



## The Exploration Station opens Social Emotional Development exhibit titled "The Feelings Room," sponsored by Project SUN.

In partnership with Project SUN, the Bourbonnais Township Park District's Exploration Station has opened a permanent social-emotional health exhibit for families. going by the name **"The Feelings Room,"** this project has been in the works for a few months and is now ready for the public to enjoy.

With the primary focus on youth engagement and family support, the exhibit's goal is to improve the social and emotional development of the children that visit. Staff will monitor this exhibit for qualities such as playability, family engagement, and the number of children playing in it daily.





Project SUN will hold our Community Planning Team meeting there on **Tuesday, October 25, from 5:00-6:30 PM**. The meeting will center on upcoming projects and support for Youth Mental Health in Kankakee County. Prior registration to attend the Community Planning Team meeting is requested. Register via Eventbrite

## Successful Fall Gathering hosted by Project SUN with local Mental Health professionals.

In efforts to establish a children's mental health network in Kankakee County, Project SUN met with approximately 25 local licensed therapists and school social workers in September. This allowed Project SUN to share partnership opportunities with those attending.

Individuals were encouraged to accept the invitation to be active members of the children's behavioral health system of care. Opportunities to collaborate focused on making and accepting referrals, expanding services by offering group sessions, and developing various workforce development strategies. A Mental Health Workforce Development Workgroup was formed to develop policies and procedures to facilitate these efforts. Specifically, they will address how to meet the mental health needs of families and youth, such as anger management, coping skills, anxiety, and depression.



These partnerships will launch a new era for mental health care in Kankakee County. While there is still work to be done, this initial step will soon result in new paid opportunities for local licensed therapists, school social workers, and others providing mental health services to children, adolescents, and their families.

If you or someone you know fits into this category and is interested in learning more about these partnership opportunities, email [projectsun@cfkrv.org](mailto:projectsun@cfkrv.org) today!

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**QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S  
MENTAL/BEHAVIORAL HEALTH?**  
**CALL US (815) 304-5933**  
**VISIT: PROJECTSUNKANKAKEE.ORG**

**PROJECTSUN**  
Helping children flourish



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## **Project SUN to launch "Just for the fun of it!" campaign in November!**

We know that positive relationships with caring adults foster the development of crucial social and emotional skills, often preventing mental, emotional, and

behavioral problems from occurring throughout a child's life. That's why we are launching a campaign called "Just for the fun of it!" The purpose is to encourage parents to play with their children - in intentional ways. Project SUN is part of a local coalition promoting use of Theraplay® inspired practices that help to build healthy, trusting relationships between children and their parents, teachers, and other caregivers.



This campaign will encourage the use of Theraplay strategies to build healthy parent/teacher/caregiver relationships with children.

According to The Theraplay Institute (2022), Theraplay is a dyadic child and family therapy recognized by the Association of Play Therapy as one of seven seminal psychotherapies for children. Practiced around the world, this type of therapy allows for stronger bonds between the child and important adults in their life. More information on Theraplay can be found at <https://theraplay.org/>.

As part of the "Just for the Fun of It!" campaign, we will be hosting and promoting various activities for parents and caregivers in our community. Learn about some of them below:

- **Parents/Caregivers & Children Interaction Workshop @ Little Me Studio:** There will be a four-week pilot program for parents/caregivers and their children in collaboration with Little Me Studio. Participants will be learning new methods and fun activities to teach their children healthy communication skills as they engage in art projects. This program is scheduled to start at the end of October and will be limited to eight caregivers and their children between the ages of 2-12. If interested in participating, email [projectsun@cfkry.org](mailto:projectsun@cfkry.org).
- **Theraplay Training:** On November 3 and 4, Project SUN and I-KAN ROE will host a two-day Theraplay training for those working with children in group settings, such as classrooms, daycare, residential settings, or with family groups. Registration will be limited to 20 individuals. [Register here through the I-KAN ROE](#).





