

Forest Lake Area Partnership Background

Forest Lake Area Partnership for Families, Inc. began as a “breakfast networking group” in 1988. In the spring of 1990, in response to the local results of the Minnesota Student Survey, the group formalized and began working collaboratively to address issues facing youth and their health and well-being - Tri-County Youth & Family Partnership was formed.

The Partnership quickly grew and became active in promoting Minnesota Chemical Health Week, safe and chemical-free prom and graduation activities, community education forums, and was instrumental in the creation and distribution of a community resource guide. In 1992, the partnership received the Governor's Award from the Minnesota Department of Health. In 1996, the partnership received a Washington County HELM grant to provide violence prevention programming and create the Families FIRST! initiative based on Search Institute's 40 Assets that promote health and positive youth development.

In 1999, TCYFP began its suicide prevention efforts in response to Minnesota Student Survey results indicating concerns among 9th and 12th graders in depression and suicidal ideation. Initially, activities were funded through a \$10,000 grant from the Washington County Teen Health Fund as part of the tobacco settlement. Initial activities were centered on education, awareness, and stigma reduction at the community level, and included the parent-led creation of the Parents as Partners Handbook in collaboration with the SAVE (Suicide Awareness Voices of Education) organization. The publication is still in use today and has been distributed internationally. In 2002, the Partnership won the Minnesota Hospital Association award for Community Health for its their efforts in youth suicide prevention. In 2003, a more formal partnership was established with the Forest Lake Area School District. Education, awareness, and stigma reduction activities were expanded to area secondary schools by way of the Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program. Staff and student lifeline trainings were held, and, in 2005, the first 10th grade depression screening was initiated - efforts that continue to this day.

In 2005, Tri-County Youth & Family Partnership became Forest Lake Area Partnership for Families, Inc. to better reflect our service area. Current projects include the Living on Less: Resources for Families in Need annual resource fair, the Suicide Prevention Collaborative, and the MOST FL Positive Community Norms Campaign. Membership includes representatives from multiple sectors including schools, law enforcement, social service and youth-serving agencies, healthcare organizations including general, mental, and chemical health providers, city and county government, faith communities, business, media, community members, including parents and youth. Forest Lake Area Partnership for Families is a fluid organization that will continue to evolve in order to address emerging needs of Forest Lake Area School District communities.