



# On Balance

A publication of Dane County's Department of Human Services  
and the Dane County Juvenile Court Program

June 2015  
Volume IX, Number 2

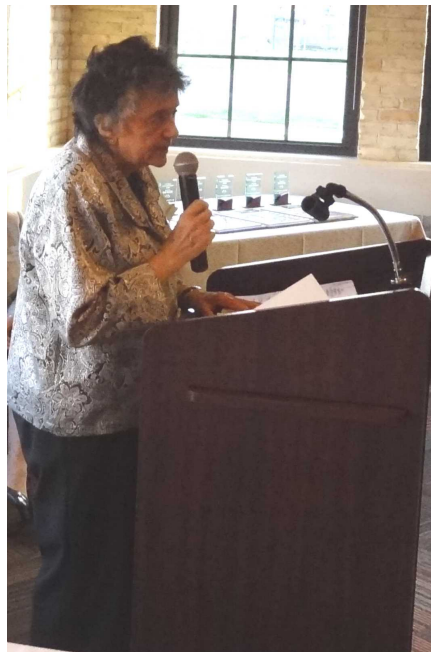
## 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Juvenile Court Awards

By John Bauman

The Dane County Circuit Court Judges in the Juvenile Division sponsored the 17<sup>th</sup> annual Juvenile Court Awards on April 29, 2015 at the Goodman Community Center. Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson was the featured speaker and Presiding Juvenile Division Judge Amy Smith led the event. The ceremony was a celebration and recognition of youth and the commitment others have made to the lives of youth and families in Dane County. The recipients of this year's recognition awards were:

### OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD

**Beth Gentilli**-Beth is a MMSD teacher at the Replay program at the Dane County Human Services Neighborhood Intervention Program and has been in



Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson

**David Hill**-David is a MMSD Psychologist and has been with the district for 28 years. He is retiring at the end of this school year. He has worked primarily with students who have significant needs through the Positive Behavior Support Team. David has been exceptional with applying different strategies and educational approaches to facilitate each student's individual programming and is patient, empathetic, understanding and non-judgmental with students and peers.

**Marlene Porter**-Marlene has served as a Guardian Ad Litem attorney since the Dane County program began in 1992. She has represented children in CHIPS, JIPS and TPR cases. She also served as the lead of the GAL project of attorneys for many years. Marlene's accomplishments are numerous, but none more important than advocating for the best interest of the children she represents. She has had a profound impact on the lives of children in Dane County, is an asset to the Dane County GAL Project, has shared her expertise through educating and mentoring her colleagues and has decades of commitment, dedication and service to improving the lives of children and families.

that role for 15 years. Replay is an alternative school for 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade boys who are there due to behavioral issues that cannot be addressed at a regular school setting. Beth has a remarkable ability to work with these boys and see their potential. Beth, like all of us, has her own life situations to deal with outside of work. However, she never lacks enthusiasm when coming to NIP and planning the day for her REPLAY boys.

See Awards  
Page 2

### In this issue:

- P3 Dane County Applies for DMC-JJ Grant
- P4 MMSD to Integrate IMHP Pilot
- P6 Vanessa Statam—NIP Family Engagement Spec
- P7 Parent Addiction Network
- P8 Save the Date—Evidence Based Practice Conf
- P9 Mentoring Positives Chess Club
- P10 Agency Spotlight—Briarpatch Youth Job Ctr
- P11 Where Are They Now—  
ADA Miriam, Jodie Rohrer
- P14 Staff Spotlight—Jerome Dillard
- P16 Where Are They Now—Dennis McClain
- P17 Juvenile Justice Corner

On the web @ [www.countyofdane.com/juvenilecourt](http://www.countyofdane.com/juvenilecourt)  
[www.danecountyhumanservices.org](http://www.danecountyhumanservices.org)

# On Balance

## Awards

*Continued from Page 1*

### THE GEORGE NORTHRUP AWARD

**Linda Geisinger**-Linda was a foster parent for over 20 years for Dane County. During that time Linda cared for some of Dane County's most medically needy children. Linda was a strong advocate for children with significant medical needs and she was very concerned about children in long term institutions. She passed away in Dec 2014 after a short battle with cancer. Her daughter Dana accepted the award and has taken over the care of Linda's own children and foster children since her mother passed.



*Dana Johnson-Voit and Chief Justice Abrahamson*

### THE PETER RUBIN AWARD

**Bob Syring**-Bob has been a CYF Division Social Worker with Human Services for 29 years and has primarily served youth in the juvenile justice system. Bob is a strong advocate for the youth and families with whom he works. He regularly goes the extra mile to help families meet their daily needs for housing, utilities, transportation and other basic needs. He creatively helps families identify and access services and resources. He goes

above and beyond on behalf of youth and families, is active with the Red Cross and he uses vacation time to go across the nation to volunteer during times of need.



*Judge Albert and Chief Justice Abrahamson*

### THE ERVIN BRUNER AWARD

**Judge John Albert**-Judge Albert will be retiring from the judiciary in the very near future. He has been a Circuit Court Judge since 1999 and was the presiding juvenile division judge from 2003-2009. While in juvenile, he presided over a courtroom in which hearings were conducted in such a fashion that all parties felt heard and respected. He was professional and pragmatic, serious, but sensible. His diverse background equipped him with great wisdom, in both a legal and practical sense. He was recognized due to his dedication and commitment to making the lives of youth in our community better and his genuine caring for those who appear before him.



*Caleb Campbell and Chief Justice Abrahamson*

### OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

**Caleb Campbell**-Caleb is a young adult who had some struggles during his adolescence. He attended Shabazz High School and after graduating attended MATC. He has matured into a responsible young man who lives independently and continues to work at some of Madison's best restaurants.

