



On Balance

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

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WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

ON BALANCE catches up with ... Buck Rhyme

By Dean C. Bossenbroek, Briarpatch

Restorative Justice is a popular concept in 2016. Funding is becoming more available for agencies to establish Restorative Justice programming. Youth workers in Dane County are regularly trained to identify and label the skills exhibited by their clients. The workers exploit those skill markers in order to assist youth and families as they wind their way through the complicated maze that defines the juvenile justice system. Including victims and community members in the process has been shown to benefit the community as a whole.

As the CEO of Community Adolescent Programs (CAP), Buck

Rhyme began talking about Balanced Approach to Restorative Justice (BARJ) principles back in the middle 1990s. He often had a hard



Photo: Kira Amber, 2016
Buck Rhyme reflects on his visionary achievements in the Restorative Justice movement as Community Adolescent Programs CEO.

time getting people to listen. "I wanted CAP to be an early adapter (of BARJ). Getting tough on crime was still big in the '90s . . . 17-year-olds were pushed into the adult system, and many kids were sent to corrections."

Buck collaborated with then Juvenile Court Administrator Jim Moeser and the Director of Chil-

dren, Youth, and Families Severa Austin to bring BARJ principles into the public discourse around the treatment of kids mired in a system that relied heavily on retributive justice. Buck says, "Intensive supervision programs were created to deal with those kids. We (CAP) were bucking a trend by building on strengths and catching people doing good. We rewarded good behavior instead of punishing bad behavior." Buck and I are having this conversation at a restaurant with a bank of west facing windows on a blindingly bright January afternoon. When Buck pensively recalls the lack of systemic buy-in related to BARJ in the '90s, I detect some moisture in the corner of his eye. Is that wistfulness? Or, is it discomfort in his light-sensitive, blue eyes from staring into the oblique-angled, snow-reflected sun glare? I ask if he'd like to move to a different table. "Naw," he grins, "who can complain about the sun at this time of the winter?"

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If there was regret or melancholy, it was short lived.

He continues his thoughts about his efforts to bring BARJ principles into everyday play, "We didn't get the legs back then, but we laid the groundwork," for what's happening in Dane County two decades later. "Victim Offender Conferencing (VOC) got going, which was important for making BARJ a comprehensive approach."

Under Buck's guidance, CAP established Partners in Youth Employment (PYE), which evolved into the Youth Job Center (YJC). He realized early on, that teen job training leads to teen jobs, and jobs are an essential component of community restoration. Many people feel employment is about the most effective form of community-based supervision there is. Buck also spearheaded Community Peer Court programs, the first teen courts in Madison and surrounding municipalities in 2000.

Buck's roots in the restorative justice movement go back to at least 1978, when he began working as a counselor with the Youth Restitution Program, the precursor to CAP. Repairing harm, making victims whole, and instilling good citizenship ideals in young people, while holding them accountable for their actions, are all keys to community restoration and protection.

When asked what makes him most proud of his time at CAP's helm, there is zero hesitation, "Oh, that's easy: the people I worked with. *Their* efforts and the things we accomplished *together*."

He derives satisfaction from knowing many of the people, who are currently leaders in Dane County's juvenile justice system and strong advocates for restorative practices, began their careers at CAP. Together we came up with a fairly lengthy (probably incomplete) list: Jay Kiefer, John Bauman, Suzanne Stute,

Andre Johnson, Heather Crowley, Ross Hazlewood, Tom Brundage, Bryan Tricker, Ty Mahone, Becky Green, myself. The shared restorative justice experience in that group alone is nearly 250 years. That's the stuff of legacy.

These days Buck is the president of RR Consulting Group. He specializes in leadership development and leadership coaching. He conducts trainings with both public and private organizations. In so doing he has discovered that leadership is leadership no matter what the sector. As an entrepreneur in the consulting world, Buck is able to take risks as an innovator, in ways that were not conducive to his role at CAP. In 2001 after leaving CAP (which is now Briarpatch), Buck jumped into consulting with his friend Bob Morris first as an employee, then as a partner, and then as a co-owner of Organizational Skills Associates. Buck struck out on his own in 2012.

This foray into independence has it challenges. He says, "It's not easy to be an individual consultant. I do it all—development, IT, marketing, training, facilitation," but it's not without advantages. Buck gives a slow, satisfied nod, "I really appreciate the flexibility of being my own boss. There's no employee handbook!"

He uses that flexibility to stay active with yoga, bicycling, and golf.

Buck recently wrapped up 12 years with the Willy Street Co-op, where he was on the Board of Directors for six years and on the finance committee for another six years. "I facilitated two work groups, which led to the siting of the second store in Middleton."

For those of us, who are Willy Street Co-op owners, the growth of the store is a welcomed development. Buck explains it was the culmination of focusing on what the organization wanted to do, and coming up with a good plan to get things done. Buck has been a key part of those multi-layered, integral, time-consuming endeavors, which brought the Co-op into its current stature with room to safely expand even more.

Toward the end of our time together in typical Buck fashion, he gave me a couple of authors and titles to check out. As the CEO of CAP Buck regularly gave employees reading assignments as he prepared us for the agency's next growth spurt. It was a simple way to prepare people for being a part of a change process. It's not surprising to see that he is sticking with time tested action steps.

Check out Buck's website: <http://www.rr-consultants.com/about.html>

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Welcoming Schools National Partnership Off to a Strong Start at Schenk

By Liz Merfeld

Early in December, Mount Horeb made front-page news — twice — when a reading of children's book *I am Jazz*, about a transgender girl, was cancelled at school, only to be rescheduled days later at a library packed with nearly 600 supporters.

It was the latest in a series of stories in and around Madison connected to the great need for schools to create gender-expansive environments, those that affirm all children and allow them to express their interests and find confidence in their strengths.

Nine Madison schools are taking on this important work through a partnership with Welcoming Schools, a K-6 project of the Human Rights Campaign. To be a Welcoming School means to embrace family diversity, avoid gender stereotyping and work to end bullying and name-calling.

One school, Schenk Elementary, is in its first year of implementation.

Sherie Hohs, the district's LGBTQ+ social worker who oversees Welcoming Schools partnerships (pictured far right in the black-and-white photo below), says Schenk is off to a strong start. "Schenk is showing us how to do this well right from the start. It is an ideal team. Their minds are really willing and open to bring this work into every facet of their school."

Kindergarten teacher Tracy Smith (pictured above right) is one of those Schenk team members. When Hohs attended a staff meeting last spring asking who wanted to be involved, Smith's hand shot up.

"I was like, sign me up immediately for as much as possible," she says. "It was really exciting because I felt this was something that we needed. It was kind of a hole that we had."

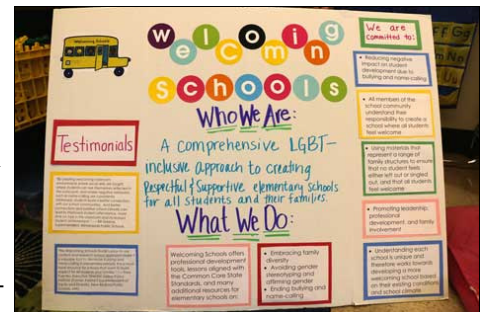
But Schenk needed more than a handful of willing staff. The whole school would need to buy in. Hohs requires the following of Welcoming Schools partners:

- A diverse team dedicated to the work that meets monthly
- A school-wide commitment to professional learning around Welcoming Schools
- A commitment to materials and lessons that are inclusive

Having implemented the approach in eight other schools, she's learned these three conditions are key. "We've really tried to systematize things. We have some good models out there, so if schools are ready to take on this equity work, we have a pretty good scope and sequence in plan to make it happen."

Love makes a family

As a starting point, Schenk focused first on family diversity, kicking off the school year in true Schenk style with a back-to-school ice cream social. A popular event with families, Smith and her team knew this would be a good opportunity to introduce Welcoming Schools, complete with special rainbow sprinkles, an informational poster board, friendly conversation and books on display featuring mixed-race families, families with two moms, single parents and so on.



"Family is the most important thing for our young people." – Sherie Hohs

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Perhaps you can imagine going through 12 years of school never seeing your family reflected in classroom materials and media. Says Hohs, “We know family is the most important element for our young people, and family engagement impacts students' school connectedness and learning. We believe that it is imperative for all students to see their families represented in their schools, and also to learn about the diversity of families within their community to become well-rounded citizens.”

If you're wondering how Welcoming Schools lessons look in the classroom, Smith says she weaves them right in to her existing curriculum. “We're already talking about families. We're already talking about what makes a family special. It doesn't feel jumbled, like I'm switching from one thing or another.”

