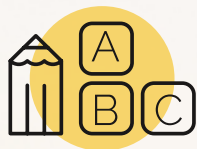


It Takes _____ _____ a Village

No one has to go it alone. Find out how Colusa County Community Advocates for Parents & Children (CAPC) can **help your family thrive.**



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A Healthy Community

Keeping children safe benefits everyone

BY ANNE STOKES

Child abuse can have life-long effects. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, survivors face an increased risk of addiction and mental health struggles, delayed brain and social-emotional development, limited employment opportunities and a lower lifetime earning potential. In 2018, nearly 1,770 abused or neglected children in the United States did not survive. The best solution to this deadly problem is prevention.

In Colusa County, Community Advocates for Parents & Children work to keep children safe by creating stable and healthy families.

"To sum it up, we hope to live in a community where children are valued, nurtured and supported and where families can strive to reach their full potential," says Carissa Bowers, CAPC program manager. "We really strive to have a preventative approach rather than a reactive approach, especially with child abuse. Many studies have shown the stronger families are from the get-go, the likelihood of child abuse and neglect radically decrease."

Through their Family Resource Center, CAPC strengthens families with services such as

parenting classes and playgroups that offer young children and parents early learning opportunities, social skills and social connections. They can also connect families with resources like employment and financial assistance, food benefits and more. Since 2017, CAPC has helped build a group of over 40 community partners and agencies and with those connections, they're able to give clients a warm handoff to service providers that can help.

"We strongly believe that when families are in a state of thriving, the community will prosper."

Carissa Bowers
Program manager, Colusa County
Community Advocates for
Parents & Children

"We have a lot of partnerships in place with other agencies throughout the county, so we have expedited referral processes for childcare, our state preschool Head Start program, One-Stop, which is job placement, CalWORKs (and) CalFresh," Bowers says. "We do a lot of application assistance at our site. ... We have all kinds of services."

These supports help more than just individual families: Healthy families mean healthy communities.

"When families are in a state of thriving instead of just surviving, everything is healthier: The community is stronger, there's more engagement," says Bowers. "We strongly believe that when families are in a state of thriving, the community will prosper."

FIVE PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Through all its programming at the Family Resource Center, Colusa County Community Advocates for Parents & Children use Five Protective Factors to build a supportive net for families:



Parental resilience

Stress reduction and management techniques give parents tools to overcome obstacles so they can continue providing for their children.



Concrete support in times of need

When families have a specific need—food, employment, childcare—CAPC can connect families with direct services to meet those needs.



Knowledge of parenting and child development

Knowing how and when children should reach developmental milestones enables parents to have realistic expectations of what their children can do.



Social and emotional competency of children

Providing children with the opportunity to build social-emotional skills before they get into the classroom sets them up for academic success later.



Social connections

Humans need social connections to thrive. CAPC provides families with the opportunity for children and parents to connect with peers for support.

Early Learning

A Head Start program helps kids thrive

BY ANNE STOKES

By the age of 3, Gloria Delacy's son still wasn't talking. Concerned, she started searching for local programs that could help.

"Usually by 3 they're talking your ear off. I was looking into different preschools and Head Starts within the community," she says. "They had these programs that help your child. It wasn't just daycare; it was a learning environment."

The Early Head Start program in Colusa County is a home-based program that also provides regular playgroup opportunities, enabling students to develop both academic and social skills. In addition to educators' home visits, Delacy says the program gave her the ability to work with her son herself.

"They tailor the program to your child, with what they need and what they are comfortable with," she says. "They involve you ... You're hands-on so whatever your child is learning, you're getting those tools so you can do it when the teacher is not there."

Today, her son is 10, in fourth grade and doing well in school. Since she first enrolled her son, Delacy's other children have also benefitted from the Early Head Start program, including a younger son with language delays.

"He was in the program since birth," she says. "It was more beneficial because I started doing sign language with him as a baby ... [and] by the time he was in kindergarten, he knew how to write his first and last name, he knew his numbers from one to 100, he knew his alphabet, uppercase and lowercase, in order and out of order, he knew all his shapes."



PHOTO COURTESY OF GLORIA DELACY

"Almost every single one of my family members and friends who have children have gone through the program and have enjoyed it. Their children enjoy it, and they are better for it."

