

WHAT is Happening?

While major change takes time and working effectively in partnerships requires fresh new skills, the Citizens Council and all its many partners that use this approach can say:

- In 2002, agencies helping children and families could not confront “systems issues, but TODAY teams and coalitions can see the big picture. Program gaps are being addressed.
- In 2002, 14 County youth were confined at the YDC in Manchester, but TODAY YDC is used only as a last resort
- In 2002, there was no Family Mediation Program in Belknap County, but TODAY there is one!
- In 2002, youth served by the Franklin District Court did not have access to the same services as other county youth, but TODAY all county youth can benefit from such programs as Drug Court and Restorative Justice.
- In 2002, there was no collaborative approach around substance abuse prevention, treatment, and recovery, but TODAY there is public attention and a network of agencies and constituents focused on this critical public health issue.
- In 2002, we could not report the results of our juvenile justice efforts, but TODAY we can.
- In 2002, there was no adult-youth mentoring program in the county, but TODAY there is!

BELKNAP COUNTY CITIZENS COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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BELKNAP COUNTY CITIZENS COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Promoting Community Justice throughout Belknap County so that children and families can live safely with dignity and respect.

Making The Difference



**A County Department located at
One Mill Plaza Laconia, NH 03246**

WHO, WHY, and WHAT is the Belknap County Citizens Council?



The principles of Community Justice guide the work of the Citizens Council

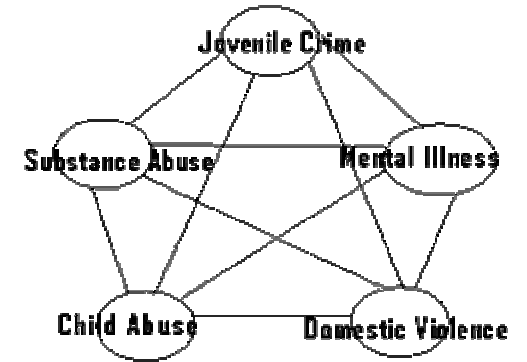
Council members are citizen volunteers and elected officials from every community in Belknap County selected through an application process by the Belknap County Commissioners.

The mission of

the Citizens Council is to promote Community Justice in Belknap County so that children and families can live with dignity and respect. The Council realizes its mission through:

- Active citizen participation
- Comprehensive planning
- Advocacy and collaboration, and
- Stewardship through governance, funding and advisory roles within the County

As the principles of Community Justice flourish best in an environment of collaboration, sharing, open dialogue, and a coordinated exchange of information and ideas, all initiatives and activities of the Council are planned and carried out in partnerships with others.



Web of Challenges Facing Many Children and Families in Belknap County

Problems such as those illustrated in this web do not exist in isolation. Instead, these concerns are best seen as a “web” of interconnected challenges. Addressing one concern means looking at *all* concerns. Taking this broad view requires teamwork and partnerships.

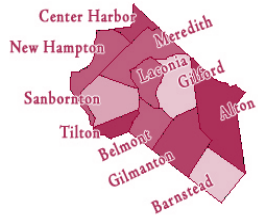
The Citizens Council, because it is not a “service provider”, is very suited to convening networks of professionals and citizens to work on identified issues and problems.

“The Citizens Council has the ability to bring people together...to cement that coming together ... More and more people are looking to the Citizens Council for solutions to issues.”

Kathy Keller, Executive Director
New Beginnings Women’s Crisis Center

What Have Communities Told Us They Need?

Community Forums, organized by the Citizens Council, were held throughout the County in the fall of 2002. Citizens attending these forums identified ways to improve their communities so that children and families could live safely with dignity and



respect:

- Juvenile Justice reform
- Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment
- Meaningful Youth Activities
- Parental Accountability
- Mentoring
- Improved Communication

Addressing These Needs?

The principles of Community Justice guide the work of the Citizens Council. Community Justice has three components and is an approach to community problems:

- Use restorative, rather than retributive justice
- Prioritize prevention-oriented programs
- Build on strengths and assets, rather



Council activities and work are based in the values of Community Justice...

Community Justice builds strong and united neighborhoods and communities.

Balanced and Restorative Justice

The principles of Balanced and Restorative Justice guide how criminal acts are handled by the justice system and the community. These principles include:

- Emphasizing the needs of the victim and the safety of the community
- Holding the offender accountable
- Preparing the offender for a safe and productive return to his or her community



The Council promotes Community Justice through the Belknap County Citizens Council Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, (JJAC) a very active network of juvenile justice professionals, law enforcement, judicial and court representatives, service and sanction providers, educators, prevention professionals, and lay citizens. In 2005, JJAC, led by a Council member:

- Developed indicators for measuring and reporting outcomes of the county's system of juvenile justice
- Began a process to create a system-wide resource guide
- Created a restitution fund for victims of juvenile crime

- Began a process for inter-disciplinary training for professionals and citizens in the principles of Balanced and Restorative Justice
- Provided networking opportunities for those working with court-involved youth

Community Development



As the Citizens Council does not provide direct services to children and families, it does not compete with other agencies for limited funds and resource. Instead it is in a unique position to see the interconnection of all problems and to bring people together around issues and ideas. Council work centers first around identifying and developing strengths and assets of its partners, including individuals, agencies, organizations and neighborhoods and then offering support and direction that moves participants to a mutual goal.

Community development strategies include:

- Improved communication
- Emphasis on strengths rather than deficits

Prevention-Focused

The Citizens Council supports the growth and development of prevention-focused strategies and activities in Belknap County through its time, energies, and resources. In 2005, the Council supported prevention programs and networks



such as:

- UpStream / Lakes Region United Way
 - * Parents As Leaders In Society (PALS)
 - * Professional Networking and Education
- The Friends Belknap County Mentoring Initiative
- The CoRe Prevention Network
- Belknap County Family Mediation Program
- Belknap County Family Violence Task Force
- Greater Lakes Child Advocacy Center
- Belknap County Alcohol and Drug Addiction Prevention and Recovery Work Group
- NH Friends of Recovery—Belknap County Chapter