and participate in CJI-AOD Team meetings upon request
- Assist in developing written materials, workshops, initiatives designed to bring solutions to parents currently involved in the child welfare, juvenile courts and alcohol and other drug systems
- Participate in the development of a parent hotline
- Assist in the development of a parent introductory training to the Parent Partner Network
- Facilitate regular parent introductory trainings to Parent Partner Network
- Make presentations about the Parent Partner Network to community agencies and organizations
- Organize volunteer schedules for parent hotline and parent partner matches.
- Plan regular volunteer recognition events and parent recognition events
- Other duties deemed necessary.

## **Sample Volunteer Parent Partner Volunteer Job Description – Appendix Three**

Title: Volunteer Parent Partner

General Function:

Work with the Parent Partner Network Coordinator to help parents become successful in family recovery and navigate the child welfare, juvenile court and alcohol and other drugs systems.

### **Being a Parent Partner can offer you**

- An opportunity to provide a parent perspective and voice
- An opportunity to be an active participant on the behalf of abused and neglected children in your community
- An opportunity to promote positive changes for the well-being of children
- An opportunity to put your interests, talents and expertise to good use for a worthy cause
- In-service training and awareness on topics such as cultural diversity, chemical and mental health, education and community resources
- Ongoing professional support and consultation
- Access to and broader understanding of the child welfare system, juvenile court proceedings and the alcohol and other drug system
- Receive reimbursement for mileage, parking and other approved out of pocket expenses
- A meaningful, important experience that will provide new insights, interests and challenges.

Expectations:

- Alcohol and other drug free with a minimum of two years in recovery
- Significant progress in personal acceptance, responsibility and healing pertaining to one's recovery and involvement with child welfare
- Desire to promote needed system changes that effect at-risk parents and children
- Desire to have a positive impact on the chemical health, child welfare and juvenile court systems
- Ability to maintain confidentiality
- Ability to work as part of a team and maintain lines of open communication

Qualifications:

- Past personal involvement and successful completion of services through the child welfare, juvenile courts and alcohol and other drug services
- Genuine concern and compassion for those with AOD concerns involved in the child protection and juvenile court systems
- Sensitivity to cultural, ethnic and economic diversity
- Willingness to learn and work within systems' protocols
- Desire to promote needed changes in the systems that affect at-risk parents and children
- Ability to form relationships and work within communities to educate and recruit parent partners
- Assist in the planning and implementation of workshops and other events
- Basic office software programs' skills
- Ability to articulate ideas, concerns and thoughts.

See next page for duties and responsibilities



## Duties and Responsibilities:

- Be present and available for parents at juvenile court CHIPS proceedings
- Be available for parents and have weekly in-person contact with your partner parent
- Make a two year initial commitment
- Participate in ongoing support groups, training and supervision
- Let the Parent Partner Network coordinator know if you need to cancel a meeting, attendance at a scheduled court session or other appointment
- Be available to speak with parents on the parent hotline
- Participate in presentations about the Parent Partner Network in community agencies and organizations
- Recruit Parent Partners
- Other duties deemed necessary

## Other Possible Volunteer Positions in the Parent Partner Network

In organizing your staff and volunteer structure you may want to consider other volunteer positions that do not have direct, one-on-one contact but will help the program to run efficiently. Some of those positions may be but are not limited to:

- Scheduler (rooms, meetings, presentations)
- Workshop Organizers
- Child Care Providers
- Office Clerk
- Workshop Speakers
- Mail Organizers
- Flyer Distributors
- Donations Organizers