Gloria Delacy
Parent and chairperson of the Parent and Children's Services Policy Council

Seeing how well preschool helped her children, Delacy started encouraging family members and other parents to enroll their children too. Often, she says parents don't think they'll qualify.

"They'll say, 'I make too much' or 'I make too little,' but they have a program for everyone, they'll work with you," she says. "Almost every single one of my family members and friends who have children have gone through the program and have enjoyed it. Their children enjoy it, and they are better for it."

For more information about Head Start, Early Head Start and other preschool programs, visit the Children's Services department of the Colusa County Office of Education at www.ccoe.net or call 530-458-0350.

RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN

Age: 0-5
What for: Prepare children and families for early learning, school readiness and future success
Who: Colusa County Office of Education First 5 Colusa

Families seeking assistance with their children ages 0 to 5 can turn to the **Colusa County Office of Education** and its collaborating service agencies. The menu of funded programs it offers includes: full- and part-time daycare classrooms for infants, toddlers and preschoolers; early care for older children; educators' visits to the home, providing learning activities; and socialization events with other families at local venues.

Another important resource for parents is **First 5 Colusa**, which has Family Action Centers in Williams and Arbuckle that offer application assistance, Growing Start parent playgroups, child development screenings, early intervention services and food assistance.

First 5 also has countywide diaper distribution programs, car seat classes (that include a free car seat), and prenatal, women's health and breastfeeding support. Early Start and Early Identification services can be accessed as well, which assist parents of infants and toddlers with disabilities and/or special health needs secure intervention.

To reach the County Office of Education, call 530-458-0350 or visit <http://ccoe.net>

To reach First 5, call 530-458-5555 or visit <http://www.countyofcolusa.org/948/First-5>



Working Together

A collection of community agencies offer life-changing support in difficult times

BY ALLEN PIERLEONI



Many Colusa County families are battling a perfect storm of stressful and frustrating situations, many due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Among them are job loss, limited public transportation, isolation and their children's struggles with distance learning.

"Taken together, they have an impact on the mental health of families, no matter what the family's size," says Danielle Padilla, a social worker supervisor with the Colusa County Department of Health & Human Services.

Typically, Padilla and her staff see issues such as child abuse, drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence and mental health crises. "In the beginning stages of our interaction with families, there's a lot of relationship building, helping them connect to all the available services right away."

DHHS and other agencies collaborate for solutions. "This is about community agencies working together, which makes our chances for success much higher," she says.

Typically, DHHS works closely with the Department of Behavioral Health, Community Advocates for Parents & Children, First 5 Colusa and the Office of Education, as well as law enforcement, schools and hospitals.

"The services we all provide can be life changing. They can be specific to education, mental health, child care and much more. They're available and we'll always find the right agency for referral," Padilla says. In all instances, nonjudgmental help is provided by caring professionals who understand the extreme stress families face.

Padilla's No. 1 concern is child safety, she says. "We do preventive work and we investigate suspected child abuse, but we want to help the entire family. They may have traumas or struggles and we want the whole family to heal."

One effective model is the Wraparound Services program, an intensive mental-health treatment schedule that figuratively "wraps" a family in services that are specific to the family's goals.

It requires "a great deal of family participation," she says. "I've worked with Behavioral Health's Wraparound for 15 years and the majority of my families' outcomes have been successful."

"It's pretty amazing to watch a family work through a really difficult time and start healing from it, then come together often closer than they were before," Padilla says. "Services are just a phone call away."

"It's pretty amazing to watch a family work through a really difficult time and start healing from it, then come together often closer than they were before."

Danielle Padilla
Social worker supervisor with the Colusa County Department of Health & Human Services

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Age: 5-12
What for: Provide summer activities
Who: Colusa County Library

To help support parents and families, CAPC has partnered with over 40 agencies in Colusa County to address challenges many parents are facing. One of the major challenges identified was finding quality and affordable care for children, especially school-aged children for times when school is not in session.



By partnering with other agencies, such as the Colusa County Library, programs that engage children and spark their interest are available at these times of the year:

- Week-long themed summer camps
- Summertime playgroups
- LEGO Club
- Book to Movie Club
- Summer Reading Club
- Pick-Up Activity Kits for families to do at home, and more!

To contact CAPC or the Colusa County Library at www.colusacapc.org, www.countyofcolusa.org/24/Library or call 530-458-7678.

