



# On Balance

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

April 2019  
Volume XIII, Number 1

## Dane County Juvenile Court Awards

By John Bauman

The Dane County Circuit Court Judges in the Juvenile Division sponsored the 21<sup>st</sup> annual Juvenile Court Awards on April 4, 2019, at the Goodman Community Center. Chief Justice Patience Roggensack was the featured speaker and Presiding Juvenile Division Judge Shelley Gaylord lead the event. The ceremony is a celebration and recognition of youth and the commitment others have made to the lives of youth and families in Dane County. The recipients of this year's recognition awards are:

### Outstanding Service Award

**Susan Sunde**-Susan has been a CASA volunteer since 2012. She has worked with numerous youth over the years and has not taken a break from volun-



Judge Shelley Gaylord with Jenny Hillard accepting for Susan Sunde

teering. She is committed to improving the health of our community and she does so with compassion, humility and consistency.

**Russell and Diane Brown**-Russell and Diane have been foster parents to teenage girls since 2007. They both provided foster care for over seven years prior to doing so together. They also both work at the Juvenile Shelter Home and have two of their own children. Russell and Diane understand teens and are very skilled at supporting and holding them accountable.

**Dr. Mollie Kane**-Dr. Kane has been the physician in Juvenile Detention for over 15 years. She is always available when she is not onsite and has developed an excellent program that is staffed by UW nurses for the youth in care. Youth receive vaccinations, testing, consultation, coordination of care with outside providers and other services through medical staff. Dr. Kane is always available for assistance and is an incredible advocate for youth.



Russell and Diane Brown with Judge Gaylord

### In this issue:

- P3 Consumer Corner
- P4 Youth Spotlight—Replay
- P5 Home Detention Program
- P6 Staff Spotlight—Intensive Supervision
- P7 Agency Spotlight-1800 Days
- P8 Where Are They Now? Jeanne Ferguson
- P9 Corrections Changes
- P10 CYF Peer Support Program
- P11 School Justice Partnership Launch Event
- P13 Madison Summer Teams (MST)
- P14 Permanent Connections for Youth

See Awards  
Page 2

On the web @ [www.countyofdane.com/juvenilecourt](http://www.countyofdane.com/juvenilecourt)  
[www.danecountyhumanservices.org](http://www.danecountyhumanservices.org)

# On Balance

## Awards

*Continued from Page 1*

### Outstanding Achievement Award

**Silas Johnson**-Silas is a young man who had a few struggles as he was growing up. He didn't always follow all of the rules or listen to people in his life who were trying to help, but he is now growing into someone who is determined to make his and other people's lives better.



*Dr. Mollie Kane*



*Erik Nielsen*

### The George Northrup Award

**Nate Marzen**-Nate has been a Social Worker with the Dane County Dept. of Human Services for the past 12 years in CPS and currently in Youth Justice. Nate goes above and beyond in his work and develops excellent relationships with youth, families and colleagues. His quality of social work is a true asset to Dane County residents.



*Judge Gaylord introduces Silas*



*Alan Chancellor and others accepting for Aaron Perry*

### The Ervin Bruner Award

**Erik Nielsen**-Erik has been a Youth Justice Social Worker with the Dane County Dept. of Human Services for over 19 years. Erik has demonstrated a quiet commitment to high quality social work over his career. His follow through with youth and others is unparalleled and he always has the best interests of youth at heart.



*Nate Marzen*



### The Peter Rubin Award

**Aaron Perry**-Aaron has been a Program Leader at the Dane County Dept. of Human Services Neighborhood Intervention Program (NIP) since 2006 and had previous experience with the Juvenile Court Program. Aaron has worked with youth involved in gangs during his time at NIP and is respected and dedicated to the youth he encounters. He is also an advocate for black men's health.