The difference is that more children see their own families in social studies lessons that go beyond the tired narrative — “Two people meet and have babies. That's what makes a family.” According to Welcoming Schools, “Love makes a family.”

It follows then that most families would react positively to this shift. Hohs offers this story: Last year she met with a parent group at *Nuestro Mundo* to model how the school would show a DVD called “That's a Family” to students ([watch trailer](#)). Afterward a parent told her, “Thank you so much for teaching our kids this. I didn't know what to say when we went to the grocery store and we saw two women holding hands. I didn't have the language.”

Says Hohs, “We need to take families on this journey with us.”



Schenk families continued their Welcoming Schools journey at an open house this fall that featured a family picture station in the gym.

Rethinking gender

In spring Schenk will begin teaching lessons on being an ally, bias-based bullying and gender, a topic too often missing from conversations in schools. Smith points out that while Schenk has done a great job of implementing practices that are culturally and linguistically responsive, many people aren't yet talking about issues around LGBTQ+ “and how it has to do with kids. I just felt really moved by it on a personal level. It's not just about kids who are not heterosexual. It's about gender. It's about making everyone feel welcomed. It's about ally behavior.”

It's true, Sherie Hohs offers, that schools generally are comfortable addressing issues of bias around gender and sexuality when negative things happen — like someone using the phrase *That's so gay*. Many teachers even have the skills to make that a teachable moment, Hohs says. “But there's a difference between just responding to negatives and providing that window of inclusion.”

This is truly a learning curve for many adults, but the good news, she says, is that we all have background knowledge to build on. “We've all had experiences with gender. Everybody's been told not to play with that toy or that they couldn't like that color. That sits with us. We still have those memories with us, being told what you could or couldn't do because of her you were. Most teachers, once they've had some training and get comfortable, they see the value and how much the kids are extremely engaged when talking about topics related to identity.”

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The kids get it, she notes. “At a very young age kids can tell you what boys are 'supposed to do' versus girls.”

Through Welcoming Schools, along with a smaller nonprofit partnership, Gender Spectrum, Schenk is shining a light on the fact that “we put kids in these binary boxes of boy/girl, and our culture is so boy/girls that it’s really hard to step back,” Hohs explains.

It may be hard, but it's necessary. At the most innocuous level, “It doesn’t allow kids to grow up with their fullest potential and truest identity,” Hohs says. More grave is the fact that children and teens are suffering. Tracy Smith doesn't mince words: “Why this really matters is because kids are dying. Straight up. We’re not addressing these issues in the way that we really should be.”

From Gender Spectrum: "For many people, the terms *gender* and *sex* are used interchangeably, and thus incorrectly. This idea has become so common, particularly in western societies, that it is rarely questioned. We are born, assigned a sex, and sent out into the world. For many people, this is cause for little, if any dissonance. Yet biological sex and gender are different; gender is not inherently nor solely connected to one's physical anatomy." Learn more at genderspectrum.org.

"Why this really matters is because kids are dying. Straight up. We're not addressing these issues in the way that we really should be." — Tracy Smith

Changing climate

Both have found that once staff start to understand gender through this critical lens, they're willing to look at how that impacts their teaching.

One example Hohs offers is Van Hise, where teachers decided to get rid of the gendered bathroom passes they've used for decades — one that's blue and has a truck and one that's purple with butterflies. After the Welcoming

Schools training, they realized, “Oh! We’re gendering this and we don’t have to.”

Much of the work to get the larger community to understand gender through that lens involves advocacy and macro-level changes in the district, like working to make bathrooms and locker rooms safe and accessible, building up libraries' collections of inclusive books and doing things like West High School did this fall when they [made the change to a gender-neutral homecoming court](#).

The social-emotional learning connection

Sherie Hohs sees a compelling opportunity to incorporate Welcoming Schools into social-emotional learning like Second Step, Responsive Classroom and Developmental Designs.

Like these approaches, Welcoming Schools and Gender Spectrum “enhance the universals of the Behavior Education Plan. They’re part of behavior support,” she says. “They can add some flavor to what we’re already doing. We have models for my partner schools for weaving Welcoming Schools and Gender Spectrum into the PBS themes.”

Tracy Smith agrees. “It’s something that makes so much sense for kids. It feels so good to be finally talking about it.”

See more at: <https://www.madison.k12.wi.us/welcoming-schools-national-partnership-strong-start-schenk-0#sthash.5OHKL5jc.dpuf>

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CYF Division 2015 Outcomes Reviewed

By Bob Lee, DCDHS Division Administrator for CYF

Each of the Department of Human Services' five Divisions prepares a formal Workplan each year. The Plans speak to large Department goals. Division Administrators present the Plans to the County Board's Health and Human Needs Committee at the outset of the year. The Administrators review the Plans with the Committee as to outcomes after the close of the year.

The Division of Children, Youth, and Families (CYF) 2015 Plan called for the Division to:

- 1) Provide effective services to children, youth, and families of color
- 2) Implement the new Community Restorative Court (CRC) initiative for South Madison young adults who have committed low-level law offenses;
- 3) Implement Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) programming;
- 4) Implement Post-Reunification Support (PS) programming;
- 5) Enhance Juvenile Justice staff utilization of evidence-based practices (EBP) into casework;
- 6) Manage alternate care utilization;
- 7) Promote community-based services;
- 8) Promote prevention, early-intervention, and youth development activities;
- 9) Maximize external (non-County) revenues;
- 10) Increase AODA consumer's participation in continuing treatment;
- 11) Implement Early Childhood Initiative (ECI) program expansion; and
- 12) Support staff development.

(Goals #s 1, 6-9, 12 are long-term and continue from year to year. Goals #s 2-5, and 10-11 are discrete and are removed from the Plan once accomplished.)

As to 2015 outcomes:

1. Services to children, youth, and families of color is a key issue for the CYF Division. People of color comprise about 70% of Division consumers. Outcomes for these consumers demand improvement. Progress is slow. Setbacks sometimes offset gains.
 - CPS: Referrals of children of color continue to be disproportionate; African-American and Latino children are 6.3X and 1.8X (respectively) more likely to be referred than white children; the figures are slightly lower than in 2014. Screen-ins reflect lesser discrepancies; African-American and Latino children are 1.2X and 1.3X more likely to be screened-in than white children; these figures are slightly higher than in 2014. Interestingly, African-American and Latino children are less likely to be substantiated for maltreatment (at 0.99X and 0.69X) than are white children.
 - JJ: Overall, referrals of youths of color dropped from 69% to 64%; figures for African-American youths dropped by 9% and for Latinos by 10%. The number of youths of color placed in Corrections was 13, only; the preceding five-year average was 21. Seventy-six youths of color were diverted from Madison Municipal Court thanks to Brighter Future Initiatives programming.
 - Alt care: The Relative Rate Index (RRI) for children/youth of color in out-of-home care regrettably increased; the figure for African-Americans was 16.1 (vs 15.8 in 2014); that for Latinos was 2.4 (vs. 2.1 in 2014). The number of foster homes with a parent of color remained at 63 (27% of all foster homes).
 - Staff: the number of CYF Division staff of color increased to 46 (23% of all CYF staff). The number of staff with non-English language capabilities increased to 38.

