

From January through March, Ozaukee Family Services touched the lives of 1,661 local residents

637 children participated in one or more of the **17** prevention programs addressing child abuse, safety, eating disorders and personal boundaries.

280 children and parents learned about Internet Safety and Cyberbullying.

112 individuals participated in at least one parenting program including: playgroups, Incredible Years or Spirited Child.

89 children and **63** parents received **140** home visits from a Parents as Teachers educator.

84 individuals received assistance and support through the CST (Coordinated Services Team) program.

80 adolescents participated in a Girls or Guys Group program.

75 seniors received **262** instances of help including rides, chores and visits.

63 individuals received **359** hours of affordable counseling. In addition, **9** students participated in therapeutic groups.

45 children and **31** parents have participated in the Family Steps program.

39 parents attended Beyond Divorce class to learn co-parenting techniques.

33 children and **21** parents received support through the RAINBOWS program.

165 people are actively volunteering for OFS.

These OFS programs promote strong & healthy families that make Ozaukee County a great place to live, work and play.



**NEWS
FALL 2020**

Dan Koth VOLUNTEER & DONOR

Dan has been involved with Ozaukee Family Services since 2012, when he became a volunteer facilitator in our Rainbows Program. (Rainbows is a 12-week program for children and adolescents who are dealing with major family changes such as divorce or death). Working with kids who have suffered the loss of a parent is a topic close to Dan's heart; he lost both his parents at a fairly young age. Initially Dan considered starting his own non-profit. However, he quickly realized that an undertaking like that would require more time and effort than he could give. He also learned about Rainbows - a program that already existed at OFS - and decided to focus his volunteer efforts there.

Dan chuckles at himself when he looks back on how he thought the kids in the program would simply open up and trust him right from the start. He soon came to realize not only did he need to earn the participants' trust, but many of the kids were not comfortable talking about their feelings or even acknowledging them. It took several sessions to earn their trust and build a rapport with them. However, Dan remembers what he calls a turning point. There was one boy, who was a bit of a challenge because of his behavior, who several weeks into the program said, "You know it really sucks not having a Dad." It was the first time the boy genuinely participated and shared his feelings. That boy, along with the rest of the group, continued to share their thoughts and express their feelings. Dan recalls, "It was inspiring to see the kids make progress and learn to deal with the changes in their lives." Something else that stood out to Dan was how some of the other facilitators had been through the program themselves when they were younger. Because the program had been so helpful to them, they wanted to volunteer to give back and ensure the program was available to anyone who needed it.

Continued on next page...



Dan Koth

After several years as a Rainbows Facilitator, Dan joined our Board of Directors. He talked about his six years, and counting, on the Board (four as Board President):

I get to see firsthand all the programs OFS offers and hear about the different clients we serve. I've learned about the community and the resources available, both at OFS and other agencies. The more I learn, the more impressed I am of the scope, depth, and breadth of the programming at OFS. I find it incredibly rewarding. One of the things that really fascinates me is to serve on the Board with individuals from diverse backgrounds, with various points of views, and differing opinions yet we are all able to work together. The starting point for every decision the Board makes is 'what is in the best interest of the agency and our clients?' Once we frame any question that way, opposing views are able to find a common ground and a way to move forward.

In addition to donating his time, Dan also financially supports OFS:

It is an easy decision to give to Ozaukee Family Services. We are talking about our backyard, our community. I am fortunate in that I get to hear stories firsthand how OFS improves lives and it really hits home. I see the strength and resilience of our clients. I see how brave they are - to come forward, accept assistance, and put in the hard work and effort. I'm impressed by the scope of our services; we touch the lives of everyone from expecting mothers to senior citizens. You don't have to look any farther than your neighbors, friends or co-workers to see someone that has benefited, or could benefit, from an OFS program. If we really want to make the world a better place, then we have to start in our own community.

“ I am fortunate in that I get to hear stories firsthand how OFS improves lives and it really hits home. I see the strength and resilience of our clients.”

