



A publication of Dane County Department of Human Services  
and the Dane County Juvenile Court Program

# On Balance

October 2009  
Volume XIII, Number 3

## Changes on the Juvenile Bench - Part 2

By John Bauman

In the last edition of On Balance, readers were introduced to Judges Flanagan and Fiedler. Since that time, two new Judges have been appointed to the bench by Governor Doyle and have started in the Juvenile Division. Judge Peter Anderson assumed the cases of Judge Martin, who had assumed Judge Hanrahan's cases for a short time prior to Judge Martin's retirement. Judge Amy Smith assumed the cases of Judge Ebert after his retirement.

Judge Peter Anderson is married to Judy Gunderson, who is an Attorney and former prosecutor and has three children, ages 20, 18 and 16. He earned his undergraduate degree from UC-Berkley and then his law degree in 1980 from Harvard Law School. He began his position as a Circuit Court Judge approximately six weeks ago. His previous expe-

rience included serving as an Administrative Law Judge since 2001, Assistant Attorney General for 12 years and prior to that he was in private practice.



**Judge Peter Anderson**

In response to a question on working with juveniles and children, Judge Anderson responded that he believes that it will be helpful that he has his own children and understands that kids will sometimes act impulsively. There are times when these acts involve the police and the hope is that these are "blips" in their lives and that there are people that can help prevent them from occurring again. Some children have significant issues and some are so far along the path toward corrections, that it is very difficult to bring them back to more acceptable be-

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*It's a great place for kids to discover and invent themselves*

By Kristin Groth, Development and Communications Director

I recently overheard Colleen Hayes, the lead staff at our Lussier Teen Center recently say to someone, "Well, if they're going to get into trouble, I'd rather they do it here." Don't you love that? All kids are truly welcome here. Whether they are dropping in to skateboard, coming for band night, wanting help with their homework, or are enrolled in one of our programs, our goal is to get to know them so we have a chance of helping them. If they are getting in trouble, they need someone to see the person behind the behavior. Our staff does that.

'Helping them' can mean very different things for different kids. One student may ask for help picking out

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On the web @ [www.co.dane.wi.us/juvenilecourt](http://www.co.dane.wi.us/juvenilecourt)  
[www.co.dane.wi.us/humanservices](http://www.co.dane.wi.us/humanservices)

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## Right Track Awards Given

By Andre Johnson, DCDHS

On August 11, 2009 the Dane County Neighborhood Intervention Program held its annual Awards Banquet at the Lussier Family Heritage Center. Approximately 100 youth, parents and youth service professionals were on hand to recognize the outstanding achievements of some of the Neighborhood Intervention Program's youth.



Right Track Teen of the Year - *Kennetta Pierce*  
(with Program Leader *Veronica Hereford* and  
*Mom*)

Many youth were recognized for their outstanding achievements and positive changes in school and the community. Pictured are two of the youth that received the top honors that evening.

The second part of the evening was dedicated to the outstanding achievements of several community members. These individuals were honored for their contributions to the lives of youth in Dane County.

**Community Leadership Award:** This person has shown outstanding community activism and demonstrated self-initiative to be a leader on important issues within our community.

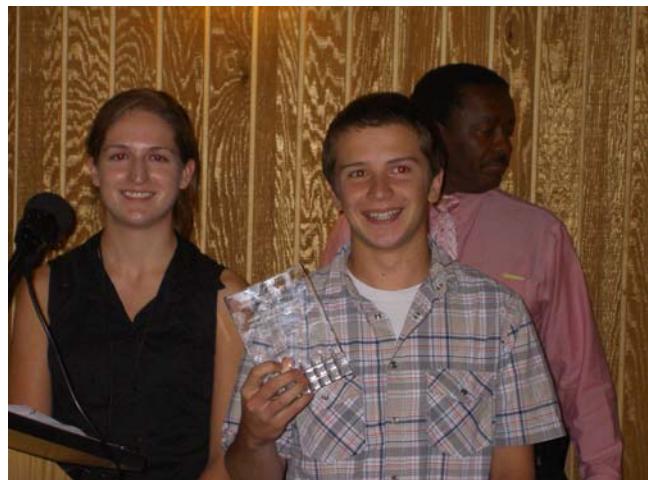
o Stan & Yolanda Woodard

**Competency Builder Award:** This person is noted for their consistent work in fostering the development of individual strengths of youth in our community. Their work has been instrumental in the development of positive assets, skills, and academic achievement of youth.

