



On Balance

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

February 2015
Volume IX Number 1

Introducing Ron Johnson and the Community Restorative Court

By Ron Chance, DCDHS

Q: Who is CRC Coordinator, Ron Johnson?

A: Ron is a long-time community activist and organizer. He is a former history teacher and middle school principal. Ron was director of the youth gang diversion program in Milwaukee for almost 20 years. He also worked for Marquette University Law School for nearly 10 years, where he was trained in Restorative Justice techniques and practices. While at Marquette, he was the coordinator of the federally-funded Safe Streets program. Safe Streets was a community-based effort to provide alternative and restorative ways to reduce crime, violence and open-air drug markets in the greater Milwaukee community.

Ron's office is located at Centro Hispano, 810 W. Badger Rd. Madison, WI 53713. His number is 608-630-1214.

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put on sanctions imposed upon the offender who has caused the victim harm. RJ involves the community in repairing harm and seeks the cooperation of victims, community stakeholders, offenders and law enforcement in re-establishing balance in communities affected by crime.

Q: What is the Community Restorative Court (CRC)?

A: The CRC is a program of the County of Dane in partnership with the South Madison community, the District Attorney, law enforcement and other stakeholders. It is an attempt to move minor cases and misdemeanor violations to resolution outside of the traditional criminal justice system.

Offenders who meet program intake criteria are offered an alternative to being charged. We strive to reach consensus in repairing the harm done and rebuilding trust and balance in communities. Offenders ages 17 to 25 will be referred to the program by law enforcement, the District Attorney's office and the com-

Q: What is Restorative Justice (RJ)?

A: RJ is an old-new way of looking at crime and justice. It differs from the traditional form of criminal justice in that it looks not only at crimes committed against the state, but also at harm done to communities and to relationships. RJ gives victims a voice and in-

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On the web @ www.countyofdane.com/juvenilecourt
www.danecountyhumanservices.org

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MMSD's Behavior Education Plan Embraces Proactive Approaches

By *Leia Esser, Ed.D.*

*Director of Student Physical, Mental, and Behavioral Health,
Madison Metropolitan School District*

*"If a child doesn't know how to read, we teach. If a child doesn't know how to swim, we teach. If a child doesn't know how to multiply, we teach. If a child doesn't know how to drive, we teach. If a child doesn't know how to behave, we... teach?... punish? Why can't we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?"
Tom Herner, President of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 1998*

In the Madison Metropolitan School District, our vision is that every school will be a thriving school that prepares every student to graduate ready for college, career and community. In order to accomplish this vision and get the best results for all students, we need to ensure that each of our schools is a place where all students are able and expected to learn. That means putting the right systems in place to support positive behavior in every student.

This Behavior Education Plan represents a shift in district philosophy and practice with respect to behavior and discipline. It moves us away from zero-tolerance policies and exclusionary practices toward proactive approaches that focus on building student and staff skills and competen-

cies, which, in turn, lead to greater productivity and success. The Behavior Education Plan moves us to a comprehensive focus on creating the conditions that make every classroom and every school a great place to learn and grow. It embodies our belief as a school district that children learn by pushing and testing limits, getting feedback about their behavioral choices and making the changes needed to become contributing members of a community of learners.

The Behavior Education Plan is also designed to reflect a commitment to student equity. This means that we hold all students to the same high expectations, but provide different kinds of support to reach those expectations. We know, from national research and our own experience, that zero-tolerance policies that result in frequent removal from school are ineffective in changing student behavior and in fact have a negative impact on student outcomes – lower academic achievement, dropout rates and increased likelihood that a student will enter the criminal justice system. And, these policies disproportionately affect certain groups of students,

especially our African American students and students with disabilities.

The Behavior Education Plan is characterized by a progressive approach to intervention and discipline. In a progressive approach to intervention and discipline, students have the space to make mistakes, learn from them and receive support to change their behavior over time. All interventions and discipline are selected, implemented, and assessed to help students do the following: 1. Understand why a behavior is unacceptable and the harm it caused; 2. Take responsibility for their actions; 3. Understand what they could have done differently in the same situation; 4. Learn social strategies and skills to use in the future; 5. Understand the progression of more serious consequences if the behavior reoccurs.

Supporting positive student behavior requires a high level of commitment from students, parents/guardians, staff, administrators, the Board of Education, and our community. The Madison Metropolitan School District deeply values our partners. Ongoing collaboration and coordination is imperative in realizing the goals outlined in our Strategic Framework and Behavior Education Plan. We welcome your ideas and support!

