

Council Quarterly

January-March of 2009

Belknap County Citizens Council on Children and Families
36 County Drive, Laconia, NH 03246

(603)527-2432 www.bccj.org

Systems Integration Initiative Underway

Eric's Story

To his parents, fifteen-year old Eric seemed angry and "out of control", bringing anxiety and confusion to the entire family. In desperation, the parents filed a CHINS petition against Eric.

After investigation it was found that Eric did not fit the CHINS criteria. Instead, the family agreed to accept family services and to pay for them on a sliding scale basis.

Mom revealed that she had been sexually abused as a child and as a result she suffered Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Noises and activities of a normal family life often brought on painful flashbacks, leaving her depressed and anxious. When Eric acted out, mom took his behavior personally and retaliated, screaming back at him when she felt disrespected. Unfortunately, family members did not understand that mom's responses were directly connected to her own childhood experiences, rather than their behaviors. Her verbal attacks continued. Eric began stealing from others.

Mom's insurance only allowed her twelve sessions, far too little to deal with forty years of mental illness that was now affecting all her children. Eric who continued to act out was now very close to court involvement.

Eric's younger brothers could not get the help they needed. Mom and dad's work schedules made it very difficult for either of them to drive these boys to their own appointments. After missing several times, the mental health agency replaced Eric's family with others from their very long waiting lists.

Now, the family had no access to these needed services and the situation at home got worse. Mom explains, "We are the working poor. My husband and I work long hours and my mother watches the kids when she can, but we live on the edge."

This family deserves better. They are working hard to support their family. Yet, their family life is rapidly deteriorating, due in large part to current policies, procedures, and protocols that are barriers to the assistance they need.

The Citizens Council is leading a services integration initiative that will make it easier for families like Eric's who struggle daily to stay together amidst numerous challenges. This complex project now involves more than sixty local, county, and state individuals, including state and local agency administrators, professional providers, and interested citizens. They meet regularly in committees to review data, policy, and processes used by agencies serving children and families.

Council members have leading roles in this initiative. **BETTY ANSON**, a Child and Family Therapist and a Council member, is the Chair of the Leadership Executive Committee that has planning and management functions. The Data Management and Analysis Committee is co-chaired by Council member, **PAM KUCZKOWSKI**, a Market Analyst at Laconia Savings Bank, and **SANDRA LOOMIS**, the Director of Operations at FamilyStrength. This committee is identifying and aggregating relevant data. A third Council member, **RICH MOED**, a consultant in healthcare admini-



stration, has played a leading role since the project began in late spring of 2008. Rich is Chair of the Administrative Oversight Committee that is responsible for laying out the strategies for the initiative and communicating with top administrators of state-level divisions and departments.

A number of Council partners are equally committed to the work of this systems integration initiative. **MAGGIE PRITCHARD**, the Executive Director of Genesis Behavioral Health, is Chair of the Legal and Policy Committee. This committee is reviewing legal mandates, policies, and protocols that either enable or prevent collaboration among providers. **LISA MORRIS**, the Executive Director of Lakes Region Partnership for Public Health and **JACK TERRILL**, Director of Lakes Region United Way, are co-chairing the Resource Inventory and Assessment Committee. This group is cataloguing the programs and services currently operating in Belknap County.
(Continued on Page 4)

Seeking Stable Funding for Juvenile Justice Services

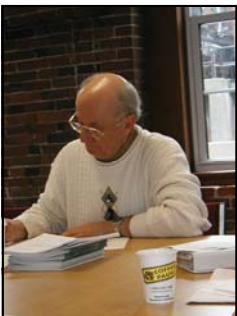
The origins of the Citizens Council are deeply rooted in the belief that juvenile services in Belknap County should be coordinated and linked together, focused on prevention, have secure and stable funding, address the needs of victims, build competencies in young offenders, be family-centered, and be placed squarely in the community to the greatest extent possible. In December 2008, the Council prepared and distributed an Issue Brief titled "Belknap County Juvenile Justice at a Crossroads". This report outlined the history of juvenile services in Belknap County and described how the current system measures up to the principles of Restorative Justice and the goals listed above.

As municipal support of the local

juvenile court diversion programs continues to decline in the current economy, the Council has been searching for strategies that would stabilize revenue sources for the three non-profit and county managed juvenile diversion programs operating in Belknap County. The Council has been working closely with the County Commission, juvenile justice providers, and the state to secure long-term funding for these programs.