o Connie Bettin

**Betty Franklin Community Service Award:** This person has devoted their life work to the improvement of the lives of youth and their families through grassroots efforts. This person has committed themselves to enhancing the opportunities for youth and families throughout the entirety of their career.

o Betty Banks  
o Gaddi Ben-Dan



Right Track Turn Around Award - *Cooper Heine*  
(with NIP social worker *Rebecca Trolinger*)

**Joe Thomas Positive Image Award:** This person has made significant contributions to families and has gone "beyond the call of duty" through their professional work.

o Jim Sanders

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## Banquet

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**Gene Weidemann Award:** This award is given to a social worker who has exemplified positive social work values. They have demonstrated an ability to form positive connections to the youth and the families they serve through the use of creative and individualized case plans. This worker has demonstrated respect for the culture, dignity and diversity of clients through words and actions. The recipient of this award has earned the respect of colleagues and co-workers.

- Jessica Bilansky
- Marie Drumm



Award Winners - Betty Banks, Yolanda Woodard, Stan Woodard (Front Row)  
Connie Bettin, Jim Sanders, Gaddi Ben-Dan (Back Row) with Stephen Blue

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havior, though you do what you can to try to help.

Judge Anderson stated that he believes his job as a judge is to be a neutral party who holds a sense of community values, who assures legality and who remains compassionate toward the parties in his court. When asked what can be expected from his court, he responded that people in his court will be invited to be active participants in the process in terms of relaying information about the case. He also acknowledged that he is new to the bench and will rely on input and experience of others. He welcomes suggestions and feedback and is excited to learn about the juvenile court.

Judge Amy Smith is married and grew up in Southeastern Wisconsin in a farming community. She has lived in Madison for about 25 years. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in 1986 from UW-Madison in economics and political science, and her Juris Doctorate degree in 1989 from UW-Madison.

She began as a Circuit Court Judge in late July. Prior to becoming a judge, she was a felony drug prosecutor for 8 years in the Dane County District Attorney's office, and an Assistant Attorney General and managing attorney for a litigation unit at the Department of Justice for 6 years where she focused

Deputy Secretary in the Department of Corrections, including oversight of 10,000 DOC staff. Judge Smith also volunteered with the Office of Lawyer Regulation and with the Madison Public Safety Review Board.

Judge Smith believes that we have a unique opportunity to positively intervene in a juvenile/child's life when they are in the juvenile system. She also thinks that it's important to do what we can to help those individuals make positive changes to be successful and to obtain needed services and support, which bests serves the interests of public safety and leads to stronger communities.

When asked what can be expected from her court, Judge Smith said that she'll ask a lot of questions, listen, and do the best she can to make good judicial decisions. Judge Smith has been in public service for nearly 20 years, with over 14 years of experience in law and five years in high level management and policy. She is thrilled to be on the bench so she can continue her career in public service in this new role. She believes that her experience will help her understand the demands placed on individuals and programs, allow her to get to the core issues in cases quickly, and help guide her in making good judicial decisions.



*Judge Amy Smith*

on sexual predator cases, patient abuse and white collar crimes. She also has held high level policy positions in state government, first as the Enforcement and Science Administrator at WI DNR where she was responsible for DNR law enforcement operations and science services, and most recently was responsible for daily operations as the

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Please welcome Judge Anderson and Judge Smith to the bench when you have the opportunity!

# On Balance

## The New Southwest Madison Youth Court is Up and Running

By Sheri Gatts

Preliminary planning for a new Southwest Madison Youth Court (SWMYC) began in December 2008 with the formation of an Advisory Committee from that neighborhood. Officer Mike Hanson, Madison Police Department, took the lead in inviting community members to participate. The Advisory Committee decided to use circle sentencing, based on restorative justice principles, to process all cases. With circle sentencing, the emphasis is on addressing the impact of the violation of the community, victims and the defendants.

Four youth and three adult volunteers were recruited and trained at the end of March. The first cases were heard in mid-April. SWMYC is held at Memorial High School once each month. Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin, Inc. (YSOSW) contracts with the City of Madison to provide administrative oversight. YSOSW also coordinates Youth/Peer Courts in the Allied-Dunns Marsh Neighborhood of Madison, in Sun Prairie, DeForest, Cottage Grove, Middleton and Oregon.

