

Director's Report



3rd Quarter 2005

"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 provides updates on several initiatives the Council has been working on over the past several months. It introduces new activities and events that continue to support the development of community justice through prevention, balanced and restorative justice, and community development strategies throughout Belknap County. And, it recaps a growing list of interactions with communities, organizations and individuals that support the mission of the Citizens Council. We invite the reader to contact the Council for more information and how to become involved in the many opportunities to engage with communities in support of children and families.

LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD PEOPLE!

We welcome [Rasim Gusinac](#) as our most recent Council member. A strong advocate within the refugee community, Rasim brings his passion for teaching, his understanding and mastery of multiple languages and cultures, and his compassion for serving his community to our table. We are very pleased he has selected us!

This year marks the first time in the Council's history that we will retire members due to term expirations. That's the bad news. The good news is that we have established a category of membership we call Council Associates. This means that for those members who wish to stay on in a supportive role, continuing to serve the Council in somewhat of an official role, we will continue to benefit from their efforts. Our first members actually came aboard during the early days of the Belknap Juvenile Justice Initiative, the predecessor of the Council. Many of these members remain involved in critical areas of the change we seek in Belknap County and we are pleased that they want to continue to see their efforts through to the end. Who benefits from this unselfish giving? We all do and we can't thank them enough! However, that does mean that we still have vacancies to fill and we are out recruiting new members all of the time. If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about us, please have them give us a call at 528-3185 and checkout our web site at www.bccj.org where an application may be downloaded directly. Join Rasim in becoming a member of the Council today!

VICTIM RIGHTS AND SERVICES

Progress continues to be made for youth and families in Belknap County. The Balanced and Restorative Justice Work Group has held a [victims' focus group](#) to gain insight into what more needs to be done to respond to the needs of people touched by juvenile crime. From this session, the Council will consider recommendations for building victims' rights and protections into the juvenile system. While a [victims' rights handbook](#) is being considered, other responses have already taken hold. The regional Juvenile Probation and Parole Office has brought on two new Juvenile Probation and Parole Officers. [Penny Short-Newton](#) is assigned to the Laconia Drug Court and [Meghan Sheehan](#) is assigned to a second shift and maintains an office at the Laconia Police. Meghan is available to meet at times and places convenient to victims that traditional hours were not able to accommodate. This is one response to meeting the needs of victims that exemplifies trends toward balanced and restorative practices in the juvenile justice system. Welcome to Penny and Meghan! In the very near future, victims will also have access to a [victim restitution fund](#). This fund is intended to reduce the time a victim has to wait to receive restitution for an offense committed by a juvenile in Belknap County. Funds to begin this program are being sought from local resources and will be replenished by offenders working to pay back the funds through contractual

requirements of youth programs in the county. We wish to acknowledge [Tom Swett](#) and [James Sawyer](#) of the [Laconia Police Department](#) for initiating this project.

UNDERAGE DRINKING UNDER ATTACK

[Underage alcohol problems](#) refer to the multitude of issues that arise from underage drinking. Not only does alcohol remain the greatest safety risk to our youth but its use creates other risks to adolescents and our communities. Vehicular deaths, life-long injury, unwanted teen pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and other negative consequences rise with a rise in the use of alcohol among teens. Working closely with law enforcement, schools, community leaders and more important, families and youth, the Council is engaged in several efforts to curb underage use and increase treatment of alcohol and other drug abuse and addiction.