**Gabe Jackson**-is a young man who had a variety of challenges and people in his life during his adolescence. He graduated from Memorial H.S. in 2013, completed a program at Operation Fresh Start, helped manage a basketball team and is planning on attending Madison College this fall. Gabe is now living in his own apartment, is employed as a security guard and is enjoying life.



*Gabe Jackson accepts Outstanding Achievement Award*

# On Balance

## Dane County applies for DMC- Juvenile Justice Grant

By John Bauman

Dane County has applied for a Department of Justice grant focused on reducing disproportionate minority contact through education and collaboration. This grant would provide collaboration between all Dane County law enforcement as well as a smaller city consortium of law enforcement departments from Sun Prairie, Fitchburg and Middleton, our juvenile justice team and national experts. Racial Equity, implicit bias and discretion will be centerpieces to each part of our proposal. We will also provide law enforcement a more complete picture of the current diversions to formal citation, juvenile justice programs, and the Juvenile Court further enhancing system understanding and collaboration. We will create unique partnerships and an ability to continue the training long after the grant period is completed.

Law Enforcement in Dane County encompasses urban, suburban and rural agencies incorporating a plethora of policies, procedures, practices, philosophies and community expectations. As our communities grow, so does the diversity of the residents. It is critical to give all law enforcement—including those departments with fewer resources—an opportunity to learn best practices, understand juvenile services and alternatives, and build expertise over time. Dane County will use a three-fold and sustainable approach to increasing education and training around DMC and juvenile justice.

1. Implicit Bias training for all law enforcement departments, juvenile justice stakeholders and criminal justice stakeholders. Training provided by The Perception Institute.

2. Racial Equity, Restorative Justice and Juvenile Justice Programs—offered to a consortium of smaller city police departments as requested by the YWCA.
3. Train the Trainer allows for ongoing sustaining efforts around racial equity, implicit bias and restorative justice available to each Dane County law enforcement agency.

The benefits of the training, education and collaboration will be to engage all Dane County law enforcement in partnership with other efforts in reducing disparate treatment of youth of color at key decision points throughout the system. Currently, some departments in Dane County have limited exposure to training and education for racial equity, implicit bias and restorative justice programs. This is an opportunity to grow our overall knowledge and understanding of racial inequities in juvenile justice while working proactively at solutions.

The County is hoping to receive notice of the awarding of this grant in June with training beginning in the fall.

**On Balance** is a publication of Dane County

Department of Human Services and Juvenile Court Program.

**Editorial Board:**

Andre Johnson, DCDHS

John Bauman, Juvenile Court

Brian Dean, Sun Prairie Schools

Dean Bossenbroek, YSOSW

David Thorson, DCDHS

Rhonda Voigt, DCDHS

**Comments?** Call Dawn MacFarlane 242-6267 or [macfarlane@countyofdane.com](mailto:macfarlane@countyofdane.com)



# On Balance

## MMSD to Implement Integrating Mental Health Professionals (IMHP) Pilot

*By Leia Esser, Ed.D.*

*Director of Student Physical, Mental, and Behavioral Health  
Madison Metropolitan School District*

The Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) believes that every school is a thriving school that prepares all students to be college, career, and community ready. One aspect of ensuring we, as a District, realize our goal is supporting our students with the most intensive and unique needs. As such, we are preparing for the Integrating Mental Health Professionals (IMHP) pilot set to begin in the fall of 2015. The IMHP pilot is one important recommendation from the Mental Health Task Force, a group of Madison stakeholders committed to supporting students with mental health needs in MMSD. At the helm of this exciting endeavor are Jeannette Deloya, Sara Parrell, and Sally Zirbel-Donich, all dedicated student services professionals with decades of experience in supporting students through mental health challenges. In addition to our MMSD staff leading this work, our community partners have been imperative in bringing this work to fruition; the Dane County Health Council, Dane County, and our Madison HMOs have worked tirelessly and collaboratively to bring services to our students.

Our local and national data indicate that children living in poverty and certain racial and ethnic groups are significantly less likely to receive care for mental health needs than their non-low-income, white peers. An estimated 40% of MMSD's students are on Medicaid, and an additional 3-5% of our students are uninsured. Troubling patterns of participation in treatment have been documented that include underrepresentation in outpatient care, and overrepresentation in inpatient and emergency treatment. Failure to receive outpatient care early appears to play a role in increasing rates of hospitalization and lengths of stay.

While mental health services in a school will be available to all students, the target population is students who have the greatest challenges in accessing services in the community. Families who live in poverty and have minimal access to transportation, those who experience scheduling conflicts due to work, childcare, and/or educational needs, and those who have challenges in navigating complex healthcare systems are more likely to receive services in the school environment.

Schools have established a multi-tiered system of support as a schema to support all students to experience school success. As a part of this framework, parents, teachers and student services staff members (i.e., psychologists, social workers, nurses, counselors) work together to deliver support within the regular learning environment. When those efforts are ineffective, students are referred for services that are more targeted. Referrals are often made for group intervention, short-term individualized intervention and community resources. If and when concerns persist or increase, the team works together to identify more specialized, intensive supports and interventions. It is at this third tier of practice, that referrals to the school-based mental health professional are considered.

