

# Director's Report



## 2nd Quarter 2008

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

### **SYMPOSIUM FOCUSES ON NEED FOR INTEGRATED SERVICES SYSTEM**

The Citizens Council has been working for the past several months on developing a process for bringing together policymakers and providers to discuss the need for programs, policies and processes affecting children and families to work more collaboratively and to improve their effectiveness and efficiency. On June 5, a symposium brought close to 50 people together to hear from [John Tuell](#), Director of Child Welfare-Juvenile Justice Initiative for the [Child Welfare League of America](#). John has been a major [Foundation's Models for Change: Systems Reform in Juvenile Justice](#) the foundation for discussion at the symposium were [Ralph Morin](#), Guardian County adolescents, and [John Cook](#), consultant for the Council who reported Council Issue Brief entitled: *Perspectives on Child Maltreatment, CHINS, and Belknap County*. Released in January of this year, this Brief can be viewed on [www.bccj.org](http://www.bccj.org).



Keynote Speaker  
John Tuell

Systems Integration force in the [MacArthur Initiative](#). Also laying *ad Litem* for Belknap results of the recent [Juvenile Delinquency in](#) the Council's website at

Among key stakeholders in attendance were Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), [Commissioner Nicholas Toumpas](#) (DHHS), Nancy Rollins, Associate Commissioner (DHHS), and [Bill Finneman](#), [Director of the Division of Juvenile Justice Services](#) (DJJS). Belknap County lawmakers, Representatives [Alida Millham](#) and [James Pilliod](#) and [Senator Kathy Sgambati](#) attended along with several local program directors representing a cross-section of prevention, early childhood, intervention and treatment services. Results on the symposium are being reviewed and the Council will be contacting many attendees to play forward roles in a major systems change initiative in how children and families served, across multiple systems, are best served. Several oversight and working committees will be formed in the weeks ahead to perform further analysis and recommendations of the changes needed in today's fluctuating economic and regulatory climate. Eliciting active roles for youth and families in this process will be key to the success of any changes that will be forthcoming. For further information on this initiative, please contact the Council at 528-3185.



Commissioner Toumpas (Rt) discussing the day's topic with John Tuell (Lt).

The Council expresses it's deepest thanks to planning committee members [Rich Moed](#), [Betty Anson](#) and [Andre Paquette](#). We also wish to thank Director [Bill Finneman](#), [Kevin Smith](#) and [Pam Sullivan](#) of DJJS who offered planning and financial support in making this symposium available.

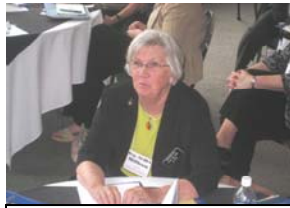
### **COMMISSIONER TOUMPAS ATTENDS COUNCIL MEETING**

New Hampshire Health and Human Services [Commissioner, Nicholas Toumpas](#) attended the Citizens Council meeting on May 16 to address his vision, mission and current priorities within his department. While painting a fairly bleak economic picture for constituents served by his department, Commissioner Toumpas raised hope that developing working relationships with organizations such as the Citizens Council will minimize the negative impacts felt by service recipients. Pairing fiscal austerity with innovation and local partnerships, the Commissioner stressed the importance of creative involvement at the local level.

Although New Hampshire has experienced financial blows in the past, the difference this time, as cited by the Commissioner, is having a triple effect. A combination of federal devolution onto the states, changing demographics, and the sagging economy are combining to make this budgeting cycle a major challenge for New Hampshire and other states. In commenting on making budget reduction recommendations to the Governor, the Commissioner stressed that there are no "sacred cows". The Commissioner reiterated his need for there to be innovative partnerships with local organizations to see us through, and beyond, the current fiscal crisis.