SAVE THE DATE

17th Annual Dane County Juvenile Court Awards

April 29, 2015, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Goodman Community Center

For more information, call 283-2925 or email: Bauman.john@countyofdane.com

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DCDHS SOCIAL WORKER JUGGLES TWO ROLES

By Rhonda Voigt, DCDHS Supervisor

Social Worker **Stephanie Marino** moved into the DCDHS Division of Juvenile Corrections Liaison and Community and Parents Support (CAPS) Coordinator positions last September. She has hit the ground running in both of her new roles. As DJC Liaison, Stephanie makes sure DJC receives information on new commitments, represents Dane County's interests during regular reviews (OJORs) for our youth and monitors youth progress in both secure care and upon return to the community. Stephanie also is a member of our Administrative Review Board. With the CAPS program, Stephanie has been working intensively with five Jefferson Middle School boys and their families. They have done several cooking and craft projects to date and have plans for upcoming recreational events to break up the winter routine.

Stephanie appreciates her new roles, particularly the ability to exercise her creativity in new ways and being able to network with community members with the goal of improving outcomes for our youth and their families.

Stephanie has been with the Juvenile Justice unit in South Madison since 2008. She also has five years of experience with SMO Child Protective Services and 7 years with the District Attorney's Office. Stephanie has worked for Dane County since 1996.

Stephanie is married to Scott and has 2 young sons. In her free time, Stephanie loves to run, cook, entertain and travel. She approaches life with a wonderful sense of humor and wit and appreciates the same in others. Congratulations on your new roles, Stephanie!



On Balance is a publication of Dane County
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MEET NICKI LAUDOLFF, DJC CORRECTIONS FIELD SUPERVISOR



Nicole (Nicki) Laudolff was appointed to the position of Madison Corrections Field Supervisor in the Northwest Regional Office on August 25, 2014. This position directly supervises the operations at the Grow Academy which is the new experiential program for male youth in Oregon, WI.

Nicki earned her Bachelor's degree from Silver Lake College in Psychology. She also holds a master's degree in Clinical Psychology from the Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

Prior to joining the Department of Corrections, Nicki was a Youth Counselor at Bremen Youth Services in Illinois where she provided individual, family and group counseling. sHE joined the Department of Corrections as a Youth Counselor – Advanced at Southern Oaks Girls School in 2002. In 2011 Nicki accepted a position as a Probation and Parole Agent with the Division of Juvenile Corrections in the Northwest Region. Nicki has had a blended caseload consisting of youth in a Juvenile Correctional Institution, Corrective Sanctions Program, Aftercare status and Interstate Compact supervision. Nicki currently serves on the DOC Human Trafficking Committee, Life Matters - Peer Supporter, DJC Trauma Informed Care Steering Committee and is a State Certified Security Threat Group Coordinator.

Nicki has been a valued member of DJC and the community as evidenced by her work not only with the youth and families that DJC serves, but also in her efforts to coordinate the DJC CARE Team with the Madison Police Department and the Community Cooperative Council in the Allied Drive Neighborhood. Nicki received the Peter Rubin Award by the Dane County Juvenile Court in 2014 for going above and beyond her professional role when working with youth, families and communities.

Nicki is extremely committed to The Grow Academy and the youth that participate in the program. The Grow Academy was recently selected by the National Institute of Corrections for its environmentally friendly approach and won 1st place in the Green Corrections Challenge.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K_s03ZhK3Fo

On Balance



Staff Spotlight – Jeannette Deloya

By Sue Milch, DCDHS

*This issue of **ON BALANCE** shines the spotlight on an outstanding professional, Jeannette Deloya, who has devoted many years of a long career to helping students and providing support to Madison Metropolitan School District colleagues. Jeannette currently works within the Department of Student Services as the Coordinator of Mental Health Supports.*

As everyone knows, children’s mental health issues can have a major effect on their ability to function and be successful in school. For many years, Jeannette Deloya was actively involved in a Children’s Mental Health Collaborative which eventually convinced MMSD’s Board of Education that students’ unmet mental health needs had to be addressed. As a result, under Dan Nerad’s and then Nancy Yoder’s leadership, a Mental Health Task Force was formed. Jeannette was an active participant in this effort as well. From January 2012 through June 2013, this Task Force worked hard to develop an action plan which was then adopted by the School Board.



No matter how good a plan is, it won’t move forward without a capable person in charge of implementation. In addition to her involvement with Children’s Mental Health Collaborative, Jeannette had been part of Mental Health Task Force and was already working in Student Services at MMSD. When the new job was posted, she was interested. “It felt like a good fit for me,” she says. In addition to her considerable experience within MMSD, Jeannette was well connected to the university and to child welfare and mental health system partners. She applied and was selected for the job.

Jeannette has been working in her new position since last fall. She looks forward to bringing the mental health system into the school network so that mental health and school professionals can work together to provide students with the services they need. “School should be a welcoming place for all sorts of students,” she states. While acknowledging that achieving this goal will take time, she notes that “The elements—a collaborative culture, existing networks, proximity to the university and a resource rich community—are in place.”



Jeannette with husband Arthur Ross

Like many Madisonians, Jeannette came here from somewhere else. Born in Norway, at the age of 8 she moved with her family to the state of New York. After graduating from Buffalo College with a degree in special education, she held a variety of jobs, first in Massachusetts—where she met her husband-- and then in Colorado where she worked for three years as a case manager for Big Brothers and Sisters.