## Sample Recruitment Plan and Time-Line – Appendix Four

|  |   |  |   |   |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| <p><b><u>January and February</u></b></p> <p>Ongoing, informal recruitment.</p> <p>Prepare recruitment materials for the year.</p> <p>Determine next orientation date and location.</p>                  | <p><b><u>March</u></b></p> <p><b>Begin active recruitment.</b> Distribute flyers, press releases, application packets at the state and local levels.</p> <p>Make presentations to community groups at the local level.</p> <p>“Each one reach one.” (ask current PP’s to recruit a colleague)</p> | <p><b><u>April</u></b></p> <p>Continue active recruitment</p> <p>Form interviewing teams and procedures, times and locations.</p> <p>Begin scheduling interviews for May and June.</p>   | <p><b><u>May</u></b></p> <p>Continue active recruitment.</p> <p><b>Begin interviews</b> during the last two weeks in May.</p> | <p><b><u>June</u></b></p> <p>Wrap up interviews and conduct records and references checks.</p> <p>local county <b>orientation and training.</b></p> <p>Check supply of recruitment materials and application packets. Update materials if needed.</p>           |
| <p><b><u>July</u></b></p> <p>Appointment of new parent partners who have been successfully screened and have completed their orientation.</p> <p><b>New parent partners begin in July or August.</b></p> | <p><b><u>August</u></b></p> <p>Ongoing, informal recruitment.</p> <p>Assign mentors to new parent partners in July or August.</p>   | <p><b><u>September</u></b></p> <p>Ongoing, informal recruitment.</p> <p>Update PP membership vacancies and waiting lists.</p> <p>Determine if additional state and local orientation and training sessions need to be scheduled.</p> | <p><b><u>October</u></b></p> <p>Ongoing, informal recruitment.</p>  | <p><b><u>November and December</u></b></p> <p>Ongoing, informal recruitment.</p> <p>Appointment of new parent partners who have been successfully screened and have completed their orientation in October, November or December.</p> <p>Assign PP mentors.</p> |

## Sample Application for Volunteer Parent Partner Position – Appendix Five

Logo, motto above or below application title

County or Agency policy and federal law prohibits discrimination based on race, creed, sex, religion, mental or physical disabilities, age or marital status. Questions of this nature are asked for general background purposes only.

**\*You are not obligated to supply this information.** If you do not answer these questions it will not affect consideration given to your application.

### Contact information:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Other Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\*Male \_\_\_\_\_ \*Female \_\_\_\_\_ \*Birth date \_\_\_\_\_

Person to notify in case of emergency \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

### Experience and skills related to your past paid and volunteer positions:

Please list any paid and volunteer jobs you may have or had in the past five years:

What skills did you develop as a result of the jobs listed above?

### Background with child protection, juvenile court and alcohol and other drug use:

Because of the qualifications necessary for the volunteer parent partner (please see Volunteer Parent Partner job description), failure to answer the following questions may affect consideration given to your application.

Have you ever been involved in a Child in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPS) court proceeding?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you involved in recovery from alcohol and/or other drugs abuse? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Your sobriety anniversary date \_\_\_\_\_ Total years \_\_\_\_\_

Did you successfully complete a formal chemical dependency inpatient or outpatient treatment program?

☐ Yes ☐ No. If yes, what program and when did you complete it?

Will you sign a release that will allow us to contact the above treatment program?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Are you currently participating in a 12 step or other recovery group?

☐ AA/NA

☐ Faith based recovery program

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

☐ If you are not currently participating in a 12 step or other recovery program, how do you receive support in recovery?

## Sample Volunteer Parent Partner Application (continued)

Please provide the name and contact information for your last, former child welfare worker, if the case closed less than 3 years ago. Will you sign a release that will allow us to contact this person? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Agency \_\_\_\_\_

During your involvement with the child welfare, juvenile courts and alcohol and other drug systems, do you feel like you were treated fairly? ☐ Yes ☐ No Please explain:

Why do you want to become a Parent Partner?

What other skills and expertise will you bring to the Parent Partner position?