The Citizens Council and its partners are a part of the discussions held by the newly appointed state committee (HB 342) that is studying existing NH court diversion law and how it matches national trends and best practices.

Update: Council Funding



Staff and leaders of the Belknap County Citizens Council are currently exploring all funding options that will continue Council activities into 2010. Included in this search are state, federal, corporate, and foundation grants.

Andre Paquette, Council Chair, facilitates a recent meeting of the Citizens Council.

P.S.U. Data Consultants Assist Council Work

Plymouth State University Professors, **STEPHANIE HALTER**, PhD in the Department of Criminal Justice and **SCOTT MEYER**, MSW, PhD in the Department of Social Work, are in their third year of a data enrichment project with the Citizens Council.

"The evidence...(suggests) that ... in Belknap County diversion programming appears to cost substantially less per youth than formal court processing."

Halter & Meyer

Funded through a grant from the NH State Advisory Group on Juvenile Justice, Halter and Meyer have recently completed a cost comparison study of Court Diversion vs. Formal Juvenile Court Processing. The duo worked with 13

"Helping Kids To Hope" released by the Council

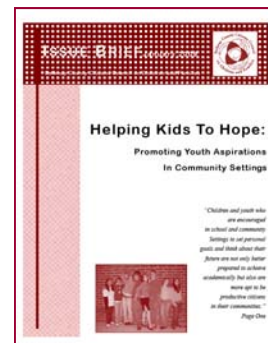
"Helping Kids To Hope" summarizes outcomes of focus group discussions held during 2008. Four groups of people who live and work in Belknap County talked about the role community life plays in fostering the personal and social growth of children and youth. Led by the Council in partnership **DAN KUSCH** of the APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN PROJECT, this year-long project was a response to the efforts of local schools, especially the Laconia School District, to incorporate personalized education in their classrooms.

This Issue Brief includes comments from all four focus groups:

- Agriculture, Horticulture, & Forestry
- Faith-Based

- Early Childhood
- Banking & Real Estate

A follow-up activity is planned for May.

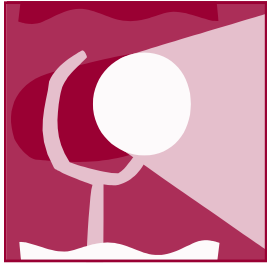


"Helping Kids To Hope", the third Issue Brief from the Council, was released in January 2009. All Council Issue Briefs are posted on the Council's website at www.bccj.org.

local and state professionals from juvenile justice, judicial, court and law enforcement. This report will help citizens and policy makers understand the variety of costs associated with juvenile delinquency.

The consultants report that "diversion programming appears to cost substantially less" and suggest "the Council utilize diversion for first time offenders and repeat status offenders". They say that more research is needed on repeat offenders. See www.bccj.org

Spotlight on Council Members



COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Betty Anson ~ *Laconia*
- Laurie Belanger ~ *Gilford*
- Emily Clement ~ *Laconia*
- Sarah Fox ~ *Sanbornton*
- Rasim Gusinac ~ *Gilford*
- Amy Hall ~ *Belmont*
- Pam Kuczowski ~ *New Hampton*
- Sandy McLaughlin ~ *Gilford*
- Richard Moed ~ *Gilford*
- Andre Paquette (Chair) ~ *Laconia*
- Jim Pilliod, MD ~ *Belmont*
- Ruth O'Hara ~ *Laconia*
- Nancy Porosky ~ *Gilmanton*
- Micheline Roy ~ *Laconia*
- Gil Schohan (Vice Chair) ~ *Belmont*

Staff:

- Alan Robichaud, Executive Director
- Judith Buswell, Resource and Planning Coordinator

36 County Drive, Laconia, NH 03246

PAM KUCZKOWSKI

Pam is:

- A Market Analyst with Laconia Savings Bank
- Co-Chair of the Data Committee of the Belknap County Services Integration Initiative
- Very skilled in organizational planning and processes
- Busy mom of three children
- Lives in New Hampton
- Actively involved in her community



Pam Kuczowski (R) enjoys a Red Sox game with her son, James who is eleven.