The purpose of the pilot is to improve student availability for learning by providing specialized mental health services in schools during the school day for students with a demonstrated need. Target populations for services include students who have significant mental health concerns that are interfering with learning and engagement and barriers to accessing supports in our community. Community-based mental health professionals team with school-based staff on site at the selected schools to provide specialized support. The following chart outlines the anticipated responsibilities of the clinicians:

*See IMHP  
Page 5*

# On Balance

## IMHP

Continued from Page 4

Services/Activities - Each licensed mental health professional is expected to provide or participate in the following services and activities:	% of total time (estimated)
<p><b>Treatment Services: related to 5% of students receiving individualized care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screening / assessment / evaluation / treatment planning activities</li> <li>• Treatment services</li> <li>• Crisis response</li> <li>• Family communication</li> <li>• Teacher consultations</li> <li>• Clinical documentation activities</li> </ul>	75%
<p><b>School-Wide &amp; Teaming</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem solving with school teams (i.e. Student Support &amp; Intervention Team)</li> <li>• Providing professional development</li> <li>• Crisis response (consultation on violence and suicide risk)</li> </ul>	15%
<p><b>Professional Development: Provider's own professional development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development (e.g., curriculum, school culture, reporting)</li> <li>• Supervision</li> <li>• Agency meetings and trainings</li> </ul>	10%

The purpose of establishing pilot sites as opposed to partial or full implementation is to explore new and promising practices on a small scale, working out the problems and learning from the outcomes prior to expanding implementation, and moving to sustainability and scaling. We hope to address real student need and we want the pilots to have the highest probability of being successful.

The IMHP joins and builds upon practices that hold great promise for further development. Throughout the course of the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years, mental health professionals from Journey Mental Health Center have provided treatment to students at Sennett Middle School. We are also learning that this focus is impactful and making a big difference for students. This winter, additional schools across MMSD applied to join Sennett as the second and third IMHP sites. Schools submitted applications demonstrating both readiness and need as evidenced by their data and application materials. We are proud to announce that Schenk and Glendale Elementary Schools are eagerly preparing to implement!

Additionally, Building Bridges, a collaborative school-based mental health program, has been in place for the 2014-2015 school year and will continue next year. This short term stabilization program has 3 teams of mental health professionals working in Dane County Schools (MMSD, Verona and Sun Prairie) providing short-term case management to families, consultation with school teams and some professional development related to mental health and trauma. In MMSD, only the East area 4K-8th grade schools were included in the first year of implementation. Preliminary results are very favorable, and as a District and community, we are learning valuable lessons that will help to improve access and support.

Schools and the criminal justice system have in many ways become the 'de facto' mental health services system for families and children who are unable to access existing services in the community. While services described here are located in the school, they are not intended to replace existing community services - rather to build access to them. The IMHP and Building Bridges programs offer a way for schools and community partners to take collective responsibility for making access to relevant and effective services possible. We are excited to see what this next year brings!

# On Balance



## VANESSA STATAM MOVES TO NIP SUPERVISION AS A FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SPECIALIST

Meet Vanessa Statam! Vanessa came to DCDHS in June 2008 after receiving her Master's in Social Work at UW Madison. Prior to this, she earned her undergraduate degree at UW Whitewater. During her time in school, she interned at both Jefferson County Human Services, and subsequently at Safe Harbor Child Advocacy Center.

Vanessa came to Wisconsin as a single parent, originally from the South Side of Chicago. She still has family there and tries to go back when she has time. However, being a mother to a 13 year old son and 19 year old daughter leaves less free time to do so. She initially became interested in Social Work as a practice due to her own family history and the experiences she had in her own life. She feels that she has a lot of personal experience that will allow her to supplement client interactions in positive ways.

Before moving to NIP, Vanessa worked as a CPS ongoing Social Worker at SMO for almost 7 years. During this time, she worked under Izzie Popic, Lisa Hankes, and Nancy Ortegon-Johnson. She was interested in moving to NIP due to the age of the youth involved with programming and her desire to work with this population. And what does she think she will encounter in her move from CPS to NIP in terms of work? Vanessa has already noticed a shift in thinking in the way cases are approached. For instance, in CPS the focus is largely that of social worker supplementing the actions of the parents in the hopes of affecting family change. In Juvenile Justice, the focus is working mainly with the youth due to their age and level of independence, while simultaneously supporting the parents to help the youth make change. In general however, most CPS and JJ cases face similar issues and barriers to success, which will allow for an easier transition to her new role.

What does she hope to accomplish in her new role? To work more intensively with families, doing "actual" social work, and providing a type of structured support that feels less formal than the court work to which she has become accustomed. She hopes to enhance the parents' abilities to support their children and help plan for an appropriate, and possibly expedited, return home. She also hopes that her work will prevent future out of home placements so that youth will not re-experience the trauma of being placed out of home. The service goal is to engage the parents in programming that they feel will benefit them to function better as a family overall. This method of interaction differs to the current model wherein we currently prescribe goals to youth and families that we think will be helpful, rather than starting with the family first.

The Family Engagement Specialist will hopefully be a positive supplement to current expectations put in place by the courts. Vanessa believes a barrier of doing social work in Madison is the dynamic between the plethora of services and agencies in contrast to the actual needs of our youth and families. While working in Madison, she has also experienced how our economic and class divisions within the city of Madison affect our ability to help. Monies are not being ported to the stressed and impoverished neighborhoods and communities in the most effective way possible.

Vanessa describes her style of work as a mix of both formal and informal conversations with families about life and family functioning. A "common sense" approach dictates her work with youth and families, and we welcome her to NIP and look forward to her utilizing her skill set and personal experiences to support our clients.

