

Director's Report



2nd Quarter 2004

"Promoting Community Justice in Belknap County so that children and families can live with dignity and respect."

HIGHLIGHTS

Grant Activity...Council Workgroup Updates...Community Outreach Efforts...Coming Events

INTRODUCTION

The second quarter of 2004 has proven no less busy than any other period of the Citizens Council's existence. Like so many other agencies, we were deeply engaged in the grant writing process and continuing a healthy number of planning and development initiatives on behalf of children and families in Belknap County. As you read on, we think you will agree that there are many exciting opportunities emerging in our county and we hope to expand our outreach to involve an increasing number of citizens in our work as we move forward.

GRANT ACTIVITIES

Since March 2003, the Citizens Council has been working closely with a group of several partners to develop a response to the need for a one-to-one [mentoring](#) program for Belknap County adolescents. In collaboration with [Reclaiming Futures of NH](#), the Council has facilitated this workgroup and conducted county-wide interviews with school district and faith-based groups to ascertain current level of mentoring services. Our research confirmed there to be only small, select numbers of mentoring programs in existence through youth-to-youth and teacher-to-student relationship but no serious adult/child mentoring available. With this information, the workgroup invited conversation and eventual planning with [The Friends Program](#) of Concord, New Hampshire. A major proposal has been written by The Friends Program to the [US Department of Education](#) to fund a county-wide school-based mentoring program for youth in the 4th through the 8th grades. At this writing, 8 of 9 Superintendents representing 10 of our 11 communities have signed Partnership Agreements with The Friends Program to participate in this effort. All signs point to unanimous participation by the date the application is to be submitted. If approved, the grant will award up to \$200,000/year for three years and develop between 100 and 150 matches for youth. Numerous other letters of support were acquired for this application including from Belknap County Commissioners, District Court Judge Willard Martin, Senators Judd Gregg and John Sununu, and Congressman Jeb Bradley. If funded, this grant would hopefully begin in October, 2004. (See attached list of the Mentoring Workgroup members).

Another Mentoring grant was submitted and approved for The Friends Program from [the NH Division of Juvenile Justice Services](#). This particular grant will target 30-35 youth involved in the district court systems of Laconia and Franklin District Court areas over a three-year period. The grant is for \$60,000, \$40,000, and \$20,000 respectively over each of three years.

The Citizens Council's Workgroup on Balanced and Restorative Justice applied and was approved for a Juvenile Accountability Initiative Block Grant (JAIBG) for \$5156 consulting services with a national expert on Community Justice. [Dr. Gordon Bazemore](#), Director of the Florida Atlantic University's Community Justice Institute, was contracted for a day of technical assistance on June 25th. A group of 36 attendees representing all facets of the juvenile justice system and community representatives attended an introductory session by Dr. Bazemore at the Laconia Congregational Church. Key NH Division of Juvenile Justice Services officials were in attendance to participate in the dialogue with Dr. Bazemore and the Citizens Council's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee thus laying the groundwork for a countywide [integrated juvenile information system](#) among all stakeholders.

The Council also received approval for \$5,000 from the [New Hampshire Children's Trust Fund](#) to support a [Parent Leadership Series – Parents As Leaders in Society \(PALS\)](#), through this fall and next spring. The purpose of this series is to develop leadership among parent participants who will develop local networks to assist families needing support and services by understanding what resources exist within Belknap County, how to access them and how to mobilize citizens to support local needs. Key partners in this endeavor, in addition to the Children's Trust Fund, include UpStream, Project EXTRA/Laconia School district, One Mill Plaza, Inc. and a host of other agencies who have served as a planning committee for this effort. (See attached list of planning committee members).

