



Northland Area Family Service Center Annual Report 2020



Mission: "We provide education, mentoring and support services that build strong individuals and families in the Northland Community Schools District."

Vision: "As a result of our work, we are breaking the cycle of generational poverty one family at a time."

Northland Area Family Service Center is an independent non-profit agency physically located in Remer; Minnesota however, serves residents living in the entire Northland School District. Begun by a group of concerned citizens whose goal was to support families in our area by making them stronger, the Family Center has continued to serve area residents through the collaborative efforts of public and private agencies, community members and Northland Community Schools. The Family Center continues to reach out to the community by developing programs that build on the strengths of all participants.



We would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have partnered with us on our work during 2020. The board of Directors continue to be instrumental in leading our organization during this past year, with continued virtual monthly meetings and leadership. We appreciate the gifts of money from donors in helping us provide education, mentoring and support services that build strong individuals and families in the Northland Community.

If you would like to learn more check out our website:

www.northlandfamilycenter.org

Leslie Bouchonville, Executive Director

218-566-3636

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2020 has been a very challenging year for so many, the Northland Area Family Service Center was also included.

From having our site closed for a few months, with staff working from home, doing virtual visits for our Family Center and ParentChild+ home visiting programs, distance learning for preschool, it has been a very challenging year.

We offered a variety of most requested applications and forms for clients to access in a bin on our front porch.

We returned to our location, with staff and preschool on site. Our programs stayed the same up to a point. We continued to offer outstanding programming with some changes. Face masks, sanitizing and Zoom meetings are now considered the “norm”. We were only able to offer client support over the phone or by appointment only, which includes helping clients with MNSure assistance either over the phone, or by appointments with safety in mind for in person visits. Our homevisiting programs had to switch to virtual visits, YouTube videos and with materials being dropped off a head of time. Our preschool offering in person school with parents only being able to drop off and pick up their child at the door. We did have a couple of students tested positive for covid and we had to go to distance learning for the required period. Throughout all of the covid hardships, one thing remained consistent, offering outstanding programming for our programs and clients.





Family Support

Staff: Linda Leverty



Who we served in 997 open hours: 271 total connections:



Resource and Referral

- 99 clients were referred to outside sources (BiCAP, Food Shelf, HHVS (and other services))
- 9 clients accessed Family Center computer for unemployment services, job searches and forms that we have available.
- 8 clients received assistance from Family Center staff to complete application forms for Bi-CAP & Cass County Health Human & Veterans Services.
- 26 clients received assistance regarding MNSure, for applications or had questions.
- 39 persons faxed paper
- 1 client accessed the phone
- 26 people were provided with other "in-house" assistance
- 43 people accessed copies
- 8 persons accessed postage
- 12 visits to the Baby Steps Boutique were recorded, this program ended in June 2020.





HEALTHY FAMILIES MINNESOTA
FAMILY CENTERS HOME VISITING
*Serving the Communities of:
Northland, Pillager, and Pine River-Backus Areas*

Program: Family Center's Home Visiting

Staff: Lee Anne Bettenberg – Family Support Specialist

Program Goals: Build and sustain community partnerships to systematically engage overburdened families in home visiting services prenatally or at birth, cultivate and strengthen nurturing parent-child relationships, promote healthy childhood development and growth, and enhance family functioning by reducing risk and building protective factors.

- The Northland site completed 149 visits during 2020 with 11 families.
- It has been an up and down year for families and staff. Due to challenges with Covid-19, we have learned new technology to stay connected and continue to connect virtually by phone, Zoom, facetime and some in person visits when allowed.
- The program is guided by an Advisory Board, which meets quarterly.
- Northland Family Center and Pine River-Backus each have a Family Support Specialist and work as a team with two Family Center Directors to provide this program.
- Retention rates are very high for the families currently involved.
- New curriculum of Growing Great Kids, Next Generation is being implemented for this program.



