



NEWS

Gordon discusses gambling addiction at Aug. 21 meeting

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Published:

Wednesday, August 27, 2008 1:09 PM CDT

Attending a meeting of the Regional Family Resource Network of Boone County could easily be compared to a "business after hours" event, except there was no discussion about building business revenue; the bottom line here is building stronger families.

According to their charter, the mission of the Regional Family Resource Network (RFRN), is to "facilitate a system of prevention, education, and early intervention activities aimed at enabling families, children, and their communities to reach their fullest potential through community-based planning activities."

At the August 21 meeting of the Boone County RFRN, held at the Danville Community Center, representatives from many area civic organizations met to discuss upcoming activities for youth and families in the area.

In attendance were representatives from Boone County 4H, Black Diamond Girl Scouts, and the Regional Tobacco Prevention Coalition and Wellness Council of West Virginia, to name a few of the civic organizations.

The day's speaker was Michele Gordon, clinical coordinator with The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia.

According to Gordon, The Problem Gamblers Help Network was created by the West Virginia Legislature to identify and provide services to problem gamblers and their loved ones.

Gordon says that there are many signs that a person has a gambling problem, and one of the tell-tale signs of a problem gambler is that he or she will lie to their loved ones about how much money they spent gambling.

"Often times the families do know that gambling has been going on, but they usually don't know how extensive the problem is," Gordon said.

The program has been in existence for nearly 10 years, and is available for residents of West Virginia. According to Gordon, anyone who needs help with their gambling may call a toll-free number, 1-800-GAMBLER.

Unlike many help lines you call, The Problem Gamblers Help Network will arrange a person-to-person consultation free of charge within 30 miles of your residence within 72 hours of the call.

"We don't want the cost of counseling to get in the way of help," Gordon said.

"We could use that as a model for substance abuse programs," RFRN Program Coordinator Michelle Baranaskas suggested.

Interestingly enough, The Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia is funded by the West Virginia Lottery, although the WV DHHR administers the program.

"We do compile data and outcomes are reported to DHHR and the WV Lottery, although no

identifying information is given to either the DHHR nor the WV Lottery," Gordon said.

Also reported at the RFRN meeting, the Regional Teen Institute will take place from June 2 -12, 20-09. The cost per camper is \$200, although the program is asking just \$20 per camper and is planning on raising the remainder cost by fundraisers, such as the Regata in Charleston this Thursday through Saturday.

The next Boone County RFRN meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 18 at the Danville Community Center. A regional RFRN meeting is scheduled for Thursday,

For more information about the RFRN, go to www.regionalfnrn.org.

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