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2. The Community Restorative Court convened in mid-2015. Community services placements for offenders have been arranged. Forty-two volunteer 'peacemakers' have been trained. Three individuals have successfully completed all Court requirements; one has not; 12 more individuals are presently participating. Twelve of sixteen participants have been persons of color. A Court Advisory Board is operative.
3. Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) staff were hired, certified, and trained during the year. They are lodged in the Community Solutions Unit. Staff screened 21 children during the year; 17 were accepted for services. There have been some delays owing to identifying providers in sufficient numbers.
4. A total of 45 children/youths were enrolled in the PS program during 2015. Those who participated in programming re-entered out-of-home care at a 7% rate, only, compared to the non-PS rate of 27%. JJ youth rose to 27% of participating youth during the course of the year. The PS staffing-situation was improved by the hire of a Project-LTE -SSS at mid-year (and a Project Social Work Supervisor in early 2016).
5. JJ staff continued to use the COMPAS tool. Staff commenced use of Carey Guides in 2015. Supervisors commenced use of 'EBP Briefcases.' An EBP conference was held in November.
6. Alternate care utilization levels are excellent. It is clear that children and youths are placed in out-of-home care only when necessary. Figures were down for all five types of placement (kinship, foster care, group homes, RCCs, Corrections). The overall 2015 average-daily-population (ADP) of 631 was lower than the 2013-14 average of 639. The key institutional ADP was 49 vs the 2013-14 figure of 64 (drop of 28%). The number of licensed relative caregivers was 33; this was a drop of 2 from 2014.
7. Community-based services were well-supported. The total allocation of \$16.2 million was \$1.1 million higher than in 2014; it was the third straight year in which the figure increased. The allocated sum was the highest percentage of monies in the CYF budget in four years. Significant expansions of JJ programming took place thanks to BFI and EI grant monies. Implementation of CCS programming took place. A pilot supervised visitation service was launched.
8. Prevention, early-intervention, and youth development activities were promoted. JFF, ECI, and AmeriCorps – PASS programming are performing at high levels. JFF staff worked with more than 36,000 families during 2015; they provided rent and/or utilities assistance to about 2,000 families. Monies allocated to these activities totaled \$5.7 million in 2015; this was the highest total and highest percentage (10.4%) of the budget ever.
9. Non-County revenues added \$767,000 to the budget in 2015. Comprehensive Community Services (CCS) revenues added \$418,000 (the figure swells to \$1.1 million in 2016); JJ-related Brighter Futures Initiative and Early Intervention monies added \$349,000. Programming for children, youth, and families was thus added at no County expense.
10. Waitlists for adult and juvenile AODA services have been largely eliminated. Discharge plans from AODA-residential sites were established with greater regularity; referrals for post-residential treatment increased; and 90-day retention rates improved.
11. Early Childhood Initiative (ECI) outcomes were excellent. Employment responses were through a Family Stability Program. Housing case management resources increased. Staffing at sites was stable.

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12. A new Staff Development Manager was hired. She has more staff-focused responsibilities than was previously the case. Staff training hours totaled 5,776 in 2015. The staff training budget for 2016 was increased during the budget process.

The 2016 workplan is similar to that of 2015. There are two new goals. The first is to continue to provide meaningful Independent Living services to youths ages 14-18 in out-of-home care; the State will shift current monies to an independent entity yet leave significant mandated IL responsibilities with Counties; the CYF OHC committee is studying this situation at this time. The second is to expand UW – Adolescent Alcohol and Drug Intervention Program (AADAIP) Multi-Dimensional Family Therapy (MDFT) programming to AODA and juvenile justice populations. Other goals remain the same as in 2015 with updates and refinements.

A Mural is Created at Shelter

By Suzanne Stute

In January of 2016 Rodrigo Carapia, Artist in Residence at the Madison Public Library's Bubbler along with Teen Services Librarian Jesse Vieau and the Shelter Residents at the time, collaborated to paint a mural on the entrance wall at Shelter.

Rodrigo is a local graffiti artist, who emigrated from Mexico to Wisconsin seven years ago looking for work and artistic opportunities. His older brother had already established himself in Madison. Rodrigo learned English, while working two restaurant jobs and continuing his art.

In September of 2014, Rodrigo was selected by the Latino Chamber of Commerce to display his work at the 2nd annual Latino Art Fair at the Central Library. This led to an Artist in Residency at the Bubbler.

Shelter Residents first worked with Rodrigo on a "Making Justice" project. Clients from the Neighborhood Intervention Program began work with Rodrigo on one of three canvasses, the Residents of the Dane County Detention Center completed the second canvass and Shelter Residents completed the third to make an entire picture using all three canvasses. The canvasses are hung in the computer lab in Detention.



The success of this project led to a request from Jesse Vieau to complete a mural at Shelter.

Rodrigo, Jesse and the Residents worked over 5 days to complete the mural. Their work can be viewed in the slide show below.

<http://teenbubbler.org/creations/painting/shelter-mural>

Shelter residents have benefitted tremendously from working with Jesse and the Bubbler. Before the Bubbler space was built, Jesse would come to Shelter and teach stop motion animation and other animation skills. Once the Bubbler arrived and the Artist in Residence program began, Shelter residents have had the opportunity to work not only with Rodrigo, but many Artists in Residence. They've made music, board games, photos, completed sewing and cooking projects and much more. The sky has truly been the limit.

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Child Protective Services Corner

By Julie Ahnen, DCDHS

Ask any CPS Social Worker to describe the most stressful part of their job, and I bet most would say that removing children from their parents ranks among the top three. The decision to separate a child from the people that they love is not made lightly. CPS Social Workers and Supervisors carefully and thoughtfully discuss the identified safety threats and make every effort to put a plan in place to control for safety threats while keeping the children in the home. In January alone, there were seven active Protective Plans in Initial Assessment. Protective Plans allow the Social Worker time to gather sufficient information to determine whether or not there are active safety threats, and if so, to make a plan regarding how to respond to those threats. When a Social Worker is unable to put a Protective Plan in place, attempts are made to place children with relatives or other responsible adults who are familiar to the children. As a last resort, the Social Worker will take Temporary Physical Custody of a child and place in Foster Care.

CPS Social Workers and Social Service Specialists realize that it is critical for children and parents to see each other as soon as possible after the decision to remove. We prioritize an initial face to face interaction between parents and children within 5 days of removal. We try to get a Social Service Specialist assigned for this initial contact, otherwise, Social Workers are making this happen. There is also an urgent need to facilitate a connection between parents and out of home caregivers shortly after removal, so that they can start

communicating about the children's needs and break through those initial assumptions they often have about each other. The first meeting between a parent and an out of home caregiver is called a "New Placement Meeting", and there is even a policy to guide this important piece of practice. Ultimately, we hope that parents and out of home caregivers develop strong, positive relationships because we know from research and experience that this helps children adjust to being away from home, and can lead to more timely permanence for children.

Over the next few months, we are taking some time to study our current practices around New Placement Meetings and Family Interaction Plan development. We started the practice of scheduling New Placement Meetings back in 2005, and we understand that many of our new staff may not remember why we started this in the first place. New Placement Meetings grew out of a training that many CPS and Subcare staff attended in 2004 called "Shared Parenting". We heard from the trainer, a former foster parent, about the important role that Social Workers, Subcare Consultants, and Social Service Specialists play in facilitating and nurturing positive relationships between parents and out of home caregivers. We were given tools to help us with these efforts, with one of them being New Placement Meetings. Given that so much time has passed, we want to take some time to understand CPS and Subcare staff perspectives about New Placement Meetings, and get

some ideas from staff about how the practice could be revised or improved.

Family Interaction has always played a central role in CPS Ongoing, thanks to the dedication of our 16 Social Service Specialists. An initial Family Interaction Plan is developed after children are placed in out of home care, and this plan is reviewed and revised on a regular basis. Our understanding about the importance of engaging parents in the development of behaviorally specific goals has increased over the past several years, and we want to better understand how workers are incorporating parents in the process of Family Interaction Plan development and evaluation. State Standards and WiSACWIS requirements have changed over the years, and we can sometimes get caught up in chasing the paperwork deadline to complete the Family Interaction Plan, rather than focusing on the parent engagement piece of the process. The timing of case transitions and Family Interaction Plan due dates also makes the process more complicated. We hope to be able to learn from staff, and then provide some tools and supports to enhance this area of practice.

The fact that Dane County CPS Supervisors, Social Workers, Social Service Specialists, and Subcare Consultants are working together to take a deeper dive into our core practice functions is a true indication of the high level of commitment to excellence in our CYF Division!

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Briarpatch Shelter: Filling Service Gaps for Runaway and Homeless Youth

By Garrison Draves, Briarpatch

The Briarpatch Youth Services Shelter has been open since October 1st, 2015, and is run by Jeanne Schneider, Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Program Clinical Supervisor and Shelter Manager. It is the only shelter of its kind in Dane County for runaway and homeless youth and is open 24/7. The shelter can house up to 8 kids at a time, ages 13-17, with a maximum stay of 28 days (27 nights). There have been around 30 kids that have stayed in the shelter, along with a 90%-95% success rate. Briarpatch defines as “finding a safe place for the youth to live permanently.”

When first referred to the shelter, an intake is performed. This process takes about an hour and is extremely thorough. During an intake, a youth can expect to be asked a lot of personal questions. It is essential for shelter staff to have an in depth description of each kid, in order to get a good picture of every resident’s life. This is also important for the ongoing case manager, who will be assigned after admittance. If the youth is referred by a police officer, the officer

must wait with the youth until (s)he is admitted into the shelter. Most referrals come from parents or school social workers. Drop-ins are rare, but they are always welcome.

Schneider stresses it is important to note that this shelter is not a treatment facility. Each potential resident takes the MAYSI mental health screening. If a youth tests too high on this evaluation, they will not be admitted to the shelter. If this occurs, the shelter staff will do everything that they can to find an appropriate placement in order for that person to receive the adequate mental health treatment that Briarpatch cannot offer.