In 1986 Jeannette and her husband moved to Madison so she could attend the UW School of Social Work. While still a graduate student, she worked for the Parental Stress Center and also managed to have two children. It was in 1992, when she was hired as a social worker at Schenk Elementary School, that her long career with MMSD began. Eventually Jeannette became MMSD’s lead social worker, providing support for all social workers in Madison schools. She held this job for 12 years before starting in her current position.

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DCDHS SUPERVISOR HEATHER CROWLEY FILLS ANDRE'S BIG SHOES

By Rhonda Voigt, DCDHS Supervisor

Heather Crowley was appointed to the Juvenile Justice Supervisor, Community Supervision Unit, Neighborhood Intervention Program position in August 2014. She filled the vacancy left when Andre Johnson became our JJ Manager earlier in the year. Heather has been with Dane County since 2007, starting with the District Attorney's office and then moving to DCDHS Child Protective Services in 2009 before settling in with Juvenile Justice in 2011. She had previously worked as an LTE at NIP and Shelter.

Heather has a wealth of experiences in other social work arenas as well: St. Mary's Behavioral Health, Lake Monona Psychotherapy and Recovery, Mental Health Center of Dane County (now Journey), Community Adolescent Program (now Briarpatch), Northstar, Briarpatch Choices group, and Rainbow Project. She attended UW Madison for both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Heather is a member of the HoChunk nation.

Some comments from Heather: "My favorite thing is to work with kids and families and un-

derstand how each individual works within that system and what role each plays. This defines how our youth will act/react/interact at home and in the community. No one ever functions alone, and that includes our interactions with them from the county level. We either play a part in reinforcing their expectations of the world, or we try to help them move forward. One must have a good sense of self and be able to edit knee jerk reactions or expectations in order to come to

a higher level of understanding. I hope I support my co-workers in finding the balance needed to continue to do good work.

"I am dedicated to the sense of community through whatever big or small role I can play to help ensure that ideal. I live in Madison with my 3 rescued special needs dogs and take time to exercise daily to reduce my stress level before I come to work. I take the time to thank everyone and attempt to build and return respectful interactions, as the type of work stresses dealt with can impact how we deal with one another. Therefore, any chance I get to help alleviate stresses, I will try to do. I appreciate how NIP staff have welcomed me and I have a strong appreciation for all they do to directly affect the positive outcomes of our kids' lives."

Welcome to the Dane County Human Services supervisory team, Heather!



On Balance



Where Are They Now? JOHN GIVENS

By Rhonda Voigt, DCDHS Social Work Supervisor



Those who have been around a while might remember John Givens from his 20 years with the Juvenile Corrections SPRITE program. Others will remember John from the Focus program where he was the Assistant Director beginning in 2008. Still others will know John from his Crossroads Youth Mentoring Support & Services program beginning in 2009 where he worked with teens referred to him via Children Come First contracts at Community Partnerships (CP) and Achieving Reunification Through Teamwork (ARTT).

Where is John Givens these days? Since July 2010, John has been a Circles of Support Coordinator with the Madison-Area Urban Ministry. John describes his work as “In Reach” in that he begins working with his clients 6 to 9 months before they are released from prison to support their successful transition back to the community by building individual support systems. John indicates he works with both adult men and women to set up their support circle, including multiple back up plans in the event their preferred plan does not pan out. Circles of Support require a minimum 6 month commitment and 90 minute weekly meetings. Circles of Support provide clients with a sense of accountability to others to prevent re-entry, as well as a continued natural support system upon program completion. They report a 90% success rate 6 months following reintegration to the community.

John is a Vietnam veteran. He has been married to Deenah for 35 years. They have 3 adult children, a son and two daughters, and 6 grandchildren. John is the Board President of the Kennedy Heights Community Center and also serves on the board of the Goodman Community Center.

Mr. Givens states that his passion is working with teens. Of the youths he mentored beginning in 2009, six of eight successfully graduated from high school. John still occasionally hears from many of them and hopes to return to working with youth and their families in the not too distant future via his Crossroads Youth Mentoring Support & Services program. Our juvenile justice system has not heard the last word from Mr. Givens yet!

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Deloya

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When asked what she's most proud of, Jeannette's response was, "Being a contributing member of the community at large, and to the Madison School District" and "Being a good support for social workers in the schools. That was very meaningful work. If I left today, I'd feel good about that." "I've been lucky to have incredible, skilled people to work with and learn from" she added. "They've been great team members and great friends."

Despite a busy work schedule, Jeannette manages to pack a lot into her personal life. Long-time "Eastsiders," she and her husband enjoy spending time with family and friends. One of her greatest enjoyments is music. She loves a good concert and would rather spend an evening playing music with friends than almost anything else. Jeannette also loves winter (Yes, she really said that!) so you might see her outside ice skating, cross country skiing or just taking a walk. Among other interests are cooking (Cajun and "playing with" Moroccan food), knitting and travel - to Oslo, Brooklyn and elsewhere.



