



**BELKNAP COUNTY**  
**CITIZENS COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**  
*"Making Changes Today For Tomorrow's Children and Families"*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Belknap County Citizens Council Members Begin Their Duties**

LACONIA: Twenty-one Belknap County residents, recently appointed to the new Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families, "had their first formal meeting on February 8<sup>th</sup> and are already busy," says the Council's Executive Director, Alan Robichaud. The Citizens Council is a new County department created by the County Commissioners to promote the well-being of children and families in Belknap County through comprehensive planning, advocacy efforts, development of new resources, public education, and the increased involvement of citizens.

Says Robichaud, "We are fortunate to have very well qualified representatives from all eleven communities in Belknap County."

He explains that Council members bring "unique skills" and "represent expertise" from a number of disciplines such as juvenile justice, business management, substance abuse, education, child development, family counseling, computer science, legal, health, law enforcement, and child development.

Council members include Richard Wallace from Alton; Cathy Apfel from Barnstead; Scott AndersEn, Peter Michaud, and Mary Warner from Center Harbor; Linda Brewer from Meredith; James Carroll, Wes Colby, John Irwin, and Andre Paquette from Laconia; Gil Schohan, Mark Condodemetraky, and Rep James Pilliod from Belmont; Rep. Alida Millham, Leo Sanfacon, Susan Smith, and Sheila Weeks

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from Gilford; Evelyn Auger from Sanbornton; Bob Rovella from New Hampton; and Kevin Washburn from Tilton.

The Citizens Council results from 18 months of preparation by members of the Belknap Juvenile Justice Initiative, an ad-hoc task force convened in April 2000 by Special Justice Willard Martin to recommend improvements to the County’s juvenile justice system. According to Robichaud the Belknap County Citizens Council is modeled after an exemplary program in Deschutes County, Oregon that functions under an umbrella called “Community Justice”, a philosophy that incorporates prevention strategies, restorative justice principles, and best practices in community development.

Robichaud explains that Council members will partner with the professionals who “provide services and programs on a daily basis for children and families in Belknap County”. He says that much of the future work of the Council will be guided by the development of a County-wide plan.

“We look forward to engaging community members as we move ahead with this process,” adds Robichaud.

Citizens Council offices are at the Busiel Mill in downtown Laconia. Those interested in participating in this new county program may call 528-3185 or visit the Council’s website at [www.bccj.org](http://www.bccj.org) .