

History of the RESOURCE CENTER FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Back in 1973, a small group of concerned Fairbanks citizens met on a regular basis to discuss the problems of child abuse and neglect in the Fairbanks community. The goals of the Fairbanks Child Protection Task Force (FCPTF) were established with respect to community need, related to parents and children in the specific areas of child abuse and neglect through education, prevention and support services, and professional case consultation. In 1974, a multi-disciplinary consultation team was established to provide wide-based expertise to local agencies and individuals dealing with child abuse and neglect. The consultation team provided guidance in initiating the first Parent Aide program later in the year.

Over the next several years, the FCPTF worked hard to educate the Fairbanks community on prevention issues and positive parenting skills. The FCPTF developed an active Speaker's Bureau with consultation team members providing information to community groups through speaking engagements to local service organizations, churches, and social clubs. Further presentations were provided for in-service sessions for teachers, social workers, school nurses, and hospital staff.

In 1979, the FCPTF had grown in size, strength, and commitment and during that year became a private, non-profit agency. The services component of FCPTF became known as the Resource Center Parents and Children (RCPC). This was also the first year FCPTF/RCPC became a recipient of grant-based income. In the early 1980s, RCPC became a chapter of the National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse (now Prevent Child Abuse America). This brought the local efforts in line with the national commitment to prevent child abuse and neglect and enabled the agency to take advantage of support from a national network of prevention services.

The state's budget crisis of 1986 impacted RCPC's programs. The agency had to close its doors for a month and look closely at its priorities. The National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse assisted the RCPC Board of Directors in strengthening the organization and board responsibilities. The Board of Directors and RCPC staff created the agency's mission: to prevent child abuse and neglect in all its forms through primary, secondary, and tertiary intervention.

The board and staff began the effort to disperse revenue sources across government grants, donations, foundation grants, and memberships to prevent the agency from ever closing its doors again. The 1980s brought new programs and services to the Fairbanks community. RCPC began focusing on primary intervention services through community outreach services such as training classes for teachers, providing parenting packets for new families and parenting skills training at various locations. Establishing

a lending library of parenting books that clients could check out, as well as the creation of a parent warm line further enhanced RCPC's effectiveness. Through the agency's relationship with the Division of Family and Youth Services, recently renamed the Office of Children's Services, RCPC began providing counseling support for families who had been victims of abuse and neglect.

The Resource Center for Parents and Children was fast outgrowing its space on Gillam Way. In 1989, the Board of Directors established the Foundation for Parents and Children. Through the Foundation, a building could be purchased to support the current and future programs of RCPC. The Foundation for Parents and Children Board of Directors purchased the old Presbyterian Hospitality House at 1401 Kellum Street. This facility offered over 8,000 square feet of space and provided RCPC a homey environment to serve clients. In that same year, RCPC applied for and was accepted as a United Way agency. This gave the agency another funding source and provided RCPC with contacts through the United Way network of social service agencies.

In 1992 the Resource Center for Parents and Children produced their first 5-year strategic plan that focused on the different programs and services related to primary, secondary and tertiary intervention methods. It also provided the Board of Directors with better tools to measure the agency's progress and success. The late 1990's were a period of growth and change for RCPC. First, the Head Start program was transferred over to the Anchorage Head Start providers, Kids Corp. Second, a new program, Healthy Families, was inaugurated through federal and state funding. Healthy Families provided services to young families and covered prenatal through age 5 with parenting skills, home visits, and connecting families to a multitude of local services. Third, a day care center was created in the Kellum Street building, capable of handling up to 20 children. Next, the Women, Infants and Children Nutrition program became a new part of the Resource Center. The WIC program provides health assessment, nutrition education, family counseling, nutritious foods, and referral services for family with young children, pregnant women, breastfeeding women and women who have just delivered a baby. Last, but not least, RCPC became the coordinator for parent education, information, and support in the northern region of Alaska through support by the State of Alaska and the Alaska Children's Trust.

The programs and services of RCPC have varied; however, all have focused on the same mission. The prevention of child abuse and neglect begins with strengthening the family structure, helping parents with parenting skills, and providing a safe place for parents to share and deal with parenting issues. The Resource Center for Parents and Children has been successful due to quality staff, programs and countless volunteers and social service agency partners. To all that have shared in our agency's history, thank you.