Defendants are referred to the SWMYC by Judge Daniel Koval, Madison Municipal Court Judge. Diversion to Youth Court is voluntary. The youth have 90 days to complete the sentence they receive at Youth Court. If they do not complete the sentence, their case is returned to the Municipal Court. If they do complete the sentence, the ticket is dropped and they do not have to pay their fine. There has only been one

unsuccessful case returned to Municipal Court.

Eleven cases have been heard so far at SWMYC. Some defendants received more than one ticket for an incident. The age of the defendants seen in Youth Court range from 12 years to 16 years. (The charts on page 9 provide additional demographic information.)

Defendants agree to complete a variety of activities for their alternative sentences. These activities, which encourage positive youth development, are geared toward engaging the defendant in meaningful interaction with their community. An excellent example is jury duty, the most popular activity included in the sentences. Most defendants are asked to do two or three activities per offense.

Michael Reilly, a youth volunteer, has participated since the training in March. He participates because he likes being engaged in the community. Michael's mother is also a regular volunteer with the court. Another youth volunteer, Annie Shao, stated on her application that she enjoys "helping and listening to people...and that volunteering for Youth Court is a positive way to use those skills." Susie Schmitz, another youth volunteer, wrote on her application that participating in Youth Court will give her a chance to "be a good role model.....by helping other people in her school." Even the youth doing jury duty have commented that it's an interesting experience,

and "not so bad." All of these young people are giving of their time and talents to help make the SWMYC a success.

Nino Rodriguez, an adult volunteer with three of the youth courts being run by YSOSW, says "I volunteer with the Youth Courts because I feel it's important to show kids that members of the community really do care about their success and are willing to have an honest conversation about making things right and the importance of being offered a second chance."

When asked about her experience with the court, volunteer Jeanette Burda said "The Madison Youth Court is one of the most rewarding volunteer opportunities I have ever experienced. I am a high school teacher and spend my days with adolescents of all abilities and backgrounds but at Youth Court, more than ever, I feel that we are able to make a difference in an individual life in a very short period of time. When we meet with a young person and their family member we are able to work together to analyze and actively help them make plans to change their behavior and get a fresh start. I also enjoy working with other teenagers who are part of the jury. They are thoughtful and mature as they work through the process and very respectful of the defendants. I highly recommend this program and commend those who have worked so hard to have it available for Madison youth."

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## A Closer Look...at Rainey Briggs

By Veronica Hereford

It's a nice game day Friday morning at Sun Prairie High School. I take a seat at a table and prepare to interview the schools newest administrator- Mr. Rainey Briggs. He takes a couple of minutes to finish up with some students and staff members and then we sit down to discuss his position, his connections to various programs in the Madison area, and the subject he spoke very passionately about: his desire to impact relationships between students, families and staff in the Sun Prairie School District.

Mr. Briggs is the new Assistant Principal at Sun Prairie High School. Born in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, his family moved to Chicago when he was two years old and then relocated to the Madison area when he was 7 or 8. He attended Midvale and Lincoln Elementary School and then Cherokee and Sennett Middle Schools. Through a program at Urban League-Project Jamaa, run by Keith Burks, he was able to attend Edgewood High School on a full scholarship. He went on to attend Mankato State University on a football scholarship.

After graduating from Mankato State with a Bachelors Degree in health science and corporate and community fitness, Rainey Briggs moved back to Wisconsin and worked at SBC in Milwaukee for two years. He then made a decision that would forever change the focus of his life. He moved back to the Madison area and took the position of cultural liai-

son for the Verona School District. He worked in this capacity for four years. Working with young people in a school setting motivated him to return to school and complete the necessary classes to receive his teaching certification in health and physical education. He worked in this capacity at Sun Prairie's Prairie

also attributes the program with providing mentors that he still calls on to this day - Danny Johnson and Sam Vultaggio (and just to show me he was serious, he pulled out his Blackberry to ensure the correct spelling of Mr. Vultaggio's name). He went on to say that one of the most important impacts of the program was

that he met Stephen Blue who was his coach, his mentor, and a father figure to him. He also earned the Right Track Teen of the Year award during his participation in the NIP program.



Rainey Briggs, Assistant Principal  
Sun Prairie High School

View Middle School for three years. During this time he completed his Masters in education administration through Viterbo University in La-crosse.

