



# Mercer Family Resource Center

Building stronger families and healthier youth since 1971!

Issue 37  
Spring

2024

Welcome to the latest edition of the Mercer Family Resource Center newsletter! We are thrilled to reconnect with you and share the impactful initiatives that have been shaping our beloved community. At Mercer FRC, our unwavering mission is to provide education, counseling, and prevention services that build stronger and healthier youth and families in Natrona County. Since our humble beginnings in 1971, we have been dedicated to instigating positive change in the heart of Casper.

In the face of the challenges that the past few years have presented, our commitment remains resolute. We dream of a future where our community stands united, with our youth making informed choices, and families experiencing fewer struggles with meaningful connections at home. Together, we strive for a harmonious and resilient community fabric.

Year after year, Mercer reaches nearly 3,000 individuals, and we extend our impact to 80% of the population through vital programs in substance abuse and suicide prevention. Our youth education and intervention programming, including Insight into Substance Prevention and Tobacco & Vaping Education, addresses the unique challenges faced by today’s young people. We recognize the hurdles of being a child these days, and our offerings include anger management, social and emotional skill development, and alternative coping strategies for life stressors.

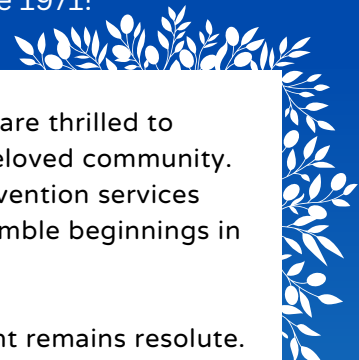
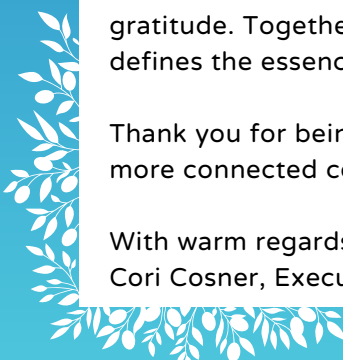
For caregivers, our Parenting classes are designed to equip you with the essential skills needed to strengthen family relationships and provide tools to navigate the common challenges that all caregivers face. Your participation is a crucial part of building a supportive network for our families and future.

As we step into the promising horizon of 2024, our vow is to persist in the fight for our community’s youth and families. We firmly believe that the positive changes we champion have a ripple effect, ultimately impacting each and every one of us. To those who have been steadfast supporters of our work, we extend a heartfelt thank you. Your dedication has been the driving force behind our successes.

To those who continue to support Natrona County at its core – the Family – we express our deepest gratitude. Together, we are weaving a narrative of strength, resilience, and community support that defines the essence of Mercer FRC.

Thank you for being an integral part of our journey. Let’s continue to build a brighter, healthier, and more connected community, one story at a time.

With warm regards,  
Cori Cosner, Executive Director



BENEFITING MERCER FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER

**DANCING WITH THE STARS** **ELVIS**  
*of Casper*  
OCTOBER 21, 2023, 8PM  
FORD WYOMING CENTER

**Recap On Page 6**

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## Community Baby Shower

This FREE event is designed to be fun, informative, and engaging, giving families tangible takeaways, and of course GIFTS to celebrate their new addition! This year we will have 20 organizations, each with their own raffle items. There will be a rummage table with all sorts of baby item giveaways, diaper depot, and each family that comes gets a bag full of baby resources. That's not all, we have big raffles including video monitors, a rocker, and a convertible crib/toddler bed. The Daddy Den will be there again with a diaper changing challenge, and of course dad specific prizes.