-dan koth

We appreciate Dan and all our volunteers and donors. If you would like to learn more about how you can help, please call us at 262-376-7774 or visit www.OzaukeeFamilyServices.org

IN-KIND DONATIONS

Most needed items – diapers (especially sizes 5 & 6), baby wipes, gas cards, Shared-ride taxi vouchers.

Girls/Guys Groups – items/trinkets for prize box (e.g. fun pencils, bouncy balls, hair accessories, erasers, matchbox type cars, etc.), art supplies (canvases, paper, markers, colored pencils, paint and brushes, scissors, sharpies), balloons, 2-pocket folders with 3-prong fasteners, card stock, poster board

Rainbows – small gifts that children in the program can choose as a holiday gift for their parents (especially needed are gifts for dads).

Parents as Teachers – finger paint (prefer Crayola® brand in squeeze bottles), finger paint paper, washable paint, colored pipe cleaners, clear glue/school glue, glue sticks, foam shaving cream, stickers, 1" or 1½" binders, paper towels, Play-Doh® (regular size), Ziploc bags (sandwich and gallon size), Clorox wipes.

Incredible Years & CST (Coordinated Services Team) – Gift cards to be used as incentives/rewards - for gas stations, grocery or department stores, movie theatres, WE energies, McDonalds, Subway, etc.

Gift Cards – Target, Walmart, Kohl's, Home Depot, grocery stores, gas stations and Shared-ride taxi vouchers - for us to pass on to those in need.

OFS Office – post-it notes, printer paper, Avery address labels #5160, Amazon gift card to purchase ink cartridges & other office supplies.

AmazonSmile - AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support OFS at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same items and prices as on Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to OFS. You simply go to smile.amazon.com On your first visit to AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com), just select Ozaukee Family Services to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. The site will remember your selection and then all future eligible purchases you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation to OFS.



If you'd like to make a donation, simply drop off your contribution at the OFS office or call us (262-376-7774) to schedule a pick-up. We'll provide you with a receipt for tax purposes.

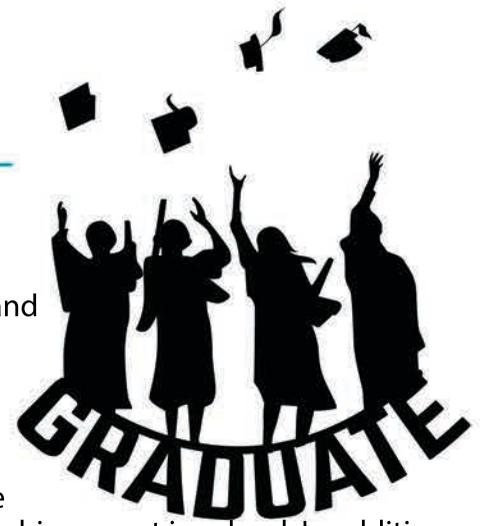
CST Celebrates a Graduation

Ozaukee Family Services partners with Ozaukee County Human Services to provide the Coordinated Services Team (CST) initiative in Ozaukee County. It is a community-based team process that assists families by promoting collaboration among their service providers. The program is family-centered and strength-based utilizing a team of providers to work with parents and natural supports to achieve goals.

"Olivia", a 17-year old high school student, was referred to our CST program about a year ago. Olivia's school was concerned because she was two years behind in her classes and the school counselor suspected that she might have depression and mental health needs that were affecting her attendance and achievement in school. In addition, Olivia had experienced some trauma and significant changes in her life over the past couple years. OFS got involved with Olivia and her family at a point of crisis. Olivia had given up on herself, was hopeless about her future, and the caregiver did not know what else to do to try and help her.

