

# Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families

## Quarterly Report

## 1st Quarter FY - 2004

### HIGHLIGHTS

County Budget appropriation for Citizens Council...Annual Meeting Collaboration...New Council Members...Council Action Plan for 2004...Grant Activity and...more!

### INTRODUCTION

The first quarter of the new year began with a very successful annual meeting. This year's event was well attended with over 120 guests and 34 exhibitors from local programs. Teaming with Upstream, the Center for Civic Engagement and Reclaiming Futures/NH the Council was extremely pleased with the turnout and partnership that pulled this event together. Laura Nissen, Director of the Robert Wood Johnson Reclaiming Futures project served as keynote speaker and delivered a powerful message on the matter that there is value in every child. (See notes on Dr. Nissen's presentation - attached)

Special thanks go out to Judi Taggert (Upstream) for coordinating the exhibitors and to Katy DeCarteret and Kevin Washburn (Citizens Council) for their tremendous efforts in organizing the annual meeting. Individuals and agencies recognized for their participation in Council-related activities and events are include as an attachments to this report.

### ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

The Council received its first apportionment of county funding in its [FY 04 budget](#) passed March 16 by the County Delegation. Per agreement among the County Commissioners and Willard Martin, representing the Annette Schmitt Foundation, the Citizens Council would begin to receive county funding in its third year of operation and increased county funding in each consecutive year until FY 07 when the Council is fully funded by the county. County contribution to this year's budget was \$46,402. The Council thanks the Commission, the County Convention and the Schmitt Foundation for their continued confidence and vision in making Belknap County a safe and healthy place where children and families can live with dignity and respect. This tremendous contribution now and in the future shows that we value the children of families of Belknap County.

[Community awareness](#) continues to be a big part of the Council's work. Helping citizens throughout Belknap County become aware and responsive to the issues impacting the lives of children and families, is paramount to establishing community action and resolution to these issues. Requests for presentations and facilitated forums from multiple sectors throughout the county will continue to be honored by staff and Council members as were the following performed over the first quarter of 2004: Youth Services Board of Directors, Belknap County Police Chief's Association, Lakeport Women's Club, Memorial Middle School PTO, Leadership Lakes Region, Lakes Region School Administrators' Association, NH Children's Trust Fund, Parent Leadership Planning Committee and the Ester Peters radio talk show that will air on Easter Sunday. Additionally, staff continues to reach out and develop broader networks with other organizations throughout the county. Staff attended CoRe *After Hours* and CoRe Advisory Committee meetings in Meredith with Inter-Lakes students and community members; participated on monthly conference calls with the Robert Wood Johnson Reclaiming Futures Community Fellowship members across the country to share practices of communities involved with youth in the juvenile justice system; and attended sessions for professionals and families sponsored by ADAPT (Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Team) featuring Steven Andrews discussing "What Works with Young People." The spirit of collaboration, through communication and resource sharing continues to strengthen our abilities to serve our youth in positive, cost-effective ways and we want to thank all of our partners in working so closely with us.

We welcome [new Council members](#) to our ranks. These individuals have attended previous Council meetings to get a flavor for what lies ahead and what the expectations for serving their communities is as a Council member. Their commitment and willingness to serve children and families throughout the county speaks volumes and their selection and participation continues the commitment of the Council to assure thorough representation from all communities in Belknap County. The following individuals will represent their communities for the next three years: Christine Corrigan (New Hampton), Ruth Castonguay

(Laconia), Sarah Fox (Sanbornton) and Steven Fountain (Meredith). We welcome these devoted members of our community and look forward to their leadership contributions.

A new [operational structure](#) is being worked out in an attempt to become further connected to the community. The Council is organized by work groups aligned with the goals set forth in the Council's Action Plan for 2004 (see Council website [www.bccj.org](http://www.bccj.org)). Rather than maintain standing committees that meet monthly, these work groups attempt to increase the participation of Council members through active involvement in achieving outcomes. Council members have selected the work group that best relates to their interest and desire to serve their community. The work groups are designed to address Balanced and Restorative Juvenile Justice System; promote Asset-Based Community Development principles; promote Strength-based Prevention and Family practices; and develop a sustainable Integrated Community Justice Infrastructure for Belknap County.