- **NEW! Social Emotional Exhibit at Exploration Station:** On Saturday, November 19, from 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM, there will be an open house for families to experience the new social-emotional development exhibit at the Bourbonnais Township Park District's Exploration Station, in partnership with Pledge for Life - I-KAN ROE Life Education Center and Project SUN. In addition to seeing the new exhibit, visitors will see demonstrations and be provided with kits for implementing intentional play practices at home. Parents will also hear about opportunities to learn more about Theraplay and simple, playful activities that can help to reduce stress and improve communication within their families. Something we can all benefit from!

These are just a few of the planned "Just for the fun of it!" activities that will be available soon for Kankakee County families. If you or someone you know are interested in learning more about this campaign, email [projectsun@cfkrv.org](mailto:projectsun@cfkrv.org). Also, be on the lookout on any of our Project SUN Social Media platforms.

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## **CYNDI'S CAREGIVER CRAFT CLASS**

Date: Monday, October 24, 2022



Using pages from an old paperback book, we will create glittery leaves to use for the Fall decorating season. No prior experience is needed.

Materials will be provided. Prior registration is required.

**AND IT'S FREE!!!**

If assistance is needed with childcare expenses, please note that on the registration form.

**Register Here**

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## **Calling: Prospective Parent Advisory Council members**

We want to empower you to make positive changes in your family and our community. Therefore, we are thrilled to launch a PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL where YOU, the experts on your child's mental, behavioral, and emotional health, will be put in the driver's seat of your child's care. Participation will provide you with access to peer relationships, mental health education, and leadership training.

As a member of the PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL, you will have a full menu of ways to be involved. Each project is optional, so you choose what interests you. And, because your time is just as valuable as ours, we offer parents stipends to honor your service to Project SUN's mission.

Here are some of the ways you can actively make a change in Kankakee County:

- 1. Serve as a Peer Mentor to other caregivers who need help accessing services or advocating for their child.**
- 2. Develop and implement parent engagement activities such as the Parent Café. Select topics of interest and help plan events where parents can learn more about mental health issues.**
- 3. Drive the re-establishment of a NAMI chapter in Kankakee County. NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is a 100% peer-led organization that offers mental health education and support groups. Join the team that is designing what NAMI Kankakee will offer to our community.**
- 4. Participate in Project SUN's Community Planning Team meetings. Many of our county's service providers collaborate with parents to innovate solutions to barriers families face. This is a great space for parents to work with the providers who serve their children to build a better system of care.**
- 5. Volunteer to represent Project SUN at outreach events in the community. Your voice and connection with other parents and caregivers are vital to Project SUN's mission to empower families!**



We want to hear from you! Feel free to spread the word to other families with children who are seeking mental health services. Feel free to contact our Family Liaison, Rhonda Showers ([rhonda@cfkrv.org](mailto:rhonda@cfkrv.org)), for updates or to express your interest in participating.

## Supporting Kankakee LGBTQ+ Youth

SCAN THIS





*Recognize challenges and learn how to amplify voices in the promotion of equity for the LGBTQ+ youth community in Kankakee county*

An important step in supporting Kankakee LGBTQ+ Youth is to conduct a survey of Kankakee County residents about experiences with gender identity and sexual orientation discrimination, as well as gather other information to help guide future actions to promote greater equity.

In the fall of 2022, Project SUN is planning to host informational sessions to bring awareness to the issues experienced by youth in the LGBTQ+ Community. These sessions will seek to recognize challenges and learn how to amplify voices in the promotion of

equity for the LGBTQ+ youth community.

**Complete the Survey Here**

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Project SUN monthly newsletters are intended to inform family members and those working with families. You are all valuable members of the **Strong and Unified Network (SUN)** being built to support the children's mental, emotional, and behavioral health system of care in Kankakee County. You are encouraged to invite others to become involved in these efforts to help children flourish. Please share this newsletter with those who may find this information useful. Suggest they visit [projectsunkankakee.org](https://projectsunkankakee.org) and sign-up to receive their own copy and become a member of the Network.



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