Olivia and her caregiver agreed to counseling and the CST program. CST implemented a team of supportive people around Olivia and the team began meeting regularly. They helped to identify Olivia's strengths and those of her family and empowered her caregiver. The counselor and the CST team provided education about depression and suicide, connected the family with resources in the community, and advocated for Olivia's needs in school. The school was open to the process and each member of the team contributed in specific ways to help turn things around. Counseling helped Olivia address her mental health. After a little while, she noticed that she was feeling better and had more motivation to work toward accomplishing her goals. Her number one goal was to graduate high school. She became an active participant in her own team and started talking about what she wanted and needed. She learned that it was okay to ask for help. Olivia's relationship improved with her caregiver. She had the BIGGEST smile on her face at the team meeting when the school counselor told her she had a chance to graduate on time with her senior class. Olivia took that opportunity, worked very hard, and the CST team was behind her every step of the way. Classes going online because of the pandemic threw another obstacle in her path and initially Olivia felt overwhelmed and struggled to stay motivated and keep up. Her counselor helped her stay focused.

Thankfully, everyone on her CST Team agreed to continue to meet virtually during the pandemic. We are happy to report that with the continued support, Olivia was able to graduate with her class and is looking forward to her future. Congratulations Olivia!



PAT Program Appreciated During the Pandemic

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is an evidence-based program for expecting parents or parents with children from birth to age five. It promotes optimal early development, learning and health. It includes personalized home visits by a certified parent educator. Because of the pandemic, these visits have been done either virtually or outside. PAT participants often tell us how their whole family looks forward to these visits. This has never been more true than during this time of isolation and social distancing.

Maribeth, one of our parent educators, shared how one of the moms in the program was so excited about Maribeth's visit that she had tears in her eyes. "She was just thrilled to be able to interact with another adult and have a conversation centered around her kids. Her family had been self-isolating by choice to stay safe. In addition, her husband works third shift, so she has basically been parenting by herself." Not only did this mom appreciate the visit and the info Maribeth shared with her, but so did her two kids!



Counseling

There is no doubt that we are living through challenging times. It can be difficult not to feel sad or disappointed because of everything that is going on. Our lives have been impacted in big and small ways, causing varying degrees of stress. For those who were already dealing with depression, anxiety, or other mental health issues, these new challenges and the uncertainty can be devastating. Unfortunately, as the number of cases of COVID-19 increases, so do experiences of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation.

OFS counselors have been working throughout the pandemic. After several months of doing all counseling remotely (either via phone or Zoom), our counselors have started to see some clients in person (social distancing is maintained, and masks are required). Currently, our counselors are seeing some clients in person and some virtually depending upon the needs of the client. The demand for counseling has risen during this time and we expect that demand to continue.

Kim, an OFS counselor, shares:

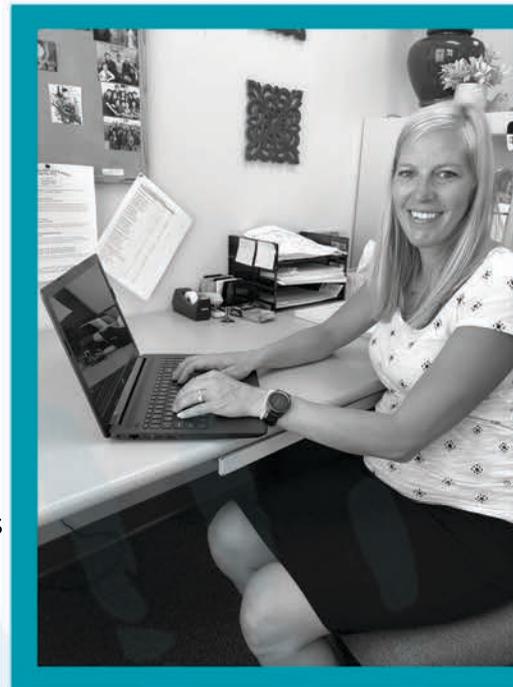
As a counselor for primarily elementary aged kids, I have seen firsthand how this pandemic has impacted the mental health of children and their families. Transitioning to counseling over the phone or via Zoom with children has presented a new set of challenges. Maintaining a relationship and allowing kids a safe place to process their worries about the unknown of the Coronavirus became an important part of my work. Additionally, I became a resource for parents who were dealing with the stress of social distancing and virtual schooling. Multiple parents have expressed their gratitude for this support and guidance and for offering consistency and reassurance during these 'crazy times' we live in.