Center for Civic Engagement ~ Underage Drinking Series

For example, working through the [Center for Civic Engagement](#), the Council is coordinating with several partners in a series of televised sessions on the Impact of Underage Drinking in Belknap County. The first session held in late spring, featured discussion on the *Scope of the Problem*. Presenters from [New Futures](#) (Jennifer Wheeler), [Teen Institute](#) (Ann Duckless), and the [Laconia School District](#) (Bob Champlin) addressed the prevalence and severity of underage drinking in Belknap County and the State of New Hampshire. On September 20, a second session was held at Laconia High School. Moderated by Peggy Selig ([Laconia Adult Education](#)) and Don Morrissey ([New Hampshire Community Technical College](#)) a panel addressed *The Impact of Underage Drinking on Education*. We extend our thanks to the following people for making this session a success: Ralph Dixon ([Belmont School District](#)), Meg Jenkins ([Gilford School District](#)), Jane Coplan, Dan Meeks, and Robert Sims all representing the [Lakes Region Facility](#). Special thanks to Robert Sims who shared his personal account of how alcohol changed his life and caused him to lose two of his best friends. Session Three: *Societal Pressures*, will be conducted at [Prospect Mountain High School](#) on Tuesday evening, October 25. Preceding the session will be a benefit spaghetti dinner provided by the local student organization – COOL ([Controlling Our Own Lives](#)). Please join us and show your support for this important anti-alcohol use campaign for keeping our youth safe and healthy. Each session of this series will be taped and assembled into a set of DVDs to be given back to schools and local libraries with the hope that communities will continue the dialogue among youth, families and community leaders and stop underage drinking problems from occurring in our communities.

At the Core of CoRe

The CoRe Coalition continues to educate our communities in being vigilant against underage alcohol use. Efforts to provide pro-social activities in which youth are encouraged to participate in chem-free choices are being provided across the county as the prevention grant continues to play out. CoRe Director Renee Rockwell and Outreach Coordinator Shannon Swett recently concluded a summer filled with engaging activities for some of our youth.

A Community Youth Mapping project involved twenty youth, ages 14 to 18, from Inter-Lakes and Prospect Mountain High Schools. These youth, accompanied by adult volunteers, surveyed over 500 local businesses to determine what opportunities they offer for youth. Employment, job company tours and a variety of other possibilities were recorded and will be entered into a data base to be mapped and used by youth, schools and looking to match interests and needs. During the course of the interviews with businesses, four youth mappers were offered jobs by the companies.



On September 23, Governor John Lynch thanked these terrific youth at a ceremony in Governor and Council Chambers where he presented a \$25,000 check from the Work Incentives Act grant to the Youth Mapping project at UNH Cooperative Extension.

Another initiative reported in our last Quarterly Report, the Media Enrichment project, ran for five days at the New Hampton School. Ten youth from the Teen Center of the Lakes Region participated in the development of a public service announcement and from that experience, two of the participants were offered full three-week scholarships to attend next summer's Performance Plus program (www.performanceplus.org) at the school. Congratulations to CoRe, the Teen Center, New Hampton School and especially our youth! GREAT job everyone!

Finally, Project Monitor has purchased magnets with the phone number and web contact so all residents in Belknap County can keep our youth safe by preventing underage drinking parties before they happen. To get your magnet, contact Renee (279-6162) or Shannon (875-3800, ext. 3206).

New Futures...New hope in preventing underage alcohol problems

New Futures released its [Recommendations for Success, New Hampshire's Strategy to Reduce Underage Alcohol Problems in N.H.](#) At a ceremony on September 21st, New Futures presented a series of state and community recommendations that set the stage for combating underage alcohol use. The Citizens Council will convene a stakeholders group in early October and develop local work plans to implement these recommendations throughout Belknap County. Thanks New Futures for providing the leadership in giving focus to this issue. Joining together, we can give it the attention it deserves.

TREATMENT + RECOVERY...A FORMULA FOR SUCCESS!

Adolescent Treatment is making its way into Belknap County. [Child and Family Services of New Hampshire](#) has hired [Jay Bachelder](#) to spearhead the [Adolescent Treatment Initiative \(ATI\)](#) project for Belknap County. Funded by [New Futures](#), this five year initiative plans to involve schools districts in early screening of adolescents so youth can access assessment and treatment at a much faster rate than in the past. Bringing treatment services to Belknap County through the collaboration of Child and Family Services and [Genesis Behavioral Health](#) is a long awaited goal and much needed. Jay is making the rounds to schools and beginning to implement the plan for treatment. Visit New Futures web site for more information on the ATI (www.new-futures.org)

Recovery Month Great Success!