Jeannette, we thank you for all you've accomplished so far, and for the good things we know you'll achieve in the future. Good luck!

Johnson

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munity. It is a completely voluntary process. The offender (respondent) must accept responsibility for their offense and agree to terms and conditions of the restorative justice program. If they achieve successful results, their case is dropped and they are never charged.

Q. What is the role of victims in the CRC process?

A: Restorative Justice is victim-based, offender-focused and community driven. Victims are extremely important to the process; their voice is acknowledged and their rights are protected. Victims may participate in the entire process and by so doing have influence over final decisions regarding sanctions imposed on respondents.

Q. What is the role of the community?

A. The community's role is vital. Restorative Justice tends to work best with people from communities that are affected by the crime. Community members (trained volunteers) meet and assist in the decision making process.

Dane County's CRC program expects to begin receiving clients by March 2015.

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Synthetic and Over-the-Counter...KNOW YOUR DRUGS

By Brian Dean, MSW, Sun Prairie Area School District

While several illegal drugs have, justifiably, received a lot of press lately—heroin because of its increasing presence and marijuana because of legalization and decriminalization in several states—lesser publicized and still dangerous substances are also noteworthy. Synthetic drugs are chemically designed to simulate the effects (and oftentimes appearance) of illegal drugs such as cocaine, marijuana, LSD and methamphetamine. CNN reports that over 300 new synthetic drugs have hit the market in just the last three years. Over-the-counter medications are also substances increasingly misused by young people to get high.

Synthetic Drugs: Include both cannabinoids and cathinones; both have a history of being sold over the counter at convenience stores, tobacco shops, and gas stations. These substances often carry a statement similar to “Not for Human Consumption” in order to avoid the Food and Drug Administration’s oversight.

Cannabinoids--Can be formulated versions of synthetic marijuana and may even contain the active ingredient in marijuana-Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). They are sold under names such as Spice or K-2. These substances are often sold as “incenses.” The original formulations of these substances were made illegal in Wisconsin in April, 2011. Overseas manufacturers, however, continually make molecular changes in the substances in order to circumvent existing law. According to the 2012 Monitoring the Future survey of youth drug-use trends, one in nine 12th graders in America reported using synthetic cannabinoids in the past year.” Similarly, according to the Dane County Youth Assessment Survey 2012, 9% of high school students report using a cannabinoid in the past year.

Cathinones--Are frequently known as “Bath Salts” or “Jewelry Cleaner.” These substances are chemicals that mimic the effects of cocaine or methamphetamine. These substances were made illegal nationally in July, 2012. A Wisconsin Public Radio report entitled, “Use of Bath Salts Reaches Epidemic Levels in Parts of Wisconsin” quotes Langlade County Sheriff’s Investigator Dan Bauknecht as saying his department spends more time with bath salt abuse than with heroin, cocaine and methamphetamines combined. “About 90 percent of our investigations are in bath salts,” says Bauknecht. As of 2012, the Dane County Youth Assessment Survey indicates that the county is lucky so far as only 1% of high school students are using these substances; the upcoming 2015 Dane Co. Youth Assessment Survey should note any changes in this percentage of use.

Mock LSD substances--2C-I-NBOMe (also known as 25I-NBOMe) and 2C-C-NBOMe are synthetic designer drugs, chemicals designed to imitate the high of the banned drug LSD. These synthetic designer drugs are so potent that a dose the size of a few grains of either can be enough to get high. These white powders are usually sold on the black market and therefore do not keep a brand name. They are usually sold to unsuspecting teens as genuine LSD or psilocybin mushroom powder. Psychosis and death are common effects.

Effects: Both cannabinoids and cathinones are dangerous due to their constantly changing make up. Because new concoctions are designed to avoid legal obstacles, no one can really be sure what is in these substances. Some effects include:

- Cannabinoids- include nausea, vomiting, severe agitation and anxiety, tachycardia (increased heart rate), dilated pupils, elevated blood pressure, tremors and seizures, hallucinations, and suicidal ideations.
- Cathinones: tachycardia, increased blood pressure, chest pain, extreme paranoia, hallucinations, delusions, and violent behavior, which can cause users to harm themselves or others, death.

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Synthetic Drugs

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Bath Salts (Wisconsin Public Radio)



K2/Spice. Etc (totallifecounseling.com)

Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medication: When used as directed, OTC medications are usually safe and can provide some relief from symptoms related to common colds and the flu. When taken in overly abundant quantities, these medications can provide a mind altering high to the misuser, which can lead to medical complications. These medications may appeal to younger misusers (11-15 years old) due to their ease of availability and the belief that because the substance is a medication, and/or legal, it must be safe. These substances are also easily obtainable through purchase or theft.

