



On Balance

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

March 2014
Volume XVIII, Number 1

STEPHEN BLUE HAS RETIRED!!!

By David Thorson, DCDHS

Stephen Blue, Dane County Human Services Juvenile Justice Services Manager, retired on February 7th after 37 years of employment with Dane County. Stephen devoted his personal and professional life to bettering the lives of Dane County youth and families, and the county is without question a better place for his efforts and accomplishments. Those are the facts. Here are the details that made his career a landmark achievement in the field of Juvenile Justice.

Stephen became the Delinquency Services Manager for Dane County Department of Human Services in 2001. He and his wife Susan were recognized that same year with the Juvenile Court Peter Rubin award for their dedication to youth and going well beyond the call of duty in that effort. In the ensuing 13 years, Stephen cemented his reputa-

tion as the person who most embodies the heart and soul of juvenile justice services, receiving the Juvenile Court Ervin Brunner award in 2011 for his lifetime commitment to working with at risk youth of Dane County.



Services in 1990 with Stephen as its leader, eventually culminating in his being named the Manager for all juvenile justice services.

Over time, NIP has evolved into a premier service provider offering prevention, early intervention, and intensive supervision programming to at risk youth. Despite budget cuts and other pressures, Stephen found ways to maintain NIP services across the continuum of needs. It was under his leadership (along with Jim Moeser and others) that Dane County moved to the Balanced and Restorative Justice model which focused assessment and treatment services on Competency Development, Accountability, and Community Protection.

Programs that have been launched under Stephen's leadership include: Replay (school program for middle school youth not making it in a traditional school setting); Weekend Report Center (sanction alternative to locking kids up who are violating their court order); Community Restoration Crew (graffiti removal); Be-

In this issue:

- P2 Out of Home Care in Dane County
- P3 Save the Date—Juvenile Court Awards
- P4 Juvenile Justice Castañeda
- P5 NIP ADDS-II Summer Project
- P6 Staff Spotlight—Cynthia Green
- P7 All Youth Deserve Permanence
- P8 SAGA Project
- P9 DJC Grow Academy

The lengthy list of Stephen's accomplishments and efforts is staggering and it is probably impossible for one person to try and list them all. He began with Dane County as a Juvenile Court worker in 1977. In 1987, under then County Executive Jonathan Barry, the Neighborhood Intervention Program was formed. NIP was switched over to Human

*See Stephen Blue
Page 10*

On the web @ www.countyofdane.com/juvenilecourt
www.danecountyhumanservices.org

On Balance

OUT OF HOME CARE IN DANE COUNTY

By Dawn Douglas, DCDHS Social Worker

Over the past couple of years, the Substitute Care Unit in Dane County has seen some interesting trends. The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families has increased mandates for our foster parents and the children and youth they serve. With the creation of Levels of Care in 2011, foster parents were licensed at a level that matched their training and expertise. Level 1 Foster Homes are court ordered Kinship Care homes, who are only paid \$226 per month regardless of the child's needs. Since we began licensing relatives, we have not licensed any Kinship homes at a Level 1. We continue to work hard to provide the necessary training and support that has enabled us to license them as Level 2 Foster Homes. As a result, they are paid a monthly foster care rate that adequately reflects the needs of the child(ren) they care for. Dane County has also started converting our "Transition Foster Homes" to Level 3 and 4 homes, which requires increased training specific to the youth they foster, along with

additional support from the Foster Care Consultant, and an increased level of face-to-face contact with the foster parent and foster children.

The State now requires that all Level 2 foster homes complete 6 hours of online Pre-placement Training prior to licensure. After licensure, they have to complete 30 hours of Foundation Training within their initial licensing period (usually 2 years). Competencies required are: Partners in Permanency; Cultural Dynamics in Placement; Maintaining Family Connectedness; Dynamics of Abuse and Neglect; Impact of Maltreatment on Child Development; Attachment, Separation and Placement; Guidance and Positive Discipline; and Effects of Foster Care on Your Family. After the initial licensing period, foster parents must complete 10 hours of ongoing training per year.

