

Uniform Database Developed for Juvenile Justice Providers in Belknap County

LACONIA: More than twenty professionals and volunteers in the county's system of juvenile justice

participated in a
June 20th (2007)

designed and
collecting,
reporting

The customized
instruction
for Belknap

consultants, all
State University,
grant funds

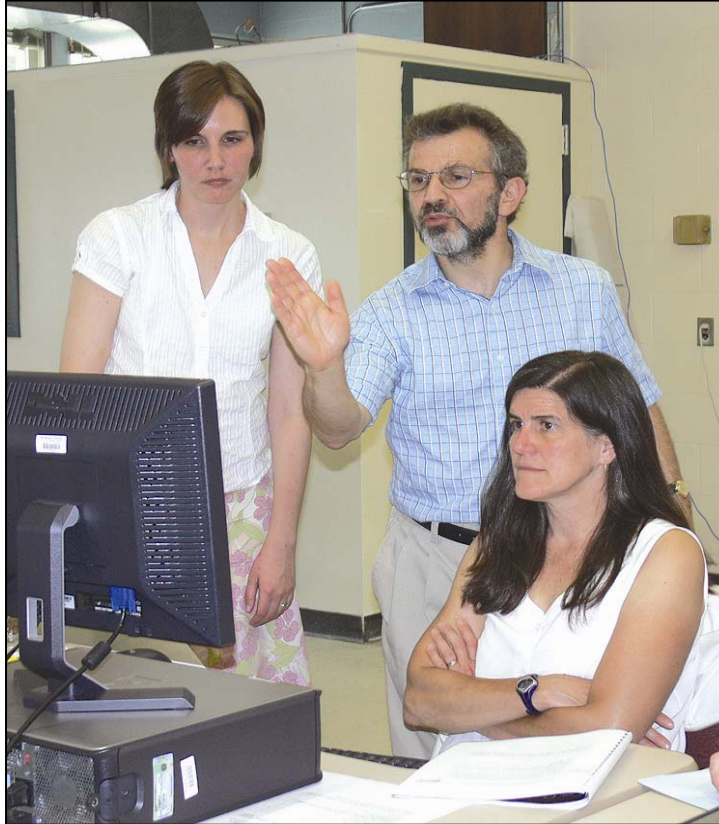
Belknap County

Children and

Families by the

NH Division for

Juvenile Justice



four-hour training on
in the use of a newly
automated database for
analyzing and

database and
manual was developed
County by the three

professors at Plymouth
hired through first year
awarded to the

Citizens Council on

Dawn Shimburg (seated) of the Youth Assistance Program in Tilton was one of more than 20 professionals and volunteers involved with Belknap County's juvenile justice system who learned how to use the new computer database designed for them by a team of PSU professors. Criminal Justice Professor Danielle McDonald, PhD, and Social Work and Psychology Professor Scott Meyer, PhD, are seen here working with Shimburg through one of the software applications.

Services State Advisory Council. The training was held in the computer lab at the Laconia Campus of the NH Community Technical College.

Belknap County does not operate a single system of juvenile justice. "Instead," says Alan Robichaud, Executive Director of the Citizens Council and manager of the grant-funded Project P.R.O.V.E. It! (*Planning Resources through Outcomes, Validation, and Evaluation, using Information Technology*), "juvenile offenders are handled by several different agencies and organizations."

The four primary providers include first-step court diversion programs, Youth Services Bureau in Laconia and the Youth Assistance Program in Tilton; the Belknap County Restorative Justice Program, a more intense court diversion program for older youth or repeat offenders; and the Juvenile Justice Probation and Parole Program operating from the Laconia District Office of NH Division of Health and Human Services for court-involved youth.

“As all four programs are at least partially supported by taxpayers,” adds Robichaud “our goal has been to better monitor outcomes by using identical parameters to track the progress of kids through these programs. We want to keep everyone, including taxpayers, informed as to the effectiveness of these services.”

Staff members and administrators from all four programs learned how to enter their program data and then how to query the database for answers to specific questions.

Robichaud explained that this collated information will provide the framework for the County’s second Report Card on its juvenile justice system, scheduled to be released in September.

“Having this new data tool is a huge accomplishment for those who work with juvenile offenders in Belknap County. Apparently we are the first in the state to use uniform indicators,” continues Robichaud.

The team of Plymouth-based consultants includes Stephanie Halter, ABD, and Danielle McDonald, PhD, both professors in the undergraduate and graduate criminal justice programs at PSU, and Scott Meyer, MSW, PhD, social work and psychology professor for undergraduate and graduate students at PSU.

According to Robichaud, All three consultants “bring us a combined expertise in data management, juvenile delinquency, victimology, staff training and development, and program evaluation design.” They have been working directly with the Citizens Council and the administrators of the four Belknap County providers of juvenile justice services for more than six months.

The Citizens Council is a County Department with a mission of promoting the principles of Community Justice so that children and families can live safely in Belknap County with dignity and

respect. The Council is composed of citizen representatives from throughout the County and meets together monthly in public sessions. For more information on the Council or this database project, contact the Council office at 528-3185 or visit www.bccj.org.

- 30 -