**There is still time to be a part of making a difference in the life of a growing family. Mercer FRC will be accepting donations of diapers of all sizes and wipes till Friday April 19th.**



WYOMING DEPARTMENT  
OF FAMILY SERVICES

**Bill Elliott**



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS  
OF CENTRAL WYOMING**



CASPER-NATRONA  
COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Frontier Eye Care  
and Eyewear Gallery



**THANK YOU!**

*This event is made possible by the members of the Natrona County Prevention Coalition and our generous community donors!*

**COMMUNITY  
BABY SHOWER**

**FREE RAFFLE PRIZES**    **FREE DIAPERS**    **FREE BABY ESSENTIALS**

**YOU ARE INVITED**

**NATRONA COUNTY'S  
9TH ANNUAL COMMUNITY BABY SHOWER  
SATURDAY, APRIL 20TH, 2024 10:00-12:00**

**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF CENTRAL WYOMING  
1701 E. K STREET, CASPER, WY 82601**

**SPONSORED BY** Frontier Eye Care and Eyewear Gallery, TRUE

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH** Casper-Natrona County Health Department, parents as teachers BLUE RIBBON AFFILIATE, BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF CENTRAL WYOMING

**FOR MORE INFORMATION  
CONTACT ANNA AT**  
307-233-4276  
ahebbert@mercercasper.com

**SAVE THE DATE**

**UNITED IN PRIDE**

**JUNE 6-9, 2024**

**CASPER PRIDE**

**Celebrate with us at PRIDE Fest 2024;  
be sure to stop by our booth!**

**Our booth will offer helpful resource  
information, fun activities, and giveaways.**

# YOUTH EDUCATION CLASSES

## Substance Prevention

Mercer Family Resource Center offers two separate substance awareness and prevention classes; Tobacco & Vaping Education, and Insight into Substance Prevention.

### Tobacco & Vaping Education

The Tobacco Education program offered at Mercer Family Resource Center is a research-based, comprehensive tobacco program that also addresses alternative nicotine products such as vaping. Our overall goal is to prevent nicotine use among adolescents. The program is designed to help youth to...

- Identify reasons people start using nicotine products
- Discover that nonuse of nicotine is normal behavior of adolescents
- Practice skills for resisting peer pressure to use nicotine products
- Recognize the subtle and not-so-subtle messages in advertising
- Create a quit plan

Facilitator: Craig Mitchell 307-233-4263  
cmitchell@mercercasper.com



### Insight into Substance Prevention

Insight into Substance Prevention is a thought based approach to substance abuse education/early intervention. The class promotes informed thinking, which leads to better decision making in the future. The class is designed for youth needing information and education on substance use prevention.



### WHY SHOULD TEENS TAKE INSIGHT?

- Teens resist being told what to think and feel; however, when presented with information, they are absolutely capable of making well reasoned, thought-based decisions.
- Students are exposed to a well-researched and up-to-date curriculum that is presented through video formats, discussion, and listening carefully to what students have to say.
- Teens are encouraged to think for themselves and weigh research and conclusions. Data is presented and it is the job of the student to digest and assimilate that data.

### Insight Class Topics:

- Marijuana
- Tobacco
- Alcohol
- Other illegal substances
- Effects of substance use on the brain & body
- Societal impact of substance use
- Skills for maintaining a substance free life

Facilitators:

Craig Mitchell 307-233-4263 cmitchell@mercercasper.com

&

Jenniej Elliott 307-233-4269 jelliott@mercercasper.com



# YOUTH EMPOWERMENT COUNCIL

The Youth Empowerment Council (YEC) had a very busy last season! Between their thriving community garden this year creating the opportunity to enjoy a community garden to table meal and being able to donate to help feed our local community, YEC has spent numerous hours presenting and participating in suicide prevention team SPAT awareness trainings. This group of teen



“change makers” have been shining their bright light and leadership skills in Natrona County. YEC is a community organization that recognizes and encourages the youth in

our community to discover the things that spark their passion for life, substance-free! That might be trying Drum Therapy or getting out in the crisp air and going for a night time ice-skate. Led by the youth; for youth, YEC’s main mission is to reach out to the community, volunteer, and provide leadership opportunities so youth know they can make a difference. YEC meets weekly from 6-7pm, and they use this time to collaborate and plan #WYAmplify substance-free events, suicide prevention awareness activities, and volunteer efforts that focus on issues that are important to them. Let our youth voices be heard!



***Are you in 6th-12th grade, or know a teen who would like to get involved?***

Contact Craig today at 307-265-7366  
or  
[cmitchell@mercercasper.com](mailto:cmitchell@mercercasper.com)

 Like us on  
Facebook  
[@YECNC](https://www.facebook.com/YECNC)

# STRONG & HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Parenting is undoubtedly one of the toughest jobs anyone can undertake, especially in today's fast-paced world where children face a myriad of challenges. From navigating social media



pressures to academic stress and peer influence, kids encounter obstacles that can be daunting for parents to address alone.