Since 2009, both foster and voluntary kinship care placements in Dane County have remained stable. Group Home placements have declined, as has institutional care for juveniles, which includes Corrections, Non-Contracted Group Homes and Residential Child Care Centers (RCCs). RCC placements have gone from an average daily population (ADP) of 50+ in 2009 to just 25 in the last quarter of 2013. In 2013 we saw a steady increase in our licensing numbers for Kinship Care Foster Homes (Approximately 38% more than the previous year). Children placed with kin are more likely to be placed with their siblings. Children placed with relatives who are not able to return to their birth parents are often able to achieve permanence through adoption or guardianship.

*See Out of Home Care
Page 11*

On Balance is a publication of Dane County Department of Human Services and Juvenile Court Program.

Editorial Board:

John Bauman, Juvenile Court
Brian Dean, Sun Prairie Schools
Sheri Gatts, YSOSW
Dean Bossenbroek, YSOSW
Sue Milch, DCDHS
David Thorson, DCDHS
Rhonda Voigt, DCDHS

Comments? Call Dawn MacFarlane 242-6267 or macfarlane@countyofdane.com

On Balance

Juvenile Court Recognition Awards Ceremony

SAVE THE DATE—April 2, 2014

The 16th Annual Juvenile Court Recognition Awards will be presented at a ceremony and dinner to be held on Wednesday, April 2, 2014 at the Goodman Community Center. Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson will be the keynote speaker. Please consider attending to help recognize the recipients. Award categories include:

The Peter Rubin Award in recognition of someone who has made significant contributions to youth (in and out of the juvenile justice system), particularly recognizing many years of service and dedication “above and beyond” the job.

The Ervin Bruner Award in recognition of an individual who has made significant contributions over many years to the lives of families/youth through their professional work in the juvenile justice system.

The George Northrup Award in recognition of an individual who has overcome adversity and/or demonstrates a commitment to persevere in improving the lives of youth and families despite difficult circumstances.

Outstanding Service Awards will be given to individuals (youth, parent(s), citizens) or groups for significant contributions to the lives of youth and families as a result of special projects or activities.

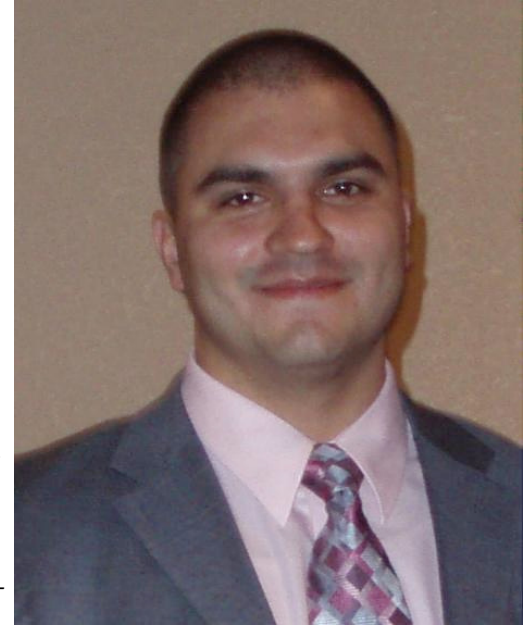
Recognition Awards to youth who demonstrate strengths and abilities to overcome obstacles and give back to the community through their achievements.

For more information about the awards and the recognition event, check the Juvenile Court Program web-site at <http://www.countyofdane.com/juvenilecourt/index.html>

On Balance

Juvenile Justice Castañeda

By Dean C. Bossenbroek



Justice Castañeda has always been loquacious.

The first time he and I were introduced, he was midparagraph in a lengthy discourse with a Youth Restitution Program (YRP) staff person. He paused long enough to give me the nod and say, "What up." Without missing a beat he continued his detailed argument about why his curfew should be lifted or at least moved back to a later time - if not every night, then on the weekends. The year was 1996 and Justice was 16 years old.