Our counselors help clients cope with many different issues. Currently, many clients are struggling with negative feelings associated with the pandemic - the fear of getting sick, uncertainty about the future, disappointment over events being cancelled, sadness, loneliness, and frustration. According to DJ, another OFS counselor, most of his clients are struggling with negative thoughts. He bases his counseling on strength-based approaches and gives his clients tools they can use to cope with their negative feelings. He shared a few of these tools/techniques:

Positive reinforcement/focus on strengths: Focusing on the positive helps combat negativity and can improve mood. Individuals are encouraged to focus on things they can control and to use their imagination and creativity to do things they enjoy. Creativity can be expressed in lots of different ways - through art, music, games, storytelling, journaling, baking, cooking, playing with your kids, exercising, organizing.

Positivity Sandwich (positive – negative – positive): Sometimes individuals tend to respond to something positive with a negative. If they are told something positive, they may reply with a "but..." As an example, if they are told, "You made a beautiful piece of art," they may respond with something like, "but I don't have anyone I can share it with." Using the positivity sandwich approach, the individual is encouraged to add a positive thought at the end. Perhaps "I'm really proud of what I made." This approach allows the person to acknowledge both the positive and the negative. It does not ignore the negative. In fact, the negative (the pain and/or sadness) is validated. This allows them to put things in perspective and see the whole picture. This technique can be applied to all aspects of life and individuals can learn to change their narrative.

Routine/structure: With so many cancellations and closures many clients complain that the days can blur together, and they often don't even know what day it is. To help with this, they are encouraged to establish some routines or structure. Even if it is something as basic as: on Monday afternoons, I talk to my counselor. On Thursday evenings, I call my sister. On Saturday mornings, I go for a bike ride.



2020 Calendar of Programs & Events

ONGOING PROGRAMS

BEYOND DIVORCE - Learn how to help your children cope during this transition, how to deal more effectively with the problems that often result from divorce and get advice on how to co-parent so that everyone in your family can maintain healthy relationships. This class fulfills the course requirement of 4 hours of co-parenting education for divorcing parents in Ozaukee County. Registration is required. Classes are scheduled for Saturday mornings. There is a \$75 fee for class and materials. At this time, these sessions are being held virtually via Zoom.

COUNSELING - Confidential & affordable counseling for individuals, couples, families, children, adolescents, adults and seniors. Sliding fee scale based on income, ensuring availability to anyone in need. At this time, our counselors are seeing clients both in person and virtually.

PARENTS AS TEACHERS (PAT) PROGRAM - For children birth to 5 years old. Personalized home visits help parents become their child's first and most influential teacher. PAT educators share information on the latest research and provide ideas and activities for stimulating a child's development to coincide with opportunities for learning. FREE. At this time, our PAT Educators are doing outdoor and virtual visits.

WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

OFS ANNUAL FALL EVENT

We are working on putting together a safe and healthy option for our Fall Fundraiser which typically takes place in November. It is a work in progress due to these unprecedented and constantly changing times, so please look for additional information coming your way soon!

PARENT WORKSHOPS

We are committed to providing education and support to parents and families this Fall. However, we are still finalizing the format of these presentations and will adapt them based on the most up-to-date public health info. Some may be virtual, and some may be in-person. Be sure to check our website, Facebook posts and monthly e-newsletters for details. (If you are not currently receiving our e-newsletter and would like to, sign up on our News & Events page on our website or give us a call at 262-376-7774).

Did you miss our summer virtual workshops? No worries. You can access the videos to them via the links on the Workshops page of our website (www.OzaukeeFamilyServices.org).



Thank You for Making a Difference!

In many of our programs part of the treatment plan often encourages an individual or family to become involved in positive, healthy, and social activities. Unfortunately, at times the cost of necessary equipment or supplies, or the activity fee itself, makes it impossible for them to do so. In addition, because of the pandemic, many of these activities were cancelled. However, your assistance allowed us to help numerous clients over the past several months by providing the following:

- baseball glove
- bike helmet
- baseball bat
- Summer activity books for kids
- bicycle
- tennis shoes

Generous donations allowed us to help clients in other ways as well. We were able to support a Mom in our PAT (Parents as Teachers) program. She is pregnant and currently living with her mother. She is on a wait list for subsidized housing. Because of generous donations, we were able to provide her with items for her nursery, a car seat, diapers, and wipes.



