



On Balance

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and the Dane County Juvenile Court Program

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Staff Spotlight – Above Average Joe Sullivan

By Rhonda Voigt

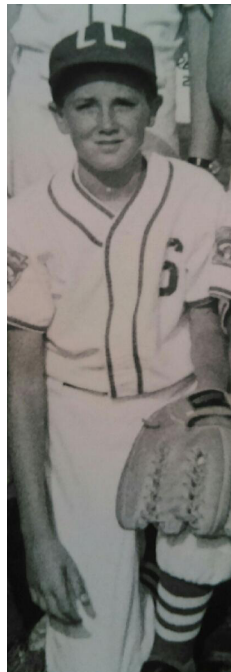
Joe Sullivan describes himself as an “Average Joe”. He has been working for DCDHS for **43** years! We are pretty sure that makes Joe #1 on the seniority list. Joe started with Dane County in 1976 as a Case Aide II when he worked with a case load of 350 food stamp recipients. Two years later Joe moved to a Social Service Aide position with CPS Service Intake. As an SSA, Joe mainly worked with Title XX recipients applying for child care assistance and in-home elderly services. In 1984, Joe moved to a Social Worker position at our Stoughton office working with both child protection and juvenile delinquency families. Joe started in his current position, Oregon Joining Forces for Families (JFF), in 1995. His area serves Oregon, Brooklyn, and Belleville. McFarland and

Monona were later added to Joe’s JFF coverage area. Joe states that he loves his job and enjoys coming into work each and every day.

With the help of his Oregon JFF team, Joe created the NINA Fund in 2004. Local churches and other private donors contribute toward this small



Joe Sullivan with his 90-year-old mother, Peg, who was a DCDHS receptionist for 28 years.



Little Leaguer Joe Sullivan circa early 1960s

fund. The NINA Fund is further enhanced by the NINA Fun Run, sponsored by the PTO. Oregon Elementary children raise funds and run/walk on the school track, donating their collections to NINA. Via the NINA Fund, Joe is able to provide rent and utilities assistance to needy area families. He is occasionally able to help with other small expenses for families such as child medications. In 15 years, the NINA Fund raised and distributed \$300,000 to needy Oregon area families.

Joe has many interests outside work. At age 67, he continues to play softball twice per week where he pitches to players decades his junior. Both of Joe’s softball teams made the championship round this summer. In winter, Joe plays pick up pond hockey at parks such as Elver. Joe has two summer cars: a 2000 Firebird Trans Am and a 2007 Corvette. Joe also has a beautiful glass art collection and other original works of art. I am sure you will all agree: our Joe Sullivan is anything but an “Average Joe”.

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On Balance



By Dr. Martha Stacker, CYF Division Administrator



Martha Stacker, Ph.D.

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) has awarded 10 Wisconsin Fast Forward grants to employers who have demonstrated a critical need for skilled workers. The training grants will be used to develop and implement training programs to upskill employees to fill the employment demands of growing and expanding employers. DWD awarded more than \$1.6 million to 10 Wisconsin employers, which will serve 11 businesses and at least 893 trainees across Wisconsin.

Dane County Department of Human Services - Children, Youth & Families (DCDHS-CYF) and Centro Hispano organizations have been awarded one of the 10 grants. Specifically, the grant benefits some DCDHS-CYF Program Leaders and Social Service Specialists and specified positions at Centro Hispano. The Wisconsin Fast Forward program encourages increased collaboration between Wisconsin's workforce trainers and employers to develop and execute business-led training programs. These training programs are designed to provide sustainable, short- and medium-term training and placement of workers in positions that offer trainees long-term professional growth and economic opportunity.

"The investment of grant awards simultaneously results in Wisconsin residents being better equipped for our current and future job market and provides our state's employers with a more skilled workforce," said DWD Secretary Caleb Frostman. "Strategically investing in transferable skills will help lift industries, communities, and Wisconsin's economy."

The Fast-Forward grant was awarded to DCDHS-CYF and Centro Hispano as follows:

- DCDHS-CYF and Centro Hispano – DWD issued a grant of \$63,040.19.
- The organizations will partner with Madison Area Technical College to provide training to three new and 11 incumbent minority staff
- Trainees will receive 12 credits through Madison Area Technical College in the area of Human Services through a customized cohort
- Training will give staff the training curriculum to work with diverse and barrier populations, guidelines for working with clients of substance abuse, leading client interviews and more within an agency setting.

Dr. Karen Menéndez Coller, Executive Director of Centro Hispano of Dane County states, "This grant is so significant to building Centro's capacity as an organization, an important part of our strategic vision. We are proud that staff at Centro is representative of our Latinx community and proud to prioritize the professional growth and advancement of our staff. The County of Dane, a programmatic partner for so many years, is the perfect collaborator as we work to level the playing field and grow a Dane County workforce that represents all of us."