# On Balance

## Consumer Corner

*By Liz Klapheke,  
CPS Ongoing Social Worker*

Kim is a hard-working, single mom of three. Her children range in age from two through twelve, and they live a very busy lifestyle! With the youngest in day-care, and the two school-age children in different school districts, Kim is always running to different places to try to be everywhere to support her kids. Kim's journey is far from easy, and she has had some major obstacles to reach this point.

Kim grew up in a single-parent home with her mom working third shift and her grandmother getting her ready for school each day. From them, Kim learned perseverance - her life motto.

Kim attributes her success to her motto of never giving up until the choice is tak-

en from you. When thinking back, Kim sees several times when she could have given up to allow her children to remain in their concurrent homes rather than continuing to fight. But Kim never gave up. Kim overcame personal obstacles of substance abuse and mental health concerns to beat the odds of bringing her family back together.

Kim still works continuously to maintain her mental health and she talks openly about how her depression is still present in her life. Kim has learned the importance of taking care of herself to overcome triggers as they arise.

Kim hopes to have a safe place to live where the kids can play outside, to take vacations with her children to

Florida and California, and to enjoy the little things in life such as family time and trips to Noah's Ark. Kim is excited to think about watching her children graduate from high school. Ideally, Kim would like to be in a place financially where she is able to spend time giving back to the community by talking to people who are struggling whether they be incarcerated, struggling with addiction, looking for housing, or involved with CPS.

Through Kim's determination to never give up, she has been able to turn her life around and she sees a brighter future for herself and her children.

**On Balance** is a publication of Dane County

Department of Human Services and Juvenile Court Program.

### **Editorial Board:**

Andre Johnson, DCDHS

Julie Ahnen, DCDHS

John Bauman, Juvenile Court

Dean Bossenbroek, Briarpatch

Heather Crowley, DCDHS

Rhonda Voigt, DCDHS

**Comments?** Contact Dawn MacFarlane at 608-242-6267 or [macfarlane@countyofdane.com](mailto:macfarlane@countyofdane.com)

# On Balance



## Youth Spotlight—Replay

Hey, my name is Jaheim White and I'm a kid at James Madison Memorial. I went to Replay for a few months to get back on track. When I was at James Madison Memorial I was a good kid, but I was with the wrong friend group and was skipping class and just gave up on school. It was not looking too good credit wise, so I set down with my Grandma and Dad and told them I needed help. Then my Dad got the call about Replay and he was like, "Son, you can go there and get some credits". I said okay, then the next day we had a meeting at Replay. At first, I didn't feel comfortable. Then I saw two good people that always have been by my side, Josh and Sedric. Then I wasn't feeling uncomfortable any more, because they always had my back. Finally, I came over to Replay and got all my credits. Next year when I go back to Memorial I'm going to keep up the work and knock out my last two years there and walk across the stage and make everybody and myself that believe in me happy. The End.

Sincerely,

Jaheim White



Replay has helped my math and reading skills. My teacher and I work one on one and that helps me focus. I have learned life skills that will help me handle my lifestyle.

Daimon Smith,  
8th Grade Student

My name is Marshaun and I started at Replay 3 months ago. I came to Replay to get my school credits and get myself back on track, because I didn't really go to class. However, I was in the school everyday walking the halls and hanging with other members of Thotupgang. At Replay I have not missed a day of school, have attended every class and I'm getting good grades. I have set new goals for myself. I'm even playing football for Memorial this year. I think Replay is a good school for a kid that's trying to get back on track. At Replay you learn life skills, meet new mentors that help you succeed in school and in the community. The staff supports your athletic endeavors. They assist you with employment and you earn money while you're here. The class size is small, so you can get more support from the teacher and that makes learning easier.

# On Balance

## The Home Detention Program

The Home Detention Program (HDP) is comprised of three full-time staff (Julie Peterson, Carlos Martinez and Krysta Moore, along with Supervisor Suzanne Stute) and LTE's who supervise youth that are deemed to need immediate Court intervention after a referral to the Juvenile Reception Center via law enforcement and a subsequent Custody Hearing. The Court hears from all parties about the most appropriate placement and services for the youth and determines if placement in Juvenile Detention, the Juvenile Shelter or parental/guardian home with the Home Detention Program is appropriate.