## **PREVENTION**

[Grant activities](#) have dominated much of staff's time the past several weeks. One of our designated purposes is to seek out and acquire supplementary resources that support the mission of the Council. Much of our effort in this area is in support of the network of community and program services throughout Belknap County. Most of our grant writing assistance goes to support the work done by others by assuring a comprehensive array of services are available to children and families. Some of these activities have included the following:

A proposal to participate as a test site for a [Co-Occurring Disorders Curriculum](#) (National Institute of Mental Health -NIMH). This was done in collaboration with Horizons Counseling Center, Genesis Behavioral Health, Belknap County Sheriff's Office Belknap County Corrections, County Attorney's Office, and Belknap County Superior Court. This highly competitive proposal (only one issued nationally in this round of requests) was not approved but places the county in a good position for technical assistance and future eligibility considerations.

A proposal to develop a county-wide [infra-structure](#) in support of the Addiction Task Force through a grant from the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Recovery. This grant would have provided needed staff support to develop local networks, of people in recovery, working with community providers, schools, faith communities and citizens to create local responses to alcohol and other drug abuses. This grant was postponed mid-way in writing once it was found that the state would not fund the needed level of resources to make this work. This need area continues to impact the level of substance abuse among county youth.

Working closely with CoRe, the Inter-Lakes community response to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey of 2001 and 2003, an extensive proposal was submitted for a Drug Free Communities grant to the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). If funded (not known until Oct. 04), this grant will allow the development of a county-wide [prevention network](#) to curb the use of alcohol and other drugs among our youth. Led by the efforts of Renee Hill (CoRe) and Judy Buswell (Citizens Council), this proposal received fantastic endorsement from a host of agencies including SAU's #2, #30 and #72, the Lakes Region School Administrators' Association, Belknap County Police Chief's Association, Judge Willard Martin and others.

The Council is facilitating another grant collaborative for [mentoring](#) youth throughout Belknap County. Working with school districts, Youth Services Bureau, Belknap County Restorative Justice, Belknap Cooperative Extension, NH Reclaiming Futures and others, we have been meeting with the Friends Program to develop a proposal for submission some time in May to be funded, if approved, in October '04. This 3-year grant would propose to match no less than 100 county youth to adults throughout the county.

The Council submitted a proposal to the Division of Juvenile Justice Services for [consultation](#) with Gordon Bazemore, Ph.D. of Florida Atlantic University. Dr. Bazemore is a recognized national expert in the field of juvenile justice research, [program development and evaluation](#). Funding for this grant comes from the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention, Juvenile Accountability Initiative Block Grant program. At this writing, we understand that this grant has received preliminary approval by the Division of Juvenile Justice Services and awaits forwarding to the Governor and Executive Council for acceptance.

## **BALANCED AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE**

The Council submitted eleven recommendations to the [SAU #59 Safe Schools Coalition](#) on January 6, 2004. This concluded the request by the SAU to have the Council facilitate discussion and recommendations around multi-agency provider [interactions with youth involved with the court system](#). The Safe Schools Coalition is developing plans to implement the recommendations. Council member Kevin Washburn and Superintendent Norman Couture were instrumental in this endeavor and the Council appreciates the involvement of Judge Edwin Kelly of the NH District Court, representatives of the SAU school districts, Juvenile Probation and Parole Office, Belknap County Sheriff's Office, Police Departments of Northfield, Sanbornton and Tilton and especially community volunteers who gave so freely of their time to discuss these important community matters.

Members of the Citizens Council accompanied Sheriff Dan Collis in visiting two [Youth Assistance Programs](#) (YAP) to see firsthand how such programs are developed and operated. YAP is funded through federal grants through the NH Division of Juvenile Justice Services and provides short-term (24 to 72 hours) youth detention capacity to local law enforcement agencies. The Belknap County Police Chief's Association gave this initiative their full endorsement and we await receipt of the grant announcement in order to proceed with a Belknap County application. The Sheriff's office will take the lead on this initiative.

Katy DeCarteret, Council member from Sanbornton, will represent the Council on the [Child Advocacy Center Advisory Committee](#). This initiative is being led by Belknap County Attorney Lauren Noether and Barbara Belmont, Victim Services Director. This project will create a safe place for child victims of abuse to be interviewed by specially trained personnel using a multi-disciplinary approach to prevent further victimization of the child through the interviewing process. This effort is supported and funded through the New Hampshire Attorney General's Office.

The Council is also sitting in on initial discussions with a "wrap-around" advisory group assembled by Genesis Behavior Health to establish a method of interacting with youth whose needs demand multiple agency responses. Referred to as the [Family Action Support Team](#) (FAST), this service alliance is presenting two upcoming training sessions to acquaint providers with how wrap-around concepts work.