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Fast Forward

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Jessica Cioci, MS ECE Madison Area Technical College Faculty of Early Childhood Education and Department Chair of Human and Protective Service further stated, "Madison College and the Human Services Associate degree program are committed to providing education and training that builds a stronger and diverse workforce in our community. We see this partnership with Dane County Human Services and Centro Hispano as an excellent opportunity to support the professional development of their current employees. Completion of this series of courses will build the participants' skills and capacities, lead to an increase in wages, and provide credit-based learning that can be applied towards a later degree if the participant chooses to continue his or her education. We are very much looking forward to the work we will be doing in the coming year."

In closing, DCDHS-CYF must be intentional in our continued endeavors to recruit, train, and retain individuals that represent every sector of our community, especially those who have historically been denied equal opportunities, such as women and individuals of color. Inclusive apprenticeship programs are one proactive way that we can foster a strong, integrated, and more equitable workforce. It is critical that anchor organizations such as Centro Hispano and Madison Area Technical College serve as great community collaborators by continuing to invest in the development of a diverse, skilled, and educated workforce. We look forward to working to help shape the policies and practices that will support workforce development programs and remove barriers that too often prevent qualified candidates from taking advantage of these important opportunities.

Congratulations to the 14 employees of CYF and Centro Hispano awarded the Fast Forward grant and this life changing opportunity.

On Balance is a publication of Dane County

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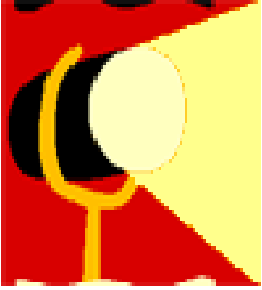
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On Balance



Youth Spotlight—Guided Conditioning for the Future

By Ty Mahone, DCDHS

As we bring our summer to close, I would like to share some of the activities that were done with youth involved with the Gang Response Intervention Team (GRIT) - West. For those of you, who may not know about GRIT, here is the skinny. GRIT is currently a collaboration between Dane County Department of Human Services –Youth Justice (DCDHS-YJ) and Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD), to provide supportive services for youth in four geographic enrollment areas. These services include mentoring, school groups, fun activities, and a variety of other activities and opportunities. Youth are referred by school social workers with parental permission. This is in an effort to prevent youth from being involved in YJ. This is a strictly voluntary program, based on needs of the community which are determined by YJ management and supervisors.

My enrollment area is the West. I work with youth that attend West High School and its feeder middle schools such as Cherokee, Hamilton, and Wright. I have worked with students at these schools for the past few years and here is how our summer went.

- ⇒ **Freshmen Weight Training** - We had a number of freshmen who wanted to spend the summer preparing for fall sports for high school (soccer, football, etc.) that had never been exposed to weight training/conditioning. We met at West on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and taught youth proper techniques for lifting and general conditioning. Raj, one of our youth was quoted as saying, “I feel much better about myself after doing this. It will help me with football.” The majority of youth enjoyed the program and participation was consistent.
- ⇒ **Open Gym for Hoops** - Youth who were of high school age, participated in open gym at Wright Middle school on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6pm-8pm. We had an average attendance of 10 youth and all were appreciative of a place to play ball during the summer.



Conditioning bodies and minds.

- ⇒ **End of the Summer Waterpark Trip** - Youth from 6th-8th grade were taken to Mt. Olympus Water Park in Wisconsin Dells as an end of the summer activity for those who participated in some of the other activities, and were making good choices this summer. We had 12 youth from the West Enrollment Area take part in this trip. The trip was followed by a meal. All enjoyed event, and were appreciative of the opportunity.

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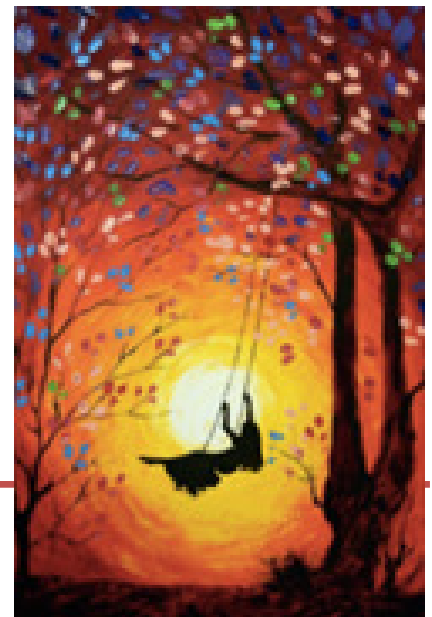
Youth enjoy a meal after a long day at the water park.



Ty Mahone spots a youth doing squats.

ILU PAINT NIGHT: The Independent Living Unit hosted a paint night for teens in out of home placement. The event promoted engagement with our youth and strengthening permanent connections. Youth and their adult mentors were invited. 7 youth attended and 3 mentors were able to attend as well. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and most indicated they would like to do something fun again in the near future.

Carla Schmit, MSSW
Independent Living Social Worker



On Balance

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Judge Albert Takes a Moment to Reflect

By John Bauman

Judge John Albert retired from service to the Dane County Circuit Court in 2015. We connected with him recently to talk about his history with the courts and what he is currently doing.

What were your positions prior to your retirement from the bench?