Will you be willing to serve at least two years as a Parent Partner? ☐ Yes ☐ No

### Please list three references:

(1) Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Street \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

(2) Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Street \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

(3) Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Street \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

In order to promote the integrity of the Parent Partner Network, ensure confidentiality is maintained, to protect the safety of the volunteer Parent Partner and those families you will be in contact with, we use many methods of screening, including criminal and child maltreatment records checks. Are you willing to allow us to conduct a thorough background check on you? ☐ Yes ☐ No

I submit the statements on this application are true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that falsification on this application can disqualify me from consideration or can result in dismissal at a later time.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this application. Return completed application...

## Sample Authorization for Release of Information Criminal Background Check Information – Appendix Six

### NOTICE TO APPLICANT:

Please complete the Applicant Data section and sign the Informed Consent below. The (requesting agency) is asking for this information so that we can ask the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) whether its records indicate that you have been convicted of any of the “Background Check Crimes” set forth in the Minnesota Child Protection Background Check Act (Minnesota Statutes, sections 299C.60-.64). Those crimes are **child abuse crimes (see list on back), murder, manslaughter, felony level assault, any assault crime committed against a minor, kidnapping, arson, criminal sexual conduct, and prostitution-related crimes.**

Because members of the Parent Partners may have access to sensitive private data about vulnerable individuals, it is necessary to assure that Parent Partners do not have a criminal history that would make access to such data inappropriate. You are not legally required to provide any of the information requested. However, if your failure to supply information results in our being unable to get responses from the BCA, if you fail to list a background check crime for which you have been convicted, or if you provide false information on this form you could be eliminated from consideration as a Parent Partner.

The information that you are asked to provide in this form is considered private data. This means it is available only to you, the (requesting agency), the Parent Partner Interview Team and BCA officials who have a need for it. It will not be released outside the (requesting agency, the Parent Partner Interview Team and the BCA without your consent unless required by an administrative, court, or investigative proceeding, whether related or unrelated to the Parent Partner Network.

You should also know that you have the right to be informed by (the requesting agency) of the BCA’s response to the information request, to obtain a copy of the report from (the requesting agency), and to obtain from the BCA any record that forms the basis of the report. You also have the right, under Minnesota Statutes, section 13.04, to challenge the accuracy and completeness of any information contained in the report or records and to be informed by (the requesting agency) if your application to be, or continuation as, a Parent Partner is denied because of the BCA report.

---

### APPLICANT DATA:

Give your Full Name:

Last \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ Middle \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Race \_\_\_\_\_

List any other Names you have used or been known by in the last ten years:

Have you ever been convicted of any of the crimes listed on the next page? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, describe each crime and the details of the conviction on the back of this form:

---

### INFORMED CONSENT:

I authorize the BCA to disclose to (requesting agency) my criminal record regarding the Background Check Crimes listed above for the sole purpose of determining whether I am an appropriate candidate to be a volunteer member of the Parent Partner Network.

This authorization shall expire one year from the date of my signature.

---

Signature of Applicant

---

Date

## **Criminal Background Check Release of Information (continued)**

### **Child Abuse Crimes**

The following are considered “child abuse crimes” under the Minnesota Child Protection Background Check Act:

1. Any of the following acts if committed against a minor:
  - Causing the death of the minor while committing child abuse if the perpetrator has engaged in a past practice of child abuse and the circumstances manifest an extreme indifference to human life (609.185(5))
  - Assault in the first, second, third, or fifth degree (609.221, .222, .223, .224)
  - Domestic assault (609.2242)
  - Prostitution-related crimes (609.322, .324)
  - Criminal sexual conduct of any degree (609.342-.345)
  - Solicitation to engage in sexual conduct (609.352)
  - Malicious punishment (609.377)
  - Neglect or Endangerment (609.378)
2. Any of the following drug-related crimes:
  - Selling a controlled substance in a school zone, park zone, public housing zone, or drug treatment facility (152.021, subd. 1(4); 152.022, subd. 1(6); 152.024, subd. 1(4))
  - Possession of certain controlled substances in a school zone, park zone, public housing zone, or drug treatment facility (152.023, subd. 2(4),(6))
  - Selling controlled substances to a minor or conspiring with or employing a minor to sell controlled substances (152.022, subd. 1(5); 152.023, subd. 1(3),(4); 152.024, subd. 1(2),(3))