**GOVERNOR SIGNS HB1370**

House Bill 1370, an act establishing a pilot program for an integrated juvenile justice information sharing system in Belknap County, was signed into law by Governor Lynch on June 11, 2008. The law will take effect August 10, 2008; Referred to as Chapter 0178, this bill will allow identified programs in Belknap County to begin tracking youth in the juvenile justice system to see if programs were successful in reducing recidivism across programs. Although this narrowly opens the door to tracking youth over time, it is the beginning of developing firm measures of whether programs succeed in deterring repeat entry into the deeper end of to court-diverted, to court-involved, the court system. The Council wishes to thank sponsorship of the bill – Rep. Alida Millham Arsenault and Rep. Jim Pilliod as well as the support of the Division of Juvenile Fenniman and Kevin Smith of that office for legislative process.



Representative. Alida Millham

juvenile justice services. From court diversion, costs increase sharply once the youth enters the the following Belknap County delegates for their (primary sponsor), Rep. Judy Reeve, Rep. Beth Senator Kathy Sgambati. We also acknowledge Justice Services and specifically Director Bill their continuous support throughout the

**COMMUNITY JUVENILE JUSTICE AWARENESS**

Since recent budget reductions to local juvenile justice programs hit this past year, the Council has been reaching out to communities to give decision makers and voters a better understanding of the juvenile justice system, how it works, and how it works together. In 2001, the Belknap County Restorative Justice program was developed to offer a more intensively supervised, second-tier program bridging first-time offender programs (court diversion) and the more court involved, higher sanction of juvenile probation and parole. This “graduated sanctioned” approach offered Belknap County a continuum of services geared to keeping Belknap County offenders in Belknap County and preventing further placement in the deeper, more costly end of the juvenile system (e.g. probation, placement and parole). While the County has worked hard to establish early intervention and remedial programs to divert youth from a life of crime, we have begun to experience an erosion of our most cost-effective and efficient court diversion programs through reduction and, in some communities, elimination of municipal funding. This raises both programmatic (loss of critical early intervention) and financial (loss of least costly services component within the juvenile services continuum) concerns for our county. At a time when federal and state resources for juvenile services are being battered with budget reductions, frozen positions, and resource consolidations, there is mounting concern that juvenile probation and parole caseloads will increase and put further burden on taxpayers to fund more restrictive, more costly services and sanctions.

Working with our providers and community contacts, the Council has been supporting local efforts to bring awareness about the juvenile justice system, its programs, its people, and its costs. We are extremely pleased with the assistance we have received from our local District Office on Juvenile Services. Acting Supervisor, Dan French has provided case-specific costs for juvenile expenses as we have made our presentations, community by community. most informative and has opened communications considerably with local leaders We intend to continue this process throughout the year and hope that our will respond through increased financial support of these programs in the next Presentations over the past couple of months include meetings with the Alton Police City Council, Gilford Selectmen, Gilmanton School Administrators, and the Laconia Additional meetings are planned for July and August and we would be happy to group of interested citizens any time they convene. As our service integration underway, we intend to conduct additional listening sessions for families, youth and communities to elicit further information on improving system responses to our citizens. We wish to acknowledge the ongoing commitment of the following people to make these forums available in local communities: Alicia Morey (Youth Services Bureau), Lee Duncan (Gilford), Armand Maheaux (Laconia), Dick Wallace (Alton), Jim Carroll (Belknap County Attorney) and several others. As we continue our community outreach efforts, please contact us at 528-3185 if you would like to have a presentation made to your neighborhood, church, civic or school gathering. The Citizens Council is funded by Belknap County tax dollars. Please let us know how we can better serve our children, our families and you!



Dan French, NH DJJS

This has been and citizens. communities budget season. Chief, Laconia Kiwanis Club. meet with any initiative gets

**STATE ADVISORY GROUP ON JUVENILE JUSTICE SERVICES MAKES THIRD YEAR COMMITMENT**

The Council was alerted on June 25 that the State Advisory Group has recommended the Citizens Council receive a third and final year appropriation to continue its data collection and analysis work in Belknap County. This is great news as we move into the systems change initiative and will be working more closely with the Division of Children, Youth and Families. Our third year grant will bring in about \$21,000 and will help us to complete this first phase of data system development in Belknap County. Similarly, we received a site review by Pam Sullivan of the Division of Juvenile Justice Services on June 11<sup>th</sup>. Citing the accomplishments and compliance outcomes of the Council’s first two years of Project PROVE IT, Ms.