ParentChild+

Equal Possibilities From The Start

Program: ParentChild+

Parent Child+, is a program of Northland Area Family Service Center and Jewish Family and Children's Service of Minneapolis. Our service area covers the Northland and Pine River/Backus school districts.

Staff: Andria Strenge and Angie Zwart – Early Learning Specialists

ParentChild+ is a free home-visiting program that promotes creative ways to learn through play, increases parenting skills, child development and helps children prepare for school. ParentChild+ helps whole family address challenges and prepare for the future.

- Participating families receive free educational books and toys
- Families begin the program when their child is 18 months to 2.5 years old
- Trained early learning specialists work with families in their homes two times a week for two years

An early learning specialist arrives at a toddler's home with books and educational toys. They are welcomed inside where they sit with the child and parent and engage in a fun and engaging educational experience. Our specialists model engaging and educational activities for parents and children together, and then support parents as they take on the role of their children's first teachers.

Some challenges occurred with COVID. On a biweekly schedule, visits during the pandemic were held virtually via zoom, YouTube, facetime and phone to comply with CDC guidelines. Materials continued to be supplied to families.

**In the 19/20 year, 19 Families were served with a ½-hour visit twice a week.
Program runs September to the end of May. This is a 2-year program.
11 children graduated from the 2nd year program.**

ParentChild+ 2020 graduating students



Wynter



Alminalyn



Owen



Nolan



Mabel



Cassa



Elowen



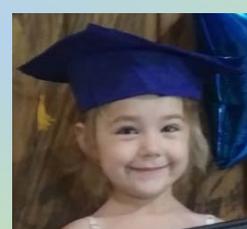
Georgina



Lucas



Nina



Emberlee

Family Center Preschool

Family Center Preschool is part of the Northland Early Childhood Collaborative. Our goal is to provide learning opportunities within a rich caring environment to better prepare each child for kindergarten.

Staff: Deb Dillard –Teacher, Faye Zorman and Randi Robison - Assistants

January 2020 - May 2020

January through mid-March 2020 classes were in person with 14 students. Mid-March to the end of May, classes were at distance learning with packets going home to all students.

2020 Preschool Graduates



Family Center Preschool

Staff: Stacey Barrick –Teacher, Randi Robison and Julie Erpelding - Assistants

September 2020 – December 2020

Fall of 2020, classes were in person with 50% occupancy of 8 children. Classes continued in person through December 2020, with one closure due to COVID exposure.





Child and Teen Check Ups (C&TC) Outreach

Staff: Linda Leverty

Outreach efforts

- Mailed reminder letters to families in Northland School District who are on Medical Assistance for health checkups

Northland Family Fun Nights

Due to COVID, unfortunately this wonderful event was not offered.

