

Parent Community Outreach/Childcare~ Nikki Hannon
Board Meeting: November 13, 2018

October seemed to fly by within the Parent Community Outreach Program. Here are a few highlights:

- **Child Care~** In October, children in the infant room practiced fine motor skills by focusing on using their fingers and hands to grab different objects and toys. They also got creative by making glitter bats with selfies. The children in the toddler room continue to learn a new letter, number and shape each week. All children were invited to participate in Red Ribbon Week dress up and daily activities. One final highlight for October was the 2018 Great Montana Shake Out Earthquake Drill (see below). The children were excited to get to crawl under the tables!



- **Hi-Set~** We are currently focusing on **recruitment and retention** to increase our enrollment and daily attendance. We had (6) returning students working on their Hi-Set with an additional (8) new students who took the TABE and have also started working on their Hi-Set.
 - **Recruitment-**Our Hi-Set tutor, Jerelyn Gobert, has reached out to community partners to make referrals. These partners include Blackfeet Community College, Blackfeet ManPower, Office of Public Assistance, Blackfeet Tribal Court, Crystal Creek and Opportunities, Inc. Jerelyn has also used Facebook, cold calls, and community flyers as recruiting tools.

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- **Retention-** We have found that, much like public schools, attendance is effected by multiple barriers. The biggest barriers seem to be lack of childcare and lack of transportation. Our program has partnered with Blackfeet Transit to offer transportation for several of our Hi-Set students. Childcare continues to be an issue as we can only refer to Head Start and there is generally a waiting list. (Our in-house childcare prioritizes teen parents enrolled in school and then district staff.) In some cases, our students will study from home if childcare prevents them from coming to the Center. Other barriers include mental health issues (ie. depression, anxiety), domestic violence, and learning disabilities. We refer our students to Good Medicine, IHS, Northern Winds, Crystal Creek, Tamarack Grief, and Blackfeet Domestic Violence to support their mental and physical health. We offer accommodations for learning disabilities as we are made aware of the specific needs.
- **Adult Basic Education-** As another means of encouraging retention and improving attendance, the Hi-Set program is looking at offering a wider variety of workshops focused on employability (ie. Resume building, job seeking), skill building (ie. Beading, star quilt making), and life skills (ie. Healthy relationships, parenting).
- **Teen Parent Program~** Blackfeet ManPower Teen Parent Coalition Coordinator, Carol Williamson, and PCOP Director, Nikki Hannon, held four teen parent classes with students from the Buffalo Hide Academy in October. The first class was a welcoming session for new and returning teen parents; an amazing pediatrician from IHS joined us for our second session to speak with the young parents about developmental milestones and general health and wellness; during our third session we were able to give out infant clothing; and during the fourth session, we partnered with Debbie Whitegrass BullShoe of the Blackfeet Injury Prevention program to provide education about vehicle safety and free car seats. We have six young parents who are very active in these classes. So far this academic year, we have identified *24 teen parents*; 3 are enrolled in Hi-Set, 4 are currently dropped-out, 6 are enrolled at BHS and 11 are enrolled at WBHA.



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- **Families In Transition**~ The FIT program is evolving into a one-stop resource center for our families eligible as McKinney-Vento (homeless). We also prioritize our resources for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren as these are often hard to distinguish from those students eligible as McKinney Vento. Currently, we have identified #115 students as homeless, an additional #156 as being raised by a grandparent (which may or may not be considered homeless), and #18 as being in foster care. We know that these numbers are extremely low and continue to work on identifying our students so they can access the resources they need.
 - **The FIT program** continues to receive generous donations from various supporters, both non-profit and private donors.
 - A very supportive nurse out of Helena has made several trips to Browning to deliver household goods for three formerly homeless families that are getting settled into new homes.
 - We were able to provide #250 coats to students during the 1st annual “Oots sto yii wa” winter clothes give-away, thanks to the donation from the Blackfeet Tourism, Parks & Recreation and a partnership with Coats for Kids, Inc (Kalispell). We were also able to give out about 15 boxes of fruit and bread, thanks to a donation from Scott Brant of Nourish the Flathead/FAST Blackfeet.



- For the second year in a row, we received a Town Pump Charitable Foundation grant to support the needs of our School-based Food Pantries in Babb Elementary, BMS, BHS and WBHA. We will use these funds to purchase pallets of food for the current school year.

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- We have been offered #100 backpacks filled with school supplies from a non-profit in Washington. We anticipate receiving those by Christmas.
- We continue to manage the Adopt-A-Student list and will soon be looking at sponsors for the Holidays. We would like to offer our larger families a full Thanksgiving Dinner, and begin to coordinate with other organizations on a Christmas gift program.

The mission of the Parent Community Outreach Program is to serve as a resource to the school district and our community in a collaborative effort to keep our students in school until graduation.

We invite you to stop by the annex for a cup of coffee and conversation.