



In the summer of 2004, Youth Professionals and Regional Extension Educators in Community Youth Development were asked to prepare case studies regarding community efforts to coordinate out-of-school time programs. They examined how the coordination occurred and how it impacted availability of programs for young people. They also captured the lessons from the coordination efforts that could help other Minnesota communities work together to increase programs and opportunities for youth.

This is one in a series of ten reports.

About The Community

Marshall, Minnesota, was named one of "**The Best Small Towns in America**" in 1993, 1995 and 2002. Author Norman Compton cited Marshall's high per capita income, low crime rates, and great educational opportunities. Marshall has functioned as a regional trade center, university town, county seat, shipping point for commodities, and food processing center. Marshall today is a regional retail and commercial center with a healthy downtown area, Market Street Mall, and many regional service businesses. Marshall is at the center of the richest farm property in southern Minnesota; several smaller surrounding communities rely on it for employment, shopping, educational opportunities, and social and recreational events.

What's Happening in Out-of-School Programming?

The Marshall community has two primary agencies that provide most of the out-of-school time opportunities for youth in the area: Marshall Community Services (Combined Community Education and City Recreation Office) and the new YMCA. In addition, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Southwest Service Cooperative, church youth groups, United Way, West Central Service Cooperative, dance teams, sports associations, University of Minnesota Extension Service 4-H Program, and special annual events planned by civic organizations are providers of out-of-school

DATA FROM THE CENSUS AND CITY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Marshall City population: 12,735

Lyon County population: 25,425

Population in Lyon County ages 19 and under:
30-32%

Population in Lyon County ages 65 and over:
11-15%

Geographic size: 9.0 square miles.

School Enrollments: Total 2,893; high school 830;
junior high 330; elementary; 1,207, private
parochial 526

Has Southwest Minnesota State University, four-year liberal arts college, ranked #1 eight consecutive years by U.S. News and World Report.

Home for the Southwest Minnesota Arts and Humanities Council.

Home of The Schwan Food Company employing 2,500

New community YMCA constructed in 2003.

Has 200+ lodge, fraternal, civic, or non-profit organizations represented.

Has 21 congregations serving most faiths.

time opportunities. In addition to these community-based youth development opportunities, the Marshall School District provides an array of enrichment opportunities for youth. The primary sites for community-based opportunities are the YMCA and the school district facilities. In addition, the community parks and aquatic and ice arena are used for youth opportunities year-round.

Community Services Youth Programs:

Program area, intensity, and number of youth ages 6-18 served (youth who participate in multiple activities may be counted more than once):

- Non-credit general interest opportunities (29) 486 participates
- Arts/humanities (2) 106 participants
- Tours/trips/travel/film (2) 101 participants
- Skill development (41) 1,634 participants
- Team sports/athletics (24) 1,894 participants
- Recreational (34) 667 youth participants
- Special events (10) 21,461 participants

YMCA Youth Program:

Youth Served (by age group):

0-5: 325
6-11: 623
12-17: 701
18-29: 974

Lyon County 4-H Youth Program:

Served 286 youth in various clubs and programs with additional youth served in special 4-H adventures and after-school programs.

Youth As Resources (YAR):

Allows community youth groups to access grant dollars for youth leadership projects.

Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Church Youth Groups, Dance and Sports Associations, Special Interest Clubs and Groups, Community PLUS, Marshall Area Stage Company, ECFE, SW/WC Service Cooperative, and Weiner Memorial Wellness Center:

All offer youth related programming during out-of-school time. Due to the varied nature of these offerings it is difficult to determine the number of participants. Many of these programs also serve youth from outside the community of Marshall.

About the Coordination Effort

Coordination happens informally in two important ways. The first is a brochure called the Community Services Guide; published every May, August, and December by Marshall Community Services. It highlights school, club, and organizational activities and programs for young people. Most local agencies that serve youth during out-of-school time list their activities and contact information in the guide. Since the arrival of the YMCA in 2004, Community Services has collaborated with or eliminated any programming that is provided by the YMCA. This has allowed Community Services to focus on their existing programs but has also eliminated some potential revenue sources.

The majority of out-of-school time programming in Marshall is developed for and delivered to the K-8 audience, though the YMCA has specific programs such as the Youth Room and Teen Nights that are designed for older teens. In addition, Community Services has an intramural program that provides older

youth with recreation opportunities. Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and 4-H also provide some opportunities for older youth.