HDP provides intensive supervision of the youth from program assignment usually until disposition. HDP works with youth on average for about 30 days. They meet individually with youth, monitor school attendance and behavior, monitor community behavior and meet regularly with the family for support and to assess the youth's progress at home. The HDP worker also keeps the Court and all parties updated on the youth's progress in the program while DCDHS develops a longer term case plan for supervision. At the time of Disposition, the Home Detention worker will often continue supervision as a "bridge" if NIP or BYS services is ordered as a longer-term supervision program.



My name is Krysta Moore and I have recently joined the Home Detention Program. I have been working with youth for over 10 years, most recently at Briarpatch Youth Services, and as an LTE at Dane County Shelter Home. While at Briarpatch I provided intensive supervision and on going case management for court involved youth. I also ran a girl's group focusing on empowering young ladies to have a voice. I have two children of my own Jadin (17), and Kenzlee (1) who are my world. I look forward to continuing to serve youth and families in our community and being a part of the Home Detention team.

I am originally from Milwaukee's north side. As you may know, Milwaukee is one of the most (if not the most) segregated cities in the U.S. However, growing up I was fortunate enough to be exposed to a diverse group of mentors and friends, as well as able to take advantage of some great opportunities through different organizations and programming. I believe this benefitted me in gaining perspective and being exposed to resources to help me move forward going into young adulthood.

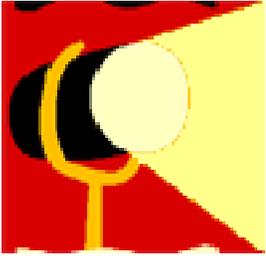
I attended UW-Madison on a full academic scholarship. I initially pursued pharmacology out of my love for science and connections I had made with the pharmacy school, but I eventually found myself more interested and concerned with the issues of society and the trends that were developing. In respect to these concerns, I switched my focus to sociology and never looked back. I was both intrigued and angered at the trends developing, which made me eager to want to help and provide any service I could.

I have been working with youth and families since 2011. I truly feel that there is no higher priority in life than providing service to others. I enjoy the work I do, and the gratitude that it provides is unmatched. I am committed to serving my community and dedicated to the population I serve. Personal interests include business/investing, music, and art.



Carlos Martinez

# On Balance



## Staff Spotlight – The Role of Intensive Supervision Services in Dane County

*By Heather Crowley, NIP, and Ross Hazlewood, Briarpatch*

Supervision workers are housed at both Briarpatch Youth Services in the intensive supervision program (formerly known as CAP, also called ISS) and with Social Workers through the Dane County Neighborhood Intervention Program (DC-NIP). The two agencies share responsibilities for supervising court ordered youth, most of whom have been found guilty of committing a criminal offense (“adjudicated delinquent”). Both programs also assist the youth and their family through their court ordered obligations and report on their compliance with their court order to the juvenile court. In 2018, services were bifurcated so that Briarpatch YS would focus on court-ordered youth who are at low and medium risk levels, while NIP kept the high-risk youth in-house. The average length of supervision at Briarpatch ISS is typically six months, while NIP is one year or more. This can vary, however, dependent upon level of compliance, change in the youth’s home situation, major life events, or new charges.



*NIP Supervision: Tony Ricker, Ashley Castro, Tom Brundage, Cheryl Bradley, Bobby Moore*

Intensive supervision provides an effective, fiscally responsible option toward addressing juvenile delinquency. As with adult probation, it diverts youth from more expensive out-of-home placements, such as foster or group homes, residential treatment or corrections. With many intensive supervision clients, it can be successfully argued that maintaining them in the community under intensive supervision (versus sending them out of the community for treatment or incarceration) represents a more effective method of reducing recidivism, as it offers an opportunity to work not just with the youth, but with their family, schools and

the general community that they interact with daily. In short, intensive supervision offers a genuine opportunity to connect with youth and to understand the challenges they face in their home environment on a daily basis. Guiding them successfully through their experience with the juvenile court system, in turn, becomes the challenge.