Cough syrups and cold medicines--In 2005, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued a warning to the public about the potentially harmful effects of cough and cold remedies containing dextromethorphan, or DXM. This warning followed the deaths of five teenagers who allegedly overdosed on DXM in capsule form. This form of drug misuse can be called "robotripping" (because of the use of medications like Robitussin) or Three C' (when Coricidin HBP Cough & Cold is used). Medications containing guaifenesin, such as Mucinex, can be similarly misused.

Effects: When taken in large doses, cough suppressant can cause central nervous system depression, hallucinations and sensory disturbances. An overdose of DXM can lead to respiratory suppression, high or low blood pressure, seizures, fever, nausea and vomiting, sedation, dizziness, coma and death.



(synchrologistics.wordpress.com)

Allergy medicines--Many of these medicines used for nasal decongestion contain pseudoephedrine, which acts as their active ingredient. Misusers can get a euphoric feeling and/or a burst of energy from unusually high doses. Fortunately, because these medicines can be used to make methamphetamine, they are often kept behind the counter at drug stores.

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Synthetic Drugs

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Energy pills, weight loss supplements, laxatives and appetite suppressants- -Once again these substances are usually harmless unless taken in large doses. Young people may even find herbal weight loss supplements and laxatives to be stimulating in high doses.

Effects--Allergy medications and OTC stimulants can lead to heart problems, insomnia, dehydration, anxiety attacks, and stomach distress.

Pain relievers--Pain relievers are among the most widely used over-the-counter medications, and when used appropriately, they can safely relieve discomfort. But when drugs like acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen are misused, they can cause liver failure, gastrointestinal bleeding, heart and kidney problems.

Effects: A study published in *Pharmacoepidemiology and Drug Safety* reveals that over 450 Americans die of acetaminophen overdoses every year.

Call to Action: *What can be done about the increase in synthetic and OTC drug misuse?*

Parents: Can monitor their children and their belongings, while storing potentially misused drugs in a secure location (along with prescription medication).

Schools: Can write policy and procedures which include these substances in the same category as other banned substances.

Local Governments: Several states have laws requiring DXM to be stored behind the pharmacist's counter (NY, AL, MS, and VA). These states also have age requirements for purchase form 19-21.

Challenge: On your next visit to the pharmacy or grocery store, please note the location of commonly misused OTC medications—are they within reach of even small children, or are they in a location that would make them easy to shoplift? Consider talking to the store manager about any concerns you may have.

Sources: Drugabuse.gov, Whitehouse.gov, Muir Woods Teen Treatment Center, Allegany Health Department, Wisconsin Public Radio

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Juvenile Justice

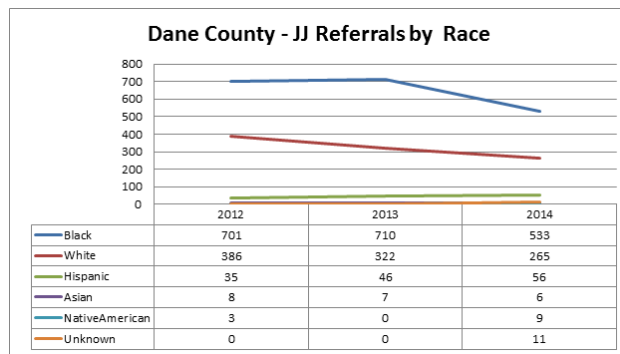
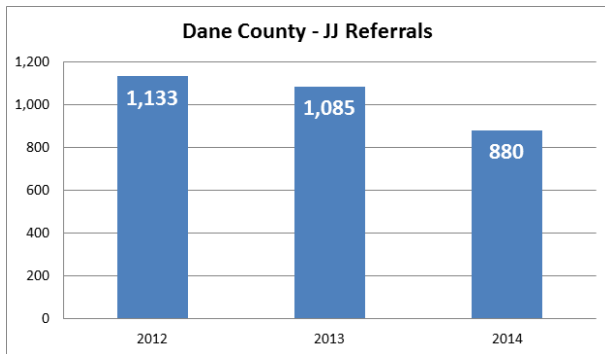
Corner

Andre Johnson –

CYF Juvenile Justice Services Manager



As we start 2015, it is a good time to reflect on the past year and the accomplishments we have made. But unfortunately, in terms of law enforcement contacts with white and African American youth, Dane County has one of the highest disproportionate rates in the state and in the country as a whole. Over the last several years, the rate at which we arrest African American juveniles has been 5-6 times that of their white counterparts. What many people don't realize is that law enforcement referrals to Dane County Human Services for juveniles has been declining (although very little for African American youth). In 2014, there was an overall reduction of 205 referrals (18.9%) from the previous year, with a reduction for black youth of 24.9% and 17.7% for white youth...Hispanics are up 21.7%. Although we still have a long way to go, it is encouraging to see some progress in 2014.



Dane County is also fortunate to have been selected as the recipient of two different grants for 2015. These grants will help enhance the continuum of services available to youth and families throughout our juvenile justice system.