# On Balance

## Parent Addiction Network Provides Help for Family and Friends Affected by Drug Abuse

*By Cheryl Wittke, Executive Director  
Safe Communities Madison-Dane County*

Parents, families and friends are caught in the stress and chaos that substance abuse brings, often not knowing what to do or where to turn. To help, a committed team of parents, law enforcement, judges and criminal justice staff, and substance misuse disorder and mental health treatment providers has created a "one stop shop" of treatment and recovery resources on-line. The Parent Addiction Network website ([www.parentaddictionnetwork.org](http://www.parentaddictionnetwork.org)) includes information about addiction, signs and symptoms of drug abuse, treatment, insurance, legal issues, how to respond to an overdose, supporting recovery, and accessing support for family and friends of people in the grip of addiction.

Parent Addiction Network (PAN) formed after Safe Communities partners came together to conduct the first "Stop the Overdose Epidemic" Summit in January 2012. Summit participants identified creation of a single information and referral source as their number one recommendation after families and providers reported becoming lost and discouraged as they attempted to navigate systems to seek help.

Parent Addiction Network is both a web presence and a group that meets to plan activities and foster collaboration. In 2014, PAN hosted a series of educational sessions that featured experts on topics including medication assisted treatment, the science of addiction and changes to Dane County's Drug Treatment Court process. These sessions are available for viewing on Madison City Channel at <http://www.cityofmadison.com/citychannel/showdetails.cfm?id=52>. Since January 2015, the group has hosted monthly

training for friends and family on administering naloxone (Narcan) featuring trainers from AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW). Eighty people have taken advantage of these trainings, and have left with rescue doses of naloxone and knowledge on how to save a life in the event of an overdose.

In March 2015 Parent Addiction Network launched a Spanish-language section of the website in partnership with the Latino Council on Children and Families. On August 19<sup>th</sup> PAN will sponsor a Platicas featuring Fabiola Hamdan of Joining Forces for Families and Teresa Tellez Giron of Dane County Human Services on the topic of addiction and seeking help. The session will be held at Centro Hispano. Check Safe Communities' website closer to the date for details.

Partner organizations and parents make the Parent Addiction Network tick. Parents of people in recovery or struggling with addiction researched every aspect of this website, from which insurance covers with treatment to what to do if your child ends up in jail. Dane County Sheriff's Office, Drug Court staff, Connections Counseling, Meriter NewStart, Northstar Counseling, Journey Mental Health and all members of the Recovery Coalition of Dane County and parents, distributed thousands of bookmarks and business cards promoting Parent Addiction Network. When out on a call with a family dealing with an addicted loved one, law enforcement around Dane county help locate services for people in crisis using the website.

We rely on a panel of experts in substance abuse prevention and treatment and addictionology - our Parent Addiction Network Advisory Board - to review our web postings and program offerings, and to advise us on effective strategies.

Misuse or abuse of prescription, over-the-counter or illicit drugs is fueling an overdose epidemic that is the number one cause of injury deaths in Dane County. No one is spared. It may be a son or daughter, a neighbor, a friend, a sibling, a husband, wife, or grandparent. The Parent Addiction Network is all about helping families find help during this most difficult of times.

PAN is one part of a multi-faceted community response to Madison and Dane County's drug overdose epidemic. The MedDrop program, which collected over 7.4 tons of medicines in 2014, and a concerted effort by health care systems to address overprescribing of opioid pain medicines are. Although we can't take a victory lap just yet, data from the Dane County Medical Examiner's Office indicates that heroin deaths were down by more than 30% in 2014. Thanks to over 350 partner organizations, and funding support and leadership from City of Madison and Dane County, we are making a difference together. See the Safe Communities web site for more information, at [www.safercommunity.net](http://www.safercommunity.net).

# On Balance

**SAVE THE DATE!!!!!!!**

*Monday November 2<sup>nd</sup>*

*8:00 am to 4:00 pm*

*LOCATION*

*The American Family Conference Center. 6000 American Parkway Madison, WI 53783. Madison, WI*

## *Evidence Based Practice Conference*

*Featuring:*

*Jeffrey Butts PhD*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESEARCH AND EVALUATION CENTER, JOHN JAY COLLEGE,  
NEW YORK

<http://jeffreybutts.net/>

*Mark Carey*

PRESIDENT OF THE CAREY GROUP, A NATIONAL CONSULTING FIRM, VIERA FLORIDA

[www.thecareygroup.com](http://www.thecareygroup.com)

With additional workshops and educational panels

Target Audience: Social Workers, P&P Agents, Judges, Public Defenders, DA's, Juvenile Court Personnel, School Personnel, Law Enforcement and POS providers

Presented in collaboration with:

 **Briarpatch Youth Services**



With Special Thanks to:

The Wisconsin Department of Juvenile Corrections and American Family Insurance



# On Balance

## Mentoring Positives Chess Club for Middle School Youth

By Aaron G. Perry, DCJJ GRIT

**The game of chess is not just for a select few gifted children; it is a trainable skill for all.**



Two months ago, I was sitting in the Darbo Salvation Army gym on a bleacher bursting with Middle School students watching some of Madison's most talented youth playing basketball, and I overheard comments relating to what college players had already committed to. So I asked many of the young spectators the question, "What college are you planning to attend?" The response was simple, "I don't play basketball."

Having personal insight that many of these Middle school spectators were struggling academically, I began to see a **Disconnect** or an **Opportunity** depending on one's

perception. Many of the Dane County youth residing in challenging neighborhoods and who regularly participate in athletics are pulled towards sports as a way out of their circumstances. This is a proven motivation for them to study hard and stay out of trouble.

The following week, I brought 10 chess boards to the gym to give the non-athletic youth something to do, and the response was so overwhelming that it resulted in the creation of DCJJ NIP-Mentoring Positives Chess Club for middle school youth.



