

# Director's Report



4th Quarter  
2004

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

## HIGHLIGHTS

This issue of the Director's Report brings forward many of the initiatives we've introduced to our readers in the past. The rapid flurry of grant development, followed by the endless waiting period to hear whether we were funded, has past and now we are in the throes of helping our partners rollout the implementation phases of these new initiatives. As in the past, if you would like any information on how to become engaged in any of these initiatives, please don't hesitate to call the Council's office at 528-3185.

## INTRODUCTION

Most discussion among all grants this quarter has centered on youth and making community connections. Whether finding adult matches as mentors, developing community connections for youth involved with Drug Court, dealing with the issue of Under-aged Drinking, or developing new approaches for Adolescent Treatment Initiatives, this quarter has seen much activity in the community/youth arena.

## INITIATIVES

The Citizens Council formalized an agreement with *Youth Venture NH* and asked Sarah Fox, Council member from Sanbornton, to oversee the development and implementation of a series of *“Dream It/Do It”* workshops leading to youth submitting funding proposals to start their own socially conscious businesses or organizations. The very first Belknap County Youth Venture was initiated by a young woman named Alice, from New Hampton. Alice turned her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration into a rolling Punk Rock concert at the Meredith Center Grange Hall on October 2, 2004. Over 120 punk rock enthusiasts came together to enjoy a day of their favorite music. Rocked by 18 different bands from across the state, New England and beyond, *Rocktoberfest* provided high-spirited, chemical free entertainment to many area youth. The concert was such a success that neighbors and Grange Hall management hopes this will become a regular activity. Other youth have since indicated a desire to plan future concerts and continue what appears to be an evolving tradition on the local entertainment scene. Our readers may recall earlier mention of grant assistance for Youth Venture initiatives from *Noyes Fiber Systems* (Belmont) and the *Alcoa Foundation*. A \$5,000 grant aided in the opportunity to bring forward this youth venture. To view Youth Venture New Hampshire information, visit <http://www.youthventure.org/index.php?tg=topusr&cat=31>.

Renee Rockwell (CoRe) convened a breakfast meeting of eight different drug and alcohol coalitions serving Belknap County. The group was treated to fresh cooked omelets and discussed ways to work together to target high risk behaviors including alcohol and drug abuse and addictions. The group, *Belknap County Prevention Network*, agreed to meet quarterly to share information and resources while preventing duplication of efforts for Belknap County youth. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday February 1, 2005. For more information on CoRe activities, visit their web site [www.interlakes.org/Core/html/](http://www.interlakes.org/Core/html/) .

Planning for the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Annual Convocation on Children and Families* has grown substantially this year and included three separate agencies conducting their annual meetings along with multiple vendors and sponsorship of the *Governor's Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment and Drug Czar* public Forum. Cosponsors of the Convocation included the Belknap County Citizens Council, UpStream and the Family Violence Prevention Council. More to come in next quarter's report.

The Council has been represented at regular meetings of the *Barnstead Community Resource Team* meetings and meetings with Selectmen to support the efforts of local citizens to assist their neighbors in times of need. This excellent example of grassroots organizing to help those in need has developed into a wonderful community endeavor led by key volunteers including Dawn McCartney, Teresa Scahill, Carol Tiede and Debbie and John Milano. Applying local assets and reaching out to neighbors in need, is a return to how we remember our communities of yesteryears. The spirit of giving is alive and well in Barnstead thanks to many citizens and community leaders. The Citizens Council will support a community forum in early summer sponsored by the Community Resource Team.

A series of sessions on *Under-aged Drinking* was held by the Laconia School District in conjunction with the Laconia Police Department and Council member Jim Carroll (also of PACT). PTAs and local booster clubs were convened to give input to the schools on ways to address this mounting problem within our county. In recent Youth Risk Behavior Surveys and through several sting operations conducted by Laconia Police, under-aged drinking is definitely viewed as an increasingly prevalent risk to our youth. The Council, working with CoRe, the Center for Civic Engagement and other prevention venues, will assist in keeping this issue in public view. We will be addressing several strategies the group has discussed including a "warm line" approach to warding off under-age drinking parties before they occur; publicly acknowledging local merchants who refuse to sell to minors; developing a public awareness calendar that can be placed in retail venues promoting adherence to alcoholic sales laws; and other activities throughout the county. For more information and interest in assisting in this venture, contact the Citizens Council at 528-3185.