Brighter Futures Initiative Grant

Dane County TimeBank, Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin, YWCA Madison and Dane County will work in South/Southwest Madison to create, document and evaluate a continuum of programming that uses a restorative justice approach to community justice. Working collaboratively, we intend to offer a series of interventions to youth ages 12 to 21, which will minimize their contact with law enforcement and the juvenile justice system while improving their connections within their neighborhood and school communities. We also hope to reduce racial disparities in the educational and juvenile justice system by serving a majority of youth of color.

Early Intervention Program Grant - Our goal is to reduce minority youth contact, decrease contact with the juvenile justice system and provide opportunities to increase youth's connection to pro-social activities.

The YWCA and the TimeBank will provide community based Restorative Justice Programs.

Briarpatch Youth Services and Common Wealth will provide subsidized work opportunities for youth that contain a service learning component.

Mentoring Positives will provide a mentor to identified youth.

And finally, Dane County will contract with an agency that can assist families in developing the skills and resources to provide supervision and guidance to their at risk teens.

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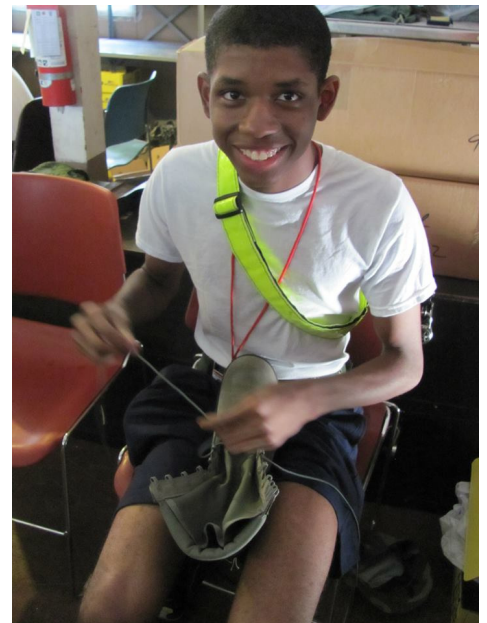
Congratulations Cadet Jones!

By Alan Chancellor, DCNIP Program Leader



DCNIP is proud to acknowledge the graduation of Cadet Alwayne Jones from the 33rd Class of the Wisconsin Challenge Academy on December 20, 2014. Cadet Jones was a NIP Metro client back in the 2010-11 school year as a 7th grader at Jefferson Middle School. In June of 2014, I received a call from this young man's mother asking if I would be a mentor to Alwayne as he was applying to the Challenge Academy. At that time I was only vaguely familiar with the Challenge Academy program but honored to be asked back into his life. Alwayne and I had crossed paths many times over the years during school visits or in the community, exchanged greetings and reminisced over fun had long ago. From a work perspective, I was glad he had not found his way back into the system. I am always proud to see young people strive for a better life. After his acceptance into the program, he was prepared for the 22-week residential program. Upon arrival at Camp McCoy, the first two weeks are the hardest for the new cadets and making it through the initial 2-week separation period was the hardest, he would later tell me. After that he was on his way down a new path.

During the first mentor visits in October, the maturing process was already happening. Seeing the cadets come into the room with military style precision, standing at attention, the "yes sir, no sir" is always a surprise when first heard out of our young people's mouths. So the military process of building up the cadets was wonderful to see and hear. We had a couple hours to spend over lunch, so he and I began the mentor-cadet process of goal setting (post-residential action plan) and preparing for his return to the community, though at that point the return home seemed far off. He tried out for and joined the Drill Team as Drummer and was working toward being Squad Leader.



In early December we had the cadet-mentor review where final check-ins were made in regards to Cadet Jones finishing school and graduation, reviewing the action plan and making sure he was ready for return to the community. Graduation day, December 20th, came quick and an exciting day it was. With several hundred people there on this special day for the cadets and their families, the gym was electric with excitement and pride for the graduating cadets.

Cadet Jones returned to Madison a young man re-energized from his successful completion of the aptly named Challenge Academy. He has made strides to accomplish the goals drafted and he has reconnected with former trusted, positive adults that will be key in his continued success. We are proud to be able to continue participating in the successes and support of such a fine young man.

Congratulations!!

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“Bubbler” Program Provides Expressive Arts Opportunities for Teens

By David Thorson, DCDHS Supervisor

Youth who are economically disadvantaged often lack access to educational enrichment opportunities, especially in comparison to their more affluent peers. This disparity is arguably more apparent in Dane County than anywhere else in the country, as evidenced by the wide black/white economic and educational achievement gaps. The Bubbler program seeks to level the playing field by offering the chance for at-risk teens who typically have been excluded from more sophisticated and challenging programs the chance to create expressive audio, video, and graphic art projects that will register their voices and concerns, foster their self-expression, develop skills, and enhance connection with their community.

So, what exactly is The Bubbler? It is a collaboration between several departments within the University of Wisconsin and the Madison Public Library, and is facilitated by UW faculty, students, and library staff. They have in turn partnered with Juvenile Court and Human Services to offer this program to youth in the Detention facility, Shelter Home, and at the Neighborhood Intervention Program (NIP). Utilizing a series of workshops designed to promote self expression, youth create graphic and 3D art, photographic, spoken word, storytelling, performance and video projects documenting their own lives and the community where they reside. Eventually there will be a media website featuring their work.