Additional detail from previous page:

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**Parent Partner Network**  
**Requesting Agency**  
**Address**

**NOTICE TO APPLICANT:**

The information that you are asked to provide in this form is considered private data. This means it is available only to you, the (requesting agency), the Parent Partner Interview Team and local social services agency officials who have a need for it. It will not be released outside the (requesting agency), the Parent Partner Interview Team and the agencies in the counties you have listed in this form unless required by an administrative, court, or investigative proceeding, whether related or unrelated to the Parent Partner Network.

| Street Address: | City: | State: | County: | From - to: |
|-----------------|-------|--------|---------|------------|
|                 |       |        |         |            |
|                 |       |        |         |            |
|                 |       |        |         |            |
|                 |       |        |         |            |

## 30

**Instruction to Local Social Services Agency:**

The front of this form is a consent for the release of any findings of child and/or vulnerable adult maltreatment to the (requesting agency) for the purpose of screening Volunteer Parent Partners.

\_\_\_\_\_ County

\_\_\_ **NO Findings of Maltreatment**

\_\_\_ **Findings of Maltreatment (See Comments)**

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Name

**Return to:**

**Attention: Parent Partner Program  
Requesting agency  
Address**



## Sample Reference Letter – Appendix Eight

### Parent Partner Network

Date:

To:

\_\_\_\_\_ has applied to be a volunteer Parent Partner in \_\_\_\_\_ County. Enclosed is a volunteer Parent Partner job description. **The applicant has given your name as a reference.** Please answer the questions below and return the completed form in the enclosed, addressed, postage paid envelope **within one week.** Thank you.

1. How well do you know the applicant?

Very Well \_\_\_\_ Well \_\_\_\_ Little \_\_\_\_ Very Little \_\_\_\_

2. When was the last time you had contact with this person?

3. How responsible is the applicant?

Very \_\_\_\_ Usually \_\_\_\_ Seldom \_\_\_\_ Never \_\_\_\_ Don't Know \_\_\_\_

4. Do you have any concerns that the applicant may have problems keeping information they learn about other people confidential?

5. Why do you think this person may be interested in working as a Parent Partner?

6. How does the applicant handle situations in which individuals have different opinions?

7. What is the most important thing this applicant can provide to another parent as a Parent Partner parent?

8. If you have any more information or comments you think would be helpful, please include them on the back.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Reference

If you would like to discuss something further, please call (name) at (number). The information you provide will not be shared with the volunteer applicant without your permission.

**Thank you for taking the time to fill out this reference.**

Parent Partner Network  
Requesting agency  
Address

## Sample Volunteer Parent Partner Agreement – Appendix Nine

### The volunteer Parent Partner agrees to do the following:

1. Make efforts to remain active in the network for a minimum of two years;
2. Abide by all confidentiality provisions set forth in the statement of Job Responsibilities and the Confidentiality Agreement;
3. Complete an initial training and attend future in-service training;
4. Attend and participate in all scheduled meetings. If unable to do so, notice must be given to Parent Partner Coordinator;
5. Be respectful of others during meetings, court hearings and training sessions. Members are expected to refrain from using inappropriate language or discussing improper subject matter, in an effort to ensure discussions are free of sexual harassment and racial or cultural intolerance;  
**Failure to abide by items #2 – 5 may result in dismissal from the Parent Partner Program.**
6. Submit requests for expense reimbursement to (the program) in a timely fashion. Expenses will be limited to those allowed by (the program) and incurred solely because of participation as a Parent Partner;
7. Address problems, grievances and the like with the Parent Partner Coordinator as issues occur.