I didn't stick around to hear the end of the discussion. It sounded like Justice was making a lot of sense, and maybe had a logical leg up in his assertion that a subjectively imposed curfew wasn't going to stop him from doing what he was going to do anyway, so, why keep an ineffectual restriction in place? The person he was parsing this out for wasn't even his individual counselor. Apparently he'd already run into a wall with his Community Adolescent Programs (CAP) SuSupervision Counselor John Bauman, and was making a desperation plea for assistance from Maureen Robbins, who coordinated a completely different program.

The next time I met Justice was in 2004. He was fresh from a tour of duty with the United States Marine Corps in Iraq. He approached me to inquire about any potential job openings at Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin (formerly CAP). At the time, the only position available was a 6- 10 hour a week job as a YRP Work Team Supervisor. Because he was a former client, I scheduled an interview as a courtesy. He proceeded to knock it out of the park.

Justice explained to me that his teenage involvement with CAP Supervision and YRP provided structure and a sense of community, which had been missing from his life. He felt that the opportunities he was given to succeed in those programs became the building blocks for future success and fertile practice fields for the art of sound decision making. Because of this, he wanted to give back to the agency and the larger community in a meaningful way, and working with those kids seemed like a good place to start. He talked at length about his appreciation for the guidance he received, focusing on the positive outcomes and acknowledging the growing pains as keys to his overall positive development as a responsible adult.

I hired Justice the same week. He proved to be a skillful work team supervisor in short order. He possesses that knack for talking to young people which snags their interest and holds it. Compassionately forthright, giving direction during group community service projects to young teens who are learning basic job skills for the first time, Justice teaches proper behavior more than he directs it. I saw this on display during his first months as a work team supervisor. On one occasion, two boys had pushed each other's buttons to the point that they were angrily elevated, not getting much work done, and were on the verge of going at it. Justice pulled them aside for a few minutes. Soon they were nodding in agreement, that working as opposed to fighting was what they preferred to be doing.

Later on I complimented Justice on his de-escalation technique, and asked him what the genesis for that was. He shrugged and in a rare moment of brevity replied, "Getting those two kids to rake leaves is nothing compared to getting the guys I supervised in Fallujah to be willing to run toward the bullets."

*See Castañeda
Page 13*

On Balance

NIP ADDS-II Summer Project is a Success

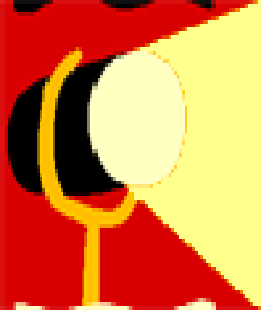
By Alan Chancellor



This past spring the ADDS-II program was tasked to come up with something different or innovative to capture and engage our clients over the summer. With increased expectations for involvement and competency development, we began to brainstorm ideas and look into the world of programming options. We settled on small woodworking activities (i.e., drink coaster from fallen tree branches) and a bench building project, the Leopold bench. Most of you are probably familiar with this bench, if not by name then by appearance. It's a fairly simple design that can be created from one piece of 12' wood cut into 6 pieces, assembled, sanded and stained. Our goal was to build 20-25 benches and sell them at \$40.00 each, in hopes of creating something that could become sustainable and grow to create work experience and jobs for our clients. From the very beginning, the young men of ADDS-II were fully engaged and eager to get to work. The project started a bit slow as we had to develop a partner in woodworking to not only cut the wood but bring high safety standards and guidelines for the project. We found that person in Eric Godwin, a welder by trade and wood craftsman by hobby. He is great! He also brought another project option of making wood bowls that really interested the young men. The few bowls we were able to make as samples turned out beautifully, though the summer got away from us being so involved with the benches that we ran out of time. Needless to say we did not get to the coasters either, though we will be doing that work over winter as well as a chair project. This chair is really cool (\$40.00 per set), simple to make and all who have seen our sample want a set. As this goes to print, we have a few benches remaining. If interested stop by NIP and pick one up.