That's where Mercer Family Resource Center steps in, offering invaluable support and guidance to parents. With a deep understanding of the modern family dynamic, Mercer FRC provides a host of classes tailored to meet the diverse needs of families. Whether it's parenting workshops, counseling sessions, or skill-building seminars, they equip parents with the tools and knowledge necessary to foster a strong family bond. In a world filled with uncertainties, having a reliable resource like Mercer FRC can make all the difference in nurturing resilient, thriving families. *Please scan the qr code for more details!*



NurturedHeart

Strengthening Families Program by Dr. Karol Kumpfer



[bit.ly/FamilyandParentingMFRC](https://bit.ly/FamilyandParentingMFRC)



**Mental Health FIRST AID**  
from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL WELLBEING

- Learn how to identify, understand, respond to signs of mental health struggles & substance use disorders
- Learn the skills you need to reach out and provide initial support to someone who may have a mental health challenge

Everyone can help with Mental Health First Aid



This training is great for anyone age 18+ who wants to make a difference!

ADULT MHFA: FOR ADULTS ASSISTING ADULTS  
YOUTH MHFA: FOR ADULTS ASSISTING YOUTH



## Thank You



WYOMING  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

For supporting the Natrona County Prevention Coalition and our efforts to reduce substance abuse in the community by promoting healthy and positive choices!

The WYCF Casper Area Local Board recommended NCPC as a recipient of funding that was made possible thanks to the Curt Weston Fund at the Wyoming Community Foundation.

THANK YOU SO MUCH!



mercer family resource center

Contact:  
Brittlynn Adame  
307-233-4277  
badame@mercercasper.com

# DANCING WITH THE STARS OF CASPER RECAP 2023



Elvis Night had us all shook up! Here are the results of an evening we fell in a hunk of burning love with.....



**Excellence in Technique**  
Steven Schnell (The Science Zone) and AJ Campbell (Rising Star Tumbling and Dance Studio)



**Excellence in Showmanship**  
Tom McCarthy (Townsquare Media) and Kimberly Barroteran (K2TV Wyoming's News Leader)



**Peoples and Judges Choice**  
Jordan Kalinowski (Merril Lynch Wealth Management) and Effie Bird (UW Family Practice)



**Best Partner Connection**  
Sharon Chapman-Climer (Restoring Cores) and Clint Saunders (Clint Saunders Professional Photography)



**Best Theme and Creativity**  
Kristy Bussey (Wallick & Volk) and Aaron Walters (Rising Star Tumbling and Dance Studio)

We would like to give a very Special thank you to all of our illustrious Judges, our Emcee Cathy Holman - Prairie Wife in Heels, to our Auctioneer Malik Hegge of King Enterprises, Photographer Willie Petersen of Willie Petersen Creative, and everyone who made Dancing with the Stars of Casper 2023 an evening to remember!



**Best Crowd Appeal**  
Anna Wilcox (Wyoming Nonprofit Network) and Craig Mitchell (Mercer Family Resource Center)

**Opening Casper College**  
Choreographed by Jodi Youmans-Jones

Stevie McNamee and Mason Jameson



**Finale by Opera Wyoming**

Daniel and Emily Quintana and Michelle Forster



## MERCER FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER STAFF

We are excited to welcome Abbie Tennant as she joins us full-time! From youth participant to part-time worker and intern, her dedication, resilience, and drive for excellence have been remarkable. With her passion, creativity, and leadership, we're confident she'll propel our team forward. Welcome aboard, Abbie!