Toys For Kids

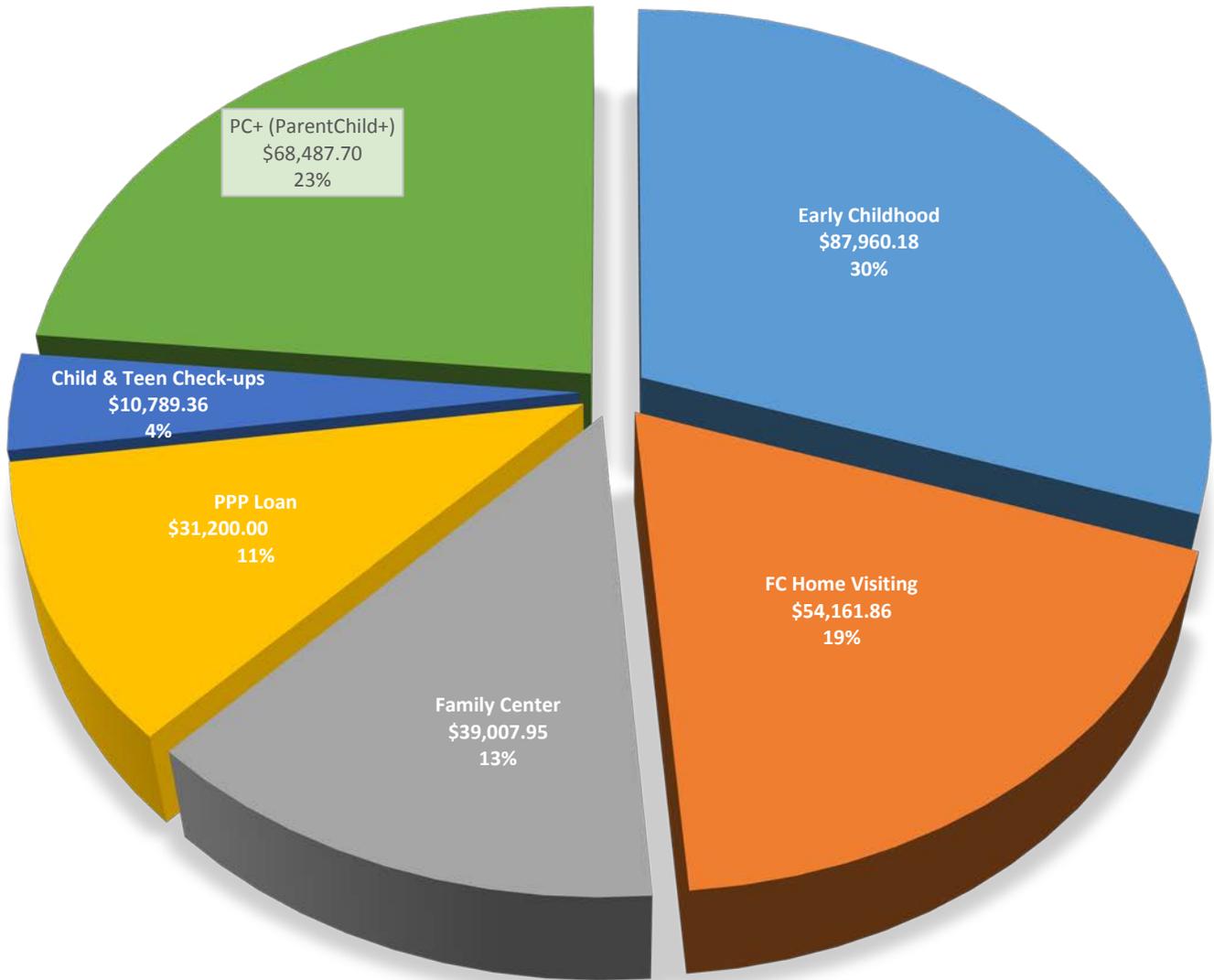
Staff: Volunteers

This is the sixth year the Family Center collaborated with volunteers to help area children have a brighter holiday. The Family Center served as the fiscal host for donations. Volunteers coordinated the program and distributed the gifts to families before the Holidays.

Served 47 Families – 123 children



2020 Program Cost



- Early Childhood
- FC Home Visiting
- Family Center
- PPP Loan
- Child & Teen Check-ups
- PC+ (ParentChild+)



Northland Area Family Service Center

About us ~ who and where we are:

Family Council

Officers

President: Barbara Anderson
Treasurer: Cheryl Desoto
Secretary: Kit Arnquist

Directors

Marlyn Holman
Brandon Otway
Stacey McKinney

Staff

Executive Director:

Leslie Bouchonville

Home Visiting:

Lee Anne Bettenberg
Andria Strenge
Angie Zwart

Preschool:

Stacey Barrick – (started September 2020)
Deb Dillard – (ended June 2020)
Julie Erpelding – (started August 2020)
Randi Robison
Faye Zorman – (ended May 2020)

Administrative Manager/Program Support:

Linda Leverty



Our Service Area



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