The Citizens Council's proposal for an earlier grant to the [Policy Research Associates](#) of Delmar, New York was unsuccessful in being selected to participate in a pilot curriculum being tested through the National Institute on Mental Health. However, because of the nature and extent of collaboration among specified stakeholders as evidenced in our application, a Belknap County contingent was invited to attend a three-day technical assistance conference in Annapolis, Maryland from July to July 23. Conference planners selected seven sites from across the nation to invite to a planning forum titled: *Treating Justice Involved Adults with Co-Occurring Disorders in Rural Settings*. Co-occurring disorders in this instance means substance abuse and mental health disorders occurring in an individual who also find themselves involved in the justice system. Representing Belknap County in continuing the planning activities of the Addiction Task Force are Judge David Huot (Laconia District Court), Michael Coughlin (Genesis Behavioral Health), Jacqui Abikoff (Horizons Counseling Center), Sheriff Dan Collis (Belknap County Sheriff's Department), Joe Panarello (County House of Corrections) and Bob Johnson (citizen advocate). The Council wishes to acknowledge the grant writing efforts of Judy Buswell who assembled the team and wrote the application so Belknap County could participate in this amazing opportunity. The team will spend time at the conference, developing an action plan for how Belknap County might respond to this increasingly occurring issue.

The Council also received word on June 25 that the [NH State Advisory Group on Juvenile Justice](#) approved the third and final year of the [Belknap County Family Mediation Program](#). This final award given to the Citizens Council and contracted to the Youth Services Bureau is for \$28,940. The Council wishes to thank Holly DeWald, her staff and Board for their commitment to this and other programs serving youth and families. More important, we extend our deepest gratitude to the volunteer mediators, without whose assistance, there would not be a program.

Belknap County Sheriff's Department also wrote for and received approval to begin a [Youth Attendant Program \(YAP\)](#) for Belknap County youth detained for up to 72 hours while awaiting release to parents or other responsible adults. This effort received overwhelming support from the Belknap County Police Chief's Association as it will provide a cost-effective alternative to transporting youth to distant detention facilities which often leave smaller communities uncovered while dealing with distant commutes. Sheriff Dan Collis and Lt. Rick Batstone submitted this successful grant for \$23,200 which will begin in October, 2004. We are fortunate to have the law enforcement community that we do in Belknap County. Their continued collaboration has proven effective time and time again!

COUNCIL WORK GROUP UPDATES

Since the Council formulated its activities into work groups, beginning in January '04, Council members, staff and other partners have been busy implementing the Goals and Objectives stated in its plan entitled: *MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER: An Action Plan for 2004*. Here are some highlights of activities ~

Work Group	Activities
Balanced and Restorative Justice System (BARJ) WORK GROUP #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Workgroup is meeting with all Police Chiefs in Belknap County to understand local juvenile crime issues. Is intending to meet with area wide School Resource Officers (SROs). ✓ Continues to open communication between service providers and court personnel in the Franklin Court area and to open access to services for Sanbornton and Tilton area youth. ✓ Continues to develop juvenile integrated Information System through consultation with national expert and associates within NH DJJS. ✓ Convened a Data Management Group to begin analysis of information acquired within the juvenile justice system.
Asset-Based Community Development WORK GROUP #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provides coordination support to the Center for Civic Engagement. ✓ Assembled ten-person County team to attend ABCD training sponsored by Reclaiming Futures and supporting coordination of follow-up activities. ✓ Investigating partnership with Youth Venture in Belknap County. ✓ Council moderated Alton Information Exchange, continued contact with Sanborn Park neighborhood project and developing Council role in Barnstead.

Work Group	Activities
Strength-based Prevention Practices WORK GROUP #3	✓ Received NH Children's Trust Fund grant for \$5,000 to develop parent leadership series in collaboration with Upstream and others. ✓ Planning for <i>Strengthening Families and Communities</i> Conference ✓ Researching partnership with Youth Venture as a means to develop youth-driven social projects w/Reclaiming Futures.
Communications & Infrastructure WORK GROUP #4	✓ Work group has consulted with PR Specialist to formulate core messages of Community Justice for future communication and public awareness activities. ✓ Continues to oversee grants to develop/sustain infrastructure of Community Justice system. Over \$420,000 in grants have been written by or in conjunction with the Citizens Council in the first half of 2004. ✓ Continues to provide coordination and facilitation to Belknap County Addiction Task Force and providing planning support for the redevelopment of the Family Violence Prevention Council.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH EFFORTS