Over the years, a great deal of discussion has been devoted toward how best to address meeting the needs of not just delinquents, but the criminal justice system as a whole. Supervision services currently model programming around one such proposal, the Balanced and Restorative Justice



*Briarpatch ISS Counselors: Anthony Johnson, Jen Ripp, Ross Hazlewood, Choua Her, and Sergio Velasquez*

*See Intensive Supervision Page 7*

# On Balance

## *Intensive Supervision Continued from Page 6*

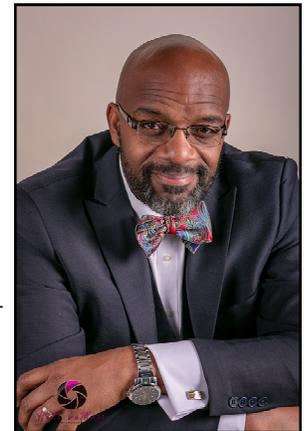
model (BARJ), which focuses on three primary factors:

- ◆ Accountability – how is the youth making amends for their mistake?
- ◆ Community Protection – what kind of monitoring will be necessary to keep the youth out of trouble?
- ◆ Competency Development – how are we assisting the youth in making better choices which will hopefully help keep them out of trouble in the future?

ISS workers address these three areas by assessing the client’s various strengths and challenges, developing a close, working relationship with the client and their family, and tapering program services according to the client’s respective needs. Upon meeting with a client for the first time, the ISS worker establishes a contract in which specific goals are outlined for the client. The client and family are informed that progress toward these goals will be reported to the court on a monthly basis, and that the client’s progress in this regard will impact the overall duration of intensive supervision services.



## **Agency Spotlight: 1800 Days— Harold Rayford, Founder, President and CEO**



1800 Days (the first 5 years of life) is a grassroots organization committed to eliminating the achievement gap in Dane County through community engagement, one child at a time. Headed by founder Harold Rayford, this agency has begun working with Dane County Human Services, area school districts and local municipalities to help families with truant children. Using their unique approach, 1800 Days will engage families in eliminating the achievement gap, use positive images of children of color designed to inspire both children and families and advocate for educators whenever possible. This strategy includes meeting with the child and family, assessing areas of need, creating an Individualized Family Vision Checklist, attending IEP meetings as requested, providing family support, contacting schools weekly and discussing progress with both the child and family on a regular basis. The 1800 Days hope is that their comprehensive intervention and one-on-one communication will inspire the student and the parent/guardian to be proactive in overcoming truancy. The 1800 Days strategic and systematic follow-up on the Family Vision Checklist is envisioned to provide positive energy and synergy for the families and the schools. Our 2019 contract will begin with roughly 50 slots shared between MMSD, Madison Municipal Court and DCDHS Youth Justice. This is an exciting addition to our provision of services to the youth and families of Dane County. Welcome 1800 Days!  
*(excerpted from the document 1800 Days Truancy Strategy)*

# On Balance

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

### *On Balance catches up with ... Jeanne Ferguson*

By Julie Ahnen



Jeanne Ferguson was a long-time CPS Supervisor with DCDHS who retired from the agency in 2009. Jeanne started at DCDHS in 1974 at the County Home, then moved to NPO as an Income Maintenance worker: determining eligibility for AFDC, food stamps, MA. After a couple of years, she became a CPS Social Worker and then transitioned into a Supervisor position in 1985. Jeanne coordinated EPS for many years, and was instrumental in starting the CPS Reunification Unit and the Family Group Conferencing program.