After admission, each resident is assigned a case manager, who is responsible for counseling the youth on a weekly basis. The case manager works with the family to establish a safe and permanent place to live. In order to be admitted to the shelter, there needs to



be voluntary consent by both the youth and parents/legal guardians. Residents must agree to comply with all rules during the intake in order to be granted admission. Cell phones are not allowed in the shelter, meaning each potential resident will have to forfeit their phone to staff, who keep it in a safe place. Residents must be able to adhere to this rule, otherwise admission will not be granted. Schneider says this has been the hardest rule for residents to comply with. Even so, most kids are able to comply with this rule. There is free time, when kids are allowed to leave the premises (ex: visiting a friend, going to a sporting event, work, etc.) and they are given their phones during those times. They are required to turn them into staff when they return.



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The structure of the shelter is unique, in that it is intended to help build a relationship with the youth and to teach them valuable life skills. Shelter staff teach the residents how to cook, clean, and do laundry. In addition, they also help with schoolwork and have a mandatory homework time after school. Residents are also taken out by staff to learn how to grocery shop and make cost efficient decisions. Computers are available, but are monitored, which means no Facebook. On weekends, there is a fair amount of downtime for residents, and staff take kids out to do a variety of activities, such as bowling and laser tag, in an attempt to build relationships with the kids. There is a mandatory curfew at 8:00PM, with lights out beginning at 10:30pm on weekdays and 11:00pm on weekends. Room checks are performed by staff at night, every hour. There is also a camera in the hallway. All staff are CPR/First-Aid certified.

Only staff are allowed to administer medication.

One of the case managers, Andrew Dettle, explained that each resident is required to meet at least once per week for counseling. Meeting with the family at the same time is preferred, but not required. Case managers work closely with the youth and family as much as possible to reintegrate them back into the community safely. The average length of stay was initially a couple of days. Recently the trend has expanded to a couple of weeks.

The relationship with the case manager is important because once the youth leaves the shelter, they are usually not allowed to return for three months. This rule may be waived by the Schneider in emergencies and extreme circumstances. According to Schneider, the most common type of referral the shelter has encountered is “parents and kids that need a break from

each other.” One of the most important aspects of the case manager relationship is after discharge from the shelter. Each case is kept open for 90 days. During this time the case manager checks in with each kid at least once a month, to ensure that their placement is safe and working well for them.

The Briarpatch Youth Services Shelter is not only changing the lives of youth by providing a safe place for them to stay for the night, but also by providing structure in each kid’s life. Teaching discipline for completing academic studies, helping with job searches, cooking, cleaning, and offering groups to build relationships with our youth is unprecedented in Dane County. Before the opening of this shelter, there were limited safe places for youth to go when they were no longer able to be at home. Being available 24/7 demonstrates to youth that there will always be someone to help them.

Not only for the night, but until each kid is back on their feet and comfortable in their community again.

Briarpatch is always available on their 24/7 helpline at 800-798-1126.



On Balance

Homeless Students Have Barriers to Accessing Education

By Max Rosen, Briarpatch

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, first passed in 1987 and was most recently reauthorized in December 2015, is a federal law that provides money to help homeless youth by reducing barriers to access and content of education. Since only \$70 million over the last ten years has been portioned out through the McKinney-Vento Act, about 88% of districts around the country don't receive any money. Whether a district is allocated federal funds or not, however, the guidelines for handling situations of homeless youth spelled out in the McKinney-Vento Act must be followed. Every school district is required to designate a Homeless Liaison, who should be familiar with the rights of homeless families detailed in the act, so that they can act as an advocate.

Homelessness throws up constant barriers to accessing education. A family in Madison that becomes homeless might have to move across town to stay with extended family or find temporary housing; they might not have the ability or resources to provide transportation to and from school; and they may not be able to access the documents or afford the fees that are typically required for enrollment. According to the McKinney-Vento Act, none of these very real problems should stand in the way of a youth receiving their education.

Homeless students have the right to attend their school of origin or their school of residence. This means a youth that moves from the Memorial area to the Lafollette area and qualifies as homeless can choose which of those schools they would prefer to attend, with the former being the school of origin and the latter

the school of residence. The student has the right to transportation to the school of origin comparable to a housed student. In the example above, since the Madison bus system might make it difficult to commute from the far east side to the far west side, Madison Metropolitan School District would be required to provide taxis to and from school if the student chooses to attend Memorial. According to Amy Noble, MMSD's Homeless Liaison, Madison schools currently provide transportation to and from school to 300 students every day.

Homeless youth have the right to immediate enrollment, without having to pay fees or provide any normally required documents. They also immediately qualify for free lunch for the entire school year, even if permanent housing is subsequently found. Beyond these basics, the law also states that homeless youth aren't required to pay fees to join clubs or sports teams.

The McKinney-Vento Act reinforces the requirement that a homeless student be able to access the same quality of education as a housed student. By providing free lunch and waiving fees for enrollment and extracurricular activities, the law tries to keep homeless students engaged in their education as much as possible. Homeless students also have the right to confidentiality regarding their housing situation, and the McKinney-Vento Act specifically prohibits segregation based on designations of homelessness.

Despite the good intentions of the McKinney-Vento Act, there are a lot of problems still to overcome. Even though it is a federal law and in theory it must be followed, there has been very little accountability in implementation. Large districts that receive money under the act likely know exactly what their responsibilities are to homeless families, but smaller districts with fewer rates of homeless families might not be aware or up to date on their responsibilities. Amy Noble has observed cases where administrators have been unaware that they were named their district's Homeless Liaison. In these cases they may be unable or even unwilling to advocate for homeless families since they aren't familiar with the law. These cases aren't necessarily unique to small, unfunded districts though. It only takes one school official unwilling to go out of their way to help a homeless student enroll without the proper documents to ensure that homelessness has sabotaged a young person's education. It is for this reason that spreading awareness is essential, so that homeless families have multiple knowledgeable advocates.

Another problem facing homeless students is the stigma attached to homelessness. Tyler Schueffner, Street Outreach Coordinator at Briarpatch Youth Services, suggested a couple of examples of how this stigma might influence a homeless student receiving assistance under the McKinney-Vento Act. While the law promises free lunch to a home-

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less student, what will happen when that student chooses the wrong item in the lunch line and is told to put it back? Will a homeless youth request a fee waiver to join the basketball team, essentially outing him/herself as homeless to their peers? In many cases, Tyler explains, these are barriers in and of themselves that can cause a homeless student to withdraw.

While the McKinney-Vento Act is a well-intentioned law that tries to make education as accessible as possible to homeless youth, it is not able to remove all of the barriers. A lack of awareness in school employees and the general public can cause the rights designated by the law to not be utilized. Also, the stigma of homelessness that a young person faces from their peers can be enough to prevent them from pursuing the education that is made available. Spreading awareness of the

scope of homelessness in our community and the ways in which the McKinney-Vento Act tries to address this very immediate problem is crucial. With more community members willing and able to advocate for their neighbors in need, the rights guaranteed by the McKinney-Vento Act can be utilized by more people. Further, acknowledgement of the problem can serve to normalize it, which could start to combat the stigma.



The Subcare Corner

By Marykay Wills, CYF Mental Health and Alternate Care Manager

CANS, LOCs and LONs

The Alphabet Soup of Wisconsin's Out of Home Care System

For the past few years the State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families has been working to fully incorporate a Level of Care System used by all Wisconsin Counties to gauge and guide child placements in out of home care. This work has been integrated into the Wisconsin Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (eWISACWIS), and is intended to aid in case planning and placement matching. It has been an enormous undertaking requiring multiple administrative rule, system and practice changes across the State.

Here in Dane County, system partners may have heard CYF social workers talk about a youth's **CANS score**...or possibly about a **foster parent's licensed LOC** or maybe about a **child's LON**. What can I say? Acronyms R US here at DCDHS and way too often we forget to give our friends the proper decoding tools to the trade lingo. *So let's talk about Levels of Care and what this all means...*

The Department of Children and Families Level of Care guide aids CYF social workers in matching a child's current **Level of Need – LON** with a placement option that provides a corresponding (or similar) **Level of Care - LOC**. Determining a child's Level of Need is based upon the child's score on **Child Adolescent**

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Needs and Strengths (CANS) – Wisconsin Comprehensive Version as well as the circumstances of each family and unique characteristics of placement providers. CANS scores are completed by a child's social worker at the time of each new placement and every six months thereafter while the child remains placed out of home of care. The Wisconsin version of this tool reviews both items that are static/historical and those that are current and changeable including trauma exposure, adjustment to trauma, life functioning, school, family and youth acculturation, emotional needs, risk behaviors and strengths. The CANS was developed by Dr. John Lyons of the Praed Foundation. The Praed Foundation describes the CANS tool as follows:

The Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) is a multi-purpose tool developed for children's services to support decision making, including level of care and service planning, to facilitate quality improvement initiatives, and to allow for the monitoring of outcomes of services. Versions of the CANS are currently used in 50 states in child welfare, mental health, juvenile justice, and early intervention applications. There is a large body of research demonstrating the CANS validity and reliability.

