

Annual Report Card Distributed By Citizens Council

LACONIA: The fourth annual Report Card to the community issued by the Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families will be inserted in the October 7th issue of The Citizen. It will also be mailed out by Foster's Publishing to every household in Belknap County on October 16th. Prepared by the Citizens Council with assistance from dbstamps consulting, this year's report describes progress towards Restorative and Community Justice goals. It expands on the three previous Report Cards issued by the Council between 2006 and 2008.

Says Alan Robichaud, Executive Director of the Citizens Council, "This new report shows that juvenile offenders are doing very well in several areas, such as completing community service requirements and paying back the losses they caused their victims.

"However, it also shows us we need to get more victims involved so that kids can really understand the harm they have caused."

The Citizens Council collaborated with four separate agencies that manage juvenile offenders to prepare this report. These agencies are Youth Assistance Program, Youth Services Bureau, the



The 2009 Report Card to the Community, prepared and distributed by the Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families, will be mailed to every household in Belknap County by Foster's Publishing in mid-October. It will also be inserted in the October 7th issue of The Citizen newspaper. Reviewing the distribution process for the Report Card are (L-R) Alan Robichaud, Executive Director of the Citizens Council; Judith Buswell, Report Card Editor and Planning and Resources Coordinator for the Council; and Tony Limanni from Foster's Publishing.

Belknap County Restorative Justice Program, and Juvenile Probation and Parole, Laconia District Office, NH Department of Health and Human Services.

Each of these four agencies completed a uniform Case Closing Form for every juvenile exiting their programs during 2008. Data from these 2008 Case Closing forms were compiled

and interpreted by Stephanie Halter, PhD, a Professor of Criminology at Plymouth State University and a consultant for the Council since 2006. Halter's work has been funded through a grant to the Council from the State Advisory Council of the NH Division of Juvenile Justice Services.

Halter and her consulting partner Scott Meyer, PhD, Professor and Chair of the PSU Department of Social Work, have guided the Council's juvenile data enrichment initiative since it began in 2006. The two consultants, along with an associate, helped to design the Case Closing Form, converted it to a computer database, and then trained staff of the four agencies in its use.

According to Robichaud, "We now have the capacity to collect juvenile offender data and compare trends. The information we gather suggests program changes and modifications so that the best outcomes are possible for our youth."

This new Report Card also describes other Council-led projects related to restorative justice, community development, and prevention, all components of Community Justice whose principles guide the work of the Citizens Council.

The Report Card includes an update on the Belknap County Systems Integration Initiative, an effort to better coordinate a variety of services and programs that address the needs of children and families. Also highlighted are the prevention accomplishments of six Council partners.

"Be watching your mailboxes for this annual update from the Council. It will arrive as part of a packet of other circulars," adds Robichaud. "Belknap County is the only county in New Hampshire and one of only a handful of places across the country that captures consistent performance measures and then shares them with the community as we do".

For further information, contact the Citizens Council at 527-2432 or ajrobich@bccj.org.