The Belknap County Domestic Violence Advisory Council is being reorganized. A group of representatives from around the County have met as incorporators of the *Family Violence Prevention Council* and will elect officers at their first Annual Meeting on January 11, 2005. *The Mission of the Family Violence Prevention Council is to prevent the occurrence of family violence through education; community awareness activities and events; to advocate for batterers' education and intervention; and to promote safe and violence-free living environments for children and families throughout Belknap County.*

The Citizens Council has conducted the first of a five-part series on parent leadership. Known as *Parents As Leaders in Society (PALS)*, twelve highly-energized parents representing five communities in Belknap County have attended sessions on child development, adolescent behavior, role modeling, mentoring and impact of media on our youth. The series continues through March and has received high marks for presenting a positive means of engaging families in the resources and support services available in the community. The graduates of this series will go on to serve various leadership roles within their respective communities including assisting in the recruitment of future leadership participants. For more information on future PALS recruitment activities, contact the Council (528-3185). This series is provided in conjunction with UpStream and Project EXTRA of the Laconia School District.

*Drug Court* is now a reality for Sanbornton and Tilton youth seen by the Franklin District Court. Since its inception, Drug Court has been a special program assigned to designated district courts throughout the state (Plymouth, Laconia, Concord, Nashua). Youth assigned to Drug Court are mandated to see the judge and a treatment team on a weekly basis and are required to test clean on random drug tests throughout their involvement in the program. As Drug Courts are assigned to specific jurisdictions only, some Belknap County youth were initially unable to access this high-end sanction of the court and thereby unable to access certain treatment services. Through the work of a School/Court/Community Liaison subcommittee of the Safe School Coalition of SAU 59 (Winnisquam Regional School District), this issue has been resolved. The Juvenile Probation and Parole Officers may request a change of venue for targeted youth and can now refer such youth from Sanbornton and Tilton to the Laconia District Court where they may access the Drug Court program. Special thanks to Judge Edwin Kelly, Sandra St. Gelais and Jay Apicelli for their follow-through and making this a reality.

What is *Asset-Based Community Development* and why is it so important to children and families in Belknap County? *ABCD*, as we call it, is a process of identifying local assets (people, places and things) in ones community that can be applied to meet local needs. You will hear many people now talking about asset mapping and performing asset inventories to get a sense of what community resources are; who's got them; who needs them; how does one connect them? One of the prime movers behind the study of ABCD is John McKnight of Northwestern University's ABCD Institute. John and his associates have written extensively on this topic and have visited Belknap County numerous times over the years. Their ABCD manual series may be obtained via their web site: <http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcd.html>. Key principles of ABCD are identifying current assets, understanding what they are currently doing, and getting them moving in the direction you want them to go (i.e. solving local issues).

The Citizens Council recognizes the importance of knowing one's community (who, what, where, and when) so we can determine "how" we can link people with resources that may already exist in order to get needs met. In developing our understanding and application of ABCD practices, the Council has initiated or been a partner in several approaches to implementing these principles. In our affiliation with Robert Wood Johnson's *Reclaiming Futures* project, ([www.reclaimingfutures.org](http://www.reclaimingfutures.org)) we have introduced Bob Francis, faculty member of the ABCD Institute from Connecticut, to provide training to members of the Drug Court communities throughout New Hampshire. Since the initial training in April '04, Reclaiming Futures has developed ABCD groups throughout the state to assist in making connections for youth involved in the Drug Court system.

We are in the early stages of discussion with UNH Cooperative Extension in accessing Community Youth Mapping strategies by engaging youth in the mapping process (See [www.communityyouthmapping.org](http://www.communityyouthmapping.org)). The Council has developed an ABCD work group to explore opportunities to identify and apply local assets to the needs of children, youth, families, and neighborhoods.

We are working through the *Center for Civic Engagement* to build on community assets around the under-age drinking issue. With CoRe, we are introducing youth to prevention asset inventories and hoping that youth will assist in identifying local programs in schools and churches that will lead to future collaborative activities among community entities that reach out to youth. Council members are having more and more conversations with others in their communities to promote ABCD principles in all of our work together. And, through The Friends Program's Belknap County Mentoring Initiative

(<http://www.thefriendsprogram.org>) and Youth Ventures (<http://www.youthventure.org>), Council members are promoting community building relationships with the businesses, schools, churches and individuals in order to tap into community resources (people, places and things) contributing to the healthy development of our youth. What we need now is for the community to step forward and assist in making these programs successful. To learn more about ABCD and each of the initiatives of the Council, please contact us at 528-3185 or visit our web site at [www.bccj.org](http://www.bccj.org).