Sullivan found no outcome or reporting deficiencies in our grant obligations. We look forward to completing our third year of the grant and continue our contractual relationships with our consultants and the state.

**LACONIA PUBLIC LIBRARY SHARES RESOURCES...CONCERNS FOR TEENS**

At its June 27 meeting, the [Juvenile Justice Advisory Council](#) welcomed [Randy Brough](#) and [Diane Lynch](#) of the [Laconia Public Library](#). Randy and Diane shared information about the special Teen Library portion of their facility and program and also some of the recent issues they have confronted with older teens and young adults. Diane comes to the Library as Teen Librarian who has had previous experience working with youth in the Nashua area. The group offered several suggestions on how the problems may be dealt with and Diane and Randy will follow up on the recommendations.

**COUNCIL WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS**

While always looking for Belknap County citizens to join in the important work of the Council, we are fortunate to once again welcome two individuals who will help us to attain our goals for the future. At its June 20 meeting, the Council accepted the applications of [Pamela Kuczkowski](#) of New Hampton and [Ruth O'Hara](#) of Laconia. Pam joins us from the [Laconia Savings Bank](#) where she serves as a Market Analyst. Her experiences with marketing and information technology will be extremely helpful in our new service integration initiative. Ruth serves as Director of Obstetrics at [LRGHealthcare](#) and has a great depth of experience in the fields of child rearing, alcohol and drug addictions, and family support.

We could not do this work if not for the contributions, talents and passion of our Council members. Each brings her/his own gifts and experiences to the table and together they make up a deeply committed group of citizens concerned and committed to bringing about positive change for children and families. If you, or someone you know, are interested in learning more about becoming a member, please call us at 528-3185. We would love to chat with you about our work and how you can contribute to it!

**TANF FAMILIES GET A JUMP START**

A unique partnership between the [New Hampshire Employment Program](#), [Project Second Start's Working Futures](#) and the [Lakes Region Community College](#) supported a dozen local mothers in completing requirements for graduating from a tailored Business Administration program leading to employment. Since Medicaid reform began during the Clinton Administration, New Hampshire implemented a five-year life time limit on [TANF \(Temporary Assistance to Needy Families\)](#) benefits. This meant that individuals needed to get off welfare and into the job market or risk future support and assistance. The problem with the early TANF program was that there was little if any support to families who were trying to better their standard of living. Assistance with housing, transportation, healthcare, child care and the like was often unavailable to support people entering or returning to the workforce. When we first learned of this pilot project in Belknap County, the Council was asked how we could help develop on-the-job training opportunities for the dozen participants who would be completing an intense eleven week educational program at the community college. With over 200 TANF eligible participants in the Laconia Labor Market area, these 12 people represented the vanguard of a new pilot initiative. If successful, more people may have the opportunity to participate in similar programs in the future.

On April 8, the Council convened a luncheon presentation for local business and economic development leaders in the area. Presentations were made by the New Hampshire Employment Program and Working Futures. Participants represented the [Laconia-Weirs Beach Chamber of Commerce](#), the [Belknap County Economic Development Council](#), [Lakes Region United Way](#), [Leadership Lakes Region](#), [Laconia Savings Bank](#), [Boys & Girls Club of the Lakes Region](#), [LRGHealthcare](#), [Meredith Village Savings Bank](#), and others. Follow-up appointments were made between the presenters and participants and led to interviews and employment possibilities for some of the TANF participants. On May 16, eleven of these participants received their certificates in a formal graduation ceremony conducted at the Lakes Region Community College.

