

**North Carolina Association of County Commissioners
2004-05 Ralph W. Ketner Employee Productivity Awards Application**

County:	Catawba County	Employee:	Bobby Boyd and John Hardy	Email:	Bobbyb@catawbacountync.gov JohnH@catawbacountync.gov
County Department:	Social Services/Mental Health	Employee Title:	Bobby Boyd, Social Services Director John Hardy, Mental Health Director		
County Phone:	828-695-5603	County Mailing Address:	PO Box 389; Newton, NC 28658		
Is this project being submitted on behalf of two or more employees?				No	Yes XX

If yes, please provide below a listing of all project employees in Number 6. Employee & title as listed above should be for lead team member.

Fair Labors Standards Act Designation: In order for your project to be eligible, you MUST indicate one of the following. If you do not know, please contact your personnel director

EXEMPT: X **NON-EXEMPT:** **BOTH (if applicable to team):**

1. Productivity Improvement Title:	Family NET: Consolidated Services for Children and Families
2. Implementation Date (must be between January 1, 2004 and December 31, 2004)	July 1, 2004
3. Please describe the productivity improvement. (Please limit response to these 2 pages.)	
<p>Family NET (Nurturing, Education, and Treatment), launched in July 2004, is a new unit of Catawba County Social Services, which consolidated and redesigned a range of therapeutic services for children and families. The unit, comprised of 62 employees, integrated “medical” and “social welfare” models. The merged unit included: outpatient services for children, women, and families; school social work services; the ACT Day-treatment program for children; an Early Childhood Support Team for preschoolers and day care providers; post adoption services, an adolescent sex offender program, services for court-involved youth, intensive family preservation, family case management, and women’s support services. The newly designed unit increased comprehensive services to high-need families, provided same-day emergency services for children and youth, and expanded “wraparound” services to schools, juvenile court and residential group homes in the community. In addition, the merger blended the expertise of many seasoned professionals and honored the innovation and preventive services developed in Catawba County over the last thirty years.</p> <p>Bobby Boyd, Director of Social Services and John Hardy, Director of Mental Health jointly steered the development of Family NET. With the endorsement of the Social Services Board, they convened a Design Team in May 2003. The Design Team, comprised of 10 staff from Social Services and Mental Health met monthly to operationalize the vision of Family NET. The Design Team determined the working model, rewrote policies, developed marketing materials, and assisted in cross-training staff. Throughout the process, Bobby and John reinforced the vision of quality, efficient, and responsive services for the citizens of Catawba County.</p> <p>Celebrating its one-year anniversary in July 05, Family NET symbolizes innovation, quality and customer service. Through aggressive marketing and outreach, by April 2005, Family NET was serving 20% more Medicaid-eligible children than the former Children’s Services unit at Mental Health (in 2003-04). Family NET continues to blend funding streams, to build staff capacity, and to heighten responsiveness to the community’s needs.</p>	
4. Please describe why this project was initiated or what problem it addressed:	
<p>In 2002, North Carolina mental health reform legislation required divestiture of area mental health programs as of July 1, 2004. One of the “immediate impacts” of this reform legislation was the loss and/or fragmentation of mental health services for over 200 children in foster care in Catawba County. Another dramatic “impact” was the potential loss of numerous mental health professionals and licensed clinical social workers working in prevention initiatives in Catawba County.</p> <p>Catawba County aimed to preserve the high quality of their professional therapeutic services, establish an alternative service organization, expand the strong continuum of services in the county, and address other unmet needs in the community. We also wanted to seize this unprecedented opportunity to blend talents and expertise by</p>	

combining traditional mental health services with selected child welfare and prevention programs. Family NET allowed us to combine services to retain and expand community-based services. It also helped us address gaps around substance abuse, victims of abuse, intensive family preservation, comprehensive teen needs, and post-adoption services.

5. Please quantify the improvement's results in terms of cost savings, cost avoidance and/or a higher level of services provided.