As a member of the Belknap County [Domestic Violence Advisory Committee](#), the Council has assisted in the planning of a day conference on April 2 in Meredith. The theme, "The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children", will bring to light the need to develop and coordinate a comprehensive approach to prevention, intervention and treatment for children victimized by domestic violence. Key sponsors of this event are New Beginnings, New Hampshire Catholic Charities, Upstream, and the Citizens Council on Children and Families.

Council member Leo Sanfacon, Gil Schohan and Andre Paquette, continue to serve on the [Belknap County Restorative Justice Advisory Committee](#) and have been working with Brian Loanes (Restorative Justice program), Mark Thompson (Attorney General's Office) and Jack Humphreys (JusticeWorks) to develop a [program evaluation and cost-benefit analysis](#) of the Belknap County Restorative Justice Program.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Continuing the reach out to the community and develop links to youth, families and neighborhoods the Council was pleased to be visited by a class of seventh-graders from Laconia's [Memorial Middle School](#). The class of youngsters provided an opportunity to share the work of the Council and address their questions as they were performing a class project in finding out more about their community. Thanks to Chaka Meredith and Sue Fernley for arranging this visitation by such a fine group of youngsters. Coupled with attendance at the recent [Leadership Lakes Region's Stand Up and Shout](#) devoted to honoring our youth, the Council is encouraged that the future leadership of our communities is in good hands!

Continuation with the [Center for Civic Engagement](#) will hopefully generate new mediums through which to develop community leadership skills in our youth and neighborhoods. Meeting with the organizers of Sanborn Park, Belmont citizen interests groups, the Alton Community Visions Team and others, gives the

Council perspectives in [community organizing and development](#) while helping local folks engage in their community. These encouraging signs show that there is great hope and abundance of resource within our communities if we know where and how to look for it. The Council remains committed to working with local people to develop strategies that strengthen community bonds with their families and youth. We are happy to respond to requests to facilitate such activities with local hosts.

Moving along nicely is a project with Upstream's Parenting Committee. A [Parent Leadership Series](#) is moving along well and a dinner forum was held at the CAP Family Center on March 25 when about 15 family members and agency representatives shared a meal and discussion in planning a leadership series for families. Joint funding from a number of sources will be sought to bring this series to fruition, hopefully next fall. Special thanks to Marie Ross (SAU 30), Allison Sullivan (Early Head Start), Diane Ouellette and many others for coming together to sponsor this forum.

The Council participated in interviewing candidates for the newly created Community Resource Specialist position with [Reclaiming Futures](#). Tym Rourke, formerly of NH Teen Institute, has joined Maria Gagnon with Reclaiming Futures, a project developing systems change in how youth involved with substance abuse and the court system will return to productive citizenship. Tym's primary function will be to develop community networks comprised of "Natural Helpers" that support youth in the Drug Court system. This team of energetic, creative and effective people will help the Council's efforts to develop appropriate community responses to the needs of local youth. We want to acknowledge Judge Edwin Kelly and Pam Neville of the NH District Court System and Maria Gagnon of NH Reclaiming Futures for their outstanding and continued support and leadership in this important venue of system change. Being a member of this Robert Wood Johnson project has brought many benefits to the work of the Citizens Council.

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The Council is exploring additional grant sources individually and with members of our numerous networks. We want to thank all of the partners in our many activities. This past year has been extremely rewarding in collaborating with our schools, service providers, local units of government, community consultants and families and youth in a variety of events, activities and forums. We look forward to continuing to build on these relationships so youth and families will feel empowered to build strong and healthy relationships with their communities.

### **THOUGHT TO PONDER**

["Know that no one is silent though many are not heard. Work to change this."](#)

[~ Karen Kerney](#)

Respectfully,

*Alan Robichaud*

**Notes from Keynote Speaker of Citizens Council and Upstream Annual Meeting Conference  
Provided by: Judy Meledandri, Foster Grandparents Program/Member of Upstream  
January 13, 2004**

Laura Nissen, Ph. D., National Project Director, Reclaiming Futures

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

As National Director of “Reclaiming Futures”, Laura Nissen is a strong advocate for kids involved in the court system—those who have a history of problems with drugs and alcohol. In her opening comments she stated that “New Hampshire is a very special place” in that the state has taken the initiative to identify and deal with the problems of youth.

**Introduction:**

Ms. Nissen gave an over-view of her talk. She would first state **3 basic premises**; ask 4 questions; share some examples; and end with a poem by Jeffery Canada.

