



December 2008

Board of Directors

Board Member	Organization
Kevin Tallant, President	Miles and Tallant
Brett Berto, Pres.-Elect	Business Representative
Virgilio Perez Pascoe, Treasurer	Business Representative
Gail Waldron, Secretary	Social Worker, Forsyth County Schools
Carol Propes	Forsyth Co. Extension
Fonda Harrison	Forsyth County Schools, Teaching and Learning
John Wilson	Director, Forsyth County DFCS
Pam Boles	Juvenile Court Judge
Buster Evans	Superintendent, Forsyth County Schools
Jeff Hall	Community Representative
Brian Dill	VP Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce
Judy Vandenberg	Community Representative
Nancy Johnson	Pastor, The River UMC
Brian Adams	Owner, Practical Solutions

Staff

Nicole McCoy, Executive Director
nicolemccoy@connectforsyth.org

Kerry Rosewall, Volunteer Coordinator
kerryrosewall@connectforsyth.org

133 Samaritan Drive, Cumming GA 30040

Phone: 770-205-1701

www.connectforsyth.org

Who we are...

The Forsyth County Community Connection is a private, non-profit Family Connection Partnership. As a nonprofit intermediary organization, we work closely with community, state and national partners to:

- provide **training and technical assistance** customized to meet our community's common and unique needs and support efforts in making better decisions locally;
- build and maintain **relationships with public and private agencies and communities** to share and combine resources, promote public policy, and improve services and supports for families;
- enhance **public awareness, understanding, communication, and commitment** to improve results for children and families; and
- promote "what works" using **research and evaluation practices** that have proven to be effective in communities, while showcasing community successes.

We provide leadership through our commitment to:

- holding ourselves accountable for improving conditions for children,
- providing family supports and services with a family focus,
- fostering collaboration among public and private organizations, and
- promoting local decision-making.

Mission

The mission of the Forsyth County Community Connection is to identify community strengths and needs; develop goals and community strategies; provide a structure for planning, evaluation, and financial responsibility in order to implement a community agenda for children, youth and families.

Vision

Forsyth County will be a community where all children and youth are healthy and safe, supported by strong, self-sufficient families.

Focus on the Strategic Plan

In Fiscal Year 2008, our organization led several months of planning to develop strategies for improving indicators that community partners felt were vital to the overall success and well-being of children and families in Forsyth County. We established focus on two key goals:

Goal #1: All children will succeed in school.

Benchmark Objective: Improve on-time graduation rates from 83% in 2007 to 88% in 2010. (Data source: Forsyth County Schools, www.forsyth.k12.ga.us, 2008)

Indicator: Students who graduate from high school on time

Benchmark Objective: To decrease the number of students who are absent 15 days or more from 8.6% school year 2006-2007 to 5.6% by school year 2009-2010. (Data source: Forsyth County Schools, www.forsyth.k12.ga.us, 2007)

Indicator: Children absent more than 15 days from school

Strategy: Ensure that those students who are most likely at-risk of not completing high school receive services to support their academic success in school. Types of programs and activities will include targeted attendance programs, Graduation Coaches, mentoring, volunteer in class tutoring, truancy officer, Kick It Up clubs (group based sessions around goal setting, time management, and self awareness for middle and high school)

Progress Update: Great work is being accomplished early in this plan!

1. **Mentor Me North Georgia has started four Kick It Up Clubs at target schools to empower and motivate students to stay focused, set goals, and work towards goal attainment.** Mentor Me is a valuable community resource in making this program successful.
2. **A targeted attendance program is continuing at Forsyth Central High School in partnership with the School Social Worker, the Graduation Coach, and the Director of the Community Connection.** Juniors and Seniors absent 15 days or more are identified for small group work and motivation to ensure on-time graduation.
3. **The Forsyth County Community Connection, in partnership with Communities in Schools of Georgia and Forsyth County Schools, has piloted the state's first coordinated effort to recruit Community Coaches at the middle school level.** The "Community Coach" concept was created in 2007 as a result of Governor Perdue's challenge to Georgia's business community to support education in our state by assisting the Graduation Coach by enlisting community support, recruiting volunteers, sharing ideas, providing real world experience to students, and serving as a community-based advisor. Forsyth County is now fortunate to have a Community Coach placed at all middle and high schools.

Goal 2: All children in Forsyth County will be raised in a safe and healthy environment.

Benchmark Objective: Reduce the number of mothers with children being re-referred to DFCS for domestic violence incidents by 5% in 2011 based on data collected in 2009 (locally developed indicator). (Data source: Forsyth County DFCS, 2009)

Indicator: This is the first time that we will be establishing a baseline indicator for this benchmark objective.

Strategy: Ensure that women with children referred to DFCS for Domestic Violence situations improve their stability by having access to support services.

Types of programs and activities will include counseling resources, basic needs (food, shelter, and transportation), job training, translation services, emergency shelter, and legal services.

Progress Update: At the end of Fiscal Year 2009, we will partner with Forsyth County DFCS to determine the re-referral rate for domestic violence incidents. At that time the strategy team of key community partners will meet to determine best course of action to improve rate. The Forsyth County Community Connection already supports Family Haven and Forsyth County DFCS through efforts to seek program funding from a variety of resources and to provide additional services to families.

Additional advocacy work...

The Forsyth County Community Connection has worked to provide a venue for collaboration on state grants that would help to expand the resources of our community. Additionally, we provide a monthly networking opportunity open to all community partners with an educational portion of the meeting focusing around a timely issue. This year we have also undertaken efforts to update our Community Resource Directory, a 150 page listing of social service organizations in Forsyth County. We hope to have this project complete in January.

As mentioned earlier in this document, a key role the organization plays is to enhance **public awareness, understanding, communication, and commitment** to improve results for children and families. Our Executive Director works diligently to advise public officials when appropriate, such as encouraging the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners to establish a thoughtful protocol on service agreements and fund disbursement to non-profit organizations that provide a direct service to a branch of county government.



The Forsyth County Community Connection is home to Hands On Forsyth, a volunteer recruitment initiative. Across the state, Hands On Georgia and its affiliates promote the power of service - how it weaves together communities, supports vital nonprofit organizations and transforms both those serving and those being served. Hands On Forsyth encourages people to do good things and also to reflect on the reasons why those good things need to be done. While volunteering empowers people in communities to improve the quality of life for all, it also develops more informed and inspired citizens.

Hands On Forsyth calls upon the citizens of our county to help tackle tough issues in our community through volunteer service and engaged citizenship. We need strong civic participation from our residents in order to make our schools work effectively, to keep our environment healthy, to nurture children whose family support has broken down, and to bring Georgia's citizens together across divisions of region, race, and economic lifestyle through the common platform of service.

Volunteers Registered at www.handsonforsyth.org: **1,707**

Projects, affiliate managed and referral, since July 1, 2008: **171**

Volunteer Hours recorded via website since July 1, 2008: **3,444**

Economic Impact of volunteers to the community since July 1, 2008: **\$67,193.00**

Community Teams Registered: **51 with 758 members**