

Juvenile Justice Resource Directory Published

LACONIA: A large loose leaf notebook with specific information and brochures from thirty agencies that serve children and families in Belknap County is now being distributed to schools, agencies, courts, School Resource Officers, libraries, and other organizations in the County.

Prepared by Youth Services Bureau in coordination with the Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families, this project is funded by a federal OJJDP grant through the NH Division of Juvenile Justice Services (DJJS).



Devon Benson (2nd from R) presents a copy of the newly produced Belknap County Juvenile Justice Resource Directory to Randy Brough, Director of the Laconia Library (center). Ms. Benson, a staff member of Youth Services Bureau in Laconia, coordinated the development of this new Directory, assisted by Lisa-Marie Sposta (far L) and Denise Langlois (2nd from L), also employees at Youth Services Bureau. Sarah Fox (far R), Chair of the Belknap County Citizens Council and a resident of Sanbornton, represents the Citizens Council, a major partner in the development of this Directory. The Laconia Library copy is now available at the Library's main Circulation Desk

Trisha Burton, Director of Youth Services Bureau, explains that those who work with youth in the juvenile justice system and their families have a critical need for updated and accurate information about “who does what” in our communities.

“Part of our job is to refer families to places where they can find assistance with any number of issues they face, such as employment, substance abuse, transportation, or parent education. Without this information, we are sort of like a band leader without the music and the baton – it’s easy to miss a few beats!”

Recognizing that the Lakes Region does not yet have access to formal information and referral services, Youth Services Bureau adopted this directory project as a component of the Belknap County Family Mediation Program that they were also developing with NH DJJS grant funds.

A key feature of the Resource Directory is the color-coded Agency Service Grid that matches 41 different programs and services to the 30 contributing agencies.

“This Grid makes it easier to locate specific programs that families need,” says Burton.

The Directory also has contact information for Belknap County schools; School Resource Officers; libraries; recreation centers; mental health professionals; AA, Al-Anon, and Alateen meeting sites; and other advocacy and support groups. Each page of information is enclosed in a plastic sleeve “which allows easy updating with new materials,” says Burton.

The Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families assisted Youth Services Bureau in developing the concept and content for this Resource Directory. The Citizens Council is a county department that promotes the principles of Community Justice throughout Belknap County so that children and families can live safely with dignity and respect. As the Citizens Council is comprised of lay citizens who are appointed by the County Commissioners, “it does not provide any direct services”, says Alan Robichaud, Executive Director. “Instead our function is to organize networks of professionals and citizens who can do comprehensive planning, collaboration, and resource development, such as this Directory, the mediation program, and other unmet community needs.”

For more information, contact the Youth Services Bureau at 524-9457 or the Citizens Council at 528-3185.