



**BELKNAP COUNTY
CITIZENS COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

*“Helping Belknap County be a safe community where
children and families can live with dignity and respect.”*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“Community Justice” Institute Begins

LACONIA: In a first-of-its-kind partnership, the Laconia Campus of the NH Community Technical College and the Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families are co-sponsoring a credit-bearing, 15-week semester course on the concepts of “Community Justice”, beginning Wednesday evening, September 4th at the Community Technical College on Prescott Hill in Laconia. Appropriate for college students, professionals in the juvenile justice field, and the general public, “Evolving Community Justice”, is a series of presentations offered by more than two dozen County and State service providers, justice professionals, and knowledgeable volunteers who have “years of experience working in the juvenile justice system,” says Alan Robichaud, Executive Director of the County Citizens Council.

According to Robichaud, Belknap County has begun to use a Community Justice model for managing its juvenile offenders. He explains that “Community Justice” moves beyond “punishing the offender to embracing the principles of Restorative Justice”.

This approach prioritizes community safety, supports victims of crime, and holds the offender accountable for his or her actions. Community Justice is also prevention-oriented and engages community citizens by drawing on the best practices in community development.

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“This course outlines this approach in greater detail and is a wonderful opportunity for citizens, professionals and students alike to get an inside glimpse of a system that has been slammed shut to any but those directly involved,” adds Robichaud.

The first session on September 4th features Special Justice Willard Martin, a juvenile judge at the Laconia District Court, who will give an historical overview of juvenile justice practices in Belknap County. Each of the following weeks introduces a different aspect of the juvenile justice system - law enforcement; probation and parole; legal; schools; victim services; mental health counseling services; detention and confinement; the court process; judicial; court diversion; substance prevention, treatment and recovery; volunteerism; and community-based prevention - and explains how each component relates to the overall goal of Community Justice.

Interested individuals can enroll in this Community Justice series in one of three ways. The first option is as a three-credit elective course in Human Services at the Community Technical College, or as a transfer to a four-year college or university. The cost is \$378.

The second option is as continuing education units or to fulfill professional staff development requirements in education, corrections, or human services. These participants will receive a Certificate of Completion at a cost of \$189.

The third option is to attend one or more individual workshops at a cost of \$10. per session. Continues Robichaud, “These three options extended by the College give us flexibility and allow for all types of participants.”

For registration information call the Community Technical College at 524-3207. For additional information, call the Citizens Council office at 528-3185.