In the fifth grade, Rainey states that he heard about and participated in a program that Dane County Neighborhood Intervention Program was offering-SOAR. He went on from this program to play with the Spartans for five years. He also participated in a program called Stars of Tomorrow. Rainey spoke from the heart when he said these programs provided him with a foundation, and promoted the development of responsibility and direction in his life. He

When asked about his long-term goals for the Sun Prairie School District and himself, he stated that he wants to foster and build beneficial relationships between the students, families and staff. He wants to assist the District in their efforts to recruit, employ and retain a staff that is reflective of the families in it. He is also planning to obtain his Doctorate and become a Head Principal, in due time.

Mr. Briggs had spent a substantial amount of time with me in school life. Several students and staff had peeked into his office and it was obvious that he was needed elsewhere. He graciously ended the interview looking over a situation that the new Head Principal, Lisa Heipp, was seeking his input on. I excused myself as Rainey transitioned into Asst. Principal Mr. Briggs.

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## Youth Court

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There seems to be a lot of interest in the Youth Court. At the Crime Prevention and Safety Conference last month, some volunteers, Judge Koval, and staff provided an overview of the Youth Court and gave a demonstration of the circle sentencing process. It was an honor to share information about the court and answer questions from people attending the conference.

<u>Sex</u>	<u>Ordinance Violations</u>	<u>Sentencing Activities</u>	
Males - 10	Disorderly Conduct 6	Jury Duty (9 defendants)	17 sessions
Females - 1	Truancy 4	Community Service (4 defendants)	36 hrs
	Obstructing an Officer 2	Meet with School Staff	3
	Possession of Alcohol 1	Letters of Apology	3
	Possession of THC 1	Essays or Papers	2
<u>Race</u>	Unauthorized Presence	Complete Summer School	1
African American - 8	On School Grounds 1	Anger Management Class	1
Caucasian - 3		Poster	1
		Buy an Alarm Clock (to get up in the morning)	1

## What Our Young People Are Writing...

*Dane County Neighborhood Intervention Program hosted an essay contest January through May of this year. We had hundreds of essays submitted by young people who are somehow system involved. Below is the March Women's History 1<sup>st</sup> place essay written by a 15-year-old bi-racial female. Please read and enjoy.*

If I could meet and talk to one woman who made a difference in America, I would talk to Coretta Scott King because she was the first lady of civil rights. She excelled at her studies and she was a person I would look up to. She was one of the most influential women leaders in our world.

She traveled throughout the world speaking about racial and economic justice, women's and children's rights, gay and lesbian dignity, religious freedom, the needs of the poor and homeless full employment, etc. These were all important issues back then and continue to be today. Most of them are still trying to be solved today and are still being talked about.

Other than an important leader in our society, she was also a dedicated mother. Raising children on her own and still being a movement worker, she dedicated most of her time to her children. This is important because I believe that your family should come before anything in your life. They help you through life and believe in you even when you don't believe in yourself. I would have asked her how her family and herself feel about her choices in life and how her children would look or lead up to that.

Coretta Scott King stood by her husband and believed and spoke about the same things he did. She was more looked up to after her husband's assassination. I believe that her speeches and beliefs made a difference in the world. I would ask her why she chose to speak about those specific topics and what prompted her to continue speaking. She also changed people's views of the world and what they thought about African-American civil rights.

Meeting Coretta Scott King would have been a great experience and it would have influenced me to do better in my life. She probably would have changed my perspective a little and made a difference in my life like she did so many others.

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a college and another may need help staying out of the juvenile justice system. The good news is that there are things for all of them to plug into at the Center, and staff who want to help.

From preschool to high school, Center activities are designed to expose kids to a great variety of life experiences, activities and people. Nutritious food, academic support, community service projects, supportive staff, and a healthy dose of fun are integral parts of every program. Kids' worlds become bigger as they go on field trips and get to try all kinds of activities – drumming, design, pottery, videography, dance, swimming, basketball, arts and crafts, cooking, biking, hiking, and lots more. Ideally, kids discover what they like and are good at so they can be proud of themselves, navigate their way to satisfying career paths, and enjoy a rich life.



## The Lussier Teen Center offers ongoing programs and drop-in activities

Teens are actively discovering who they are, who they can trust, what in this big world is exciting to them, what they are good at and where they fit in.

Here's just a sampling of programs being offered this fall. Some are drop-in activities, some require enrollment:

MediaWorks: Madison creative professionals help students learn the art and technical skills to make their own videos.

