

2009 Brings Change to the Belknap County Citizens Council

LACONIA: The Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families, a department of County government, has recently moved to new office space. The two person staff that leads a council of fifteen volunteers who live in Belknap County recently vacated their office space in the Busiel Mill in downtown Laconia and moved into the Belknap County Cooperative Extension wing in the County Complex located at 36 County Drive in Laconia.

According to Alan Robichaud, the Council Executive Director, the Council negotiated the move in conjunction with the Belknap County Cooperative Extension Services as a cost-cutting measure and worked out the logistics with the “very accommodating staff at the County Cooperative Extension”.

Says Amy Ouellette, Office Administrator at Belknap County Cooperative Extension, “We are happy to share space with the Citizens Council. It’s a natural fit because three of our staff already collaborate with them on a regular basis.”

As well as acquiring new office space, the Citizens Council recently welcomed three new Council members: Pamela Kuczowski of New Hampton, Ruth O’Hara of Laconia, and Deborah Rosato of Gilford.

Pam Kuczowski, a Market Analyst with the Laconia Savings Bank, graduated from Southern NH University in

Manchester, NH with a BS in Business Administration. She also earned a Diploma from the American Institute of Banking. Ms Kuczowski has been sharing her knowledge of data, statistics, and process mapping as part of the new Systems Integration Initiative of the Citizens Council.



Incoming and outgoing leadership of the Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families include (L-R) newly elected Council officers: Gil Schohan, Vice-Chair, and Andre Paquette, Chair; Sarah Fox and Emily Clement, Outgoing Chair and Vice Chairs; and Deborah Rosato of Gilford, a newly appointed Council member. Missing from the photo include two additional new Council members, Pamela Kuczowski of New Hampton and Ruth O’Hara of Laconia.

Ruth O'Hara, Director of Obstetrical Services at LRGHealthcare, began her career as a labor and delivery nurse at Lakes Region General Hospital. She holds an Associate Degree in Nursing and a BS degree from NH College in Manchester. Ms. O'Hara who has raised five children uses her skills as a nurse, director, and parent to promote the work of the Citizens Council. Ruth is a member of the Prevention Work Group, one of many Council-sponsored networks that support and develop Council projects and activities.

Deb Rosato, the Executive Director of the Prescott Farm Audubon Center in Laconia, has a long history as an educator and administrator of early childhood programs. She holds M. Ed. and CAGS degrees from Plymouth State University. Most recently Deb served as the Program Coordinator and Early Intervention Special Educator with Lakes Region Community Services. Ms Rosato is also a member of the Council's Prevention Work Group.

The fifteen-member Council recently elected new leaders at their Annual Meeting in December. Andre Paquette of Laconia was elected Council Chair and Gil Schohan of Belmont as Vice Chair. Mr. Paquette, a retired school superintendent, has been involved with the Citizens Council since 2000 when he was a member of the Council's predecessor, the Belknap County Juvenile Justice Initiative. Gil Schohan, a resident of the Lakes Region for forty-five years, is a business partner with Evroks, a bridge construction company located in the Lakes Region. Gil is a longtime community volunteer, most recently as a member of the Board of Trustees of LRGHealthcare. She has also been a Council member since its early beginnings in 2000.

The Belknap County Citizens Council is a county department that leads planning and coordination efforts among agencies and organizations. A primary planning goal is to reduce the numbers of youth requiring the attention of the juvenile justice and child protection systems, as these services are expensive for the taxpayer. More information is available at the Council's website, www.bccj.org or by calling 527-2432.