### **The New York City Schools Chess Program Highlights Cognitive Benefits of Playing Chess:**

- ◇ Chess instills in young players a sense of self-confidence and self-worth.
- ◇ Chess dramatically improves a child's ability to think rationally.
- ◇ Chess increases cognitive skills and improves children's communication skills and aptitude in recognizing patterns.
- ◇ Chess results in higher grades especially in English and Math studies.
- ◇ Chess builds a sense of team spirit while emphasizing the ability of the individual.
- ◇ Chess makes a child realize that he or she is responsible for his or her own actions and must accept their consequences.
- ◇ Chess teaches children to try their best to win while accepting defeat with grace.
- ◇ Chess provides an intellectual, comparative forum through which children can assert hostility, i.e. "let off steam" in an acceptable way.
- ◇ Chess allows girls to compete with boys on a non-threatening socially acceptable plane.
- ◇ Chess provides children with a concrete, inexpensive and compelling way to rise above the deprivation and self-doubt which are so much a part of their lives.



After months of incorporating chess 1 to 2 nights a week, the group has slowly attracted new participants as well as stories of academic success being reported. I received feedback from a proud instructor at O'Keeffe Middle School that her student, Terrell, made the Honor Roll after some initial academic challenges. Terrell is among the first Middle School youth to join the DCJJ NIP-Mentoring Positives Chess Club.

Obviously all the credit goes to the Terrell and his teacher, but his success is consistent with research that proves test scores improved by 17.3% for students who regularly engaged in chess classes, compared with only 4.6% for children participating in other forms of enrichment activities.

With only a few months and counting, Mentoring Positives' Will Green along with DCJJ-NIP's Aaron Perry, continue to guide and recruit Middle School youth to help increase their proficiency in the game of chess. As the 2014-2015 school year comes to an end, we will be moving the chess club to Tuesday afternoons with a goal to compete with other neighborhood centers throughout Dane County this summer.

# On Balance



## Agency Spotlight – Briarpatch Youth Job Center

By Dean C. Bossenbroek

Getting a job in Madison is tough. It's a university town with plenty of highly skilled, educated adults competing for a full spectrum of employment opportunities. There are many working class adults with families, who find themselves needing multiple jobs to get by in a tough economy. Business owners have a relatively deep pool of workers from which to choose the most employable individuals. Jobs that have been traditionally filled by teenagers are no longer below the station of people, who used to design certain service industry and entry level positions. The seasonally adjusted youth unemployment

rate for Dane County in 2014 was 12.9%, which is four times higher than it is for adults. The percentage of unemployed youth of color is even higher.

For employers, choosing between an array of applicants becomes an understandably easy process of elimination. If the choice is between a mother with a solid work history, a college student able to work nights and weekends, and a 15-year-old with zero experience and limited hours of availability, the high school sophomore won't have a sniff at an interview.

Hugh Wing, Briarpatch Youth Job Center (YJC) Coordinator, believes many teens have what it takes to obtain and maintain employment. Wing has made it his mission to enhance the employability of youth in Madison. In addition to his regular YJC Monthly Employment Trainings, Wing recently established two innovative job training opportunities for teens.

In collaboration with the Goodman Community Center and the Madison Mallards, Wing and YJC Intern Mark Bollman provided basic kitchen skills training in Goodman Community Center's commercial grade kitchen for nine youth this spring. It was dubbed *Ten Skills, Ten Weeks*. The youth were paid for their weekly participation. If they had court ordered restitution obligations through the Youth Restitution Program (YRP), their earnings went to their victims.

Topics covered during the ten weeks include sanitary kitchen practices, safe food temperatures,



*The Youth Job Center (YJC) is located at 2720 Rimrock Road in Madison. It is one of many youth oriented programs operating under the Briarpatch roof.*

***See Briarpatch  
Page 13***

# On Balance

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

### *ON BALANCE catches up with .... ADA Miriam Jodie Rohrer*



Jodie Rohrer retired from the Dane County District Attorney's office in December 2014. She was replaced by Krista Holzberger.

Juvenile DDA Mike Walsh reflects on Jodie's time in the office and shared the following views: "Jodie's biggest assets in working with Juvenile prosecution are that she is a very good trial lawyer, a hard worker, and a researcher. She also helped JJ staff stay focused on public protection when reviewing a case. She acknowledged the impact of the crime on victims and community and helped her fellow attorneys maintain this lens when working on a case as well."

#### **When did you start work with the DA's office?**

I started working as a Wisconsin Prosecutor in early February 1979, when I was hired to work as an Assistant District Attorney in Stevens Point, Wisconsin. In early March 1981, I was hired by then District Attorney James Doyle to work as an ADA in Dane County.

For the first years, I mostly worked in the criminal and traffic parts of the office. An exception was for a short time in 1983 and 1984 when I did work for the juvenile unit and did all of the termination of parental rights cases. I then was transferred to the felony unit in the office. I worked for approximately fifteen years in the felony unit and had a concentration of prosecuting child sexual assault and child physical abuse crimes.

In 1999, I moved from the felony unit to the juvenile unit of the office and worked there for my last fifteen years in the office. I retired on the last day of the year in 2014. When I left, I was five weeks shy of working 36 years as an Assistant District Attorney, with 34 of those years in Dane County.

When I first started I was among the first wave of women Assistant District Attorneys and there weren't too many of us around. In Stevens Point, I was the first woman ADA. One of the positive developments over my career was the increased participation of the number of women as Assistant District Attorneys. The number of female ADA's in the Dane County office has reached parity with men.