Atlas Improv Teen Comedy Club: A 10-week session where local comedians teach students the craft of interactive, on-stage story-telling and prepare them for two public performances.

Step Up & Out: Ongoing programming for Middle School boys that includes recreational, educational, health and fitness, community service and leadership opportunities.

Girls Inc.: Ongoing program offering girls in 5<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grades the chance to explore issues and careers, go on field trips, do service projects and fitness activities. Dinner, homework support and computer access is provided.

Keepin' It Real: An ongoing program for High School men where they can talk about issues, get homework help, explore careers, learn lifetime hobbies and sports, participate in community service activities and just have a blast.



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Teen Volunteer Corps: Teens identify community service projects they'd like to do — local to global — and then organize and implement them.

Urban Icons: A community art project with local artist Pritika Chowdhry where they are creating a life-sized sculpture. Work is well on its way, with people of all ages invited to help. The final project will be installed in front of the Center at the end of October.

Mess Hall Press: Staffed by community artists and communications professionals who provide a hands-on approach to learning the fundamentals of screen printing and graphic design.

Spoken Word Workshop: Derek Johnson, creator of Phredum Productions will lead these free workshops for high school teens. Teens will receive one-on-one advice from local spoken word artists and peers and prepare for a poetry slam.

Drop-in activities: Video games, arcade games, music, computers with wireless access, and staff on hand to provide a safe and friendly environment. Dinner and free healthy snacks are served weeknights.

## Alternative East High School program is good for all

The VIP, Vocationally Integrated Pathways program moved in when we did, and we love it. Academic programming paired with vocational training at the Center in one of four areas: Culinary Arts, Childcare and Development, Maintenance or Hospitality. They essentially become apprentices, working side-by-side with professionals at the Center. We've had teens say things like, "Nothing ever worked for me before. I like working here." To learn more about this program, contact Bonnie Goeke-Johnson, VIP Program Coordinator at 608-225-4633 or [bgoekejohnso@madison.k12.wi.us](mailto:bgoekejohnso@madison.k12.wi.us).

## Ironworks Café provides training for at-risk teens

The Ironworks Café at the Goodman Community Center is a teen training program where teens, including some students from the VIP program, learn how to run a café while working side-by-side with the Center's Chefs, bakers and food service professionals. The teens earn a stipend and credits towards high school graduation in exchange for their labor, but more importantly it gives them valuable job and life skills that traditional classes can't provide — like if you want a paycheck, you gotta show up, cooperate with others, and get the job done.

*If you'd like to learn general information about the Goodman Community Center, contact Kristin Groth, Development and Communications Director, at [kristin@goodmancenter.org](mailto:kristin@goodmancenter.org) or 608-241-1574 x224.*

*See our web site to learn more about the Goodman Community Center, including our online Activities Calendar, see [www.goodmancenter.org](http://www.goodmancenter.org).*

*For more information about teen programming contact Meme Kintner, Middle and High School Program Director, at [meme@goodmancenter.org](mailto:meme@goodmancenter.org) or 608-241-1574 x229. October 2009*



# Subculture Corner

*Stephen Blue, Chair  
Dane County Youth Gang Prevention Task Force*

The shooting deaths of 16-year-old Kareem Collins and 23-year-old Detarius Martin this past spring reminded all how fleeting and precious life is. Two young African-American males, just beginning to experience what the possibilities of life could offer, both fathers and both from loving families. You may ask why I chose to start this article in this way. What does it have to do with our usual topic of gangs? Our community was rocked by the two deaths but also with a significant number of events in which firearms were used. Although the issues and circumstances related to Kareem and Detarius' deaths were different, they point to an emerging fact and new reality.



*Stephen Blue, DCDHS*

Our community must find a way to address this issue and provide youth and young adults with alternatives to violence, increase conflict resolution education, implement community firearm recovery programs and heighten neighborhood intervention strategies in those communities, which tend to be most impacted by violence. The data from the 2008 Dane County Youth Gang Prevention Task Force shows that youth involved in gangs have a higher level of interest, need and access to firearms.

