

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

Director's Report #13 ...01/01/03 – 01/31/03

Looking Back ~

Well it's been a while since sending out a Director's Report. This fall has been a busy time for the Council. We've continued our monthly meetings of the various coalitions and subcommittees of the Council, conducted a fifteen-week education series and course on Community Justice, convened six Community Forums covering eight communities in Belknap County, and held the first Annual Meeting of the Council. The Annual report, distributed at the Annual Meeting will serve as the 4th Quarter Report of the Council (Soon to be added to Council web site www.bccj.org).

The Emerging Community Justice series was completed on December 11 with matriculated students presenting their final projects. This series was very successful and over the fifteen week series, five individuals signed up as a three-credit course while 24 others attended as separate workshops. In total, 50 individuals, including presenters, from 18 communities attended and participated in the dialogue relative to Community Justice. On January 31, Council member Andre Paquette and I recognized the Community Technical College for its participation with us in this series. President Karen Grosz and evening division coordinator Charlie Plimpton were recognized for their assistance and cooperation during the series.

During the month of November, we conducted forums for the following communities, Alton, Belmont, Center Harbor and Meredith, Gilford, Laconia, and Sanbornton and Tilton. Nearly 300 individuals attended these forums giving the Council excellent information and insight into the issues and assets perceived by residents of the community. Through the cooperation of the UNH Cooperative Extension Services and several Council members who initiated Steering Committee efforts, numerous local volunteers and businesses contributed time and resources to making these forums a success. With three communities remaining, the Council will conclude its initial forums in the next few weeks.

Outreach

Annual Meeting ~ During January, the Council conducted its first Annual Meeting at the Belknap County complex. Alan Cantor, Vice President of Philanthropy at the New Hampshire Community Loan Fund, served as guest speaker. Numerous organizations and agencies were recognized with a Community Partner Award for contributing to the Council's efforts along with individuals being recognized with Community Associate Awards for contributing to such efforts as the Community Justice series, public forums, survey data-base development and other activities. (See attached list of all award recipients.). Deb Williams of Laconia was the 2003 Annette P. Schmitt Award winner for her outstanding volunteer efforts on behalf of children and families.

Another highlight of the Annual Meeting was the swearing in of new Council members and recognition of those individuals who served the Council in its inaugural year. Thanking them for their outstanding leadership and dedication to the Council, outgoing Chair, Gil Schohan recognized Kathy Apfel (Barnstead), Wes Colby (Laconia), Rep. David Russell (Gilmanton) and Sheila Weeks (Gilford). Swearing in the new Council members, Belknap County Commission Chairman Mark Thurston welcomed Beth Bascom (New Hampton), Kim Campbell, (Center Barnstead), Katy Kannaly-DeCarteret (Sanbornton), and Nancy Porosky (Gilmanton). With these appointments, all eleven communities of Belknap County are once again represented on the Council.

The Council extends its greatest appreciation to Gil Schohan (Belmont) for her leadership and commitment to serve as the Council's first Chair. Her endless hours and determination in directing the all-important foundation year of the Council is most appreciated. Gil joined the Council and the over 70 participants at

the Annual Meeting in welcoming Alida Millham and Susan Smith, both of Gilford, as this year's Chair and Vice-Chair respectively.

Community Technical College ~ Continuing to serve on the NH Community Technical College System Board of Trustees, I have attended meetings of the Trustees, the Human Services Advisory Committee of CTC Laconia/Berlin, and have met with the Deputy Commissioner of the system along with the President of the Laconia/Berlin campuses to discuss the development of a Center for Civic Engagement anchored out of the Laconia campus. These discussions have also included The NH Rural Development Council as a partner interested in establishing an AmeriCorp program in conjunction with the CTC System, Regional Planning Commissions and others. Ultimately, such a center would become a clearinghouse for service learning, community leadership development, volunteerism, and a host of seminars, courses and workshops such as the Community Justice Institute offered through the College this past fall.

Other Meetings ~ Other routine organization meetings attended this month have included Upstream (Annual Meeting), NH Rural Development Council Board of Directors, Domestic Violence Advisory Committee of New Beginnings, and weekly Rotary meetings. Additionally, the Council was represented at the Birth to Five subcommittee of the Laconia School District. Judy has served on the Search Committee for the Director of the 21st Century Grant and also serves on the Drop-out Prevention Committee.