#### **What are the best memories of your career?**

The best memories are of the colleagues that I worked with from the earliest days and how we became such very good friends. Working in prosecution, particularly sensitive crimes such as child abuse and child sexual assault, is very stressful and very sad. The friends at work are unique in understanding what an ADA is living every day at work. Those friendships become very special because the bond has been forged by sharing some very dark work experiences on a regular basis.

My best memory as far as work is concerned is when I worked in the felony unit and I would talk with child victims and/or their parents after jury verdicts of guilty. I remember in one case, in particular, when a girl of about ten years of age was staying at a downtown hotel with her family because they had moved out-of-town after her sexual abuse. Her parents had wanted her safely in a new community away from the abuse. The detective and I went over to let her know of the guilty verdict at the end of the jury trial. She and her family were relieved that her adult abuser would not be able to molest and assault any other children and would not have access to her for the years he would be in prison.

My best memories in the juvenile unit were the voluntary termination of parental rights cases with babies because I knew that the child had the probability of a very loving family life with adoption after the TPR. I also had a few delinquent kids, several years after their delinquency, come back and thank me for being part of holding them accountable and changing their lives in a favorable direction. That didn't happen very often, but definitely a handful of times and it was very moving and gratifying.

*See Rohrer  
Page 12*



# On Balance

*Rohrer*

*Continued from Page 11*

## **How are you keeping busy in your retirement?**

In retirement, I am able to sleep well which is a blessing after so many years of going without adequate sleep. My husband is semi-retired so we spend lots of time together which is fun since we get along better than ever. We both love to read, so we understand each other's need for some quiet time every day. We took a short trip to North Carolina and Virginia in March and enjoyed the warmer weather.

I have also been walking over four miles a day every day since the beginning of March. Oftentimes, one of my sons joins me and we take our dogs along with us. Spending more time with Sugar & Pip, our American Eskimo dogs, and Mimi, a labradoodle, is a great joy. I also garden with perennial flowers, but having the dogs is often incompatible with gardening, since they are happy to dig up what I have just planted.

I also have been able to get together with some people with whom I worked in the office, but I want to do more of that.

I am also involved with the Lawyer Assistance Program through the Wisconsin State Bar. Now that I am retired, I have more time to assist lawyers who are going through problems such as drug/alcohol abuse, mental health difficulties, or age-related decisions about whether to continue to practice law. As I sort out what is important to me, I probably will get involved in more volunteer work.

## **What do you miss about working in the Juvenile Unit?**

I miss making a difference in the lives of victims by working to let them know that someone cares what hap-

pened to them and wants to bring some justice to their situation. What has happened to victims of a crime cannot be undone, but a prosecutor can make a difference by working hard to make certain that a just resolution is reached in a case. I spent a lot of time personally speaking to victims to figure out the best resolution to a case.

## **How did you help change the lives of youth in Dane Co?**

I changed lives of young victims, particularly in the area of sexual abuse. Much of that work was done when I not only did delinquency cases, but also worked with the accompanying Child in Need of Protection and Services [CHIPS] cases. That system worked well because there was coordination between what was happening in court with the victim and the perpetrator, who were often siblings. I changed lives by recommending resolutions that made the home safer for the victims. I also was part of changing the lives of the perpetrators by insisting that the offenders go through treatment and not go home until after that treatment was completed.

I also changed lives by holding juveniles accountable for their misdeeds. The best results were the juveniles who learned from the juvenile system and were able to change and become responsible adults. As I stated earlier, I know that some of the juveniles changed for the better because of my work in the juvenile system and because a very few came back and thanked me.

## **Is there anything you would like to see changed/improved upon?**

I would like to see more government spending in the area of mental health and juveniles. We have some very good programs in our community

such as the PACT program that do wonderful work with young people with mental illness. There are many young people who are not served by these programs because there is not enough government expenditure to expand the programs to the full need in the community. It would save money in the long run if mental health problems could be solved prior to incarceration. It would also reduce heart-break and damage to help the mentally ill child prior to that child victimizing another person.

## **Other interesting facts about Jodie:**

I attended the first Safe Harbor Interview as a Juvenile CHIPS attorney along with Assistant District Attorney Gretchen Hayward who was the prosecutor on the adult felony.

I appealed a decision that had dismissed a juvenile petition in 1999 wherein the juvenile had been charged with disorderly conduct after threatening to kill a principal at a local school. The juvenile offender described how he would kill the principal to four other students outside of school. He stated that he would make the principal kneel and then shoot the principal in the head. The petition described how this statement disturbed the other teens. This crime happened shortly after the Columbine school shootings in April 1999. The trial court dismissed the case by stating the juvenile was just engaging in trash talk. After I appealed the case and wrote the briefs, the Court of Appeals reversed the trial court and found that disorderly conduct had indeed occurred. This case was then appealed to the Wisconsin Supreme Court and affirmed. It is an important case in determining what constitutes disorderly conduct. I was part of the development of the interpretation of that law.

*See Rohrer  
Page 13*



# On Balance

**Rohrer**

*Continued from Page 12*

In January 2009, I was named by Madison Magazine as the top lawyer practicing juvenile law in Dane County. In June 2014, I was honored by the Wisconsin Law Journal as one of 27 women lawyers chosen as Wisconsin Women in the Law. The Wisconsin Law Journal described the event: “Twenty-seven outstanding female members of the bar were honored at the event, which was attended by more than 350 people at Milwaukee’s Pfister Hotel.”

I currently serve on the Board of Directors for Safe Harbor. I was named Women in the Law Lawyer of the Year 2014.