### The State Agency agrees to do the following:

1. Provide training, consultation and technical support necessary to facilitate the work of the Parent Partner Network;
2. Provide reasonable basic supplies needed for the Parent Partner Network activities;
3. Reimburse mileage at the current state mileage rate, long distance phone call expenses, and child care (up to \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month/per Parent Partner) for activities related to Parent Partner activities. With prior approval and as permitted by (the Program), other reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred in activities as a Parent Partner member may be reimbursed;
4. Address problems, grievances and the like with the Parent Partner Coordinator as issues occur.

### The local host agency agrees to do the following:

1. Provide an orientation to the Parent Partner Network in your community;
2. Provide initial and ongoing training and consultation on the local child welfare, juvenile court and alcohol and other drug systems and assistance necessary to facilitate the work of the Parent Partner;
3. Provide reasonable basic supplies necessary for the Parent Partner to carry out his or her duties;
4. Provide the Parent Partner with information and supervision necessary to carry out his or her duties as allowed by statute;
5. Provide formal and informal recognition of the work of the Parent Partner.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Partner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Partner Consultant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Partner Coordinator

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Partner Network  
Host Agency  
Address**

## Sample Confidentiality Agreement – Appendix Ten

This agreement shall be interpreted pursuant to the laws of the State of Minnesota and shall apply to the host agency (hereinafter “Agency”) and the undersigned individual who is a member of the Parent Partner Network (hereinafter “MEMBER”).

**WHEREAS**, the **MEMBER** has been approved to serve as a Parent Partner;

The **MEMBER** agrees:

1. That no confidential or protected nonpublic data collected, maintained, or used in the course or performance of my duties as a member of the Parent Partner Network shall be disseminated by me or at my direction, except as authorized by statute, either during my period of service as a Parent Partner or thereafter; and
2. To indemnify and save hold the State, its agents, and employees, harmless for all claims or cost arising out of resulting from, or in any manner attributable to my violation of any provision of this agreement, the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and/or Minn. Stat. § 256.01, subd. 15, including legal fees and disbursements paid or incurred to enforce the provisions of this agreement.
3. That my participation in the Parent Partner Network makes me a part of the (Agency) for the purposes of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Partner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Agency Designee

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Partner Network  
Host Agency  
Address**

## Sample Interview Questionnaire – Appendix Eleven

### Interview Questions for the Volunteer Parent Partner

Date:

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Introduction:

Tennessee Warning: Addresses why the information is being asked, how the information will be used, what information the individual is legally required to provide, what the consequences are for either providing or refusing to provide information, and the identity of those authorized by law with access to the information.

Did you have a chance to read the Volunteer Parent Partner job description? Do you have any questions at this point?

#### General Questions:

Score the answer to each question using a scale of one to five, with “1” indicating the applicant has difficulty or inexperience with the concept, and “5” indicating the applicant has a mature and well thought out grasp of the concept.

#### The applicant’s understanding of the role of the Parent Partner:

1. Why do you want to serve as a Parent Partner and what do you hope to gain from your participation?  

\_\_\_\_\_  
(score)
  
2. What experiences have you had that might help you understand the different backgrounds and needs of families in the child welfare, juvenile court and alcohol and other drugs systems?  

\_\_\_\_\_  
(score)

**The applicant's understanding of the child welfare, juvenile court and alcohol and other drug systems:**

3. What do you think government's role should be in the protection of children? \_\_\_\_\_  
(score)

4. What responsibilities, if any, do communities and neighborhoods have to protect children? \_\_\_\_\_  
(score)

5. If you were introducing a new social worker who will work in your community, how would you describe the community and the families living there that he or she will serve? \_\_\_\_\_  
(score)

6. What do you think causes child abuse and neglect? What recommendations might you make to prevent it? \_\_\_\_\_  
(score)

