

## Press Release

October 18, 2011

Kosciusko Leadership Academy (KLA) met on Tuesday, October 18 at the Health Services Pavilion with host K21 Healthcare Foundation to learn more about *Human Services in Kosciusko County*. Those attending learned about the role of Cardinal Services, the United Way, and the Department of Child Services (DCS) of Kosciusko County in providing human services.

K21 President Rich Haddad opened the session sharing how the idea of the K21 Health Foundation came from a KLA White Paper project. Haddad explained that the K21 Health Services Pavilion is home to a group of non-profit service organizations serving Kosciusko residents. He further shared that through the years it has seen new services birthed as the organizations housed in the building work together, encourage one another, and draw strength from each other. Currently they have 9 organizations in the building providing 15 services that focus on health and wellness. Haddad ended by encouraging current KLA students to keep “spinning those ideas”.

Guest speakers were Jane Wear, President/CEO of Cardinal Services, Inc.; Patricia Coy, Director of United Way; and Peggy Shively, Director of the DCS.

Jane Wear spoke on the many services and programs Cardinal Services, Inc. provides. These programs range from KABS, a rural transportation system, to Pike Lake Pointe, affordable housing for challenged people. She explained that the mission of the organization is to support people with challenges or disabilities in reaching their personal goals and stressed that, “We all have challenges”. Wear said that Cardinal Services, Inc. now services 2,700 annually in five counties with a staff of 500. She ended by sharing the needs of the organization which include job leads, mentors, volunteers, and ambassadors and encouraged White Paper ideas along those lines.

Patricia Coy followed by sharing that one of the United Ways goals is to raise the high school graduation rates. She also covered the 211 program which is a free and confidential referral database of agencies that can help people with a variety of needs from utility assistance to food relief. Coy went on to share about the Volunteer Kosciusko web site, <http://www.volunteerkosciusko.org>. It is a site that lists different volunteer opportunities where one can sort by skill or agency. She encouraged those attending to go to the site and see where they could help. Coy also spoke about the Day Of Caring program that was started as a **KLA** White Paper project. It is a way of giving back to the community one day in the year. This year they had 134 projects in 12 communities helping reroof homes, build wheelchair ramps, and etc.

Peggy Shively wrapped up the Human Services session. She started by stating that it's important to keep children connected with family. The removal of a child from its home is traumatic and has been revealed to be similar to one experiencing post traumatic stress disorder. The question that guides their decisions is "How can we keep the child safe in the home?" Shively touched on the meth (methamphetamine) situation sharing that many don't recognize how dangerous meth is to children, stating that "meth impedes the ability to parent". She divulged that over the last year, she has seen more meth-related incidences with children. The session ended with a question and answer period.

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 4 at 7 AM for the Education Summit. It will be held at Lakeland Christian Academy, Winona Lake. They will join community leaders along with Dr. Patrick Carr as the community addresses the "Rural Brain Drain".