



Food for Thoughts



GOALS AND ACTIVITIES

This project aims to support student achievement by connecting youth to caring adults who can offer guidance, encouragement, and help to raise self-esteem.

Red Lodge Fire Rescue Community Care Team provides informal counseling, welcoming hugs, and healthy snacks to community high school students each Monday an hour before school begins. Students in need of individual mentorship are referred by administrative staff at Red Lodge High School. School counselors receive weekly reports of meetings with students.

Research has shown that a connection to a caring adult can help to increase the likelihood of graduation and mitigate the negative effects of “toxic stress,” which can cause lasting health problems.

POPULATIONS SERVED

Students who attend Red Lodge High School, which includes the communities of Red Lodge, Roberts, and Luther, with a focus on at-risk youth who lack a strong, emotional support network.

MAJOR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

Red Lodge Fire Rescue Community Care Team, Red Lodge High School, and Red Lodge Area Community Foundation

MAJOR OUTCOMES

Received positive feedback from students, school staff and parents:

- One student said that Monday mornings, when the Community Care Team visits, are the highlight of his school week.
- The team has helped several students dealing with mental health issues, including depression. One parent said he believes his daughter would not have made it through her junior year without us.

INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS

Relationships and public trust were key. Members of the Red Lodge Fire Rescue Community Care team had been actively involved with the school in parent, coach, adviser, aid, and booster roles prior to this initiative. Because of that history, they were welcomed with open arms.

ADVICE FOR OTHERS

“Be flexible and willing to collaborate with a variety of partners.”

— Ruth Bilyeu, Red Lodge Fire Rescue Community Care Team