Wisconsin's Out of Home Care System categorizes Out of Home Care types by Levels in an order of 1-6. Foster Homes are licensed to provide care for Levels 1-4 (Child Specific to Specialized Treatment), Group Homes are licensed to provide Levels 3-4 (Moderate to Specialized Treatment) and Residential Care Centers are licensed to provide Levels 5-6 (Exceptional Treatment). Dane County licenses foster homes (relative, like-kin or special, and traditional foster care) in Levels 2-4. (Note: We offer to Level 1 care but there is very little incentive for relatives to be licensed at this level of care.)

All this being said, there are times that a child's Level of Need may not match his current level of care as the Department of Children and Families directs counties to first and foremost case plan to meet the child's identified needs rather than match the boxes in the placement level grid. For example: An eight year old boy with current physical health needs, significant trauma exposure and acting out behaviors has a CANS LON score of a 4 but he and his younger sibling can be placed with a licensed relative caregiver in Madison who he knows and loves but this provider is Licensed as Level 2 foster home. In this instance, keeping this child with known family and his health care providers is the far better option than a treatment level foster home outside the community. This little guy's identified care needs can still be met by placing him and his sibling with his licensed relative and providing individualized services.

I hope this helped clarify CYF discussions about levels of care in out of home placement. More information about Wisconsin's Level of Care System or the Child Adolescent Needs and Strengths Tool can be found at:

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families: <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/>

The Praed Foundation: <http://praedfoundation.org/>

On Balance

WI Trauma Project Efforts Begin in Dane County CYF

By Julie Ahnen – CPS Manager and Marykay Wills CYF Mental Health & Alt Care Manager

Dane County Department of Human Services' CYF Division is pleased to announce our participation in the latest expansion of the State Department of Children and Families' Wisconsin Trauma Project. The Wisconsin Trauma Project offers counties and tribes the opportunity to: 1) bring and/or expand evidenced based trauma treatment to the child welfare service array 2) provide trauma informed parenting training to resource families, bio families and staff and 3) organizational and system training to build a more trauma responsive system of care. CYF has been selected to take part in all three initiative areas.

Here in Dane County, the evidenced based trauma treatment offering is the expansion of certified clinicians to provide Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) to high needs and/or underserved populations. TF-CBT is an evidenced based treatment modality which has demonstrated significant reduction in trauma symptoms across multiple populations. CYF has proposed providing TF-CBT training to Spanish speaking clinicians, clinician of color and in-home therapy teams to increase access of this evidenced based treatment modality to non-white and non-English speaking families as well as those in more rural settings. We are thrilled to announce that therapists from UW-AADAIP's

Multidimensional Family Therapy teams, Orion Family Services In-Home program and OASIS will be taking part in TF-CBT training and learning collaborative groups in 2016. Adding these skill sets to our existing teams will enhance services and expand our ability to offer evidenced based treatment to children and families involved with Dane County Child Protection and Juvenile Justice Services.

CYF's participation in the WI Trauma Project is also allowing us to expand Trauma Informed Parenting Training (TIPs) in Dane County. This highly successful National Child Traumatic Stress Network endorsed training was originally piloted here in Dane County and we have been proud to offer this training to Dane County foster parents for several years. Unfortunately our limited resources are such that we have been unable to offer TIPs to other groups beyond licensed caregivers...until now. Over the next year, resource parents, bio families and DCDHS staff will be able to participate in TIPs and this time next year, we will also have two more certified TIPs trainers to aid us in continuing this important work.

Finally, we are putting together a Core Implementation Team to develop a plan around how to move

CYF forward toward become a Trauma-Informed Organization. Staff are being recruited from CPS, JJ, Subcare, ARTT, and JFF. We will also have a biological parent on the team and a leader from an organization that is closely connected to CYF. This team will participate in training around Trauma and what it means to be a Trauma-Informed Organization. The Team will complete an assessment of CYF and will develop a road map to move us forward into the future. Ultimately, we hope to partner with the Juvenile Court system, as many of our Court partners expressed an interest in learning more about the effects of trauma on the children and families that we serve, and how to make the legal process more trauma-informed for everyone. The Core Implementation Team will keep all CYF staff informed and involved.

On Balance

Human Trafficking and Gangs

By Heather Crowley, DCDHS-NIP

The 2015 and 2016 school year thus far has proven to be interesting for Dane County with regard to both gang activity in Madison as well as the "newer" trend of human trafficking. NIP's Gang Response and Intervention Team (GRIT) have followed these trends throughout the past few years. Certainly Madison has been made aware of the gang involvement more recently due to gang arrests that have involved the use of weapons in public areas. Tied to many of the same key players, the human trafficking issue has affected our teenagers and young adult single parents at a much higher rate. Within the last few years, Madison Police have arrested known gang members who eventually were charged with Federal trafficking crimes and sentenced within Federal court. Both the gang and trafficking issues are well known to Dane County service providers, but seem to have made few headlines within the community as a whole.

Alternately, the gang activity with county-involved clients seems to have subsided at least for the time being. Though one cannot definitively predict the trends around this or the trajectory of each youth, NIP staff have made a concerted effort to address gang-issues at both the middle school and high school freshman levels. Not only do we observe a much more impactful response at these ages, but we are also able to track them over time by offering these services at the prevention/early intervention levels. Cur-

rently NIP has middle-school groups at Jefferson MS, Sun Prairie Cardinal Heights, and Monona Grove's Glacial Drumlin. Groups will soon start at Sennett MS and an added group at Prairie View in Sun Prairie as well. These groups are in addition to the current high school groups the NIP Gang Response and Intervention Team Program Leaders already facilitate. (Additional group information available upon request.)

A new addition to the NIP Community Supervision Unit is LTE Youth Worker, Carrie Cossom. Carrie will be teaming with current Parent Engagement Specialist Vanessa Statham to provide prevention and intervention services to identified females in Dane County that either need behavioral or trafficking redirection. The Youth Worker position was added to NIP when both DCDHS staff and law enforcement contacts were identifying an increasing number of adolescent females as victims of trafficking. This concerning epidemic is a difficult one to address as many of the signs of trafficking can be very subtle for untrained observers. Social media has provided many clues to behaviors of those being trafficked as well as those doing the trafficking. Frequent runaways, truancy from school, and new clothes, hair, and other changes seen in female presentation or behavior can also be indicators of being groomed or being actively victimized. The investi-

gations around this issue take a long time to process and can be very involved, so is not an expeditious process. NIP staff hope to provide support in the community to females at risk. Working with school staff as well as MPD to identify potential victims, NIP will build relationship with these individuals and assist in monitoring and intervening when possible.

Overall, criminal involvement in both of these areas seems to ebb and flow based upon the key players in the community. There are a lot of connections to bigger city activity such as Chicago and Milwaukee for both gangs and trafficking. Money, guns, and drugs revolve around these same activities as well. Whether this is part of a bigger societal issue for Madison and Dane County is a wait and see situation, as one could theorize in a variety of ways. For now, DC-NIP will continue to provide support, prevention, and intervention for all of our kids and families identified as being in need.

On Balance

Community Supervision Pilot Program

By Stephanie Marino, DCDHS Social Worker

The Division of Juvenile Corrections (DJC) launched a Community Supervision Pilot on October 1, 2015. Historically, DJC has operated a Corrective Sanctions Program which provided intensive supervision services to youth with correctional commitments. The pilot program was outlined in the Core Concepts publication in October 2015 (summarized in this article). In order to gather further information regarding the pilot, I interviewed Nicki Laudolff, NWRO Field Supervisor/ Director of The Grow Academy and Ragen Shapiro, Program and Education Coordinator. Ms. Laudolff and Ms. Shapiro were full of enthusiasm and gusto when discussing the direction DJC is moving. DJC is six months into a two year pilot and staff have expressed more meaningful, valuable and effective relationships with youth and families. Pilot staff are being audited and DJC is pleased with the clear changes being made in the lives of youth. Staff are invested in providing beneficial services to youth and families. The project is giving youth more ownership of their supervision and they are motivated to move through the Phases. Research shows punishment is not effective in motivating youth but rather incentive behavior modifications will produce change for success. DJC is focusing on every individual youth and the positives they possess, which creates growth and change. So what exactly is this Pilot Program?

