



**Family
Service**
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www.familyservicerochester.org

Keeping African American Kids in School

by Scott Maloney

African American youth are overrepresented in both the child protection and juvenile justices fields and have disparate negative outcomes as compared to their Caucasian peers. In fact, local statistics have shown that even though African American youth comprise 8 % of the student population in Rochester, they account for 34% of trancies, and 55% % of all school suspensions. Additionally, 42 % percent of African American youth drop out of school in comparison to 8.3 % of Caucasian students. These statistics are alarming, especially when one considers that truancy is often a precursor to school dropout and those outcomes for school dropouts are often bleak.

One of the newest service areas of Family Service Rochester is our Truancy Prevention and Educational Achievement Project. This collaborative effort with Olmsted County Child and Family Services broadens our already existing early interventions services for African Americans. This project is being funded, in part, by a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

We are excited to announce that we have hired Willie Tipton to head these efforts. Willie brings a high level of commitment, passion, and enthusiasm. Willie's responsibilities include:

- Assessing and providing social work services to the youth and family.
- Advocating on behalf of the youth and family especially with the school system.

- Facilitating a positive working relationship between the school and the family.
- Assisting with connections and access to community services to help promote stability and family well-being.
- Provide support groups for parents and youth designed to encourage engagement in the educational process.
- Provide family activities to foster positive working relationships with the school and community partners.
- Provide incentives for improved school attendance and academic performance.
- Increase the school personnel's awareness of and sensitivity to the issues confronting youth and family well-being.

We expect this program to be a success and with that will come positive outcomes. We hope our truancy prevention and educational advocate services will lead to increased school attendance for teens and increased family stability for African American generations to come.

New Food – More Meals! Weekend Meals on Wheels make a change

by Kelli DeCook and Pat Bauer

Meals on Wheels is heading down a new road to ensure hot nutritious weekend meals are available to all in need. As the population shifts, we are experiencing a greater demand for meals, especially on weekends. To meet this demand Family Service Rochester is working with a new vendor for weekend meals. This vendor also provides new meal options including: pizza, chicken alfredo, burritos and teriyaki chicken. By hiring food service workers and contracting with PossAbilities, we are able to serve the growing need for weekend meals. The new meals are served in eco-friendly containers. Please consider volunteering to deliver meals, 287-2010.