After leaving DCDHS, Jeanne worked for the University of Denver in New York, helping them implement their Family Assessment Response (FAR) system in CPS (similar to Alternative Response in WI). Her official title was FAR Manager. She also spent some time working with the State of Florida in coaching for CPS Supervisors.

Jeanne is now working in Madison in a variety of capacities. She is teaching an online Child Abuse and Neglect course for the UW School of Social Work as well as teaching a Field Seminar for full and part-time Social Work students. She is also working for the Surrogacy Center (TSC) as the Director of Client Services for the State of WI. TSC has been around for 15 years and helps connect gestational carriers with couples who are struggling with infertility.

I asked Jeanne what she was most excited about in CPS and she quickly responded that “Family Group Conferencing has been one of the most energizing, fundamentally rewarding practices in my career.” She is “thrilled” to be bringing Family Group Conferencing (FGC) back to Dane County in a limited, volunteer capacity. She and a small group of graduate students are working with CPS and APS to complete 8-10 FGC’s before the end of this semester. Jeanne enjoys “empowering families to believe in themselves and rediscover skills to be able to plan for their family members”.

Jeanne has observed a number of changes in CPS since she left Dane County. Jeanne remarked that the new technology and the “lack of hard files is very shocking and surprising!” She is also pleased to see that Social Workers in organizations are beginning to recognize and talk about Institutional Racism and hopes that as Social Workers we can “allow ourselves to be humble, recognize mistakes and then learn from them”.

When asked what keeps her motivated to continue working in the field, Jeanne explained that she “can’t let go of the enjoyment of working with families”. She is also motivated by the passion and excitement of Social Work Students and their desire to make a difference.

Throughout her career, Jeanne was able to maintain a healthy work/life balance by focusing on family and by taking care of horses. Jeanne explained that, “Working with big animals required me to forget work and be ‘in the moment’. That was so freeing. It was physical, dirty work and exhilarating to ride a Thoroughbred at 25 mph!”. Jeanne’s three grandchildren now get a lot of her attention as well, not to mention the never-ending work on the house she and her husband are renovating!

# On Balance

## Corrections Changes

*by John Bauman*

As many of you know, Act 185 closes Lincoln Hills/Copper Lake Schools by 1/1/21. The bill establishes smaller Secure Residential Care Centers (SRCC) operated by counties throughout the state for youth under correctional orders who are not Serious Juvenile Offender designated or adult sentenced youth, and they need to be operational by 1/1/21. Two or more Type I DOC run facilities will also be built in Milwaukee and the Fox Valley area. In addition, MJTC at Mendota will be expanded and will be able to work with girls and boys who are under correctional orders and have significant mental health needs.

Dane County submitted a letter of interest to the State in order to continue planning for a SRCC. The others who have done the same are: Milwaukee, Racine, Brown, Fond du Lac, LaCrosse and the WI Tribes. There is a proposed trailer bill that may move the application deadline from 6/30/19 to 9/30/19 and the SRCC opening deadline to 6/30/21.

Dane County is planning to expand its Juvenile Detention facility on the second floor of the CCB in order to add a

SRCC for youth ordered to corrections from Dane and surrounding counties. 18-23 male beds and 5-6 female beds is being proposed, along with programming/school space, outdoor recreation space on an exterior portion of the building and other changes to the second floor. If selected by the State as a site, 95% of the construction cost would be covered under a grant program.

The development of the treatment program will be the next item for discussion for Dane County's SRCC. Assessments, treatment plans, trauma therapy, other clinical services, educational/vocational instruction, daily living and life skills, family engagement, transition planning, community linkage, mentoring, etc. will all be important components of the program.

The ability to be in a program closer to home and have family as an integral part of treatment, the transition work that can occur and the resources that are available in Dane County will be a significant improvement from the current

services that our youth are receiving at Lincoln Hills/Copper Lake Schools. A Dane County SRCC will greatly benefit the youth who need an intensive, temporary intervention in order to be successful in a less structured setting in the community.