The Bubbler program started as a pilot project in the 2013-14 school year and was offered only at the Detention and Juvenile Shelter. Its full title is “The Bubbler: Making Justice With Court Involved Teens.” This school year it has been expanded to include youth in the Community Supervision and the Court Diversion Units at NIP. The program takes place all around the county, including the Madison Library Media/Design Labs, UW performance spaces, and community or cultural institutions. Guest facilitators are brought in to take the lead with specific topics, whether that’s creating spoken word sound recordings, collaborating on photographic or staged interpretation or reinterpretation of ideas, creating artifacts that make a statement about an assigned topic, or stimulating teens to define their own personal brand and attributes. The ultimate goal is to motivate youth to look inside themselves and discover their own identity and place in our society.

Each Bubbler program involves a 15 week curriculum, and is offered in both the fall and spring semesters. Sessions last approximately 2.5 hours and include 8-12 teens. It is remarkable to see the degree to which at-risk youth are able to engage in sophisticated subjects and the talent that emerges, if they are just given the opportunity. The hope is that evaluation of participant learning will demonstrate The Bubbler program’s efficacy in bringing

high level arts programming to disadvantaged youth, and that it can be shown to be an effective tool for reducing risk and raising positive community attachment. Long-term sustainability of the program will be more likely if that connection can be demonstrated, and perhaps it can even become the centerpiece for a more comprehensive community outreach to this population.

Got more questions? Contact Jesse Vieau (Madison Public Library) at jjvieau@scls.lib.wi.us or Nancy Buenger (UW-Madison Library and Information Studies) at nbuenger@wisc.edu

On Balance

“BRANCHING OUT” Provides a New Opportunity for Youth

By David Thorson, DCDHS Supervisor

We are often disappointed at the lack of activities and recognition for teens who have skills in other areas besides athletics. Since last August, however, a little known project at the Neighborhood Intervention Program (NIP) has been blossoming and filling part of this gap. **Branching Out** is led by NIP Program Leader Amber Corbit, who has recruited interns and volunteer artists/artisans to assist her in providing a variety of weekly art projects for youth.

The goal of **Branching Out** is to provide an alternative to sports activities, especially targeting those youth who might be at greater risk of isolation at school and thus potentially alienated or unattached to traditional school outlets that lead to pro-social attachment to their community. **Branching Out** is designed to promote self-expression, improve artistic skills and confidence, and help youth recognize these skills as an asset to be celebrated just as much as those of a football or basketball player.

This program, which is coed, currently meets twice a week, serving up to 8 Middle or High School youth in each session. On Wednesdays from 4:15 – 5:30 PM there is an open attendance policy. Contact Amber at 288-2432 or via email at Corbit@countyofdane.com to get a referral application for this group. During that same time period on Thursdays, the program is geared toward Community Supervision youth, and in January, the Court Diversion began participating. So what exactly are these kids doing each week? Here’s a current list of projects already completed or in the works:

- Collage/canvases
- Jewelry making and bead work
- Repurposing light switch covers
- Clay work
- Button making
- Fabric and felt projects
- Decorating tiles
- Christmas stockings out of recycled sweaters



There is a planned activity each session, although youth are welcome to ‘branch out’ and come up with their own idea. Once it’s completed, they can take their work home or leave it behind to be put on display. At some point there is a plan to have the group do a wall mural in the lunchroom at NIP. Thanks to the donation of several sewing machines and other art materials, the number of potential options continues to grow. The greater the sophistication of the equipment, the more intricate the projects can become.

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Branching Out

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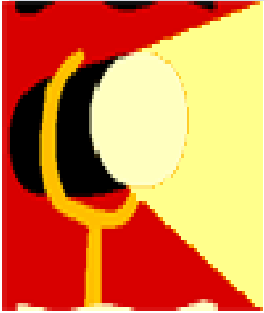
Feel free to contact Amber if you have art supplies languishing in your basement and closets right now. Think how much better you'd feel if these supplies could be put to good use by Amber's teens.

Amber is hoping to eventually grow the program to include more days per week and a wider base from which to draw potential participants. There is also a goal of getting parents involved to do parent/teen projects together, or offer workshops where they learn a more intricate skill together and then create an artistic piece based on their newly learned skills.

For staff who work in the NIP building, it is a satisfying sight to regularly see a group of youth and adults working individually and collaboratively to create interesting and personal art projects. There always seem to be smiles on kids' faces and I hope they are as relaxed as they appear. Amber Corbit brings a calming yet enthusiastic presence to the room. It is a great concept that we hope will continue to grow and become a staple in the NIP continuum of services to youth.