The three basic premises stated by Ms. Nissen were:

1. There’s greatness in every child. Sometimes it is particularly challenging to find it, but it’s there. If we do our job well, we’ll bring it out.
2. There will be constant disruptions: funding problems; critics; politicians who try to hijack our youth agenda # 1 and # 2 complicate each other creating a source of excitement while at the same time aggravation. In spite of the setbacks we need to systematically bring out childrens’ greatness. It should not be random.
3. There is greatness in every community. Our challenge is “How do we bring out the greatness in the community in order to bring out the greatness in every child.?” How can we rise to the challenge?

**The four questions** we need to ask ourselves are:

What do kids need to grow up healthy and successful?

What is needed to bring out greatness in every child?

What is the community’s role?

How do we get more caring, committed adults involved? How do we take the challenge to the next level?

Many of the strategies and projects that are now in place are only the short-term solution. Community involvement is the long-term solution. How do we fill the gaps created by our current efforts?

Ms. Nissen continued by providing examples of interesting new projects around the nation.

I. **The Kansas City model – “Is it Good for Children?”**. A group of civic leaders asked community leaders to ask this question whenever deciding on major issues. “Is what we are about to do good for children? The question was visible on billboards, at community forums, and broadcasts.

II. **SHINE** – “Seeking Harmony in Neighborhood Every Day” – [www.SHINE.com](http://www.SHINE.com)

Getting kids involved in art, music, sports, which inspires them and builds their self-esteem SHINE clubs were established that did something positive for the community such as clean-up projects, trail building, etc.

- III. Harlem Children Zone - A 24 block area in Harlem w/ a youth population of 12,500 mobilized everyone in the community to focus on the needs of youth and develop educational, social activities and a network of resources to help troubled youth. 15 centers were established and a team effort involving the entire population.

Ms. Nissen continued by outlining a 9-step process for getting the community involved in embracing youth. Professionals (police, judges, counselors, therapists) are not the complete answer. For long-term results we need to involve the total community and build Professional/Community partnerships.

1. Assume strengths are present in youth, families, and communities. There are many unsung heroes.
2. Do a community inventory of pro-social opportunities. “What is our pantry of resources? “ e.g. treatment, jobs, mentors, artists, coaches, etc.
3. Prepare partner agencies for this expanded vision. Work with them and find out what they need to meet the challenge. Take the risk to approach businesses in new ways, such as offering internships.
4. Assess the strengths of youth in a different way. We tend to focus on the negative—how dangerous, how sick, how much treatment they need as if that is all they are. Turn it around to look at potentials and possibilities.
5. Match kids systematically to those opportunities that match their strengths.  
Ex. If a kid plays the saxophone, find a link—a new sax, a mentor
6. Track the results. When we do we often find kids exceed our expectations.
7. Mine our success stories. Use Madison Ave. techniques to disrupt the negative messages about kids. There’s POWER in the stories. Illustrate the compelling positive stories of redemption to over-ride the negative examples we hear/see every day.
8. Honor our strength based community advocates. Ex. Newspapers
9. Honor our strength-based systems- the infrastructures as well. —the justice system, therapists, professionals

Examples of Community Advocates:

Faith communities  
Libraries  
Parks and Rec. Depts.  
Artists-Musicians  
Athletic Organizations

Get kids involved in inventorying community advocates and finding out where the safety zones are; where there is access/no access; and where we can discover new assets to fuel change. **Tell a new story. “The story of redemption can be bigger than the story of failure”**

# CITIZENS COUNCIL RECOGNITION AWARDS 2004 RECIPIENTS

## Sanborn Park Initiative

<b>Community Partner</b>	<b>Community Associate</b>
SANBORN PARK ASSOCIATION	DAVID AND CHRISTINA MILES LAURIE MICHALEWICZ
BELKNAP COUNTY RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAM	BRIAN LOANES
LACONIA POLICE DEPARTMENT	CHIEF TOM OETINGER OFFICER AL LESSARD

## Belknap County Family Mediation Program

<b>Community Partner</b>	<b>Community Associate</b>
YOUTH SERVICES BUREAU	HOLLY DEWALD

## Juvenile Offender Locator Team (JOLT)

<b>Community Partner</b>	<b>Community Associate</b>
BELKNAP COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT	SHERIFF DAN COLLIS
JUVENILE PROBATION AND PAROLE ~ LACONIA DISTRICT OFFICE	JAY APICELLI

## Belknap County Addiction Task Force

<b>Community Partner</b>	<b>Community Associate</b>
DIVISION OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE PREVENTION AND RECOVERY	ROB O'HANNON

## Annual Meeting Volunteers

<b>Community Associates</b>
PAM WASHBURN CAROL WALLACE

## Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee

<b>Community Associate</b>
JOHN COOK