**Briarpatch**

*Continued from Page 10*

knife skills, food storage, and cooking for large numbers of people. One highlight of the training occurred in March, when the trainees prepared and cooked food for 250 people at Goodman’s Family Science Night. They made potato salad, sliced fixin’s, and grilled 100 bratwursts, 150 hotdogs, and 250 hamburgers.

Learning basic kitchen skills with an emphasis on safety and cleanliness is one path to increased employability. Of the nine youth who began the *Ten Skills, Ten Weeks* training, six were hired by the Madison Mallards Baseball Team to work in the sprawling food service department at Warner Park during home games.

Wing reflects on this success, “We ask, *why* did those kids get jobs with the Mallards? The answer is more complex than, they had the experience of being trained to cook for large numbers of people. We taught the youth how to talk

about that experience during a job interview.”

Indeed, simply completing the *Ten Skills, Ten Weeks* sessions did not guarantee a position with the Mallards. Each of those kids went to an interview, and sold themselves utilizing the interview skills they learned during YJC training.

Another cutting edge initiative Wing has honed is in conjunction with Madison’s burgeoning food cart scene. He is collaborating with Christine Ameigh, owner of Slide Food Cart and the driving force behind Let’s Eat Out! food cart gatherings. Wing will provide four youth, who have an interest in food service and running a small business to be matched up with individual food cart owners for paid, summer internships.

The goal is to teach the young interns all aspects of running a successful food cart business. The

gamut of skills running from food prep to customer service to health code compliance is as multi-layered of a job training experience as there is. By the end of the summer, the kids will have a solid foundation of relevant experience with which to enhance their resumes.

The teens, who successfully complete these unique opportunities, will be able to compete for jobs in a tight market. The Youth Job Center’s proactive programming is an inexpensive, ideal way to provide community based supervision for kids before they become embroiled in the juvenile justice system. By matching youth with positive adult role models in a productive work environment, Wing believes the sense of shared purpose will strengthen bonds between formerly detached segments of Madison’s community.

# On Balance



## Staff Spotlight – Jerome Dillard



**Please tell us about your current position as Re-entry Coordinator for Dane County. What is a typical work day like for you?**

My current position as the Re-Entry Coordinator for Dane County started in June of 2014. As the re-entry coordinator, I work with individuals who are serving sentences within the three Dane County facilities under the operations of the Dane County Sheriff's Department. In a typical work day, I will meet individually with an inmate who will be released back into the community in 30-60 days. Our meeting time allows me to assess the needs of an inmate who is preparing to transition from jail to the community for areas of employment, housing, education, healthcare, transportation, child support, etc. Based on their needs, a strategic plan is put in place to help address those areas. In addition to meeting individually with inmates, I conduct two weekly Re-Entry Readiness groups. These take place in the Public Safety and City County Buildings. Once a week for 6-8 weeks, we work on re-entry planning. I ask the inmate to prepare for what day one will be like for them after they are released, what will that look like? What will their actions be if the plan we worked on doesn't go as planned? What will their plan B and C look like? We come up with what the best approach should be as we talk those things out....I ask them the tough questions and listen to them tell me what they will do in those worst case scenarios.

The goals of the Re-Entry Coordinator program are to develop strong collaborative relationships between the re-entry program and local community agencies. This will help ensure that the inmate has an efficient and effective return to the community and also that the newly released individual will have access and full provision to the treatment and services that those agencies provide. Some of the areas that I've identified as opportunities for growth in our re-entry program to help an inmate/former inmate make a successful re-entry are:

- That community based services become more 'Holistic'
- There is greater continuity of services from pre-release to post-release
- Continuity of care in the community to connect individuals to resources and supervision after release where appropriate
- There is more time for case management
- Staff members are better prepared to work with offenders
- More re-entry services are available
- There is a cultural shift in thinking about how services are delivered
- Reduce recidivism for offenders released from Dane County jail

**What is most rewarding for you about this job and what have you found to be your greatest challenge(s)?**

The most rewarding aspect of my job is seeing transformation happen in the lives of some of the men and women I've worked with inside a jail or prison who are now productive members of the community. When I receive a phone call from individuals who check in to update me on what they are doing now and to tell me that they're staying out of the criminal justice system, this is really rewarding and what motivates me to do what I do.

*See Dillard  
Page 15*

# On Balance

*Dillard*

*Continued from Page 14*

We recently wrapped up a process to get inmates signed up for healthcare prior to their release from the Dane County Jail. It is comforting to know that these individuals will have access to the healthcare and medications they'll need after release. I want to give a big thank you to Kelsey Getz, for taking the project to another level.

Some of the greater challenges I am encountering is helping former DCJ inmates find access to housing and employment. The access to affordable housing/re-entry housing is a constant barrier for this population and once improved could greatly help re-entry success. I am working with local community organizations to help improve these needs. Additional challenges are that former DCJ inmates with mental health needs will be able to have access to mental health services. Other areas I would like to see take shape would be the implementation of community case managers who are directly involved outside the DCJ in a community based setting (a boots on ground approach). This would be a great asset to the re-entry continuity of services available from pre-release to post-release.

## **Where do you see yourself and this Re-entry program 5 years from now?**

I would like to see the full implementation of a Transition from Jail to Community (TJC) model in Dane County that reintegrates individuals from jail to the community through a collective responsibility approach of both the jail system and the community. I see myself heading this re-entry model that touches every individual who comes through the doors of the Dane County jail. Their time spent in jail, however brief, will be used to set in motion elements of transition planning that can continue in the community after release. This may include distributing re-entry handbooks or take on a more comprehensive assessment, planning, and case management style approach. This model will allow DCJ to take a number of approaches to improve re-entry outcomes for individuals, their families, and communities each being a stakeholder invested in the successful re-entry outcomes of the former inmate. Continuing in effective re-entry strategies will require further involvement of community-based organizations that provide services, such as training, AODA treatment, and case management to have accountability in both the jail setting and the community after release.