On Balance



Staff Spotlight – Cynthia Green

By Sue Milch, DCDHS



Cynthia Green recently took time out of her busy schedule to talk about aspects of her work and her life. Since 2003 she's been Manager and Clinical Supervisor for UWHC-AADAIP-- the UW Hospital and Clinics' Adolescent Alcohol/Drug Assessment Intervention Program which, since 1977, has been a comprehensive alcohol and drug evaluation program, providing screening, assessments, intervention and referral services for youth and their families. As of January 2011, UWHC-AADAIP became both a Community Substance Abuse Service and a Mental Health outpatient treatment program. Since that time UWHC-AADAIP staff have participated in rigorous training to provide the evidence based Multi-dimensional Family Therapy.

Cynthia grew up in Appleton and came to Madison in 1979 to attend the UW. To help put herself through school she got a job as a buffet and party supervisor at the UW, and then started working as an overnight counselor at Wyeth House, an all boys group home in Madison. From there she took a full-time job at another group home—Thoreau House—that shaped her career choice. She loved the work; seeing youth and families make important positive changes was very rewarding and made her want to learn more. Cynthia remained at Thoreau House through college, eventually graduating with her degree in rehabilitation psychology.

What to do after college? Cynthia had been considering the Peace Corps, or perhaps graduate school, but she chose a different path with her future husband. When the two first met he had already been planning to go to Nicaragua to work for Witness for Peace, so Cynthia made a decision to go to Central America. They drove to Nicaragua, studying Spanish on the way in Guatemala. Once in Nicaragua she found employment as a work camp coordinator for Habitat for Humanity, a job that involved traveling around the country and gave her the opportunity to learn Spanish.

After a few years, Cynthia and her husband returned to Wisconsin. She began working again for Thoreau House and, not long afterward, started Social Work graduate school. UW-Milwaukee was her choice. Their Family Therapy certificate program was a good fit with her belief in the importance of family and the need for parent involvement to help youth make and sustain change. After completing her MSW degree, Cynthia continued at Thoreau for a while, then left to spend time raising her family.

It wasn't too long, though, before Cynthia again entered the workforce. She was hired as an Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Abuse Prevention Coordinator, working mostly with high risk students in Spring Green schools.

Ten years ago when the AADAIP Director position became available, Cynthia applied and was selected. "It's been a great job," she says. AADAIP has historically done screening, assessment, brief intervention, and

See Green

Page 12

On Balance

All Youth Deserve Permanence

By Jennifer Keip, DCDHS Social Worker

All youth deserve permanent, life-long connections with important people in their lives. Youth placed in out-of-home care deserve the opportunity to remain connected to family members, friends, and their community of origin. In addition to permanent connections, youth deserve a stable environment with at least one adult who is committed to meeting their needs and providing life-long love and support.

“We might walk the same path, but not in the same shoes”

Having a permanent plan means that if youth cannot be safely reunified with their primary caregivers, other permanency options are considered. The State of Wisconsin identified three forms of legal permanency for youth: *Reunification*, *Guardianship* and *Adoption*.

Permanency Roundtables have been implemented statewide for youth in out-of-home care. Permanency Roundtables are structured, professional, case consultations designed to expedite safe, legal permanency for youth in out-of-home care through innovative thinking, application of best practice, and the ‘busting’ of systemic barriers.

In April 2013, Dane County Department of Human Services implemented Permanency Roundtables for youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Since that time, 15 youth have been the focus of a Permanency Roundtable. Measurable outcomes include the youth’s progress toward permanency, changes in the level of placement restrictiveness, rate of re-entry into out-of-home care, and rate of discharge to legal permanency.

Permanency Roundtables have shown to be effective with youth who meet the following criteria: youth who have been in out-of-home care longer than 12 months, youth without an identified legal form of permanency, questionable sustainability of placement and/or legal permanency option, youth without any identified permanent, life-long connections; youth struggling to maintain in community placements.