The Council wishes to thank the following people and organizations who made this opportunity available for Belknap County families: [Denise Sleeper](#) (Working Futures/Project Second Start), [Carol Varney](#) and [Gene Patnode](#) (NH Employment Program), and [Joe Halgren](#) and [Bill Wheeler](#) (Lakes Region Community College). Special thanks to [Paula Guade](#) and [Dawn Prescott](#) of [Woodside/Taylor Community](#) for always making their facility available for community use. Their gracious and professional assistance is always appreciated.

**ALCOHOL ABUSE...NEW HAMPSHIRE'S TOP YOUTH HEALTH RISKS**

As alcohol abuse among our younger generation continues to capture the headlines, many organizations continue to collaborate to reduce this killer of our youth. The Council continues its investment in three key efforts in Belknap County – prevention, treatment and planning.

As a member of the [Belknap County CoRe Coalition](#), the Council supports efforts to bring prevention resources into the county support of increasing environmental change - things the community and the marketplace can do to change the cultural

influences - affecting the way youth view alcohol and other drugs. We would like to acknowledge the work of Jena Vincent, Wendy Williams and all of the members of the Coalition, as they work throughout the year bringing positive anti-alcohol and anti-drug activities to our youth. CoRe has supported several youth forums and events over the years and will be submitting a major grant request to the federal government for continuation funds in the upcoming months. We hope that our communities will continue their support in keeping our youth free from alcohol and drug abuse.

Belknap County has been extremely fortunate to have received one of five adolescent treatment initiative grants awarded by the [New Hampshire Charitable Foundation](#) through [New Futures](#). While serving as the initial convener of area providers in planning the submission application, the Council has remained actively engaged with this effort since it began over three years ago. [Child and Family Services of New Hampshire](#) has been the guiding force in delivering evidence-based screening, assessment and treatment services under this grant. As this project is also based on “soft” resources, we will need to collectively support the continuation of these critical services to our youth as the grant winds down toward its fifth and final year. The Council is grateful to Child and Family Services of New Hampshire for their commitment to this initiative and we especially recognize the fine work of [Ryan Barrieau](#) and [Hilary Hartford](#) who operate the local project. These highly committed and talented individuals have filled the gaping adolescent treatment hole that had plagued the County for too many years.

Planning takes many shapes. While each program is responsible for its own planning in terms of defining specific outcomes associated with their priority areas of focus, the state’s Department of Health and Human Services, through its various divisions, has adopted a [Strategic Prevention Framework \(SPF\)](#) in conjunction with the federal government’s [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#). When the Council was asked to become a member of the [Lakes Region Partnership for Public Health \(LRPPH\)](#), we quickly saw the relevance between an organization concerned with the health of its citizens and the issue of substance abuse among our youth and young adults. Thankfully, so did they! A successful proposal submitted by LRPPH led to their designation as fiscal agent of one of ten SPF regions – in this case, Belknap and Carroll Counties. Through this process, LRPPH is responsible for the development of a strategic plan identifying goals for reducing underage drinking and reduction of binge drinking among young adults. Working with the state’s SPF epidemiologist, these two targeted areas were found to be the top concerns relating to alcohol and other drug abuse in New Hampshire. While the SPF staff is diligently developing its strategic plan (due for submission later this year) the community is asked to participate in a host of ways (e.g. participating in and conducting surveys and focus groups, becoming involved in the membership group, participating in future activities outlined in the plan) in order to make this plan effective for our communities. There are many ways to become involved and much to do. For further information, contact Lisa Morris or Colleen McDermott at LRPPH (528-2145). We appreciate the work of Lisa Morris, [Colleen McDermott](#) and [Katy Shea](#) in spearheading this massive project and also the leadership and support of [Michelle Ricco](#) and Melissa [Ritchings](#) of the [Department of Health and Human Services](#).

**THOUGHT TO PONDER**

*“Four steps to achievement: Plan purposefully. Prepare prayerfully. Proceed positively. Pursue persistently.”*  
William A. Ward

Respectfully,  
*Alan Robichaud*  
Executive Director

For more information on the activities, events and initiatives of the Citizens Council, or to apply to become a member of the Citizens Council, please visit our website at [www.bccj.org](http://www.bccj.org) or call us at 528-3185.