Teen Support

Girls Circle program provides students the skills to succeed

BY ANNE STOKES

As the first in her family to graduate high school and earn a college degree, Amahirani Hernandez says she is very thankful for all the opportunities she's been given. Those opportunities, however, came with pressure to succeed. Thankfully, she found help navigating the social and academic challenges of high school through Colusa County's Boys Council/Girls Circle program and its facilitator Sarah Regnani.

"It was an outlet for us to share our thoughts and feelings and it was a safe space for us to share without judgment. ... It really made us feel comfortable about our feelings and validated for the way we felt," Hernandez says. "Sometimes it was tough navigating everything like school and extracurricular activities. Even if we had some home problems, she would help us with all of our feelings."

For its members, Girls Circle provided more than a safe place to talk. Hernandez says it was her first introduction to college: both in terms of what it would take to get in and how it would help her in the future. Regnani not only worked with school counselors to help Hernandez stay on track academically, she also referred her to programs that helped with college and federal student aid applications, something Hernandez was later able to help her younger brother with when he applied for college. Regnani even attended college campus tours with students.

"The whole purpose of (my family) coming to this country was to get a good education. I (realized) college was the next step," she says. "Once you go to a college (campus), it gives you a sense of what college is and it triggers your mind to think, 'OK, now I can imagine myself as a student in college.'"

Hernandez graduated from Sacramento State University in the fall of 2020



"It really made us feel comfortable about our feelings and validated for the way we felt."

Amahirani Hernandez
Girls Circle client

Colusa County's Girls Circle program gave Amahirani Hernandez the confidence and support she needed to graduate high school and earn a college degree, the first in her family to do so.

PHOTO BY SARAH REGNANI

(COURTESY OF AMAHIRANI HERNANDEZ)

with a bachelor's degree in sociology and a minor in nonprofit administration. Her ultimate goal is to become a social worker.

"I love children and I believe that I could be a great help (to) future generations of children and create a better society for all of us," she says.

RESOURCES FOR TEENS

Age:	12-18
What for:	Provide a place where students can be heard and respected, and make connections with their peers and facilitators
Who:	Boys Council/Girls Circle and Friday Night Live/Club Live

Adolescence is a trying time for children and their families. There to guide and support Colusa County youth in grades 6-12 is a collaborative partnership that synchronizes its programs.

Boys Council/Girls Circle and Friday Night Live/Club Live "provide a place where students can be heard and respected, and make connections with their peers and facilitators," says Sarah Regnani, a counselor for Colusa Probation. For 10 years, she has been the facilitator for Boys Council/Girls Circle, the county's primary outreach organization for adolescent programs, which is offered at every junior and senior high school.

Boys Council/Girls Circle focuses on:

- self-awareness,
- moral reasoning,
- critical thinking,
- empathy,
- resiliency and,
- most importantly, developing healthy relationships that strengthen the individual and the community at large.

Friday Night Live/Club Live teaches:

- leadership-building and
- communication skills to middle school students, along with
- substance abuse prevention and
- opportunities for community involvement.

"Both groups create face-to-face connections with youth, and that's what makes these groups so impactful for young people," Regnani says. "They're getting a genuine experience."

College Graduate

A resilient young woman, with support from her home base, plans to help others achieve success

BY EDGAR SANCHEZ

By 6th grade, Juanita Parra was a reluctant student. She disliked school—a common trait among dropouts.

But Parra, now 23 and a lifelong Colusa County resident, was fortunate. The farmworkers' daughter stayed put, ultimately earning a bachelor's degree in sociology with a minor in counseling from Sacramento State University in December 2020. Applying herself, Parra commuted by car between Maxwell and Sac State twice weekly for two years—a 120-mile round-trip.

She's come a long way from Maxwell Junior High, where she found herself on academic probation after her grades plunged.

"I guess it had to do with maturity and carelessness," Parra said recently, but for about two years, "I really didn't care about what was being taught," though she never cut classes.

Parra was helped by Girls Circle, an intervention program that helped her make good decisions, starting with remaining in school.

Created by Colusa County's Probation Department, Girls Circle helps juvenile offenders, as well as law-abiding youngsters like Parra, navigate toward the positive.