Permanency Is:

Life-Long Relationships
Commitment
Someone to Trust
Unconditional
Someone to Call ‘Just Because’
Support
Friendships
Celebrating Special Times Together
Continuity
Shared History
Family
Ongoing Support
Knowing Someone is Proud of You
Love

Throughout Wisconsin, youth who have been the focus of a Permanency Roundtable have only a 3.7% rate of re-entry into out-of-home care.



Permanency Tools

Permanency Pact

<http://www.nrcyd.ou.edu/publication-db/documents/permanency-pact.pdf>

Connectedness Map

<http://www.ocwtp.net/PDFs/FSE/ConnectednessMap.pdf>

On Balance

Sun Prairie SAGA Project to Assess Local Gang Activity

By Mary Ellen Havel-Lang, Sun Prairie Youth and Family Commission

How much gang activity is there in Sun Prairie? What should be done about it? Where are the gaps in services for youth in the community? Where should any available resources go?

These are just some of the questions the Sun Prairie Youth and Families Commission's Subcommittee to Assess Gang Activity or SAGA Project will attempt to answer in the next few months. A request by Mayor John Murray to the Commission asked that a subcommittee be formed to begin:

- Assessing current anti-gang efforts being deployed by the Sun Prairie Police Department, Sun Prairie School District, Dane County, the YMCA, state law enforcement agencies and faith-based and non-profit organizations.
- Identifying gaps in our anti-gang strategy and potential solutions to filling those gaps.
- Outlining how the new Community Schools initiative fits in to our anti-gang strategy.

SAGA teams are using the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) model to complete the assessment. This model calls for a Steering Committee

made up of policy makers to guide the project and Assessment Teams to gather and present the information for the final report, which is projected to be complete by November of this year.

The Assessment Teams are broken into 3 groups – Data, Stories and Best Practices. Data is being gathered from law enforcement agencies, the school district, and other sources. The Stories Team will gather information from community members, gang members past and present, business owners, parents and students. Information on what programs and services are available in the community is being gathered and recorded by the Best Practice Team.

There is still time to get involved in this project. The Assessment Teams meet together on the second Tuesday of the month in the Prairie Phoenix Academy library from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. Some outside meeting times will be scheduled to review and analyze data and gather stories. Contact Mary Ellen Havel-Lang, Chair of the Youth and Families Commission, at spyfc@charter.net for more information.

On Balance

The DJC “Grow Academy”: What is it and How Will it Work with Dane County?

By Heather Crowley, DCDHS Social Worker

The Grow Academy is a new program located on the old site of the SPRITE program in the town of Oregon. This undertaking was an idea of DJC Regional Chief Kate Elvidge, who had previous experience starting an ag-based program while working in Adult Corrections.

The program plans to accept youth for residential placement beginning on June 1st. Referrals can either be county or DJC initiated for direct DJC placement, stayed correctional order youth, or youth returning from Lincoln Hills.

Youth placed in this program will earn high school credit or HSED programming, based upon age and progress in school. The Oregon School District is partnering with DJC to ensure the schooling component adheres to Wisconsin DPI standards. A JCIP (Juvenile Cognitive Intervention) component is also part of programming.

DJC is also identifying other community agencies to partner with in this effort. These include UW Extension, Community Action Coalition, Grass Roots Outdoor Wonder, UW School of Psychology, and UW School of Education. They will be seeking social workers and other support staff for this program in the near future, and continue to revise the plan itself as spring closes in on Wisconsin.

The main component of this initiative is the agricultural piece itself. The program's goals are to provide organic vegetable farming knowledge and experience to the youth, caring for and raising small farm animals, learning nutrition and meal planning, incorporating a restorative justice component by giving to food pantries, and marketing/sales skill development.

If this current program succeeds over the next year, DJC hopes to expand it to a day report program. There is not yet a date set for receipt of June referrals for programming, but inquiries may be sent to Heather Crowley, DJC liaison at Crowley@countyofdane.com if one would like to be informed of developments over the next few months.