Since June there have been two Task Force sponsored meetings to find solutions to youth violence. The interest and commitment at these meetings has been impressive. The last meeting was kicked off by a presentation and report by Midwest Recycling business owner Jon Mortrud, County Board Supervisor Eileen Bruskewitz, and DCNIP Gang Prevention Program Leader Aaron Perry. They reported on the new youth employment initiative spearheaded by Supervisor Bruskewitz some weeks back. Presently there are six gang-involved youth working at the site, from gangs like Gangster Disciples, Mexican Empire, Chicano Pride Association, and Black P. Stones. Jon Mortrud gave a passionate overview of the program. He thinks this concept can grow and is already working with clients from the division of corrections. You can clearly see he is a man invested in his community.

The southwest side of Madison has been in the news since the spring. Residents' concerns about violence and quality of life issues have created community-wide action and groups working to improve conditions for residents.

SWANS....South West Alliance of Neighborhoods, is an organization of sixteen neighborhoods working at the grassroots level to advance collaboration, coordination and communication of activities and effectiveness among neighborhoods. On August 26th, they sponsored a forum where a resident's bill of rights and community code of conduct and behavior was presented. While the intent may have been to unite the neighborhood to action, some of the audience felt the result was divisive. The event drew a significant amount of local media coverage and was well attended. At the conclusion of the event, organizers pledged to continue a community dialogue to improve community safety and quality of life concerns.

A grass roots organization called Families and Communities United has been formed. This group was started from a meeting put together by Tony Travis, Youth Coordinator at Wisconsin Youth Company, right after the death of Kareem Collins in June. Since then, the group has continued to meet on Tuesday nights to discuss tactics and responses to the issues facing the South West side. Various subcommittees have developed and begun work. A community march has been held and an August 29<sup>th</sup> back-to-school event was a big success in bringing the community together. Jim Monroe, Manny Scarbrough and Stephen Blue acted as the coordination council initially but the group

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## Subculture Corner

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has taken on real momentum of late, with more interest and membership each week. County Board Supervisors Matt Veldran and Diane Hesselbein are active participants. Office of Community Services staffers Mary O'Donnell and Lori Wendorf have been solid contributors to the efforts. Neighborhood officer Mike Hansen has been a valuable player in getting the other neighborhood association presidents to participate. Hats off to the leadership of Manny and Jim and kudos to Shamya Curtis for her leadership on the back to school event.

The next steps are to bring the efforts of these two groups towards a common unifying purpose, to improve safety, opportunities and inclusion to all residents on the southwest side. Both groups have pledged an interest to come together for the common good.

Chief Wray and MPD have plans to attack youth violence in the City of Madison. Captain James Wheeler spoke to the task force membership about the MPD plan, but cautioned that plans are in the early stages of development and would be changing. Some of the preliminary elements include an expansion of gang officers, and a community oriented approach based upon the High Point, North Carolina model, which has a continuum of risk level responses. The Captain promised more information as it develops and stressed partnerships would be needed for success.

Mayor Assistant Joel Plant spoke to the group about a meeting with the County Executive and Mayor on youth violence concerns and other issues related to poverty. The City of

Madison will be moving aggressively in its efforts to address the issue. Some steps to date include increased coordination efforts, possible reallocation of resources by the Office of Community Services and Community Development Block Grant, and needs and expansion of the YSOSW youth courts concept and YWCA programming. The City of Madison's emerging neighborhood dollars targeted towards Owl Creek, Lake Point and Southwest neighborhoods significantly impacted the reduction of incidents in those neighborhoods this past summer.

Madison Schools Safety Coordinator Luis Yudice has agreed to co-chair the Dane County Youth Gang Task Force along with me. Many of you might remember Luis and the late Milt McPike were the co-chairs of the Enhanced Gang Task Report. Our hope is, together we can continue movement on many of the recommendations contained in the report.

The Subcultures Conference Planning Committee is currently meeting to work on the May 7, 2010, event. Our conference has been a very successful way to increase community awareness and to promote best practice related to youth gangs. The last conference drew over 300 participants. We will provide updates in the near future.

The 2009 Youth Survey committee held its planning meeting in September. The group is going to sample another group of youth involved in the Dane County Juvenile Justice System from October 1, 2009 to January 1, 2010.

Co-Chair Stephen Blue will also be seeking the help of area youth service organizations to plan a youth focus event on gang prevention and vio-

lence reduction. Motivational speaker Roberto Rivera, who was a group favorite at last year's Dane County Youth Gang Prevention Task Force Conference, will be a part of the event in addition to workshops, contest, and other activities. More soon.