Cori Cosner, MSW, LCSW  
Executive Director

Brittlynn Adame, MSW, LCSW  
Clinical Coordinator  
Program Manager

Gena Jaussaud  
Office Manager

Anna Hebbert, MSW, PCSW  
Family & Parenting Specialist,  
Counselor

Sheena Hixson, BSW  
Counseling Intern  
After School Program Specialist  
Natrona County Prevention  
Coalition

Whitney Lamb, BS  
Prevention Education Specialist

Craig Mitchell, BA  
Prevention Education Specialist  
CHINS Coordinator, YEC  
Coordinator

Jenniej Elliott  
Development Coord./ Facilitator

Alissa Lamb  
Grants/Finance Coordinator

Jill Davis  
Development/Finance

Kendra Bock, AS  
Finance Coordinator / HR

Ted Sellers, MBA  
Finance Coordinator

Lindsey Hall 2016 - 2023  
Justine Marton 2017 - 2024

Though they've left, their impact endures. We cherish their time with us, their knowledge, and unique contributions. Their legacy inspires us. Best wishes for their future, and heartfelt thanks for all they've done!

RECAP OF PROGRAMS & SERVICES PROVIDED	JULY 2023 - DECEMBER 2023
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PARTICIPANTS	2031
TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS (RECEIVING DIRECT SERVICES)	1771
TOTAL NUMBER OF DIRECT SERVICE HOURS PROVIDED	4451

INTERVENTION SERVICES	SERVICE HOURS PROVIDED
Insight into Substance Prevention (Level .5 for Youth)	198
Corrective Thinking; Social and Emotional Skills for Teens	310
Tobacco & Vaping Education (Youth)	235
Something for Nothing (Youth Shoplifting Prevention)	40
Anger Management (Youth)	320
Drug and Alcohol Education (level .5 for Adults)	112
<b>TOTAL INTERVENTION EDUCATION HOURS</b>	<b>1215</b>
<b>CLIENTS: 186</b>	

FAMILY PROGRAMMING	SERVICE HOURS PROVIDED
Family Programming Outreach	177
Parenting Love and Logic Way	134
Strengthening Families	70
The Nurtured Heart Approach	190
Circle of Security	33
<b>TOTAL FAMILY PROGRAMMING HOURS</b>	<b>604</b>
<b>CLIENTS: 94</b>	

COUNSELING, ASSESSMENT, & CASE MANAGEMENT	SERVICE HOURS PROVIDED
CHINS - Child in Need Of Supervision	326
ASI - Addiction Severity Index (substance evaluation)	96
Counseling (individuals, couples, families)	66
Community Case Management	244
<b>TOTAL COUNSELING ASSESSMENT &amp; CASE MANAGEMENT HOURS</b>	<b>732</b>
<b>CLIENTS: 852</b>	

YEC/PROSOCIAL ACTIVITIES, PREVENTION & AWARENESS TRAINING	SERVICE HOURS PROVIDED
YEC (Youth Empowerment Council)	275
YEC - SPAT (Suicide Prevention Awareness Team)	1018
#WYAMPLIFY (substance-free youth activities)	298
QPR - Question Persuade, Refer (Suicide Prevention Task Force)	309
<b>TOTAL PREVENTION &amp; AWARENESS HOURS</b>	<b>1900</b>
<b>CLIENTS: 639</b>	



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535 W. Yellowstone  
Casper, WY 82601



www.mercercasper.com



## NEW COUNSELORS AT MERCER FRC

### Sheena Hixson

BSW, MS of Clinical Mental Health Counseling Intern



New job roles:

- Individual counseling for adolescents and adults
- Addiction assessments for adolescents and adults

"Inspired by client-centered empathy, experiential activities, and cognitive-behavioral approaches, I am passionate about the tapping into the power of proven techniques that encourage clients to actively engage in their healing journey. As my client, you can expect activities like creative expression, roleplay, mindfulness exercises, and exploring relational patterns in a safe, nonjudgmental space."

### Anna Hebbert

MSW, PCSW, & Counselor



Hi! I love working with families. I am the Family & Parenting Specialist here at Mercer Family Resource Center. I received my bachelors degree in Sociology at the University of Wyoming, my teaching license from Metro State in Colorado, and my Masters of Social Work from Colorado State University. I also have a certificate in Social Aspects of Human-Animal Interaction that supports Animal Assisted Interventions. I am trained to facilitate parenting/caregiver classes or groups and professional development for educators or providers. I utilize play based counseling strategies along with family systems counseling, and art therapy strategies for self expression and reflection. I look forward to putting all my knowledge to work in family counseling.

DANCING WITH THE STARS OF CASPER



SAVE THE DATE!  
OCTOBER 26TH 2024



MUSIC VIDEO NIGHT