

4th Annual NCACDSS Best Practices Awards Nomination Form

Category: PCC#6 Tier 2
Profiles in Community Collaboration

Project Title: Adrian's Playground

1. **Project/Program Summary:** Briefly summarize the project's history, purpose, timeline and budget.

In March 2006, Moore County DSS, county officials, and local citizens attended a dedication for Adrian's Playground, a safe place where children can play while their families conduct business at DSS. This project took over a year to plan and complete as community volunteers were lined up and funds collected. The playground project included many hours of sweat and hard work to see the vision of one social worker become a reality. The project budget consisted of donations totaling a little over \$1000.

2. **Innovation:** Why is the program unique? How does your project differ from similar projects?

This playground project is unique because it demonstrates that the commitment and efforts of one person can make a huge difference. The project combined the vision of one social worker with the efforts of many individuals and organizations in the community to make it a reality. A small, secluded plot of land beside the DSS building and adjacent to the visitation room was available for a playground, but the agency had no money to pay for labor and equipment. This ambitious project was completed through collaboration with a variety of resources in the community to obtain supplies, equipment and labor. The project also benefited from the hard work of several teenage foster children, who grew in self esteem with the realization that they were helping to provide a safe and fun environment for their younger counterparts.

3. **Project Success and Impact:** What were the objectives? How well were they met? How widespread is the impact of the project/program? What is the anticipated long-term impact? Did the project involve collaboration with other agencies, non-profits, businesses, etc.? Describe the outcome of the collaboration.

The objective was to create a safe, secure place where children can play at DSS, where foster children can visit with their parents under the watchful eye of social worker staff, and where adoptive parents can meet that special child for the first time. The project was a success with the area being used regularly by DSS children and families. The program was completed with a grant from the Moore County Junior Services League and contributions of money, time and/or labor from the Eagle Scouts, Poverty Hill Nursery, Greene's Hardware, TH Blue, Inc. (landscaping), and private donors. Through collaboration with these agencies and individuals, a balance beam, swing set, sandbox, and do-it yourself tower with slide and climbing wall were constructed. A fence was erected, shrubbery planted, and mulch was distributed around the playground. The Property Management Department also became a partner in the project, strengthening relationships between county departments. This project has long term implications in that DSS will always have a safe place for children to play while they are visiting the

agency. In addition, the playground exists as a reminder to other DSS employees that one co-worker's vision can truly make a difference and that employees who think outside the box can have a significant impact in the workplace.

4. **Project Effort and Difficulty:** How well did the program use limited resources? What obstacles or challenges did you overcome? How was this done?

This project was completed entirely with donations of money and labor. No other financial resources were available. The social worker who spearheaded this project chose to spend his spare time including many weekends to solicit help and supervise the actual work. This project was completed out of a dedication and commitment to help children.

5. **Ability to Replicate Project:** Can this project be duplicated in other counties? What could counties do to minimize obstacles and problems?

Yes, if they have land available for a playground. Counties can elicit donations from similar sources in their community and draft volunteers to complete the work, including teens within the foster program.