The Division of Juvenile Corrections wanted to look at Evidence Based practices in order to respond to supervision violations and effectiveness. DJC gathered research that states the duration and intensity of community supervision should be based on a youth's risk and needs. Therefore, a workgroup was developed to examine this issue and develop alternatives that allow agents to be more responsive to youth treatment and service needs. DJC contracted with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency to evaluate current supervision practices and identify evidence-based practices, including type and frequency of DJC staff contacts with youth.

The study confirmed two pieces of information:

1. Supervision intensity should vary according to youth risk and should be responsive to youth needs.
2. No evidence currently exists to support a supervision framework that includes a specific frequency of contacts with youth based on risk level.

DJC is using this information to initiate the pilot project that will utilize evidence-based supervision practices, including effective case planning, structured contacts centered on youth skill building, strength based approaches to supervision, decreased contacts for individuals at lower risk levels, risk and need appropriate treatment dosage requirements, family engagement, routine and frequent case staffings and maximized utilization of existing DOC case management and assessment software.

The pilot project has two primary objectives:

1. Evaluate the potential outcomes resulting from new supervision, case management and treatment approaches with youth.
2. Test and refine new supervision policies and processes on a small scale prior to statewide implementation to ensure feasibility and maximize staff efficiencies.

The anticipated youth outcomes are decreased recidivism and an increase in pro-social thoughts, attitudes and behaviors among pilot participants as compared to non-pilot participants. Anticipated process-related findings are systematic use of evidence-based practices in case management and behavior management among pilot staff, as well as increased community safety and staff satisfaction.

The pilot case management framework is adapted from components of the Functional Family Probation and Parole model, an evidence based approach to aftercare supervision for youth which places emphasis on family involvement in treatment and behavior management, and is centered on the application of the Four Core Competencies (Carey Group) of correctional practice. There are three fluid phases, Engage, Develop and Sustain. Youth move back and forth throughout the phases, depending on their individual needs and strengths, which means there is no particular time frame. The risk of the youth has a direct correlation to the degree of supervision.

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During the Engage Phase, the agent will focus on building professional alliance and case planning with youth. Agents build rapport and trust with the youth and youth's family. A youth is stabilized in the community, including settling into the home/ independent living environment, school enrollment, establishing rules and expectations and developing a case plan focusing on the youth's criminogenic needs. The youth will then move into the next phase, Develop. During this phase, the agent will focus on connecting the youth and family with services that address criminogenic needs, support the youth in actively progressing through the case plan, updating the case plan to reflect new goals and tasks as previous goals are met, build prosocial skills through staff contact, assigned skill practice and skill building activities and referrals to treatment and prosocial activities. The third Phase is Sustain. During this phase, the agent will focus on preparing the youth and family to transition out of supervision, independently creating and maintaining supportive community connections, continuing skill practice after supervision and planning for relapse prevention in criminogenic need areas.

According to Ms. Laudolff, agents are invested in their interaction with youth. Supervision is different for agents and it's different for kids. Agents have guidance, tools and structure to promote success. The Carey Guides are linked to case plan goals and are used in every contact with a youth to address any current issue a youth is facing. A youth is building and developing skills every time they meet with their agent. A large focus throughout the pilot program is Incentives. DJC created Supervision Star Bucks and youth earn rewards for a large variety of behaviors. Agents are encouraged to support every positive in a youth, no matter how big or small. DJC is focusing on growth and movement. Supervision Star Bucks may be tangible objects, such as a movie pass, or it can be a change in the case plan, such as extended curfew to attend a prosocial activity. Simply, agents are encouraged to build rapport with youth, learn what motivates youth, and then promote it.

The Pilot program will run until September 30, 2017. We look forward to hearing updates regarding youth successes in Dane County and throughout the State. A special thank you to Ms. Laudolff and Ms. Shapiro for taking the time to discuss this exciting project!

FoodShare Work Requirements: How Changes in FoodShare Rules Affect Young Adults

By Gwen Hannes

Beginning in April 2015, there have been some big changes in the FoodShare world. **Certain recipients of FoodShare must meet a work requirement to continue to receive their FoodShare benefits.** One way to meet the work requirement is participating in the FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) program. Individuals who must meet a work requirement, but do not, can lose their FoodShare for 3 years.

With the changes comes some good news, too. We have vastly expanded the FSET program. There is more focus on job skills training, certifications, and connections to employers. We have a host of partners who run specialized training programs for construction and trades, IT, customer service, medical tech jobs, and more. We also have a lot more money for participants to help with transportation, training costs, and work-related expenses.

Some FoodShare basics:

- The amount of the FoodShare allotment is based on the number of people in the 'food unit', their income and some living expenses.
- Adults aged 18-21 must be included in their parents' food unit if they live at (or use) the same address.
- To be eligible for FoodShare, a person must be a U.S. citizen or legal resident.

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FoodShare Work Requirement

Who does it apply to?

- **Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)**
 - ◊ Able to work
 - ◊ Age 18-49
 - ◊ Not a custodial parent
 - ◊ Not pregnant

Who does not have to meet a work requirement?

- Higher Education students, half-time or more
- Temporary or permanent disability
- In AODA treatment
- Getting Unemployment Comp payments

What is the work requirement?

- 80 hours/month employment
- 80 hours/month in an approved work program: FSET, WIOA, W2
- A combination of the above with a total of 80 hrs/month
- Earnings of \$935/month regardless of the number of hours

What if the work requirement is not met?

- ABAWDs can receive 3 months of Time-Limited Benefits (FoodShare) without participating
- After they have used 3 months of TLBs, they will be ineligible for FoodShare for the remainder of 36 months
- ABAWDs can regain FoodShare eligibility by becoming employed.

“What’s in it for me?”

Services available for FSET participants:

- Job Skills training: interviewing practice; how to look for a job; resume and cover letter writing
- Soft Skills and life management: conflict resolution, creating a back-up plan, time management, financial literacy, etc.
- Employer networking
- Career assessment and planning
- Vocational skills and Certificates
- Assistance and referrals for barrier remediation
- Supportive Services: money or eligibility for transportation, child care, work uniforms, and more

How does someone sign up for FSET?

- In Dane County, call the Capital Call Center at 888-794-5556 to request an FSET referral.
- Forward Service Corp. runs the FSET program for DCDHS. The scheduler can be contacted at 608-216-7641.

*****Alert, Alert*****

Things to be aware of:

- Letters about work requirement and FoodShare eligibility come in the name of the Head-of-Household.
- It is the responsibility of the FoodShare recipient to verify any information for eligibility or exemptions.
- Back-dating is not allowed. An exemption “exists” when it is reported and verified.
- If someone is using Time Limited Benefits they need to *start participating* in FSET (or otherwise meet the work requirement) *before* the 3rd month is over.

This article is a basic “what to be aware of” summary. FoodShare has detailed policies that cannot be covered in a short article. The intent here is to help advocates of teens and young adults be able to alert them to changes and help them navigate the FoodShare system. It is not intended for advocates to understand all the intricacies of eligibility for FoodShare and FSET.

On Balance

Youth Employment and Paid High School Internships

By Mary O'Donnell, City of Madison Community Development Division

The goal for the City of Madison Community Development Youth Programs area is to “Support youth to become successful members of their families, school, communities, and workplace through collaboration with the public school system and other key stakeholders.” The City’s youth employment priority is to “Provide life skills, vocational/career guidance, pre/post-employment support and job placement for low-income youth.” The City of Madison Community Development Division supports this priority through a paid City internship program called the Wanda Fullmore Youth Internships, and through work with several non-profit organizations that provide pre-employment and job placement programming. All of the programs are focused on youth who face barriers to employment due to economic or racial/ethnic inequities.

Wanda Fullmore Youth Internship Program

The purpose of the Wanda Fullmore Youth Internship Program is to provide high school age youth who face barriers to employment work experience and career awareness through placement in a City Department with support from a non-profit agency. In the summer of 2015, seventeen different City government department/divisions hosted 32 high school age youth. In 2016, approximately 20 City government departments/divisions will host at least 50 youth interns. Each of the City placements provides a work space for the intern and identifies a City employee who serves as the intern’s supervisor/mentor. Each supervisor/mentor works with the selected non-profit provider to develop a job description and coordinate work/education schedules for the intern. Interns will generally be expected to work and participate in supplemental educational programming for approximately 20 hours per week for 8-weeks beginning in late June and ending in early August.