Parra was in 9th grade and showing self-induced improvement when Sarah Regnani, a Girls Circle counselor, began holding weekly group sessions at Maxwell Junior High. With her guidance, Parra became a more determined student, despite occasional self-doubts.

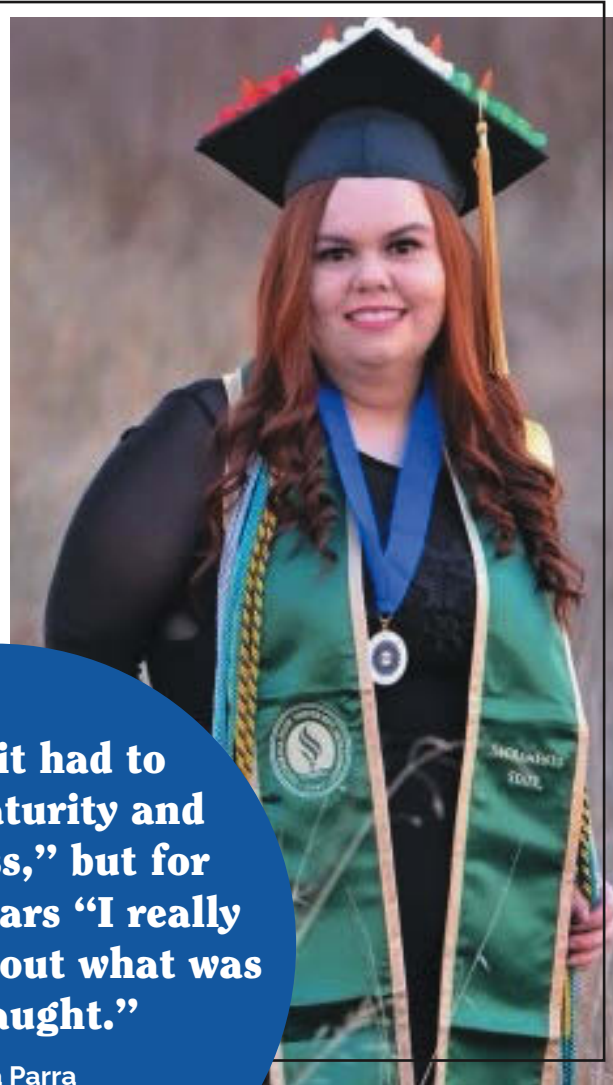
"It's been a long time, but yes, I do remember meeting Juanita," Regnani said, recalling "a sweet girl who was very open to talking about her life experiences."

One day, Parra wondered aloud whether she could finish high school and transition to college. Regnani assured her she could.

Parra later spoke about needing a long break before college. Delaying college was risky, Regnani warned, because the older a person, the harder it is to study.

Parra listened.

After obtaining an A.A. degree in sociology from Woodland Community College, Parra entered Sac State



"I guess it had to do with maturity and carelessness," but for about two years "I really didn't care about what was being taught."

Juanita Parra
Graduate, Sacramento State University

Juanita Parra graduated from Sacramento State in December 2020.
PHOTO COURTESY OF CAPC

in 2018. Living in a campus dorm was not an option; she had to be in Maxwell, helping to care for her mother, who was ill.

Parra, who worked part-time to pay her tuition, will soon begin graduate online studies, through Irvine-based Brandman University.

With a master's in school counseling, she'll undertake an important mission: guiding students of color and others from low-income families to higher education at university campuses.

RESOURCES FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Age: 16-24
What for: Help with acquiring life and job skills
Who: Colusa County Independent Living Program

Tailored for youth ages 16-24 who need help acquiring life and job skills, the Colusa County **Independent Living Program** assists with their transition into adulthood.

ILP collaborates with the Boys Council/Girls Circle and Friday Night Live/Club Live, outreach organizations offered at every junior and senior high school. Those programs mostly focus on relationship-building, problem-solving and substance abuse prevention, says Sarah Regnani, a counselor for Colusa Probation and facilitator for Boys Council/Girls Circle.

"All of our programs go hand-in-hand," Regnani says, but ILP is a different model. It offers a broad range of practical daily-living and life skills, including health and safety, cooking classes, employment skills training, paid and unpaid work experience, resume writing and financial literacy (such as creating a budget). There is also assistance with choosing and applying for college.

"There are a lot of kids who have never set foot on a college campus, so we think it's especially important for them to take those trips together," Regnani says.