Judge Albert was an attorney at the Legal Services Center to begin his career from 1974-1980. The Center was the precursor for the State Public Defender's office. He then was in private practice from 1980-1999, which is when Governor Thompson appointed him to the Dane County Circuit. Judge Albert was an active Judge from 1999-2015, serving eight years in the Civil Division and seven years in the Juvenile Division. Before retiring, he was the Presiding Juvenile Judge of the Division.

What are some of the accomplishments that you are most proud of to date in your career?

Judge Albert cited a number of proud accomplishments during his time on the bench. He helped to

create a number of initiatives in the community including a supervised visitation program through the Rainbow Project that helped provide more access for parents to visit their children after they have been removed from home. He also helped to create the Focus program, which was a Residential Care Center on the Mendota grounds that served youth who were on the verge of a correctional placement. Judge Albert was also very proud of his work helping to ensure that a new Juvenile Detention facility got built, which opened in August 2007.

Any funny or fond memories?

One funny memory that Judge Albert recalled was that shortly after the Focus program opened, the youth placed there pretty quickly figured out that in order to run away from the facility, all they needed to do was slide out their bedroom windows. Adjustments were made to try to deter this from happening.

What have you been up to since retiring?

Since retiring, Judge Albert has done some mediation and private practice work, but has also enjoyed many other fun activities. He has taken a river cruise in France, fished in Alaska and Canada, and has gone on Lion's Club eyeglass mission trips to El Salvador and Haiti in order to distribute eye glasses to those in need.

Anything else that you would like to share with readers?

Judge Albert wanted all to be sure to not be afraid to work with juveniles, either as a judge, provider, or anyone else!

On Balance

Changes on the Juvenile Bench 2019

By John Bauman



Judge Susan Crawford looks forward to being a part of a system that strengthens families.

There have been some changes this summer in the Juvenile Division of the Dane County Circuit Court. Judge Genovese moved to the Criminal Division and Judge Crawford moved to the Juvenile Division. Judge Genovese will finish up any juvenile cases that are pending and then Judge Crawford will have all new and existing cases in Branch 1. Thank you to Judge Genovese for six years in the Juvenile Division!

Judge Gaylord, Judge Colas and Judge Mitchell will continue in the Juvenile Division and Judge Gaylord will continue to be the Presiding Juvenile Judge. Following is an introduction to Judge Susan Crawford. Please welcome her to the Juvenile Division!

How long have you been on the bench? I have been on the bench since August 1, 2018.

Which divisions? I was in the criminal division for the first year and switched to the juvenile division as of August 1, 2019.

What did you do prior to becoming a Judge? I had a varied legal career for over twenty years that included private practice at a Madison law firm, serving as an assistant attorney general at Wisconsin DOJ, and serving as chief legal counsel to Gov. Jim Doyle.

What is your philosophy on working with juveniles and children? Under both the juvenile justice statutes and the children's code, the best interests of children and youths are paramount. This policy guides my philosophy in presiding over cases in the Juvenile Division.

What can people expect when they have court in your branch? My goal is to treat every person in the courtroom with dignity, respect, courtesy, and sensitivity. The courtroom can be a scary and intimidating setting, especially for children and youths. It doesn't have to be. I want everyone to feel both physically safe and comfortable sharing their perspectives on matters before the court.

Is there anything else that you would like readers to know? Cases involving children and families are among the most important to come before our courts. I look forward to getting to know the kids and their families, and working with all participants in the youth justice and child welfare systems to keep kids safe and strengthen families.

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Northside Safe and Thriving Initiative and DAMA Provide a Splash of Art and Youth Voice to the Northside

By Sonya Sankaran

Dane Arts Mural Arts (DAMA), funded by the City of Madison Community Development Division, worked for over a year gathering voices from the Northside community to design and produce a mural on the Dane County Job Center entitled, "Thrive". The mural features large rubble that represents obstacles to thriving, while green vines and King Protea flower represent the strategies we use to overcome challenges. The Protea is the national flower of South Africa, and is known for thriving in difficult conditions. DAMA specifically worked with East High School, Sherman Middle School, Shabazz City High School and Vera Court Neighborhood Center to gather drawings and words that are featured in the mural. It was painted during the DAMA Summer Institute by youth apprentices at Vera Court Neighborhood Center. This community artwork highlights the courageous work being done in the Job Center by both providers and clients.



DAMA also worked with their apprentices to develop a design and brought artists from across the country to complete a mural for the School Road pedestrian tunnel. Northside youth created featured pieces that were installed on the west side of the tunnel and did the spray painting on the east side of the tunnel. Artist Lavie Raven, from Chicago, provided a spray workshop and guided spray painting in the tunnel with young people. DAMA also had Eli Lippert from San Francisco do a significant amount of work, including the beautiful stairwells, which feature blossoming trees, a UFO and Sandhill crane.

Many local residents passed by and through the tunnel thanking the artists and young people profusely for making it more beautiful and inviting. This publically funded, youth designed and produced artwork will have a continued impact in providing a safe route for countless community members to get "across" Northport Drive.

We hope you are able to traverse the tunnel to take-in this amazing community project.

