Colorado Respite Coalition (CRC)

Start-Up Process

• Colorado began creating a respite coalition in 2000, after a small group of interested parties met to discuss respite needs in Colorado.
• In 2001, the group formed the Colorado Lifespan Respite Coalition and a representative from the ARCH National Respite Network attended a meeting. The coalition had some success, but disbanded a few years later.
• In October 2007, the Emergency Respite Project was launched by a group of interested parents, employees from concerned local and state agencies and representatives from various community partners. The group was later renamed the Colorado Respite Coalition (CRC).
• The two co-founders Janis De Baca and Valerie Saiz, who are parents of persons with developmental disabilities, organized the first CRC meeting and provided support as members.
• The original impetus for the CRC was to create a respite center that would be available 24/7 for emergency and non-emergency respite for children. The goal was based on a successful model of a center-based respite program in Ft. Collins, CO called Respite Care Inc.
• This mission eventually evolved into the current mission, which is to establish more extensive respite options for Colorado families. The CRC strives to provide accessible information, resources and referrals to family caregivers seeking respite care by creating a statewide collaborative network of families, professionals and advocates.
• In 2010, the CRC partnered with the State Unit on Aging, Easter Seals Colorado and the Chronic Care Collaborative to apply for the Federal Lifespan Respite Care Grant. The State Unit on Aging was awarded the grant in 2011.

Structure

• The CRC represents about 200 professional organizations, and has a mailing list of more than 400 family caregivers, advocates and professionals throughout the state.
• CRC is a statewide organization and has helped form four regional coalitions, including the Denver Metro Respite Coalition, throughout the state. The CRC works to reach the entire state through community partners and participation from various organizations that work with the special needs population.
• The CRC is currently housed at and overseen by Easter Seals Colorado.

Staff

• The CRC is supported by two staff funded by the federal Lifespan Grant, and housed at Easter Seals Colorado.

Funding

• In 2014 the Colorado Respite Care Program received a second three-year Lifespan Grant to help support the CRC and its partners. It was also awarded an expansion grant in 2016.
• In 2013, as part of the Lifespan Grant objectives, the CRC and Easter Seals Colorado held three statewide regional summits to increase regional participation in respite efforts. The summits were funded through a grant from the Colorado Trust.
• The CRC receives in-kind donations as part of its sustainability efforts.
• In 2013, the CRC and Easter Seals Colorado successfully advocated for $150,000 to be placed in the 2014 Colorado State budget. The group received $250,000 in FY2015 and $350,000 in FY2016 and FY 2017. The funds are distributed through grants to agencies providing respite across the state and lifespan.
House Bill 1226 was passed in 2012 which imposes a surcharge on crimes against at-risk populations. Funds from the surcharge allow the CRC to distribute grants to agencies providing respite across the state and lifespan. A formal grant application process has been established.

JFK Partners has supported the efforts of the CRC by providing consultation and financial support for the co-facilitators to attend annual respite conferences 2010, 2011 and 2012. JFK Partners continue to support the maintenance and enhancement of the CRC website.

Membership
- Membership in the CRC is volunteer-based and there are no membership fees.
- There are about 200 member organizations. Members include families, caregivers, state agency representatives, providers, advocates and employees of various organizations that provide services to the special needs populations across the lifespan.

Meetings and Communication
- Meetings are held quarterly at the offices of a local non-profit foundation. Quarterly meetings are open to everyone interested in supporting and expanding respite opportunities in Colorado. Meetings are accessible in-person or by teleconference.
- Regional coalitions host meetings and events in their respective regions quarterly and maintain specific email list serves directed towards people in their region.

Major Activities
- The CRC was a strong community partner in the startup of “Discovery Clubs.” The Adventure Center in Alamosa, CO, was the model used to provide respite to families of children with special needs. Community college nursing students provided most of the respite hours. This model was then used by Easter Seals with community partners’ support as they launched the first “Discovery Clubs” in the Denver metro area in 2006. There are now five such programs in the Denver metro area, with at least one program available each week. Easter Seals provides administrative, programming, and grant writing support as well as training for the nursing students.
- The CRC launched its website in 2012. The website, www.coloradorespitecoalition.org, includes many resources for families including a Respite Locator. JFK Partners has supported maintenance of the website and in 2012–2013 an intern was assigned to increase the number of respite providers on the Respite Locator. The CRC website underwent a design overhaul in 2014, and continues to be maintained and updated by Easter Seals Colorado.
- During the 2009–2010 legislative session, CRC leaders and families testified and advocated for a Catastrophic Bill to help cover respite costs for families in crisis. This bill was spearheaded by another CRC partner, Family Voices of Colorado, and although it passed three House committees, it was defeated in the Senate.
- In 2015, the CRC advocated for the formation of a statewide Respite Care Task Force, which was developed and held until January 2016. The task force developed recommendations for the legislature on how to better support respite care services across Colorado. The recommendations included a cost-benefit study of respite care, developing an online training inventory and training best practices for Colorado, and an outreach campaign to increase awareness of caregiver needs and policy efforts to better streamline services and regulations. In 2016, the recommendations were funded by House Bill 16-1398. An RFP was released by the Colorado Department of Human Services to conduct the project. Easter Seals Colorado was awarded the contract, and began efforts in 2017.
- In 2016, the CRC co-hosted the National Lifespan Respite Conference in Denver, CO, with the ARCH Respite Network, Easter Seals Colorado, Colorado Department of Human Services and National MS Society–CO/WY Chapter.
- Lifespan Respite Grant Plan: to improve the coordination and distribution of respite care services for family caregivers of individuals with special needs which includes:
  - bringing agencies, coalitions, respite providers and families together to develop a lifespan infrastructure;
  - identifying existing resources (i.e., funds, providers, training);
  - providing care worker and volunteer training; and
  - improving caregivers’ knowledge about respite.

Documents/Resources Available
- Mission and Vision Statements
- Website: www.coloradorespitecoalition.org
- Brochures, PSA video and one pager documents used for outreach
- Survey results

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