The *Belknap County Addiction Task Force* prompted a response to a request for proposals from *New Futures Adolescent Treatment Initiative* which has been subsequently accepted for further planning and implementation. Nine conceptual papers were accepted statewide and are proceeding with New Futures to develop comprehensive local responses to meeting the adolescent treatment needs in New Hampshire. Locally, a collaborative of the Citizens Council, Child and Family Services of New Hampshire, Genesis Behavioral Health, Horizons Counseling Center, CoRe and others, is developing an approach to screening youth in alcohol and drug abuse, referring youth to assessments indicated by results of screening, training professionals in the use of specific evidence-based screening, assessment and treatment models and conducting a comprehensive and coordinated case management system that places and tracks youth success in treatment services. For further information on the New Futures initiative, visit [www.new-futures.org](http://www.new-futures.org).

Belknap County Citizens Council's *Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee* and their *Data Management Team* have been developing benchmarks and performance measures for application to various components of the juvenile justice system. The purpose behind these measures is to be in a position to report to our communities, County Delegation and state policy makers the outcomes of our efforts to build an integrated system of graduated sanctions for youth here in Belknap County. To this end, a five-person team was invited to attend a three-day training session on Performance Measures in the Juvenile Justice System convened by the *American Prosecutors Research Institute* <http://www.ndaa-apri.org/>. A more complete report on the findings of this exciting opportunity will be reported in our next Quarterly Report. Thanks go to Council members Leo Sanfacon who brought this opportunity to the Council's attention and to Andre Paquette for serving as team leader for the group who ventured to South Carolina.

Members of various county initiatives were invited to present information to administrators, faculty and staff of the new *Prospect Mountain High School*. This beautiful new facility serves the educational needs for high school students of Alton and Barnstead and we thank Principal Russ Holden and Assistant Principal, Art Abelmann for extending an invitation to hear about some of the new programs and services that are available to their communities and students. The following programs were represented to nearly 30 members of the Prospect Mountain educational team: Dick Wallace (Council member from Alton) speaking on *Community Youth Activities*; Holly DeWald (*Belknap County Family Mediation*); Jim Hamel (*Youth Venture/NH*); Jim Doremus (*Belknap County Mentoring Initiative*); Renee Hill-Rockwell (*CoRe and Belknap County Prevention Network*); and Alan Robichaud (*Belknap County Citizens Council*). Our hosts and guests were welcoming and enthusiastic in hearing the potential these programs have for their students and we thank them for their hospitality and interest. We look forward to working very closely with Prospect Mountain High School, its students and its families!

## PRESENTATIONS THIS QUARTER

Representatives of the Citizens Council made the following presentations to local and state groups this quarter:

- UNH Cooperative Extension– Strawberry Bank Museum *Community Development and Coalition Building*
- Attorney General’s Conference on Child Abuse – *One County’s Response to Community Building*
- Belknap County Early Head Start – Belknap County Community Justice
- Lakes Region Business Showcase – Exhibitor Table
- New Hampshire Community Technical College, *Justice in the Community*
- Inter-Lakes Prevention Inventory training with CoRePLUS
- WLNH/WEMJ, Allan Harrison’s show re: the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Convocation on Children and Families
- PATV Channel 25 *Good News Travels Fast*, re: Parents As Leaders in Society.

## RESOURCE CORNER

1. *Reducing Underage Drinking, A Collective Responsibility*, Institute of Medicine, [www.nap.edu](http://www.nap.edu)
2. *Teen Drug Use and Juvenile Crime in New Hampshire*, New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies, [www.nhpolicy.org](http://www.nhpolicy.org)
3. *Building Communities From the Inside Out*, <http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/abcd/abcdpubs.html>

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

Please visit the Council’s web site to view and download our newest publications [www.bccj.org](http://www.bccj.org)

- Citizens Council Brochure
- Year of Progress – Annual Report

## NEXT ISSUE

Stay tuned for the next quarterly Director’s Report. We will give an overview of the *2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Convocation on Children and Families*, an event with growing interest and collaboration among agencies serving children, youth and families throughout Belknap County. The Convocation was attended by 250 people with 57 exhibitors presenting informational materials on their services. Many individuals and organizations were recognized for their outstanding achievement in service to our citizens. Highlights included our four special emcees, high school students from Inter-Lakes, Laconia and Prospect Mountain school districts, art work displays by area students, co-sponsorship of a public forum on substance abuse with the Governor’s Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment, and special award winner Dawn McCartney of Barnstead who has provided leadership in her community for the needs of elders, youth and children. Judge Willard Martin presented the prestigious Annette P. Schmitt *Unsung Hero Award* to Dawn at this year’s Convocation.

Respectfully,

*Alan Robichaud,*

Executive Director