If anyone has questions or would like to provide any input about Dane County's plans, feel free to contact me at JRC at 608-266-4983.

# On Balance

## CYF Peer Support Program

By

*Heather Wende-Outreach, Awareness, Recognition Subcommittee*

### **Do you lay awake at night thinking about work?**

If the answer is yes, you could be experiencing secondary trauma. Its no surprise to anyone in the field that all CYF Staff are exposed to situations that can lead to high levels of stress and burnout due the nature of the work. Furthermore, this stress can have ripple effects throughout our personal lives, our health and our mental well being. Most of us went into this profession to help others. We also have to help ourselves and each other to most effectively serve the populations we work with.

In an effort to provide support and recognition for the unique challenges our job creates, the CYF Division is working to create a peer support program. The program is being developed as a joint effort between line staff, supervisors and managers representing many different CYF programs and job functions. Once implemented, this program will be accessible to support staff, social service specialists, program leaders, social workers and supervisors. The mission of the peer support program is to be available to listen, refer, and assist employees during stressful professional or personal events or critical incidents. A core belief of this program is that a traumatic incident is largely defined by the person experiencing it.

As part of the efforts to implement this program, people have received an email asking for nominations of individuals who would be ideal candidates to serve as a peer support person. These individuals will receive training on how to provide peer support over the coming months. We hope to train approximately 20 individuals to serve as peer supports. The training will be a 3-day training held in the near future. If you have been nominated to be a peer support person, someone will be reaching out to you and further explaining the commitment and the training process.

Additionally, staff will have access to online educational and resource materials related to secondary trauma and self care along with materials in the work place that will remind staff to recognize the need for self care and direct them to support that is available online, in the community and within the agency. Committee members are also available to attend unit meetings and explain the program further for interested individuals.

Our hope is that the peer support team will be fully functional by August 2019. Please continue to look for more information about training for all staff and next steps in the Peer Support Program development coming very soon!

# On Balance

## School Justice Partnership Launch Event

February 5-7, 2019

On February 5<sup>th</sup> Dane County Department of Human Services hosted a launch event for the School Justice Partnership process that we are bringing to some communities in Dane County. To introduce this process a team from Clayton County, Georgia came to present. For several years Clayton County Juvenile Court and its partners in the Clayton County Public Schools, local law enforcement, and the Clayton County System of Care have provided consultation and technical assistance to requesting localities interested in replicating its nationally recognized and lauded School-Justice Partnership and the Clayton County System of Care's approach to addressing minor school related infractions.

*"With more than 15 years of experience in successfully reforming our own juvenile justice system, we have shared our experience with more than 50 jurisdictions across the nation....."*

Following the launch event, (February 6 and 7<sup>th</sup>) was a two day session with The Madison Metropolitan School District, MPD, DCDHS and several community agencies. This meeting was led by the Clayton County team and we went through a process to examine data and move towards diverting several offenses away from a formal arrest or citation. We are excited for the next steps in this process in the City of Madison and other Dane County communities. Next Up Middleton!!



*See SJP  
Page 11*

# On Balance

**SJP**  
*Continued from Page 10*



# On Balance

## Madison Summer Teams: A Paycheck and a Whole Lot More

*By Karl E. Johnson, Briarpatch Youth Job Center Coordinator*

Briarpatch Youth Services (BYS) is gearing up for summer youth employment! Madison Summer Teams (MST) – formerly Madison Street Teams – is one of the longest-running programs at BYS, and will be providing paid employment to several teams of youth throughout Madison this summer. With funding from the City of Madison, including new partnerships through the Northside Safe and Thriving Initiative, MST aims to continue working toward violence reduction in neighborhoods throughout Madison. MST focuses on hiring youth, ages 14 and 15, from the Allied Drive, Badger Rock, Brentwood, and Kennedy Heights neighborhoods.