I attended the Human Resources Committee of the City of Laconia and shared in discussion relative to the hospitality of welcoming strangers to our community. Strangers, in this sense, refer to those who live on the fringes of society who, because of social, economic, or behavioral differences, are not often included in their communities. In conjunction with this discussion, Denise Sleeper (Gilford) has begun to coordinate opportunities for welcoming the "stranger" into community life through setting up individual matching relationships, one-on-one among people primarily living in Laconia and Gilford.

Also attended was a gathering of parents and youth in Memorial Middle School who experience difficulty in academics. This meeting was conducted by SAU #30 and the Laconia School District as a measure to increase communication among parents, youth and school and to elicit and offer assistance in tutorial and other remedial strategies that will help kids stay and succeed in school. This invitation was extended by the Superintendent of SAU #30, Bob Champlin.

In a continuing attempt to reach out to the faith community, an interview was set up with Laura Livingston of Straight Ahead Ministries, a faith led group dealing with youth substance abuse issues. Straight Ahead Ministries operates out of Westboro, Massachusetts with Laura serving as outreach director for New Hampshire. Laura attended many sessions of the Emerging Community Justice series. She works out of the Northfield, NH area but covers all of New Hampshire.

Administration

Commission & Convention Meetings ~ The Council attended two meetings with the County Commissioners and one with a Budget Sub-Committee of the County Convention. Gil Schohan, Alida Millham and I requested a meeting with the Commissioners to ascertain our position in endorsing statewide coalition initiatives. Gil and Alida also participated with the Commissioners in interviewing our new Council members.

Alida Millham and Bob Rovella accompanied me to a budget presentation to the Outside Agencies Subcommittee of the County Convention. We explained our revised budget, line items and a new revenue line item for this year to accommodate anticipated grant resources.

Grants ~ Judy has been very busy providing technical support to other agencies' pursuit of grants. She provided substantiating data for the 21st Century grant (\$2M over five years) received by the SAU #30 Office; referred Genesis Behavioral Health to a professional grant writer with whom they submitted a grant (\$200K/yr for two years) to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; and continues to perform substantial grant writing assistance for a Mediation grant to be submitted in early February (\$40K) in conjunction with the Youth Services Bureau.

Director's Evaluation ~ The Council Chair, in conjunction with the Executive Committee and members of the Council, completed the Director's evaluation for the first year of Council operations. Apparently I will remain employed for the next year. ☺

Forum Follow-up ~ Now that many of the community forums have been completed, the Council will be scheduling the three remaining communities of Barnstead, Gilmanton and New Hampton to convene their forums and perform various follow-up activities. Dick Wallace has convened a follow-up meeting of the Alton Steering Committee and they will be addressing the Alton Selectman at an upcoming February meeting. Leo Sanfacon and Alida Millham, along with Polly Sanfacon and others, have scheduled a follow-up session for Gilford on February 19th. The intent is to return to each community and assess the outcomes of the forums and establish action steps that the Council can assist with in the future.

The Community Technical College has again stepped forward to assist the Council, this time in creating a data base for the accessing the surveys collected during the community forums. Kalene Coulombe (CTC/Laconia) has created an Access data base that will allow us to review responses from nearly 200 forum attendees. Surveys collected from upcoming forums will be added to this data base as well. Kalene was awarded a Community Associate Award for her contribution to the Council's efforts.

Priorities of Interest ~ Major themes that have emerged to date in the community forums and the various coalition meetings with the Council are: Parental Accountability, Substance Abuse and Juvenile Justice Reform. These issues will find their way into the Council plan and serve to focus our effort this next year.

Addiction Task Force ~ The Council has been approached by the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Recovery (DADAPR) to establish an Addiction Task Force to create a regional plan around substance use/abuse issues. Riley Regan, Director DADAPR is enthusiastic about the possibilities such a Task Force will have in working closely with his Division. This Task Force will be initiated in February with the organizational meeting slated for February 19.

Reclaiming Futures ~ I continue to attend monthly meetings of the Reclaiming Futures Advisory Committee. I will be attending a spring conference in Atlanta as the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation will again gather representatives of the eleven sites for an annual training and technical assistance session. Maria Gagnon, state project coordinator for the grant, was awarded one of the Council's Community Associate Awards for her assistance during the community forums. Maria facilitated many of the small group discussions.

Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC) ~ Andre Paquette has volunteered to spearhead the Juvenile Justice Reform Plan for the Council. Andre's dedication to the Council is surpassed only by his knowledge and expertise in the areas of program development and evaluation and research application to targeted goals. Through his leadership, earlier work of the Juvenile Integrated Information System committee will merge the data priorities into the work of system reform. Consistent accumulation and analysis of data will be necessary to determine the paths the county takes in reforming the juvenile justice system. The Council thanks Andre for the numerous hours he commits to this project.

Insights Into Industry ~ As part of the Community Development emphasis of the Council, I have met with Maureen McConnan, Director of the Insights Into Industry program of the Belknap County Economic Development Council to examine application of her program as an adjunct to reentry of youth and young adult offenders. I am arranging meetings with Maureen and representatives of the juvenile and adult correctional systems. An initial meeting with the Warden of the Lakes Region correctional facility has already occurred with others to follow.

Prevent Child Abuse New Hampshire ~ I attended a focus group convened this month at the District Office of the Division of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), sponsored by Prevent Child Abuse New Hampshire. This organization is collecting information from each area of the state to build an agenda for prevention. There was strong support for the community development aspects of what the Council is doing and many of the issues identified by the group as major causes of child abuse, echo the concerns the

Council has been hearing in recent forums. I have been asked to facilitate a domestic violence discussion group slated for later this spring. The discussion will target judges, law enforcement and practitioners concerned about batterers' issues and treatment needs.

Looking Ahead ~

Presentations ~ The Council has been asked to attend and present to the Regional Guidance Directors and School Administrators on February 6 at the Oliver Huot Regional Vocational Center. The topic will be Drop-Out Prevention. Judge Martin and I will also be presenting at the Judges' Conference on February 13 on the Community Response to Youth DWI. Jude Martin, Alida Millham, Judy Buswell and I will be presenting on the Council's activity at the Leadership Lakes Region Annual Series on February 20th.

Meetings ~ Monthly Council and committee meetings will occur as scheduled this month. Check the Council web site for dates and times.

Training Opportunities ~ A Mentoring teleconference will be held at LRGH on Friday, February 7 from 1:30 to 3:30. For more information, contact Miami Blake at 528-4048.

A training session sponsored by DADAPR will be held on February 18 from 1:00 to 3:30 in Concord. Entitled, *Out There: Selling Healthy Choices In a Buyer's Market*, the session will be held at the Holiday Inn. Contact Rob Hannon, DADAPR, 1-800-804-0909, Ext. 4726 for registration information.

Special Mentions ~

We continue to wish speedy recovery to our friend Holly DeWald (Youth Services Bureau) who was injured in an auto accident New Years' Eve day. Holly continues to make great progress and we look forward to her return.

We also wish to thank our growing list of supporters in all that we do. Without you...providers...citizens...community...we would not be able to achieve our mission "*to promote Community Justice in Belknap County so children and families can live safely with dignity and respect.*" Thank you!

Thought to Ponder ~

"I've learned.... That sometimes all a person needs is a hand to hold and a heart to understand."
Andy Rooney

Respectfully,

Alan

Appendices

Award Recipients

Appendix A

COMMUNITY FORUMS

* Community Associate Awards – Community Forums

Steering Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs

Alton
Belmont

Center Harbor/Meredith
Gilford
Laconia
Sanbornton/Tilton

Patricia Fuller
Tom Carroll, Pleasant Oberhausen,
Gretta Olson-Wilder
Joanne Plummer / Sandy Quinney
Sandy McGonagle, Cecily Quimby
Miami Blake, Bob Champlin
Carolee Longley, Julie Lonergan

Facilitation of Forums

UNH Cooperative Extension Services -
Judith Bush, Charlene Baxter, Charlie French, Frank Mitchell
Maria Gagnon – Reclaiming Futures

* Student Civic Awards – Community Forums

Terese Hopper –Alton
Anastacia Brewer - Center Harbor/Meredith
Lilah Donovan – Center Harbor – Meredith

* Community Partner Awards – Community Forums

Belmont Police Department Explorers
UNH Cooperative Extension

PUBLIC EDUCATION & COMMUNITY JUSTICE SERIES

*** Community Partner Awards**

New Hampshire Community Technical College / Laconia
DB Stamps Consulting Services
The Citizen
LRGHealthcare

*** Community Associate Awards**

Krista Marrs (The Citizen)
Charlie Plimpton (NH CTC/Laconia)
Kalene Coulombe (NH CTC/Laconia)
Norma Phillips (LRGHealthcare)

ANNETTE P. SCHMITT AWARD

Deb Williams (Laconia)