

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

## *Director's Report #10 ... 07/21/02 – 08/02/02*

### *Looking Back ~*

#### **Outreach**

The Evolving Community Justice series is progressing nicely although we did lose our coordinator of the project. Bill Wheeler regretfully had to rescind his offer to coordinate the project for us as unforeseen matters arose that will demand his attention during this time. To date, over 2,000 brochures for the series have been distributed and we understand that the Chamber of Commerce newsletter did go out recently with the insert we provided. Other good news is that John Howe (*The Citizen*) has indicated that he will assign a reporter to the project so we can get additional coverage for each session as they come up this fall. By now, each Council member should have distributed their packet of brochures to their local police departments, libraries, schools and other key areas around town. If you need more, please do not hesitate to call me. We should leave piles of these at various locations around town as well as do word-of-mouth promotion to as many people as possible so we can get a good turnout at each session. Don't forget, this is our first public education campaign and community justice and we should really try to pack the classroom.

Meetings with local agency leaders occurred with NH Child and Family Services, New Beginnings and Juvenile Probation and Parole during this reporting period. In order to meet the increased demand for additional supervision and accountability, Youth Educational Employment Services, Inc. (YEES), of Nashua, has been brought into the region to provide an intensive tracking and vocational response for youth served by Laconia High School and others in the region. In the short time they have been in the area, the Laconia High School Assistant Principal, Jim McCollum and Jay Apicelli have reported great results in responding to kids' needs.

The local JOLT (Juvenile Offender Locator Team) has been very active this past couple of weeks as the project gets off the ground. Jay Apicelli, JPPOs and members of the Belknap County Sheriff's Department have visited several county youth and the impressions have been striking. An agreement to expand the JOLT effort to the Laconia Police Department was also signed and the numbers will increase even more. The Council recognizes the fine efforts of Jay Apicelli, Sheriff Dan Collis and Chief Bill Baker (Laconia Police Department) for their outstanding leadership in this venture and to Judy Buswell for her all her work in acquiring the grant for the program.

The Council continues to facilitate a District Courthouse Exploratory Committee to determine needs and assets of the existing structure to serve current and future needs of the community. There is a great deal of interest in continuing the Courthouse in the immediate downtown area. Interests in this project include the City of Laconia, the State of NH Administrative Office of the Courts, the District Court, the Citizens Council on Children and Families, the Main Street Program, service agencies whose clients use the District Courthouse and others. At the most recent meeting, the group met with a representative of Rist-Frost Associates and heard about past assessments of the building; and a representative from Lavalley/Brensinger Architects of Manchester who will present preliminary conceptual sketches of the Courthouse at our next meeting.

As to the Mentoring Grant we apprised you of in our last report, we have learned that it passed muster from the Office of State Planning in terms of meeting the requirements for accepting funds should the grant receive approval from the granting authority. We further learned that there are four other competitive submissions from New Hampshire so this increases the stakes a bit. It makes the victory that much sweeter! We will keep you apprised of this grant and continue to wish PACT well in their efforts to receive approval.

The Director was invited and attended the Belknap County Firesetters Intervention Team Annual Meeting at Gilford Fire and Rescue. This is a fine little program that deals with youngsters caught for arson-related activities. It is a grassroots effort that is quickly gaining attention across the state and elsewhere. Their budget is small but they have been very successful in acquiring volunteers for their program but can use more involvement. If anyone would like further information about the program please contact Frank Latosek at 527-4758.

### ***Administrative***

Judge Martin was briefed on Council activities and discussed further needs in the county in order to prevent future placements. One major area of concern that Judge Martin feels is needed is intensive day programming. We have recently learned that the Becket School of Haverhill, NH is opening a 28 student alternative day school in the Tilton area. The school has accepted its first referral and should fill up fairly rapidly based on our discussions with several parties over recent months.

Advisory committee meetings were attended of the Reclaiming Futures and Reentry grants in Concord. Concerns we continue to reiterate to these groups relate to the need for resources to be granted for services before placement and before return to one's community. State agencies have been apprised of the need to target resources toward pilot programs established across disciplines as opposed to setting up a pilot in one part of the state that defines needs and then set up competing interests across the state which cause resources to be allocated away from the sustenance of the pilots. It feels as though the various projects work against each others.

Staff, along with some provider agencies attended a Bidders' Conference sponsored by the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Recovery (DADAPR). The purpose of this meeting was to describe for potential bidders, the process for submitting a grant to acquire funding set aside by the Governor's Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment. About \$147,000 is earmarked for Belknap County. We know there is some interest on the part of some local providers to submit a grant for these funds.

A meeting with Nancy Cook was held to review the Council budget for the remainder of the year. While we are in great shape, we need to straighten out some accounts which were carried over from the early days of BJJI. These will be corrected within the next couple of weeks.

Judy has put in a great deal of effort in redeveloping our web site. David Stamps has been given a complete update of information and ideas for design work to be performed over the next few weeks. When complete, our web site will contain revised information, removal of outdated materials, numerous links and an ability to keep the information current as time goes on.

Updates from the Juvenile Integrated Information System group is that we will contact Gordon Bazemore to assist in developing a structure by which we will collect, analyze and report on data coming out of county programs. We will also be considering ways to collapse some of the many meetings and committees into a consolidated Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee (JJAC). This forum would combine the Juvenile Crime Enforcement Team required by the JOLT program, the Restorative Justice Advisory Committee required by the Byrnes grant, the Juvenile Integrated Information System committee, and others into a structure that addresses the scope of juvenile services in the county. If accepted by providers and others, this forum would serve many purposes, focus consolidated energies toward the common needs of youth and families and reduce the number of meetings we all attend. We need to be sensitive to the programs where Directors are also practitioners and what happens when their time is taken up in meetings.

Congratulations to Bob and Carol Wallace and many other Alton volunteers for holding a very successful first dance for Middle Schoolers on Friday evening, August 2. This event came as a result of planning efforts Dick has led over the past few months, efforts that have in part have been prompted by Parents and Children Together (PACT). Congratulations and thanks Dick. That's how change happens!

## *Looking Ahead ~*

A gubernatorial candidates' forum will be held at St. Anselms College on Wednesday, August 7, from 11:30 to 1:30 PM.

The Council has invited a small group of providers and others to meet with Riley Regan, Director of the Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention and Recovery on Monday, August 12 from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM at the County Complex. The purpose for the meeting is to hear from Riley his vision and directions for the Division. With a new Governor and Commissioner of Health & Human Services taking office in the near future, it will be important for us to develop relationships with the various Divisions affecting youth and families.

The first and second weeks of the month are busy months for Council committee meetings. Please remember to call the office and let us know if you cannot attend the meetings.

Other local meetings will be held over the next couple of weeks. Bob Rovella and Chip Sawyer will get together to begin a discussion of identifying ways to activate local folks in the New Hampton area while Mary Alice Warner will be hosting a meeting with Chief Andy Fowler and other people in the Center Harbor area. Thanks to both of them for their efforts in setting up the beginnings for organizing their communities for future engagement with the Council.

## *Thought to Ponder ~*

Words inscribed over Gandhi's tomb

*"Think of the poorest person you have ever seen and ask yourself if your next act will be of any use to him."*

Respectfully,

*Alan*