The consensus at the conclusion of the last task force meeting was there is a continued role for our group as a community facilitator of the youth gang and violence issues. This Fall's early youth gang incidents and conflicts also reinforce the need for our group.

- • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
- **Subculture Corner Gang Fact:**
- GD's, BD's and BG's: What is the difference?
- All three originated in Chicago.
- The GD's, BD's and BG's today are basically three different gangs.
- All three have completely different written constitutions, different leaders and organizational style.
- The GD's are the Gangster Disciples (AKA:GDN, Gangster Disciple Nation). The BD's are the Black Disciples (AKA:BDN, Black Disciple Nation). The BG's are the Black Gangster Nation, but are sometimes called "The New Breed." The BG's single greatest enemy are the GD's but they are not aligned with "people" (Vice Lords). While the GD's and the BD's all developed about the same time and were both "folks" gangs, the BG's are a splinter group of the BDG's. Many GD's are simply BDG's or the BGDN being another descriptor of the GD's as they fall under King Hoover and the BG's under Boony Black.
- Source: NGCRC-G.Knox

## Disproportionate Minority Contact & Confinement (DMC)

By Rhonda Voigt, DCDHS

The Juvenile Justice Disproportionate Minority Contact & Confinement work group recommendations were presented to the larger DMC committee last May<sup>1</sup>. The 6 workgroups each submitted separate reports containing over 50 recommendations for addressing DMC in our community. The committee identified the following major themes among the many recommendations: training, coordination, alternative dispositions and skills development. To narrow the focus of committee recommendations, each workgroup submitted their top 3-4 recommendations (the full report can be reviewed at:

[http://www.danecountyhumanservices.org/pdf/DMC\\_Workgroup\\_Report.pdf](http://www.danecountyhumanservices.org/pdf/DMC_Workgroup_Report.pdf))

### Family and Community Supports Workgroup

1. Analyze the responsibilities of Joining Forces for Families (JFF) and possibly return to the previous model (neighborhood teams comprised of police officers, school staff, public health nurses, county social workers, housing resources, mental health outreach staff, economic assistance staff, etc.). JFF team members could manage volunteers in local neighborhoods and provide more skilled services in addition to or instead of the basic needs demands that they currently respond to due to severe economic pressures on already stressed families.
2. Create outreach to African-American families. Help families understand the way the legal and other systems are likely to respond to their family issues and assist them in making choices that have more positive results.
3. Increase the number of African-American and other people of color hired in positions of visibility in formal systems: DCDHS, MMSD, court systems, service agencies, etc.

### Positive Community Alternatives Workgroup

1. The community must stand firm even during difficult economic times and dwindling revenues to provide a solid continuum of positive alternatives to youth. Maintain funding to youth serving organizations to provide support, opportunities, and resources to reduce delinquency.
2. Support the expansion of evidence based youth programming in our community. The community will benefit from targeting prevention and early intervention strategies that increase youth assets and reduce risk.
3. Improve collaboration and communication within our community's key funders and resource providers as to youth trends, needs and risk factors. Then meeting to dialogue and to develop a direction that addresses the following strategies: Discovery, School-based Assessment (CBITS) and Screening, Provide Outreach, Community Collaborative, Competency/Asset Building, Knowledge/Education.

### Schools Workgroup

1. Review school district disciplinary codes and the expulsion process to determine if other options are available or should be developed.
2. Staff/student interactions-improve the skill levels of staff so they have a greater understanding of the students' culture and how that may influence their behavior and reactions in the school environment. Review teacher disciplinary referrals for trends and address disproportionate referral sources.
3. Transitions-increase the level of support for 5th and 8th grade students in their transition to middle school and high school.

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# On Balance

## DMC

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### Law Enforcement

- 1.Expand training for police and school staff together re: strategies to address DMC, cultural competency, mental health, child/teen development/behaviors, and brain development. This effort could be funded through a state DMC grant.
- 2.Expand conflict resolution/anger management programming (i.e. D.A.R.E., ADDS) to elementary and high school levels. This effort could be funded through United Way grants.
- 3.Expand youth courts and time banks to include additional county areas.