To learn more about ILP, contact Marisa Apaseo, Colusa County One Stop, Youth Services Department at 530-458-0236, ext. 109.

Crisis Management

There are local services available even in the darkest times

BY ALLEN PIERLEONI

Colusa County's network of service providers collaborates for solutions to a broad range of adversities faced by the community, from family dysfunction to mental health and substance abuse issues.

It's standard procedure for agencies such as the Department of Behavioral Health to work closely with the Department of Health & Human Services, Community Advocates for Parents & Children, First 5 Colusa, the Office of Education, law enforcement, schools and hospitals. All have a common aim: to help those who are struggling.

"Our goal at Behavioral Health is to provide any type of mental health services to our consumers in need," says Shannon Piper, the DBH's clinical program manager for adult services and crisis services. "When we say 'crisis,' we're usually talking about people who are suicidal, or people who are unable to provide for their basic needs."

About six months ago, Piper points out, DBH staff began to see a "dramatic increase in crisis services. The number of people we were getting doubled. A lot of them were new clients and we were taking a lot more children in crisis. I believe a lot of it was related to the isolation caused by the pandemic. People were not able to see other people or get out and do things."

In treating clients, "it's a rule that we counsel people not to isolate, in order to alleviate their depressive symptoms and anxiety. But going through COVID, they've had no choice but to isolate. It's been very challenging."

However, she adds, DBH staff has actually increased the productivity of clients they've reached out to.

"The majority of our crises do end with

"We work with family members and clients to develop safety plans, and plans to deal with overwhelming emotions and despair. We often have happy endings."

**Shannon Piper, clinical program manager for adult services and crisis services
Department of Behavioral Health**



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHANNON PIPER

developing ways for the individual to cope with whatever is going on," Piper says. "We work with family members and clients to develop safety plans, and plans to deal with overwhelming emotions and despair. We often have happy endings."

For those in crisis and uncertain what to do, Piper has this informed advice: "Always reach out, there are always resources to help. Call a friend, call a family member, and there is always somebody available at our Crisis Hotline (888-793-6580)."

RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES IN CRISIS

Age:	All ages
What for:	Focuses on crisis intervention and resolution
Who:	The Colusa County Department of Behavioral Health

The Colusa County Department of Behavioral Health is an essential partner among the county's collaborative service providers.

It focuses on crisis intervention and resolution. One vital piece is its 24-7 Crisis Hotline, **888-793-6580**, staffed by caring professionals.

The DBH's team of licensed professionals offers a range of programs linked to its crisis and substance abuse services. They include:

- counseling
- crisis intervention
- psychiatric medication services
- screenings
- information and referrals
- mental health education
- patients' rights advocacy
- peer support
- treatment services
- wellness and recovery groups
- educational programs
- parenting and prenatal groups

Walk-ins are welcome at 547 Market St., Colusa, during business hours, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays-Fridays, when counselors are always available. The main number is **530-458-0520**.

For more information:
www.countyofcolusa.org/326/Substance-Abuse-Services

We Are Here to Help



We assist with the following and so much more:

- Drop-in Center
- Application assistance
- Home visiting
- Job training connections
- Expedited referrals to various community agencies
- Substance abuse prevention
- Violence prevention
- Services for children with special needs
- Connection to mental health services
- Connection to childcare
- Literacy
- Assistance with basic economic needs
- Connection to housing support
- CalFresh application processing
- Early learning parent playgroups
- Parenting support groups and education
- Connection to prenatal care, pre- and post-natal services, and classes
- Family health and nutrition on a budget
- Parent leadership and social connections
- Food distribution



COLUSA FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER OFFICE IS LOCATED AT:

131 5th St., Colusa, CA, 530-458-7678

New Parenting Education programs are now available, including virtual and in-person options that are individual or group-based.

The Nurturing Parenting Program:

Learn positive skills and behaviors through lessons and practice that promote healthy physical and emotional development of your children. *This 16- to 52-week course has a specialized curriculum based on parenting styles and needs.*

Parenting Wisely - Young Child Edition and Teen Edition:

Learn valuable skills to improve your family's relationships. *This 7- to 8-week course can be taken together by parents and children ages 10-18. It is offered in English and Spanish.*

If you have any questions or to register, please call us at
530.458.7678!

We would be happy to help!