## **Please give a brief history of your life and career before you started working for Dane County.**

Prior to working as the Re-Entry Coordinator for Dane County, I worked for over 13 years in the criminal justice system in a Program Director capacity, Re-entry and Advocacy Director and as a Resource/Re-entry Specialist. In these various roles I've implemented re-entry programming for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals released in the State of Wisconsin. I've worked closely building collaborative relationships with the Wisconsin Dept. of Corrections, Dane County Jail and various community based providers since 2002.

I have worked at the Wisconsin Resource Center in Winnebago, WI, a maximum security prison under the Department of Health Services (DHS); a mental health/AODA prison; as Director of Re-entry and Advocacy Services with a non-profit community based organization; and as a volunteer chairman of Voices Beyond Bars (VBB), founded in 2002. I led this organization in providing coaching, weekly support groups and daily ongoing mentoring to men and women returning to Dane County from Wisconsin's state prisons. From 2003 – 2008, I held a position with Madison Area Urban Ministry (MUM) as the Re-Entry/Resource Specialist, coordinating the Journey Home program. There I developed and maintained a referral network for newly released individuals to navigate resources and develop support networks within various housing, employment, education, job-training, transportation, Mental Health and AODA agencies.

In 2008, I was awarded the Dane County Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Humanitarian Award for my work, dedication and commitment to the men and women returning to Dane County from incarceration.

## **When you're not working, how do you like to spend your time?**

I enjoy spending time with my family, landscaping, attending church and going to see live music performances.

# On Balance

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

### *ON BALANCE catches up with ....Dennis McClain*

*By Rhonda Voigt, DCDHS*

Dennis retired in 2010 after 38 years working with teens at our Juvenile Reception Center. Dennis started with JRC part-time, later moved to a full time position and was the JRC Superintendent for 25 years. Dennis looks back on his career with JRC as a great experience in that he was allowed to implement the latest innovations and he was afforded training at a national level. During his career, Dennis was witness to administrative rules changes, spearheaded the creation of and the move to our new detention facility and facilitated improvements at the JRC school and medical services. In terms of staff, Dennis was a proponent of positive motivation and teaming as best practice tools. Dennis is proud to report that JRC maintains the same philosophy and daily schedule that were implemented during his tenure. Dennis says that retirement called his name once he maxed out his benefits and then it was time for him to leave.



What is Dennis up to these days? He remains quite busy with numerous activities. Dennis is a board member with the Capital Times Kids Fund where they administer mini-grants for non-profit agencies targeting literacy, nutrition and health. He is also on the board of Rubin For Kids, a non-profit agency that funds small grants for deserving youth. Dennis continues to be interested in Spartans Basketball where he coached teams beginning in 1988. Dennis enjoys travel and has recently been to San Francisco, Las Vegas, Washington, Milwaukee, the Twin Cities, Arizona for baseball spring training and various tropical locations via the cruise lines. He has upcoming travel plans for New York City and North Carolina to see the Packers play the Panthers. Dennis continues to have season tickets for Badgers basketball. He regularly attends Brewers games and high school sporting events of all kinds. Dennis is an active member of Golds Gym. He enjoys taking in performance arts events such as concerts, plays and Summerfest. Dennis and other former JRC retired staff get together monthly for breakfast. Dennis describes himself as a free spirit with many friends and he appreciates a life of low drama.

What does Dennis miss about his career? He misses the daily contact with young people. As Dennis puts it, working at JRC, you never know when you might be THAT person that helps a teen make the necessary changes to live up to their potential. Dennis has a passion for seeing kids grow to become capable, successful adults.

When Dennis and I met, the community was awaiting DA Ozanne's decision regarding the death of Tony Robinson. We discussed the significant disparity problems in our community. Dennis proposed a solution: target Madison and Dane County resources toward poverty for a few years while holding the various systems accountable. He suggests our community should address issues of poverty on multiple fronts and that more community involvement is needed to facilitate positive change. He encourages community leaders to ask the difficult questions and push buttons to move the community in a better direction. Dennis believes we need to work harder to increase the number of leaders of color in Madison and Dane County.

It was refreshing to meet up with Dennis this spring. He is the picture of what a happy, healthy retirement can look like. Thank you, Dennis for letting us have a peek at your successful retirement life!



### “A Time for Change”

*By Andre Johnson – CYF Juvenile Justice Services Manager*



Dane County is often listed as one of the best places in America to raise a family, yet it ranks near the bottom in national studies for racial disparities in education and justice systems. In spite of the wealth of services in Dane County, the County still faces one of the most significant disproportionate minority contact (DMC) issues in the state. I believe by enhancing our communication and collaboration that we can begin to have an impact on this community issue.

There has been some great work done by different groups in the community such as Justified Anger, Young Gifted and Black, The African American Council of Churches, the Urban League and the Boys and Girls Club. I think it is time that we pull all of those groups and others together to work on the issue of Juvenile Justice disparities. We can no longer afford to operate in our silos in this community and expect to be successful in addressing these community issues. The time is now for us to work together - Government, Non-Profits, Faith based community, the Business community, Schools, the youth and families - to try and solve this issue.

In the coming months I will be reaching out to a variety of people from these different entities to engage them in conversations around juvenile justice. My hope is to build a coalition that has the skills and expertise to make meaningful change in the way we do business.

We can't do things as we always have and expect different outcomes. We have to do things differently if we want to see different outcomes. The time is now for Dane County to do things differently.