September capped off an outstanding array of activities and events focused on substance abuse, addiction and importantly, recovery. Thanks to the leadership of [Ruth Castonguay](#), the organizational prowess of [Judy Buswell](#), and the energetic support of the emerging [Friends of Recovery](#), Belknap County was put on the *Recovery* map. Special thanks go to the [Belknap County Commission](#) for continued annual support of Recovery Month and signing a proclamation to that end. A petition with 230 signatures was collected and mailed to about 200 Legislative and Congressional representatives and others requesting support of recovery efforts in New Hampshire. It is great to finally see this issue getting the recognition it deserves and we are thankful to all our friends in and of recovery for helping us to understand and address this important issue.

[Voices of Recovery](#) are being heard across the county. [Horizons Counseling Center](#) has released a CD containing original music and voices of eleven of our friends and neighbors speaking out on addictions and recovery. These powerful messages help to break the silence of stigma so we can better understand the healing of recovery and the need for support. This incredible audio storybook is available through Horizons by calling 524-8005.

New Futures recently honored two local individuals for contributions to the prevention and treatment arena. [Jacqui Abikoff](#), Executive Director of Horizons Counseling Center received the Dr. Tom Fox Scholarship for Treatment for her leadership in the treatment and recovery community. Alan Executive Director of the Belknap County Citizens Council on Families, received the Dr. Tom Fox Award for Excellence in the pioneering efforts of the [Citizens Council's](#) comprehensive prevention and community justice. Also recognized was Tim



Center many years of Robichaud, Children and recognition for approach to Lena, Student

Assistance Program Coordinator with the Timberlane Regional School District. Tim received the Dr. Tom Fox Scholarship for Prevention. All three recipients are shown in picture with [Dr. John Bunker](#), President of New Futures.

18 PALS TO BECOME BELKNAP COUNTY LEADERS

October 15th begins this year's [Parents As Leaders in Society](#) (PALS) series. We will be welcoming 18 county residents for the five session series concluding in March 2006. Many of last year's graduates,

pictured here, have become actively involved in local, state and even national issues as a result of attending series. This year, our numbers have doubled and we look forward to tapping into participants' energy and passion for making Belknep County a safe and healthy place for children and families. Thanks to Kathy PALS, graduate of 2005, and Judi Taggart of UpStream, comprehensive agenda



planned. To kick the series off, UpStream's fall conference will feature Harvard faculty member, Julie Wilson who will discuss community response models to meeting the needs of children and families. We are extremely proud of our PALS graduates and welcome our new participants to the ranks of Belknep County leaders.

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 15, 2005 ~ [UpStream Fall Conference](#), Busiel Mill

Presenter: [Julie Wilson](#), Director, Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy, Harvard University

Topic: Strategies for meeting the needs of children and families...what Works and How Will We Know?

8:30 AM to 11:30 AM Open to Public; No Charge

October 25, 2005 ~ [Underage Drinking Series: Societal Pressure](#), Prospect Mountain High School

Panel discussion and Lakes Region Public Access - TV taping 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM

[Spaghetti Dinner](#) preceding forum to benefit [COOL](#) 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM

January 24, 2006 ~ Convocation on Children and Families: ["Soup-A-Bowl: A Recipe for Families"](#)

Keynote Presenter: [Judge Edwin Kelly](#), Administrative Judge for New Hampshire's District, Family and Drug Courts

Exhibitors, Youth entertainers, School Art Departments' designer Soup Bowls!

WE'VE MOVED!

We want all of our visitors to know that the Citizens Council's offices have moved to the River Level within the Busiel Mill. Please drop in to see us and let us know how we can assist you, your agency and your community in making Belknep County a safe community where children and families can live with dignity and respect.

THOUGHT TO PONDER

If quitters never win, and winners never quit, then who is the fool who said, "Quit while you're ahead?"

Respectfully,

Alan Robichaud

Executive Director