One of our CST (Coordinated Services Team) families that includes a teenage boy with multiple mental health needs and his caregivers who are a bit older, were in constant crises at the beginning of the year. The boy had been in and out of residential treatment facilities, and his caregivers were not sure if they could continue to meet his needs in their home. However, with on-going support from OFS and other community resources they were able to keep him at home and in the community. Then COVID-19 hit and introduced additional challenges including increased stress, greater isolation, and fewer opportunities to participate in activities. This, along with the boy's mental health, difficulty adapting to change, and the lack of support available for his caregivers was overwhelming. To help, Kelly, their CST Coordinator, put out a request for a few items including specific board games that would help keep him occupied and allow for quality family-time together, a photo album (he had a camera), and a Walgreens gift card to be used to develop photos. Immediately, a board member responded by donating all these items. The family was amazed and extremely appreciative. They have shown great resilience, both in managing everyday life with a child with special needs, and in dealing with all the challenges related to the pandemic. Our CST program continues to help them tackle challenges as they arise.



Another generous board member donated a "power lift chair" to one of our senior clients. The client's response was...

"I can't believe this! My physical therapist was just here and told me I should get one of these, but I wasn't sure how I would afford it."



Your generosity allows us to provide this extra assistance in addition to our programs. Thank you! If you would like to make a donation, send a check to: Ozaukee Family Services, 885 Badger Circle, Grafton, WI 53024 OR if you prefer to use a credit card visit www.OzaukeeFamilyServices.org/donations

Senior Services During the Pandemic

OFS, like everyone else, has faced multiple challenges because of the pandemic, but we've also experienced some positive effects. We have gained several new "unsolicited" volunteers in our senior program. Most of these new volunteers were working from home and therefore had some flexibility. They all expressed wanting to help someone who was struggling during this challenging time.

"Tina" had called OFS months ago looking for some assistance for her mom. Once she started working from home, she contacted us to volunteer to make phone calls to our senior clients to check in and chat with them. Our clients loved this especially since many of them were feeling extremely isolated and lonely. Tina continues to make a few calls each day based on her schedule and is enjoying brightening seniors' days with a simple phone call.

Another local couple that both transitioned to working from home due to the pandemic contacted Kristy, our senior services coordinator, about helping some local seniors with shopping or yardwork. The timing was perfect as many of our senior clients were not able, or hesitant, to leave their home. This couple now shops regularly for an elderly lady in Mequon. They contact her for her list, do the grocery shopping, and drop it off at the front door of her assisted living home.

John, one of our board members, used to visit his elderly mother every week. Due to the pandemic and her senior retirement home being on lock-down, he was not allowed to see her. John decided if he could not visit his mother, he would use that time to assist another senior citizen instead. He has been grocery shopping for "Susan" and according to Kristy she absolutely adores him!

OFS Board Members

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Our senior clients got another unexpected treat. Our Auxiliary, a wonderful group of generous volunteers that act as the fund-raising arm of our agency, distributes "thank you" baskets to some local donors every year. In March, they donate, assemble, and deliver baskets of goodies. This year, because of the pandemic, they were not able to make those deliveries. However, many of the Auxiliary members had already purchased and donated the items to be included in those baskets. Rather than having these items go to waste (most are perishable food items), we packaged them up and delivered them to our senior clients. Masks were worn and social distancing was maintained. Not only did this give us an opportunity to check-in on our senior clients, it allowed us to spread some cheer! Our clients appreciated the treats and were thrilled to have the opportunity for a brief visit.



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For more information on OFS programs and events, please visit OzaukeFamilyServices.org or call us at 262-376-7774.



A HEARTFELT THANKS TO OUR CORPORATE PARTNERS!