Common Wealth Development, the local non-profit who successfully facilitated the City’s youth internship program in 2015, was selected through a competitive RFP process and approved by the Council last month to provide services for 2016. Common Wealth has been successfully providing pre-employment training, job placement and support to youth and their supervisors through the Youth-Business Mentoring Program for nearly 25 years. Youth can access information about the application process on the Common Wealth website, www.cwd.org or you may contact Rachel Darkin at rachel@cwd.org to refer youth to the Wanda Fullmore Youth Internship Program.

Other City of Madison Youth Employment Opportunities

The City of Madison also provides financial support, administrative assistance and program oversight through contracts with several non-profits. Staff from the non-profits work directly in neighborhoods and schools to build relationships with youth who will most benefit from job experience and employment opportunities.

Programs funded through the City’s Community Development Division include highly supported work crews with non-technical tasks and direct supervision/support from youth worker/social worker, work crews with projects that require more technical skills and can lead to certifications, work exposure and jobs in a non-profit environment, and job interviews/placement in private businesses.

In addition to recruiting youth who have the greatest need and are ready for an employment opportunity, most of these programs:

- Provide the youth with a minimum of 20 hours of pre-employment training;
- Assist businesses or other host organizations in identifying and planning appropriate projects and tasks for the youth;

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Youth Empl

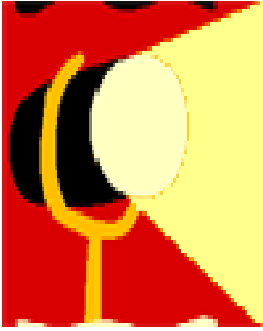
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- Support both the youth and their supervisor with weekly/monthly phone or e-mail contact and address any issues or needs in face-to-face meetings;
- Provide the youth supplemental educational activities such as financial literacy and future education and career exposure and planning; and
- Evaluate the experience for the business and the impact on the youth participants.

Non-profits currently funded by the City of Madison for youth employment services include: Commonwealth Development, Centro Hispano, Goodman Community Center, Operation Fresh Start Briarpatch. Each program has its' own recruitment/screening limitations. For example, Centro Hispano provides internship placements to youth already enrolled in the more broadly focused Escalera program. In total, these non-profits provide paid jobs or internships to ~ 450 City of Madison youth. Please contact each non-profit directly to inquire about participation requirements and the program schedule.

Lastly, in 2016 the City of Madison operating budget included funds for ~100 additional paid youth employment opportunities for youth ages 14-18 years who face barriers to gaining work experience, with an emphasis on serving youth involved with the juvenile justice system. The RFPs for these services are due in late March.

On Balance



Agency Spotlight – IT TAKES A VILLAGE Wisconsin Family Ties Parent Peer Support Program

By Dave Thorson, DCDHS NIP

“Through the blur, I wondered if I was alone or if other parents felt the same way I did - that everything involving our children was painful in some way. The emotions, whether they were joy, sorrow, love or pride, were so deep and sharp that in the end they left you raw, exposed and yes, in pain. The human heart was not designed to beat outside the human body and yet, each child represented just that - a parent's heart bared, beating forever outside its chest.”

— Debra Ginsberg

Wisconsin Family Ties was inspired by parents who labored to make their way in this community and this state while raising children who didn't fit the Norman Rockwell mold, but who nevertheless deserved to be valued and celebrated rather than judged and isolated. The Parent Peer Support Program through Wisconsin Family Ties was born in May 2015 out of a need to specifically provide additional assistance and validation to parents of kids who not only were struggling socially, but also made choices that brought themselves into the juvenile justice system. The Parent Peer Support program began with a focus on youth whose families had a long history of system involvement, and the youth was now returning home from placement in a foster home, group home, or residential care center. Many of these parents are suspicious of the system (often legitimately) and reluctant to acknowledge they need help with parenting, much less accept help that they perceive as being forced upon them. Most parents had negative experiences with the system for lots of different reasons, which unfortunately also served to help them rationalize avoidance and/or resistance to modifying their parenting practices. That barrier too often led to failed reunifications and youth going back into care, or getting into trouble again.

More so than others, these particular parents often fail to realize, and many “helpers” neglect to acknowledge, is the reality that everyone fails as a parent. No mother gives their child enough mothering, and no father gives enough fathering – even the best ones - it truly does take a village. The WFT staff are astutely aware of this fact and do their best to meet parents wherever they are on the continuum of caregiving to their children. They approach parents, not excusing their decision making, but doing their best to understand it in the context of raising difficult kids. It is this knowledge and strategy that often sets them apart from other providers and gives them authenticity that many parents come to recognize and appreciate.

Often as a result of a disconnect with support services, they struggled to effectively parent. Many were frustrated with the process for getting help, and pessimistic about the probability of success. As a result, parents in this situation are often avoidant of system helpers – even those that come with no strings attached. These caregivers routinely have transportation challenges, unstable housing, and limited phone service. Change within these parameters is a slow process. Although it was hoped for relatively short intervention periods, it turns out that it is not uncommon for WFT to need 6-9 months of involvement – both to overcome family mistrust, and to begin to change engrained maladaptive behaviors and responses.

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Family Ties

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One of the advantages of Wisconsin Family Ties is that their staff are all parents of youth who have had challenges themselves, so these adults are well aware of the problems and barriers associated with dealing with schools, the legal system, and the mental health system. They have “been there” so have a level of legitimacy and credibility that other providers don’t bring.

In 2016, the Parent Peer Support Program was able to expand the number of families they can assist to 16. They were also able to broaden the focus to now include parents of youth who are part of the court diversion program, but nevertheless are at risk for deeper involvement in the juvenile justice system without additional supports.

Connecting and joining with families with these sorts of challenges is a slow process marked by incremental change and improvements. The dramatic changes seen in movies is not usually reflected in everyday reality. Baby steps and lots of patience is required. Parents who are able to utilize the “peer parent” feature of this program successfully are those who at the outset are open to hearing suggestions from others, made easier if they come to realize that other adult has walked a mile in their shoes. They are eventually able to see that their kids’ misbehaviors are often a response to the actions and reactions of the adults in their lives. Parents who are willing to try something themselves rather than being focused on wanting someone else to fix their child are more likely to expand their repertoire of responses.

Parent Peer Support staff are effective advocates with schools, as well as with other various parts of the system such as housing and the justice system. They currently have two staff and are looking to hire another. They rely and depend on good, accurate information from social workers and that close communication is critical to successfully helping caregivers navigate the difficult task of parenting teenagers. Dane County should celebrate and be grateful that we have access to programs like WFT, and the profoundly caring persons who inhabit them. They reach out to those in need, without judgment, and with the wisdom that comes from having been in their place not that long ago.

“To be in your children's memories tomorrow,
you have to be in their lives today.”

— **Barbara Johnson**

If you want to contact Wisconsin Family Ties to learn more about their program and services contact them at:
info@wifamilyties.org

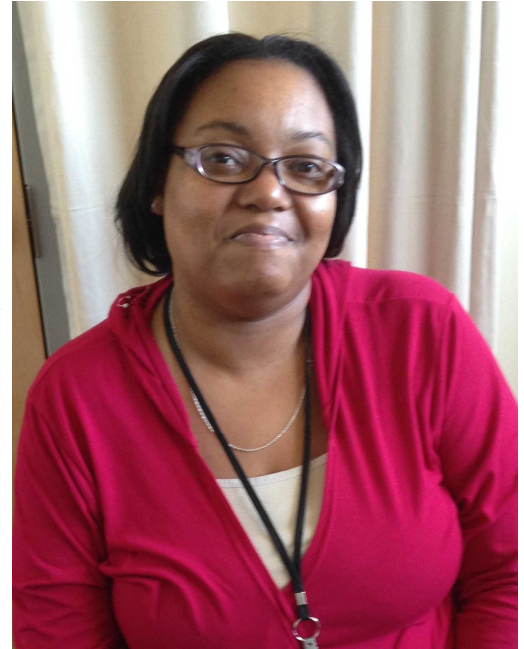
On Balance



Staff Spotlight – Ericka Boeoy

By Rhonda Voigt

Ericka Boeoy joined the DCDHS-CYF team in July, 2015 as a half-time Social Service Specialist working with Post-Reunification Support (PS) families. Ericka's work focuses on parent support activities including: employment, housing, education, drivers license recovery, bills payment, budgeting, transportation, safety in the home and parenting skills. She helps make purchases for families via PS funding. Ericka attends team meetings to support her families. She has skills in crisis management, trouble shooting and following up with her families. Ericka reports she loves working with DCDHS. She feels she can help others by sharing her past experiences of being where her families have been. Ericka strongly believes that education is empowering and the key to success. She helps families gain and keep hope for the future that they will achieve their goals. Ericka teaches co-parenting by active participation and connection with schools and the community. She works to determine a family's strengths and help them to utilize their assets to the best of their ability. Ericka models a positive work ethic and determination to never give up. She has assisted in finding housing where others had thought there was little hope. Ericka is not afraid to tackle barriers that appear insurmountable.