MST seeks to provide youth with a highly supportive first-time employment experience. After an interview process and over 20 hours of training, the new youth employees are then formed into teams of ten and complete project work within the neighborhoods in which they live. Training includes pre-employment skills, restorative justice and violence prevention. Additionally, youth are eligible to receive school credit for the time they spend working on a summer team, as well as the opportunity to earn progress toward a Leadership

Certificate or Employability Skills Certificate. Madison Summer Teams run for approximately eight weeks from June through August, working 12 hours per week earning \$8.00 per hour.

Madison Summer Teams offer youth a unique opportunity to engage in projects within their community while earning a paycheck, school credit and employment training. Each team of 10 youth is supervised by two youth counselors providing personalized support. Crew supervisors are responsible for modeling positive employment skills, engaging youth in improving their employability confidence and supporting youth in practicing and navigating their first employment experience. MST strives to give each team the opportunity to identify projects of interest in their neighborhood. Supervisors then coordinate and collaborate with several agencies throughout Madison to help see these projects come to fruition. Partnerships have included Badger Rock Community Center, Joining Forces for Families, Kennedy Heights Community Center, Dane Arts Mural Arts, City of Madison and many others.

Briarpatch Youth Job Center also offers the Farm & Garden summer program. Through a partnership with Frostwood Farms, 22 youth ages 15-18, have an opportunity to work 30 hours per week earning \$10.00 per hour. Briarpatch provides transportation to the farm site with pick-up locations at our agency on Rimrock Road and at the Lussier Community Education Center. Participants work Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., receive a free lunch every day and a paycheck each Friday. With over 1500 tomato plants and 1800 pepper plants, Farm & Garden employees have a unique opportunity to experience working outdoors with fresh produce on a large scale. Additionally, employees are able to witness community interactions by assisting with bringing the produce to Madison area food pantries.

For any questions or additional information, please feel free to contact Karl Johnson, Youth Job Center Coordinator, by phone at 608.245.2550 ext. 1116 or by email at [karl.e.johnson@briarpatch.org](mailto:karl.e.johnson@briarpatch.org). Briarpatch is looking forward to a busy summer with lots of youth employees and exciting community projects!

## Permanent Connections for Youth

*By Kim Carter*

Dane County Department of Human Services was awarded an Innovation Grant issued by the State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. The goal of this grant is aimed at developing a mentorship program for teens in our county who reside in foster care as they prepare to enter adulthood. The purpose of this grant is to offer these teens a positive connection and resource when they are living independently, with the hope that these connections will evolve into lifelong relationships. Although legally these youth will soon be “adults”, we can remember how much guidance and advice we still needed at this stage in our own lives. The grant is particularly seeking people of color to mentor our youth, although not exclusively. Outreach was initially done with African American church leaders in our community. Natural connections were also utilized for children in foster care and their mentors.

Training for the mentors was through a partnership with CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate). This training took place for two evenings to help mentors feel better prepared in their role. After the training and background checks were completed, mentors were interviewed regarding their own interests to make the best possible match with the youth. A strong match with similar interests would help with long term commitment and long term support for the teen. To date we have matched 15 mentors with our youth. All mentees have voluntarily enrolled in the mentor program and have been excited to have a positive adult in their life to connect with. Dane County will be doing regular check-ins with the mentors and mentees to offer any ideas for activities and to help with reimbursement for activities that require out of pocket payment. The mentorship program is voluntary and aimed at developing a strong support system, with the hope of a long term commitment.

If you have ever thought about becoming a mentor, the Independent Living Skills program is still looking for people to mentor youth ages 14 to 18 who will continue in foster care into adulthood. Dane County will help reimburse for mileage and activities. Mentors need to make monthly contact with their youth for at least one year. If you or someone you know is interested in the opportunity to enrich the life of a young person, please consider becoming involved. If you are interested or have questions please call Kim Carter at 608-283-1383 or email at [carter.kim@countyofdane.com](mailto:carter.kim@countyofdane.com). Thank you for your consideration in becoming a mentor.