

## **Partnering With Parents** **Revised 6/2/11**

**Partnering With Parents** (PWP) is a new network of training organizations, agency partners and individuals that promotes the behavioral health of children and youth by

- Working together through training and collaboration to strengthen the role of parents advocating for children with behavioral health needs; and
- Promoting partnering of parents, caregivers, agencies and communities to advocate for system changes to improve the lives of all families in Connecticut.

**PWP member partners are:** training organizations, agency partners and individuals whose primary focus is providing training to parents and caregivers of children with behavioral health needs; *and* parent training agencies for which behavioral health is an important, though not primary, component of their mission. Affiliates include state agency representatives and others whose support and partnership is important to the network.

**Network members offer training and services that are:** accessible; culturally competent; family-driven, recovery and resiliency-focused; strength-based; youth-informed; and promote mutual respect.

**Network members are committed to:** embedding parental involvement in agency programs and services; strengthening collaboration among network members; sharing and utilizing best practices and standards of excellence in program provision, including data-driven outcome evaluation; providing culturally responsive programs and services; decreasing barriers for families.

**Network members participate together in:** developing a continuum of parent training opportunities; collaborating to improve access, quality and best practice parent training standards; expanding available curricula and enhancing certification and accreditation opportunities; obtaining marketing, resources and sustainability assistance.

**Partnering With Parents History:** In 2005 the State of Connecticut received a Mental Health Transformation State Incentive grant from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to transform the State's behavioral health delivery system into a recovery-oriented, culturally competent consumer and family-driven system of care. The Connecticut Workforce Collaborative on Behavioral Health, created through the grant, launched an initiative to identify and strengthen linkages among organizations, programs, and activities that promote the role of parents as advocates for their own children, advocates for the children of others, and as advocates for service and system changes to improve the lives of Connecticut's children, youth, and families. The initiative also sought to support the development of a statewide parent leadership network.

Two meetings of interested individuals and agencies were held in spring 2010 with resulting development and approval of an action plan, strategic recommendations and a resource directory. Participants then worked together to develop a mission statement, membership agreement, governance structure, communications and marketing plan and sustainability proposals. Newly named **Partnering With Parents**, the network now seeks capacity-building support to improve parent leadership training curricula and help to match trained parents and caregivers with state and community volunteer opportunities.