LOVING OUR COMMUNITIES COALITION

Improving the lives of those with behavioral health challenges by collaborating with community partners to implement solutions for their community’s needs
The Loving Our Communities Coalition met February 12th 2016 for our kick off event.

There were approximately 100 people in attendance from our 10 county catchment area:

- Department of Corrections
- Faith Based Community
- Family Connections
- City Council Members
- Police Department
- Vocational Rehabilitation
OUR PROJECTS

➢ Tackling Homelessness
The initial goal was to build/open a homeless shelter in our community.

➢ Implementing a Resource Directory
Our goal is to have an up and running web based resource directory that we can share with community partners.

➢ Community (Educational) Fair/Events
Our initial goal was to host a community event in January with a focus on behavioral health awareness and education with representatives from other fields such as primary healthcare, adult education, etc.
Challenges
- Identify software/funds for software
- IT Staff Time

What worked
- Scheduling meetings around lunch
- Identifying volunteers to help
- Connected with a CPS from a different area
- Setting an estimated, tentative completion date – July 1st

Accomplishments
- Have a cohesive team dedicated to this project
- Have set dates and times dedicated to working on this project
- Completed 5 of 10 counties served
TACKLING HOMELESSNESS

Challenges
- A recently passed moratorium in Dublin threatened to displace individuals living in hotels for more than 120 days
- High poverty rates throughout our catchment area with 5 of 10 counties in severe poverty
- Resistance from the community

What Worked
- Social Media - Partnering with Be At Peace Farms
- Invited Be At Peace Farms to our coalition meetings
- Small grassroots meeting held in January 2017 with Mayor, Chief of Police, City Attorney, City Manager, CSBMG CEO and Board Chair to discuss moratorium and homelessness issue in our community

Accomplishments
- Coalition supported Be At Peace Farm efforts by providing technical assistance and taking part in food/blanket drives
- LOCC Chair to attend Be At Peace Farms homelessness meetings
COMMUNITY (EDUCATIONAL) FAIR/EVENTS – WHEELER COUNTY

Challenges
- Most significant challenge was tapping into an area with limited resources
- High poverty rates throughout catchment area – highest being Wheeler County with 39% of population living in poverty

What Worked
- Meeting chamber members in Wheeler county who were better able to draw in their local community
- Behavioral Health Education Luncheon
- Question-Persuade-Refer training offered free to all counties
- School staff trained in QPR from bus drivers to administrative leaders

Accomplishments
- Held first educational event with Wheeler County citizens
- Approximately 30 people in attendance
COMMUNITY (EDUCATIONAL) FAIR/EVENTS – LAURENS COUNTY

Challenges
- No funding
- Rural area with a high poverty rate of 25.5%

What Worked
- Building upon already strong relationships
- Networking – There’s always “someone who knows someone”

Accomplishments
- Acquired Venue
- Identified and reached out to collaborative partners—ranging from DJJ to Healthy Start to MH services
- Identified Speakers
- Draft Agenda
- Involved local media for advertisement/coverage of event
CSBMG recently invested in sending a staff member to the 2 day Grant Writing USA training in January 2017. This training puts the coalition in a better place to partner with local non-profits to maximize our impact on the community.

- CSBMG helped establish “ECHO, Inc” (Emerald City Helping Others Inc), a 501c3 non profit entity.
- We collaborate closely with the Carl Vinson Veterans Affairs Hospital in Dublin as well as Middle Georgia State University.
- Middle Georgia State University sends volunteers to our Mental Health Clubhouse (SOAR) and annual youth rally every year.
- MGSU will often involve us in their work to address behavioral health. We were involved in the Veterans Day programming offered by MGSU.
- CSBMG offered a “meet and greet” with newly elected sheriffs in January 2017, with representation from Regional Office, to discuss programming, crisis services, shelter plus care beds and GA Housing Voucher program.
- On May 1st 2017 MGSU will have a program regarding teen suicide and suicide prevention. Staff members from the CSB were asked to attend in order to better support those who may find the programming difficult or triggering.
- CSBMG is sending invitations to all 10 sheriffs to attend our Citizens Advisory Council meeting on April 18th, 2017 for orientation with program staff and community partners regarding services, challenges and collaborative assistance to our citizens.
Behavioral Health and I/DD Education – We’re Rockin’ It

✓ We have had roughly 25 behavioral health educational sessions since January 2016. More than half of which are QPR as well as Mental Health First Aid and DBT in the school systems to encourage mindfulness.

✓ RESPECT Institute took place in Dublin on February 13th through February 16th with people of lived experience ranging from members of management to those currently served in our programs. RESPECT graduates will be utilized by our coalition to share stories of recovery and how a community can impact the recovery of an individual.

✓ We have the pleasure of employing and working with Connie Smith, the Family Connections Executive Director in Laurens County.

✓ CSB participates in I/DD Awareness events hosted by CDDC (Center for Developmentally Disabled Citizens) 3 times throughout the year.
NEXT STEPS

- Secure funding for software
- Join other collaborative partners in their efforts to improve the quality of life for needy families
- Expand our community event efforts to include our remaining counties
OVERALL RCC CHALLENGES

- No available funding – finding another way to fund events and projects
- RCC Chair changeover in September 2016
- Initially difficult to get all partners at the table
- Having a ten-county catchment area can be overwhelming when trying to implement all that is required to make a collaborative a success
Our coalition is a work in progress.

CSBMG built relationships with community partners, and this was very meaningful for us.

We learned that the collaboration and relationships we have built become our stories and show the heart and soul of what we do.

No matter how little we feel we have done that day, we know that if we have improved the life of just one person in our community, our day was a success and our mission has been met.