On Balance



Agency Spotlight – The OFS Way Is Working

By Dean C. Bossenbroek, YSOSW

Chris Brown is amped about his job. You've met this kind of guy before. He's smart, well spoken, energetic, skilled, and doing exactly what he is meant to do.

I met with Chris Brown at a house he and his Operation Fresh Start (OFS) Crew were rehabbing on Vondron Road on the eastside of Madison as part of the Pathway Program. It was the middle of January, the heat was off, and the front door was wide open. I could hear the sound of voices and impact tools emanating from the basement. I zipped up my coat, and waited for Chris to come upstairs, which he did in short order two steps at time. The temperature in the stripped down living room rose noticeably with his arrival.

No kidding. His energy and attitude generate heat!

Chris began our conversation by giving me a verbal outline of how his shift started that day, which was a typical day. He described delegating preparation tasks to crew members, who are 18 to 20 years old. Before leaving OFS shortly after 8a.m., they collect supplies, tools, and lunch, and load up the van. On this day, one of his crew members arrived at 8:04a.m. Chris emphasizes to his charges, that being on time for a shift that begins at 8 o'clock means being in the building at 7:45a.m.

Simply put, on Chris Brown's Crew, 8:04 is too late. He informed the young man, that he would not be able to work

that day. According to Chris, the late crew member pleaded with him to let him stay, "Aw, c'mon Chris! Are you really gonna do this to me?!"

Chris replied, "Look, if I *don't* do this, I've failed you, because that's not the way it works in the real world," and sent him home "for an unpaid vacation on the couch."



Acknowledging the expectations of the OFS way are incredibly high, Chris showed no regret in his decision. In order for him to help the young people he supervises and mentors erase years of questionable behavioral patterns, it is necessary to establish new, good habits. Doing so requires taking responsibility for one's own actions. Chris plants this seed and is fully aware, that it may not germinate for years. And once those seeds of positive change germinate, they will take even more time to bear fruit.

It's a long process. Chris has no pretensions the young people on his crew will become different people overnight. "This program is more than a high school diploma, stipend, or job. It is about personal, dramatic change."

As anyone who has experienced such transformation knows, it's the journey that counts just as much or more than the destination. Along the way OFS participants develop integrity, learn the art of good decision making, and work toward self-sufficiency. Chris believes the young adults, who take their time at OFS seriously, end up far ahead of the curve in relation to the average high school senior. He is confident they will be prepared to succeed in post-secondary education and a job.

While Chris takes the philosophical part of his job very seriously, there is house building to see to.

Before coming to OFS in 2012, he ran a construction company. He knows how to construct a dwelling from the foundation up, and teaches his crew every aspect of that procedure. This is quite literally the nuts and bolts of OFS programming.

There is a clear beginning and end to building a home. Arriving at such a tangible goal is something in which OFS

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participants may take great personal pride. Chris emphatically points out, “No matter what happens in their lives, they’ll be able to drive by this house and say, ‘I built that.’”

When construction of a house is complete, a quality, affordable home is ready for the market through the Wisconsin Partnership for Housing Development.

Another component to successful completion of the Pathway Program takes place in the classroom at OFS on Winnebago Street. Participants are expected to work toward their high school diploma. This takes about 20% of their time during the week, and focuses on basic academics. The goal is to get them to a 9th grade level in reading, writing, and math. They also explore potential career paths and develop a resume.

Executive Director Greg Markle Outlines the Grad Crew and the Options Program

Greg Markle states the Operation Fresh Start mission as his introduction to our conversation: “OFS provides disconnected youth a path to self-sufficiency.”

It is a simple, straightforward concept, and when one considers the complicated issues disconnected youth bring with them, an uncomplicated motto makes a lot of sense.

Greg gave me descriptions of two OFS initiatives he sees as integral to leading young adults down a self-sufficient path.

The Options Program is ambitious. OFS staff go out and engage with each young person in Madison, who has not completed high school in four years. That’s roughly 320 students per year. Greg maintains that as an organization outside the school system, OFS is viewed in a different light by the young people in this situation. He says, “We act as their advocate to help them figure out the next steps to a high school diploma.”

Many of these individuals are just a credit or two shy of graduating and for a myriad of reasons, did not graduate with their class. Not having a high school diploma is a major obstacle to becoming successfully self-sufficient. Greg cites statistics indicating an ungraduated person costs the community \$250,000 over their lifetime. So, tracking them down, being an ally, and “walking them back into the school setting or alternative education program,” is not only a significant cost savings, it is also “an extremely efficient way of addressing the achievement gap.”

The other program Greg talked up is the Graduate Crew. This is for 18-24 year olds, who have been through the Pathway Program, and decide that construction is the occupation for them. The crews are made up of five young people and one supervisor, who build up to industry pace. They’re training goes beyond basic job skills. There is an apprenticeship test and a week of job shadowing at Findorff Construction.

After completing this program, graduates are ready for a union construction job with annual wages beginning in the \$30,000 to \$40,000 range.

If you would like more information about OFS, please go to their website:

<http://www.operationfreshstart.org/>