

# PROJECT SUN

Helping children flourish

## An Introduction to Project SUN



Welcome to the first edition of the Project SUN monthly newsletter. For the past 15 months several hundred community members have come together – teens, parents, grandparents, educators, healthcare workers, mental health service providers, early childhood service providers, along with representatives of the juvenile justice system, faith communities, civic groups, and other concerned citizens – to form a **Strong and Unified Network** dedicated to fostering a family-driven and youth-guided children’s behavioral health system of care in Kankakee County.

This publication is intended to inform the Network about Project SUN sponsored activities, as well as encourage others to become involved in our efforts to help children flourish. Each edition will contain information about upcoming events, community resources, relevant behavioral health news, and avenues for you to voice your preferences and opinions to help shape our system of care.

Through this newsletter, we hope to engage you in a two-way conversation by opening new channels to hear from you. In addition to inviting you to community gatherings, we will be challenging you to learn new meanings of words, to read at least one article, and not only pass on what you learned to your family and friends, but to also comment on our blog at [www.projectsunkankakee.wordpress.com](http://www.projectsunkankakee.wordpress.com). On the next page, you will find directions to a survey that will help the Network learn how we can better meet the information needs of parents. Each month we will ask for feedback from different groups.

If you have questions, we are here to help you navigate the system and find answers! Together, we will make the journey easier.

*Deb Baron*

Debra Mayconich Baron, PhD  
Project Director

## First Parent Café Set for Jan 30, 5-6:30 PM

Recognizing Signs of Children’s  
Behavioral Health Concerns

This event will create a space for parents to bring their questions and talk with others who may have similar experiences. Find event information on the following page. Guest speakers will include:

**Raunak Khisty, MD, MPH**  
Riverside Medical Center,  
Child Psychiatrist



**Jackie Haas, LCSW**  
Helen Wheeler Center for  
Community Mental Health, CEO



**Theresa Mitchell, CFPP**  
Project SUN, Parent Support  
Coordinator



### Word of the Month Wraparound

Wraparound is a planning process that follows a series of steps to help children and their families realize their hopes and dreams. The Wraparound process also helps make sure children and youth grow up in their homes and communities. It is a planning process that brings people together from different parts of the whole family’s life. With help from one or more care coordinators, people from the family’s life work together, coordinate their activities, and blend their perspectives of the family’s situation

- The Wraparound Process User’s Guide, 2019



# Helpful Resources

We challenge you to read at least one of these resources!

Visit [projectsunkankakee.wordpress.com/](http://projectsunkankakee.wordpress.com/) to comment and share your thoughts or questions. Also, pass along what you find helpful to a friend or family member!

## **FRIENDLY READ - Less Than 5 Minutes**

- "[Talk About Mental Health](#)" - Simple conversation tips and signs to look for when you need to talk with a friend, family member, student, congregant, or any community member about mental health concerns.
- "[Taking Care Of Yourself](#)" - Protect and strengthen your physical and mental health as a caregiver.
- "[The Promise Of Adolescence: Realizing Opportunity for All Youth](#)" - Learn reasons why only an estimated one-third of all adolescents with any mental disorder find treatment and opportunities to create change.

## **REFLECTIVE READ - More than 5 Minutes**

- "[Learn More About Mental Health Conditions](#)" - Explore treatment and support ideas for 13 major conditions.
- "[How You Can Help Your Child After They've Been Diagnosed with Mental Illness](#)" - What the diagnosis journey might look like; from understanding the diagnosis to simply giving yourself the time for processing.

## **ACADEMIC READ - Longer than 10 Minutes**

- "[Fostering Healthy Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Development in Children and Youth](#)" - Research highlighting the need for a broad-based effort to improve the mental, emotional, and behavioral health for children and youth.

## Community Resources Website Re-Launches



Over twenty years after the launch of the original Kankakee-Iroquois Help Network (Kan-I Help) website, an updated site [www.kanihelp.org](http://www.kanihelp.org) is now live. The website hosts service profiles from over 650 local and national government agencies, human services, and non-profit organizations.

Questions regarding Kan-I Help? Please contact: [mariah@cfkrv.org](mailto:mariah@cfkrv.org).

*From early childhood education to aging services, and everything in-between, Kan-I Help is designed to help individuals and families discover service options to meet their needs.*

## Meet us in the community!

### Project SUN Parent Café

January 30 | 5 - 6:30 PM

Location: The Helen Wheeler Center  
202 N. Schuyler Ave, Kankakee

Open to parents with children of all ages. Refreshments will be provided.

Please RSVP by January 28 at:  
815-304-5933 OR [augustina@cfkrv.org](mailto:augustina@cfkrv.org)

### February Café Topic

Understanding the Difference Between an IEP Versus a 504 Plan

*More details coming soon!*

### Parent Input Needed!

[CLICK THIS LINK](#) to take a brief, 3 minute survey. Your results will help us determine the best times, topics, and locations for Parent Cafés in the future.

### More Than Sad

The More Than Sad program helps educate individuals on how to recognize signs of mental illness. This can be taught to teens, parents, and anyone who works with teens.

If you would like to host a More Than Sad program, please contact Anne King at 815-545-8647.

### Coming Soon

## Community Navigators Training

Open to all professionals and community members who would like to learn how to better utilize the **Kan-I Help database** ([kanihelp.org](http://kanihelp.org)). This training will last less than 2 hours and those who pass an exit test will gain a Community Navigator certificate.

Please check the Project SUN website and Facebook page (*see addresses below*) for updates.