**Work Style:**

7. Please describe a recent situation when you worked as a member of a team. Tell us what you liked and did not like about it. \_\_\_\_\_  
(score)

### **Procedural Questions:**

1. Is there anything else about your background or experiences that you have not mentioned and we should know about in considering you for this position?
2. Have you ever been convicted of any of the following: Child abuse crimes (as described in the Minnesota Child Protection Act), murder, manslaughter, felony level assault or any assault crime, kidnapping, arson, criminal sexual conduct or prostitution?
3. We will be contacting your references that you listed. Are there any changes?
4. If chosen as a Parent Partner, are you able and willing to make an initial commitment of two years?
5. Are you willing to participate in initial and ongoing training?
6. Will you agree to maintain confidentiality?
7. Are you aware this is an unpaid volunteer position?
8. Do you have any further questions?
9. The next steps in the process are...

(Possible 35 points) **SCORE:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Interviewer's comments and observations:**

You may want to come up with additional questions. Other examples are:

Do you believe people can change?

What do you believe people need in order to make changes in their lives?

Recommended for training? \_\_\_\_\_ (pending results of background and reference checks)

## **Sample Volunteer Interview Tennessean Warning – Appendix Twelve**

The information that we have gathered from you so far and any information about you that we gather as part of this interview is private data. As such, it is not releasable outside of the (Agency) unless required by an administrative court or investigative proceeding whether related or unrelated to the Parent Partner Network.

We are asking this information to distinguish you from other interested persons and to allow us to form a Parent Partner Network that broadly represents the community and contains a diversity of membership.

You are not legally required to provide any to the information we ask you for and furnishing any information about your social security number, gender, race or ethnicity, and disability status is voluntary. Refusal to supply other requested information may result in your not being selected to participate as a Parent Partner.

If you become a member of the Parent Partner Network, some of the data you have provided will become public by operation of state law. Those data are:

- your name
- any compensation you receive, including expense reimbursement
- your position title and description
- any relevant education and training background and work experience that we have gathered about you
- the dates of your membership in the Parent Partner Network or Program.

**Parent Partner Network**  
**Agency**  
**Address**

## **Appendix Thirteen**

### **The Five Clocks**

The five clocks parents and families involved in child in need of protection or services (CHIPS) proceedings and those working with them often have to consider are: 1) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), 2) the child welfare system, 3) the recovery process, 4) their child's developmental needs and 5) the agency and staff response to their recovery needs.

#### **The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Clock**

Work must be found within 24 months when benefits cease. For MFIP, there is a lifetime limit for receiving benefits of 60 months.

#### **The Child Welfare Clock - Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA)**

- Six month reviews of parent's progress towards becoming a safe caregiver of children who have been removed from their home.
- A court hearing at 12 months and a petition to terminate parental rights if the child has been in out-of-home care for 15 out of the prior 22 months.

#### **The Recovery Process Clock - One Day at a Time**

- Recovery often takes longer than substance abuse treatment funding allows.
- Good outcomes are contingent on adequate length of treatment. This may be incompatible with child welfare deadlines.
- The recovery timetable can be summarized as "one day at a time, for the rest of your life."

#### **The Child Development Clock**

- According to research on brain development, the developmental timetable that affects children, especially younger children, as they achieve or fail to achieve bonding and attachment during their first 18 months of life is critical.
- A child's sense of time is different than an adult's sense of time. For children, the "clock" runs much slower.

#### **The Agency and Staff Response Time Clock**

Those who work in the juvenile court, child welfare and alcohol and other drugs' systems and those who provide direct services to children and families from other agencies need to remember:

- The clocks never stop.
- The new child welfare and TANF time limits, combined with what is known about child development, attachment and bonding demand a more *best interests of the child – parent – family centered* practice than ever before.
- Priorities must be made for the permanent funding of programs and resources for timely assessment and intervention for prenatally exposed and children who are exposed daily to the environmental and familial effects of alcohol and other drug use.