### Custody, Screening, and Petitioning Workgroup

- 1.DCDHS needs to begin tracking Deferred Prosecution Agreements, clarify case management expectations, and consider altering the case assignment procedure in order to enhance supervision.
- 2.DCDHS should revise the case assignment process for youth who are newly assigned due to placement on a custody order. A social worker should be assigned immediately upon learning of the custody status/hearing, and that worker should begin assessment information gathering immediately. DCDHS should commit to always having a worker present at initial custody hearings.
- 3.JRC staff should have limited access to WiSACWIS in order to enhance their information base when making custody decisions.

### Disposition and Placement Workgroup

- 1.Increase use of DPA's (Deferred Prosecution Agreements). In order for this option to be effective, there will need to be a higher degree of written DPA's with services more typically used in court-ordered cases, and adequate social worker case management and monitoring, along with client engagement in services. Explore use of a group approach for some DPA cases (i.e. a group similar to the retail theft group which has both a youth and parent component; circle sentencing; continuation/expansion of ADDS).
- 2.Include a family assessment in the Juvenile Delinquency Assessment. The youth is part of a family and we need to understand how life experiences, race, poverty, culture and values have shaped the youth we are working with and the family system.
- 3.Supervisors do in-person exit interviews of parents to get feedback about what we are doing that is perceived as helpful, what is not and what we could be doing better (DCDHS and service providers).
- 4.Provide supervision that is consistent yet realistic and flexible enough to take into consideration individual circumstances.

The DMC Oversight Committee has been reconfigured to include some of the JJ-DMC membership as we move toward implementation steps and continue our overall DMC mission. The newly reconfigured DMC Oversight Committee, which had its first meeting on September 23rd, will begin monitoring the implementation of the JJ DMC Solutions Work Group recommendations. The meeting resulted in unanimous agreement on eight priority implementation recommendations for 2010. Subcommittee chairs have once again been selected to begin formation of work groups. These efforts will present the opportunity to develop a comprehensive and integrated response system to benefit our community and youth.

# On Balance

## Déjà vu All Over Again

By David Thorson

Well over a year ago, On Balance reported that Dane County Department of Human Services had made a decision to realign all of their staff into three “pods.” The Eastern Pod had already been formed with the combination of staff and supervisors of the Sun Prairie and Stoughton offices. Who knew then that the economy, combined with major remodeling at the South Madison office and the slow opening of space at the Northport office would effectively delay the formation of the North and South pods to this day?

However, change and progress are finally upon us. During the summer, half of the CPS Intake unit moved from South Madison (SMO) to Northport to join the CPS Ongoing unit that was already there. Anyone who has been around the South Madison office on Park Street lately knows what an adventure it is to park, much less find one’s way into the building around all the construction. Many meetings have been forced to relocate during the construction, including the temporary moving of the Administrative Review Board (ARB) staffings to the Neighborhood Intervention Program (NIP) office on Sherman Avenue.

Later this fall, the plan is for Diane Prellwitz’s ongoing delinquency unit to move from SMO to Northport, thus completing the Northern Pod.

The Northern Pod will service mainly the Madison East, Madison LaFollette, Middleton/Cross Plains, and Waunakee school areas. By this fall, the ARTT unit will have moved from Northport to NIP as well. Likewise, the Thorson intake delinquency unit will move upstairs at SMO-B, to be joined by the SMO-A Access, CPS Intake, and

With any luck, all unit moves will be completed prior to December 1st. Dane County has long recognized that there has been a significant increase in the complexity of the various functions the department undertakes – whether it be delinquency, child protection, substitute care, neighborhood intervention services, intake, or ongoing. State mandates and standards have made each of the various disciplines very complicated. As a result, the old days of social workers carrying mixed caseloads is probably gone forever. The goal of all of these moves has been and remains to improve the capacity of the differing specialties to more readily and easily communicate and collaborate with each other by increasing proximity and promoting the sharing of knowledge and information.



*Dave Thorson, DCDHS Social Work Supervisor*

CPS ongoing units. SMO-A will be torn down along with the rest of the southern portion of the Villager Mall, thus paving paradise (loosely speaking) to put up a parking lot. The main coverage areas for this South Pod will be Madison West, Madison Memorial, Verona, and Mt Horeb.

Providers, families, and system partners should not experience major changes in their interactions with Human Services, and hopefully the uncertainty of who has moved where and when will only result in minor disruptions. Ultimately it is hoped that even with all of the delays that have occurred in the implementation, this reorganization of the Children, Youth, and Families (CYF) Division of Dane County Department of Human Services will be both perceived (and in actuality result in) improved and more responsive services to families.