Ericka holds an Associates Degree in Human Services from MATC. She has previous work experience at the Salvation Army shelter (3 yrs), as an in-home daycare provider (7 yrs) and as a CNA (3 yrs). Ericka came to Madison in 1999 from Gary, Indiana, following other family members in search of more opportunities for advancement. She states that she came to Madison for a summer visit and liked it so much she never left.

Ericka is the proud mother of four sons: Jonathan, 25, attends Madison College and is a manager at Lids; Jermaine, 19, a high school graduate who works at OFS and has plans for going to AmeriCorps to earn money for college; Michael, 17, attends Madison East where he wrestles and plays football; Makell, 13, attends Sherman and plays football and basketball. Ericka reports that she stays very busy by being involved with the many activities her sons participate in.

Welcome to DCDHS-CYF, Ericka!

On Balance

Juvenile Justice

Corner

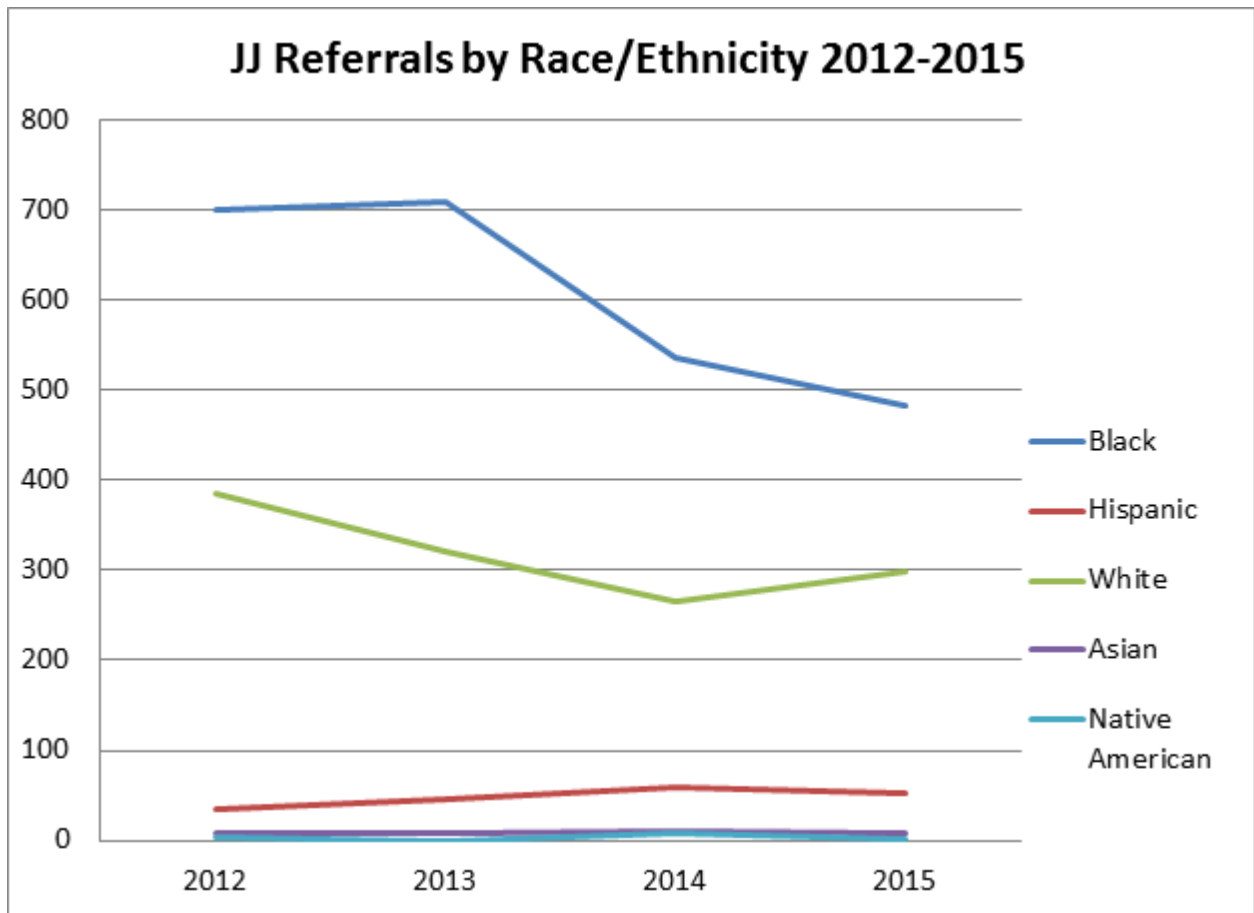
Andre Johnson –

CYF Juvenile Justice Services Manager



While we continue to have some pretty disturbing numbers in the Juvenile Justice System in Dane County there are some things that should give us hope. Looking at the last 4 years of data on Law enforcement referrals to the Department we continue to see a decrease in overall referrals. In 2012 we had (1133) referrals, in 2013 (1085), 2014 (879) and 2015 (842).

Law enforcement referrals to the department are down **4.2%** from 2014 and **25.7%** from 2012. From 2014 to 2015, referrals for African American youth decreased from 536 to **483**, a **9.9%** drop while Hispanic youth referred also decreased **10.3%** (58 to 52). White Youth referrals increased from 266 in 2014 to **299** in 2015 – a **12.4%** increase. The % of total JJ Referrals for Persons of Color decreased from 69.7% in 2014 to **64.5%** in 2015.



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JJ Corner

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We also saw a dramatic decrease in the number of sanctions that youth served in 2015 (83) vs. 2014 (127) a 34.6% decrease. We believe that this was in part due to a change in process that DCDHS began in the spring of 2015 to more closely examine the use of sanctions. Below are the numbers from 2014 and 2015.

2014	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
BOYS	6	7	13	5	6	12	6	4	2	9	9	4	83
GIRLS	5	6	3	3	2	4	3	4	2	6	2	4	44
TOTAL	11	13	16	8	8	16	9	8	4	15	11	8	127

2015	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
BOYS	2	9	8	6	0	4	4	4	7	7	3	5	59
GIRLS	4	2	3	3	1	1	4	0	1	3	2	0	24
TOTAL	6	11	11	9	1	5	8	4	8	10	5	5	83

Finally, we are very excited about a new initiative that started in late 2015. The Municipal Diversion Program (MDP) began operating on September 15, 2015 through funding from a Brighter Futures Initiative grant from the State. MDP encompasses three partnering organizations that include the YWCA, Dane County TimeBank, and Briarpatch Youth Services as well as coordination with the Madison Police Department and the Dane County Department of Human Services.

In lieu of an arrest and referral to the Madison Municipal Court youth are given the opportunity to participate in a Restorative Intervention. Youth are processed by the YWCA and either participate in a Peer Court or Restorative Circle. An agreement is reached which outlines what the youth must do to repair the harm that they have caused. If they complete all aspects of the agreement then they will not have an arrest on their record and they will not need to go to Municipal Court. We are very excited about this opportunity for youth and the potential impact it may have on juvenile arrests as well as disparities in the Juvenile Justice system. Below are initial numbers for the first quarter of operations.

From 9/15 to 12/31

TOTAL OPT-IN NUMBERS:

115 referrals

94 opted into the RJ program (that is 81.7%)

21 did NOT opt in

Racial Breakdown

Of the 115 youth referred, 89 were youth of color (77%) [80 African American, 9 Latino/Hispanic]

Of the 94 youth who opted in, 76 were youth of color, (80%) [68 African American, 8 as Latino/Hispanic]

Of the 21 youth who did NOT opt in, 13 were youth of color (61.9%) [12 African American, 1 Latino/Hispanic]

GENDER

Of the 115 referrals, 65 identify as male (56.5%) and 50 identify as female (43.5%)

Of the 94 youth who opted in, 50 were male (53%) and 44 were female (47%)

Of the 21 youth who did NOT opt in, 15 were male (70.5%) and 6 were female (28.5%)