Marshall Community Services is the leading agency behind coordination of out-of-school time activities and programs. Along with the short-term courses and activities offered, Community Services has invested in a Minority Child Advocate and After-School Program Coordinator. This individual works at the Marshall Public Junior High school and serves as an advocate for minority children, as well as a facilitator of after-school clubs and activities for all children in grades K-12.

The second way coordination happens is through the Lyon County Alliance for Youth and Families. This alliance provides the greatest interagency community approach to a coordinated out-of-school time effort. Formally, the alliance was a Restorative Justice Coalition formed in 1997 with funding from grants from the Minnesota Prevention and Intervention Program with the Minnesota Department of Economic Security. Since 2003, the group has taken on a new name and new mission statement, thanks in part to a United

Way grant that allowed for a strategic planning process. While the new mission and goals do not specifically address the issue of out-of-school time, the alliance is the umbrella organization for Lyon County Youth and Families, and is mindful of the out-of-school time research and implications for lack of access to opportunities.

Mission:

The mission of the Lyon County Alliance is to advocate for Lyon County Youth and Families by identifying community issues and responding with resources.

Goals:

- Create awareness in the community of the mission and function of the group.
- Develop and implement an organizational structure to promote and facilitate the group initiatives.
- Successfully implement a campaign that addresses quality early childhood experiences.

Membership:

Includes, but is not limited to: Department of Corrections; Marshall Police Department; Southwest Minnesota State University; Southwest Minnesota Foundation; First Call; Community Plus; Private Industry Council; Lincoln, Lyon, and Murray County Human Services; Probation; New Horizon Crisis Center; Marshall Community Services; Marshall School District; county commissioners; University of Minnesota Extension Service; a group home; public health professionals; and clergy. Many have made unsuccessful attempts at getting area businesses represented at the meetings.

Structure:

Typically, the group meets monthly at the Lyon County Courthouse with elected officers leading the meeting. Three work groups meet separately to move the three goals forward.

Impact:

Historically, some of the impact of this coordination lead to purchases of curriculum, parenting education, community presentations, Bikes for Kids Programs, School

Supplies Backpack program, creation of Community Plus and Marshall Area Child Care Initiative (MACCI House), Teen Court, and other education programs. Search Institute *Attitudes and Behaviors: Profiles of Student Life* surveys was completed and the information was utilized.

With the changes in name, mission, and goals, the alliance is making progress on informing the public that it is an umbrella structure to allow for coordination of youth and family programs and to reduce interagency duplication. In 2003, major budget cuts resulting in lack of time and funding were cited in the minutes as impacting agencies' ability to participant in the alliance.

The impetus for coordination:

As noted, the alliance was first established as part of a Restorative Justice Committee. The new-found motivation for coordination stems from the desire for high quality and responsive programming while dealing with the more recent budget cuts and staff reductions. Coordinated community-wide projects that allow efficiency in spending have become vital.

What else has happened in the community to impact availability?

- Budget cuts in 2003 resulted in decreased service for youth.
- Rise of methamphetamine use in rural communities has also shifted attention and limited resources to intervention rather than prevention.
- Transportation is an issue for families who either live outside the city limits or are unable to transport their children to programs.
- Cost for participants continues to be an issue, with school-related activities and community youth activities costing more each year.
- The Lincoln, Lyon, Murray County Family Services Collaborative does provide funding for projects and programs that serve youth within the community of Marshall and the county

What could stimulate more local action?

- Opportunities for the alliance to see “Best Practices” in out-of-school time programming.
- Opportunities for youth voice.

Implications for other communities:

- The joint office of the City Department of Recreation and Community Education (Community Services) has allowed Marshall to focus on both the city and school needs.
- Program quality has been enhanced through the coordination effort of the alliance. Youth-serving organizations have been able to share staff workshops and trainings to create stronger and higher-quality programs.

- Communication has increased between all the youth serving organizations through both of the coordination efforts of the alliance and Community Services.
- New and creative funding opportunities have arisen from the coordination effort. These opportunities have required youth-serving organizations to work collaboratively.

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Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Marshall Community Services; Marshall Area YMCA; Marshall Area School District; and numerous youth-serving organizations