Pam is organized, resourceful, creative, and dependable. She has made valuable contributions to the Belknap County Systems Integration Initiative.

NANCY POROSKY

Nancy is:

- A Portfolio Manager for Nova Information Systems
- Member of Families Advocating Substance Abuse Treatment, Education and Recovery (F.A.S.T.E.R.)
- Co-founder/facilitator of a parental peer support group, Turbulent Teens
- Recently represented NH Friends of Recovery/F.A.S.T.E.R. at a national forum. The goal of this forum was strengthening families as valued system partners and advocates in shaping policies, programs, and practices around substance use, addiction, treatment, and recovery



Nancy leads a group discussion.

Nancy is persistent and passionate in her support of parents struggling with substance abuse issues in their families.

MICHELINE ROY

Micheline is:

- A Registered Nurse at LRGHealthcare with special interests in substance abuse and mental health issues
- The Chair of the Council's Prevention Work Group
- Effective community liaison who actively promotes prevention as a way of life
- Coordinated recent focus groups to identify the vital roles community members can play in the lives of children



Micheline facilitates a Prevention Work Group meeting.

Micheline is a leader but she is also a very effective member of the team. From distributing flyers, to hosting Council displays, to providing hospitality for the Council, Mich is ready to help!

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING...

About the Systems Integration Initiative

- “I would like to take this opportunity to formally share with you and the Council how proud I am to have been invited to participate with the Belknap County Citizens Council in their Systems Integration Initiative. The vision and commitment of the Council to this initiative is truly impressive and inspiring.”

Sandy Loomis, Director of Operations, Family strength

- “...these factors...highlight the importance for the excellent and expedited progress that is being made through the leadership of the Belknap County Citizens’ Council and its local and state partners. I was remarkably impressed with the growing ranks of collaborative partners at our January meetings which served as a testament to the increasing interest and commitment to this work.” *John Tuell CWLA Director, Child Welfare-Juvenile Justice Integration Initiative & Senior Consultant*

About the Juvenile Justice Advisory Council

- “(Having) a Boys & Girls Club as part of the re-entry program at the Sununu Youth Center happened because of my attending JJAC (Juvenile Justice Advisory Council) meetings and learning about the needs of the kids and families in Belknap County. Thanks to ...the Citizens Council!” *Dianne Zawacki, former Director of the Lakes Region Boys & Girls Club*

NEWS AND UPDATES:

COUNCIL HAS NEW OFFICE SPACE



Winter view from new Council office at the County Complex.

During the Christmas Holidays, the Council office moved to the Cooperative Extension Wing in the Belknap County Complex. Many thanks to Extension Educators and their office staff for their warm welcome and continuing support.

2009 BELKNAP COUNTY CONVOCATION ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES CANCELED—SCHMITT UNSUNG HERO AWARD SCHEDULED FOR MAY

For a variety of reasons this year’s Convocation family event has been canceled. However, one of the highlights of Convocation—the presentation of the Annette P Schmitt UnSung Award—is still happening. Be watching in May when Judge Willard Martin will present this award to someone who has worked quietly behind-the-scenes on behalf of children and families. Previous winners include Leo Sanfacon in 2008; Wendy French in 2007; Dave Tryon on 2006; Dawn McCartney in 2005; Paul Plimpton in 2004; and Deb Williams in 2003.

A Closer Look...

Agencies making a Difference for Children and Families in Belknap County



GREATER LAKES CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER

Child abuse is a community problem that Belknap County challenges through interdisciplinary cooperation. The GLCAC works with teams of professionals from DCYF, law enforcement, prosecution, victim advocacy, medical mental health, education, and other s as appropriate.

GLCAC is committed to coordinated investigations and effective utilization of existing community resources to reduce trauma and promote healing of victims and their caregivers while holding of-fenders accountable.

Childhood victimization represents a widespread, serious social problem. Research shows that child abuse is often linked to later involvement in the juvenile and criminal justice systems. (*Widom & Maxfield, 2001*)

140 children were served in 2008 at this Belknap County facility.

(From Pg 1) S.I.I. Underway

John Tuell of the Child Welfare League of America who leads similar integration initiatives across the country is the project consultant. The work of this systems integration initiative is funded in part by grants from the NH State Advisory Group on Juvenile Justice and the National Training and Technical Assistance Center.