

2011 Turning Point Director's Report

What a Year!

It's only been nine months since we last met at the Annual Turning Point Conference yet **much** has been accomplished! I hope you enjoy our new format for the Community Partnership Profiles. Since we are "going green" and loading all of our documents to a CD instead of printing them on paper we are able to offer more substance to our reports and extend them beyond one page. I will not repeat what you will read in the reports but I do hope you take the time to see just what is going on across Oklahoma. We can easily get caught up in the ranking and the projections. While this information is very important and useful, it may feel full of gloom and doom UNLESS you look beyond the statistics. Because it's beyond the statistics that you will see the true commitment of communities across Oklahoma coming together, leveraging resources, seeking outside funding for health initiatives, passing public health policies, and improving systems. Ultimately, these communities are changing their culture in an effort to make OKLAHOMA a healthier place to live, learn, work and play!

This year has gone by so quickly. I appreciate the fact this report forced me to stop and reflect back to recognize and appreciate the accomplishments that occur when a true public health system develops at the local level through the collaborative efforts of community partnerships. Encouraged by my reflections over the past year, I decided to take this opportunity to reflect *way* back. I pulled out the work plans for Turning Point from 2002. How awesome is it to see that we have reached many of our stated goals. I remember sitting around the planning table with Neil Hann, Larry Olmstead, Dr. Rhoades and many others discussing what it would take for the philosophy of Turning Point to make a difference. Outside of the obvious, it would require community partnerships committed to improving health in *their* county. The strategy tied directly to that outcome was to hire "regional representatives to facilitate community partnerships". The target number was 12 – 14 regional representatives. Through the support of Oklahoma State Health Department leadership and many partners internal to OSDH as well as invaluable external partners, this year the Community Development Service hired an additional FIVE Regional Turning Point Consultants. We have met the objectives laid out when the Turning Point philosophy was in its infancy stage. We now have 13 Regional Turning Point Consultants working with community partnerships across the state to improve the health of Oklahomans!

In addition to the newly added staff, we have embarked on a revolutionary partnership at the state level that will enhance the way communities interface with several state agencies. Recognizing healthy communities require collaboration among multiple priority areas, the Oklahoma State Health Department (Strong and Healthy Oklahoma, Tobacco Use Prevention Service and Turning Point), the Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) and the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Service (Block Grant and SPF/SIG) are committed to practicing what "we" preach... **collaboration**. The state agencies have been meeting to adopt a collaborative framework that will ease the burden of programs

and coalitions at the local level by reducing redundancies through coordinating competency-based training models, curricula, tools and opportunities. Essentially the goal of this state level partnership is to better serve community partnerships and grantees by aligning tobacco control, nutrition and fitness, and substance abuse prevention terms, tools, templates, training, and work plans.

The Regional Turning Point Consultants began 2011 by feverishly working with community partners on the newly released TSET Nutrition and Fitness grants. Over thirty Turning Point partnerships worked on the proposals. Some worked as consortiums while others as single counties. The TSET Board awarded fifteen community based nutrition and fitness grants covering 21 Oklahoma counties! I would be negligent if I failed to mention the 85% of the population covered by the Communities of Excellence in Tobacco Control grants (34 grantees covering 51 counties and one tribal nation). TSET has been a great friend of Turning Point. By funding local community partnerships to address two of the three flagship issues outlined in the Oklahoma Health Improvement Plan, communities are empowered to address health. As the year went on Regional Turning Point Consultants have been trained in the MAPP (Mobilizing for Action Through Planning and Partnerships) framework and ToP Facilitation Methods. Each of these trainings have provided the RTPC the skill set they need to effectively work with community partnerships by building their capacity and readiness to tackle the behaviors that are impeding the health of the residents living in those communities.

On a final note, I would like to take just a minute to say “thank you”. Thank you for being involved with the Oklahoma Turning Point Initiative and thank you for supporting public health at the local level. YOU truly are making a difference. I’ve been working for the Turning Point Initiative since 2002 and can honestly say there is no place I would have rather been. I am leaving OSDH and Turning Point in September 2011. I am leaving during a time of great excitement, enormous work and multitudes of possibilities. I have had the honor of working with many inspiring people in communities across Oklahoma. I appreciate the time you gave me to talk about public health and the time you took to educate me on what public health means at the local level. I can’t say enough good things about those I’ve worked with since joining the OSDH team in 1994. I can simply say “thank you”. It is with an excited yet heavy heart I close this letter. As it will be the last time I am among you as a Turning Point employee however, I hope to join you as a partner. I am blessed to know this quote holds true for me and my experience working for the Turning Point Initiative within the Oklahoma State Department of Health.

"How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard."

~ A.A. Milne (Winnie the Pooh)

All My Best,

Brandie O'Connor

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