A wide array of speaking engagements and community meetings were conducted during the past three months. As time goes on, Council members are becoming more involved in community meetings and speaking out about issues impacting children and families. As these opportunities arise, Council members become better known within their respective communities and play a greater role in helping others to understand the systems of services and natural ways for people to get their needs addressed. Some of these opportunities have included participation as Moderator of the Domestic Violence Conference (4/2) and Alton Information Exchange (5/11); and attending the Safe Schools Retreat in SAU 59 (4/6); Gilford Elementary School staff meeting (4/8); NH Music Festival Retreat (4/19); Asset-Based Community Development training (4/17); New Futures State Strategies Summit (5/24); Lakes Region Community Services Council Annual Meeting (6/10); WEMJ broadcast (6/24); Barnstead school and community group meetings (4/19, 5/24, 6/28); and others.

At the invitation of Chief Tom Oetinger (Laconia Police Department) the Council Executive Director met with a delegation of the Moroccan National Security Force and discussed efforts at incorporating community policing practices into local law enforcement activities (5/11).

An orientation session for new Council members was held on May 18th. Since that time, our new Council members have taken a very active role in a number of Council initiatives and are quickly adapting to their new roles. Council members and staff continue to make themselves available for presentations, coordination of activities and events and facilitation of meetings and forums throughout all communities in Belknap County. For information on how we can help focus attention on issues that impact children and families, please call 528-3185 or e-mail us at ajrobich@bccj.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Be sure to mark your calendars for the following events and activities in the months ahead.

Multicultural Market Day	Sponsored by the Laconia Human Relations Committee	September 11, 2004
National Recovery Month	<i>Join the Voices for Recovery...Now!</i>	September / 2004
Upstream Fall Conference	<i>Strengthening Families and Communities</i>	October 16, 2004
Parent Leadership Series	<i>Parents As Leaders in Society</i> (See attached Application Form)	October 16, 2004 thru March 19, 2005

For more information about any of these events...please call the Citizens Council at 528-3185.

Respectfully,

Alan Robichaud

Attachments

Mentoring Workgroup Members

Alan Robichaud	Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families
Becky Levesque	UNH Cooperative Extension Service
Brian Loanes	Belknap County Restorative Justice Program
Carolee Longley	SAU #59 – Winnisquam Regional School District
Claudia Rein	SAU #59 – Safe School Coalition
Dan Kusch	Appalachian Mountain Teen Project
Deb Williams	SAU #30 – Laconia School District
Holly DeWald	Youth Services Bureau
Jack Terrill	Lakes Region United Way
Jay Apicelli	Juvenile Probation and Parole ~ Laconia District Office
Jim Doremus	The Friends Program
Judy Buswell	Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families
Maria Gagnon	Reclaiming Futures ~ New Hampshire
Renee Hill	CoRe (Community Response Team)
Shirley Glines	Project EXTRA ~ Laconia School District

Parents As Leaders in Society (P.A.L.S.) – Planning Committee

Alan Robichaud	Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families
Allison Sullivan	Belknap/Merrimack County Headstart Program
Andrea Bielf	Parent
Barry Armitage	Parent
Jim Pilliod, MD	Citizens Council member
Judi Taggart	UpStream
Judy Buswell	Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families
Katie Searle	Parent
Margaret Armitage	Parent
Marie Ross	SAU #30 ~ Laconia School District
Mary Alice Warner	Citizens Council member
Rasim Gusinac	Laconia Human Relations Committee
Ruth Castonguay	Citizens Council member
Sherman Ross	Parent
Sue Ayers	Parent
Tammy Emery	UpStream
Trish Burton	UpSwing Program
Umija Gusinac	Laconia Human Relations Committee