(Please indicate what resources were used to achieve your results, and what was done with the time savings, if any accrued).

1) Family NET's ability to "go live" on July 1, 2004 helped our community avoid a major break in therapeutic services, which many other communities have experienced after mental health reform. Catawba County has over 200 children in foster care; 60% of these children receive mental health services through Family NET. If DSS had been forced to negotiate multiple contracts with numerous providers to obtain these services, the costs and fragmentation would have been substantial. On July 1, 2004, we were able to transfer all mental health records for children in foster care to Family NET and reauthorize treatment so that no child in foster care had a break in care provision. Private providers who accept Medicaid frequently request payment for all non-Medicaid-billable services (i.e. treatment teams and court testimony), which costs approximately \$1000 per foster child annually. Although Family NET staff still must be paid to provide those services, we are able to expedite the services, provide them at a lower cost and minimize travel time; this results in a net savings of approximately \$50,000 annually. The private providers also must have contracts negotiated, which is an administrative cost to the county—at DSS and county finance—approximately \$200 in staff time per contract. If we were to negotiate an additional 20 contracts, which is conservative, this would have resulted in a \$4000 cost.

2) Under statewide mental health reform, Catawba County's ACT day treatment program which serves 30+ exceptional children each year, may have been at risk of dissolution. ACT day treatment requires psychiatric and psychological oversight in order to bill Medicaid for day treatment, which are costly for any free-standing program to sustain. Under Family NET's umbrella, the ACT program has been able to maintain quality Medicaid-billable services, and has actually expanded to provide 5 weeks of summer programming for children this year.

3) Psychiatric services for children are very limited in this area of the state. In fact, Family NET provides psychiatric services to several private agencies at this time, on contract. Family NET's client volume allows us to assure psychiatric coverage for Family NET as well as other agencies at this time at a reasonable cost.

4) In recent years, many clinical social workers have left public child welfare to pursue careers in private practice. Family NET has expanded DSS' ability to retain highly qualified clinical social workers, attract psychology and social work interns, and assure clinical expertise throughout child welfare programs. If "turnover of a position" costs \$7000 in lost productivity and re-training, then Family NET's integration into an alternate provider network saved Catawba County at least \$35,000 in 2004-05 through the retention of 5 clinical social workers. We have also been able to attract other trained professionals to this area because of the clinical expertise and resources available at Family NET.

5) Several of Family NET's therapists and social workers are school-based, which is extremely important in a rural community. The co-location of mental health and social work services provides early intervention with children and youth to avoid destructive behaviors, underachievement in academics, disruption in the classroom, unnecessary absence from school, and time away from work for parents.

Family NET's ability to provide same-day emergency walk-in appointments for children and women in crisis has provided faster response and support to school personnel and families, and strategic care for children and youth who were suicidal and

6) Family NET expanded DSS' opportunity to bill Medicaid for intensive family preservation, school social work and post-adoption services. Although it has taken some start-up time to insure all licensed social workers were credentialed to bill, we have generated \$40,000 in Medicaid and third-party funding in the last year. Through outreach and unified work plans, the units have also been able to assure that youth who qualify for CTSP funding for mental health services receive those funds, without those children entering DSS custody.

6. Please provide any other descriptive information you would like to be considered by the review committee.

North Carolina has very few examples of integrated public mental health and social services models at the local level, especially as expansive as Family NET. Wake County has an integrated public health, mental health, and social services agency, but no other public social service agency in the state serves as the umbrella for a comprehensive service such as Family NET. Bobby Boyd and John Hardy, the respective directors of social services and mental health faced a huge challenge to blend two organizational cultures, to blend financing, to respond to staff needs, and to meet citizen demands within such a short time frame. They are to be commended for their vision and leadership during this exciting time.

County Manager's Name:

J. Thomas Lundy

Supervisor's Name:

J. Thomas Lundy

Return by JUNE 1, 2005 via email Rebecca.Troutman@ncacc.org or fax to (919) 733-1065