

# Project Carino

## McCurdy's School-based Mental Health Program

**Amanda Gonzales:** 753-7221 ext. 271  
Monday – Friday

**Caroline Wareham:** 753-7221 ext. 239  
Monday & Tuesday

**Project Carino** has been serving students and families at McCurdy School for over twenty years! Our emphasis is spiritually based counseling directed toward supporting our students' healthy development. We are a comprehensive mental health counseling program focusing on issues critical to young people's lives. We do assessments of emotional and mental health functioning and barriers to learning; and provide necessary support to our students so they can adjust to challenging circumstances and continue learning.

**Services** offered to McCurdy students and families include:

- Individual Counseling
- Classroom Presentations
- Staff In-service Presentations
- Personal Safety/Empowerment Presentations at the Elementary and Middle School
- Information and Referral to community-based services when necessary and requested
- Family Counseling
- Play Therapy
- Group Counseling

### **Programs:**

- The **Big Brother Big Sister Program** has been launched this year with the State/Local Chapter. Thirty matches between high school and elementary students who are engaged in mentoring relationships.
- **Peer Counselors** were trained by our department in September. Thirteen 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> Graders completed a two day training on helping skills and are ready to assist peers in need.
- **Peer Conflict Mediators** are trained in collaboration with the New Mexico Center for Dispute Resolution. These middle- and high-school students are capable of assisting peers find non-violent solutions to conflict.
- The **Dominic Interactive Screening Assessment** is used for the early detection of the most frequent mental health issues in elementary school children.
- **Celebrate Survival Day** is a volunteer activity offered in the spring to honor and support students who have lost a family member to death.
- **Violence Prevention** activities and information were shared with the High School student body during the national Week without Violence campaign during the month of October.

McCurdy School makes a strong commitment to the comprehensive health of our students by funding two licensed, professional counselors who work closely with faculty and staff in the service of McCurdy students:

**Amanda Gonzales**, Director of Project Carino, comes to us in 2006 as a full-time mental health counselor, and coordinator of department services. She has been working with children and families in the Espanola Valley for the past ten years. A licensed Master-level Social Worker, Amanda earned her degrees from New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, NM and has been in service to children and families for twenty years. Her son, Marcos, is a third grader at McCurdy Elementary.

**Caroline Wareham**, Mental Health Counselor, has been responsible for the continuing development and success of Project Carino for the past twenty-one years. She has continuing relationships with many McCurdy families, and works with students in the Elementary through High School. She has a M.Ed. in Counseling from Boston University and is a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor as well as a credentialed Grief Counselor.

