



Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families

One Mill Plaza Laconia, NH 03246

Tel: (603)528-3185 Fax: (603)528-3635 Website: www.bccj.org

FOR RELEASE

Scott AndersEn
Center Harbor

Linda Brewer
Meredith

Kim Campbell
Center Barnstead

James Carroll, Esq.
Laconia

Mark Condodemetraky
Belmont

Katy
Kannaly-DeCarteret
Sanbornton

Peter Michaud
Center Harbor

Alida Millham (*Chair*)
Gilford

Andre Paquette
Laconia

Rep. James Pilliod
Belmont

Nancy Porosky
Gilmanton

Robert Rovella
New Hampton

Leo Sanfacon
Gilford

Gil Schohan
Belmont

Susan Smith (*V.Chair*)
Gilford

Richard Wallace
Alton

Mary Alice Warner
Center Harbor

Kevin Washburn
Tilton

Alan Robichaud
Executive Director
ajrobich@bccj.org

Judith Buswell
Planning & Research
Coordinator
jsbuswell@bccj.org

CONTACT: Alan Robichaud or Judith Buswell, 528-3185

National Architectural and Community Planning Firm Visits Belknap County

LACONIA: Steven Bingler and Bobbie Hill of Concordia LLC, a nationally recognized community planning and architectural firm with offices in New Orleans, Louisiana and Pasadena, California, recently visited the Lakes Region to meet with more than 200 community stakeholders, leaders, and citizens from throughout Belknap County. The goal of this two-day conference was to explore alternative approaches to resolving the facility and infrastructure needs of communities. Titled “More Than Bricks and Mortar”, the visit was organized by the Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families in collaboration with the Center for Civic Engagement and was funded by a grant from the Lakes Region Charitable Foundation, a division of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, New Hampshire’s statewide community foundation.

Bingler, the founder of Concordia LLC, and his associate Ms. Hill introduced the “Concordia Model”, a comprehensive community engagement and systemic planning tool that integrates a community’s physical, cultural, social, educational, organizational, and economic assets and needs.

According to Alan Robichaud, Executive Director of the Citizens Council, a County Department created in January 2002, this event was in response to the “overwhelming call for Community Centers, something we heard over and over again during the Community Forums held last fall throughout the County.” He said that the Council’s task with those community development issues that relate to children and families is to bring “fresh perspectives, such as offered by Concordia LLC, so that we can perhaps identify a new path for resolving these types of challenges.”

The Concordia visit was divided into three sessions: the first session shared strategies for strengthening community planning within the county’s system of juvenile justice; the second,

- more -

introduced three national models of community support for youth developed by Concordia; and the third session involved a strategic discussion of how the Concordia approach might be utilized in Belknap County.

Robichaud adds, “It was especially exciting that many attendees had organized themselves into teams from nine communities in the County. Our goal now is for these teams to continue the discussion in their individual communities.”

He added, “While there are surely many ways to solve community problems, the one we want to avoid is asking taxpayers to pay more and more. Instead, we want to be frugal and creative with what we already have. in front of us.”

Award-winning architectural designs created by Concordia LLC have appeared in national publications such as *Architectural Digest*, *Progressive Architecture*, *Architecture*, *Interiors*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and the *Wall Street Journal*. Concordia’s projects span a wide range of building types and include the Jackson Brewery Festival Marketplace, the New Orleans Aquarium of the Americas, and the Henry Ford Academy. Current community projects are underway in California, Louisiana, Michigan, Ohio, Iowa, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. Concordia research alliances include the MIT Media Lab, Harvard University’s Project Zero, the University of New Mexico, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Thornburg Institute, the Appalachian Education Lab, and the West Ed Lab.

Steven Bingler, the founder of Concordia LLC, has written articles in a wide range of books and journals in the fields of urban planning, architectural design, education, public health, and smart growth. He is a frequent speaker at national symposia and conferences related to systems thinking and innovations in community-based planning and design. Bingler served as a special consultant to the Office of the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education for policy related to the design of schools as centers of community. A new book entitled [2076: A Democratic Revolution in Progress](#) is currently in progress.

Bobbie Hill, as the Director of Planning for Concordia, has organized many local and statewide networks and associations concerned with issues related to education, the arts, and community advocacy. In 1983, she founded the Museum in the Community, an arts and education center in West Virginia that has earned a reputation as a premiere cultural center.

In addition to the Lakes Region Charitable Foundation, resources for this project have been contributed by the UNH Cooperative Extension Services, a partner in strengthening NH communities.

Additional information is available by contacting the Citizen Council on Children and Families at 528-3185 or by visiting the Council’s website: www.bccj.org.