

Parents and Youth Successfully Complete Strengthening Families Program *Organizations Partner to Bring Program to Racine*

In mid-November, seven parents and 11 youth celebrated the successful completion of the Strengthening Families Program. For seven weeks, parents and youth gathered at John XXIII Educational Center for a family meal followed by two hours of activities designed to strengthen their ability to communicate, set limits, and resolve problems together as a family. As a result of the program, youth also gained skills in handling stress and resisting peer pressure especially related to alcohol, drugs, and delinquent behavior.

The program responds to a community need for prevention programs for parents of middle school youth in Racine County. “In May 2011, Racine County UW-Extension collected information on parenting programs and resources in the county. We found that there was a gap in prevention programs for parents of middle school students in Racine County,” said Sarah Hawks, Family and Community Educator for Racine County UW-Extension.

Parents are seeing value in the program as well. Marisol Salazar, High School Support Coordinator at John XXIII Educational Center, has received, “positive feedback from the parents that participated, confirming the need and effectiveness of the Strengthening Families Program.”

Strengthening Families is a family-focused program for youth ages 10 to 14 years old and their parents. The goal is to reduce substance use and behavior problems in youth during their teen years. It is an evidence-based program that has been recognized as an exemplary prevention program by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, National Institute of Drug Abuse, Department of Education, and the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration.

The Strengthening Families Program was made possible through a partnership between three local organizations. Focus on Community, John XXIII Educational Center, and Racine County UW-Extension collaborated to bring the program to Racine families.



Youth develop skills to resist peer pressure through role play activities.