



## Youth, Family and Community Outreach Spotlight

Our Program Spotlight series continues by highlighting how our **Youth, Family and Community Outreach Services (YFCOS)** are continuing to provide services in this **Q & A** with the program's Directors, **Doug Braun and Bruce Mayer**.

**Q:** How has the current shelter in place mandate affected how we deliver the various services within YFOCS? Do caseworkers still see clients face-to-face?

**A:** The YFCOS program has really **rallied** to ensure services continue for the people we serve. Many of our clients are struggling right now. Health concerns, loss of income and the reality of being cooped

up in close quarters has increased stress and the opportunity for family conflict. Some of our families need additional help securing basic needs such as food, medication and stable housing. Our staff have attempted to **increase communication with clients** during this difficult time. Whenever possible this communication occurs over the phone or through video conferencing. In addition, our clients always have access to our 24 hour a day crisis line. A YFCOS staff member is always available to help **problem solve**. Sometimes in person contact is unavoidable. When this is the case, YFCOS staff take every possible precaution to ensure **their safety** and the **safety of our clients**.

**Q:** Tell us your biggest wins for your program so far during this crisis. What are you most proud of?

**A:** We are so proud of how YFCOS staff have stepped up and are **modeling the CYFS mission**. They are quick to volunteer to **help fellow staff**, other CYFS programs and the community in general. YFCOS staff are **resourceful**. They are experts on assisting families find what they need to **survive and thrive**. YFCOS staff know community resources and have **valuable working relationships** to maximize their impact. YFCOS staff are working from home as much as possible but they are certainly still working. They have been **creative** and are **making the most** of these unusual circumstances. We are seeing an **increase in staff training** and CQI projects being completed.

**Q:** What have been your biggest obstacles?

**A:** Crisis response for our CCBYS program is a **challenge**. We attempt to **triage crisis** calls remotely whenever possible. Sometimes this is not possible and requires an in-person response. We complete health screening and use appropriate PPE, but managing these calls can still be difficult. Because of COVID-19 there are many restrictions in regard to accessing public places such as police departments and hospitals where we usually meet to **intervene and attempt to resolve conflict**. In addition, it can be very difficult to identify a **safe place for kids** to go to for respite and a cooling off period. CCBYS staff and supervisors **continue to meet these challenges**.

**Q:** If someone reading this wanted to help our YFCOS program right now during the pandemic, what you would say is your greatest need?

**A:** Basic needs items that staff can share with YFCOS clients is our greatest need. Personal hygiene items, grocery store gift cards, gas station gift cards and PPE items are needed. In addition we could always use **more licensed foster homes** that would be able to provide **short term respite placement** of kids that are involved in a **family conflict** and have either **run away** from home or have been **locked out** of the home by their **guardians**.