On Balance

Stephen Blue

Continued from Page 1



havior Intervention Group (alternative to aggression group); ADDS (Assessment, Deflection, Deferment, and Stabilization – a program aimed at keeping youth out of the formal court system through deferred prosecution); Competency Skills Survey (assessing strengths and setting goals for all delinquent youth); Madison Spartan Basketball (nationally acclaimed – members have gone on to both college and professional basketball); and other programs (Dance Troupe, Gang Squad, Future Leaders, Little League), and the Juvenile Court Awards.

Over the past several years, Stephen led and energized Dane County's efforts to impact the disproportionate rates at which African American youth are arrested and incarcerated. In 2009 he spearheaded a County-wide task force to examine the problem, recommend solutions, and most

importantly, implement those recommendations. He did the same with an effort to examine the growing gang problem in the county, and his work with both law enforcement and service providers has been critical in Dane County's relative success in controlling gang violence and crime.

Stephen also recognized the need for data to inform decision making and used it to successfully advocate for the services youth need. His penchant for acronyms was legendary; there was no program for which he couldn't come up with an appropriate title.

It is frightening sometimes to think about what juvenile justice services in Dane County might have been like without his consistent and effec-



tive leadership. He supported each and every staff and worked tirelessly to give them the tools to be successful. Stephen led by example. No one worked harder than he did. If



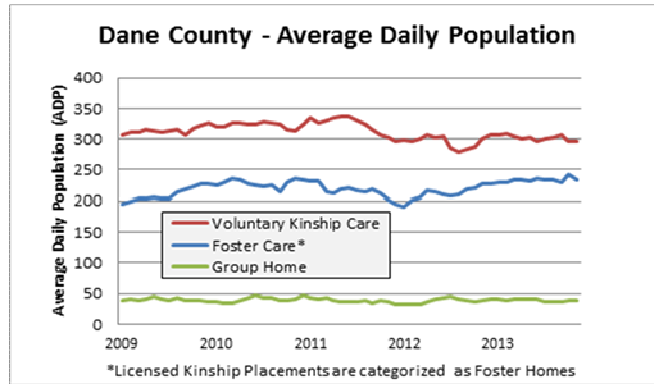
you ever saw Stephen in a meeting lining up four cell phones in front of him, you were probably in awe of his ability to multi-task on a daily basis. And his days didn't end at 4:30 PM or on the weekends.

Countless boys and girls (now men and women) benefitted greatly from Stephen's involvement in their lives. He leaves huge shoes to fill. He also leaves us with an exceptional juvenile justice system that is dynamic and ever changing to meet the needs of youth and the community. The Neighborhood Intervention Program is Stephen's legacy, and it is one that anyone would be proud of.

Other than spending more time with his family, Stephen did not disclose any post-retirement plans. If you see him around town, be sure to congratulate him on his well-deserved retirement.

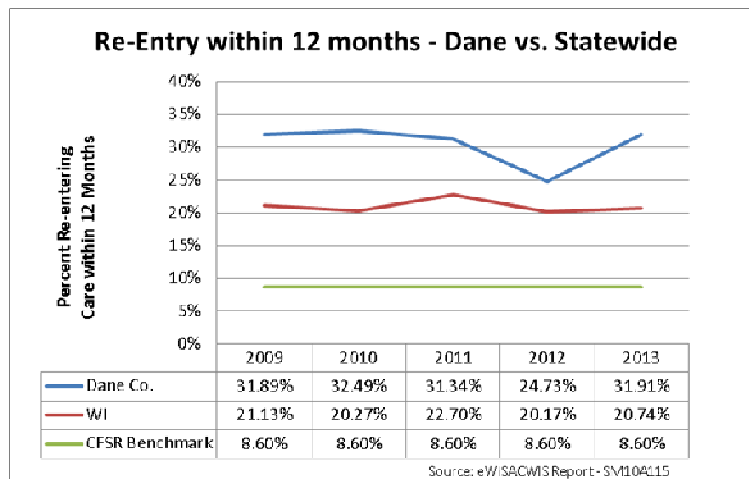
On Balance

Out of Home Care Continued from Page 2



One issue that we continue to address is the racial disparity in out-of-home placement for children of color. In 2012, 71% of children placed in substitute care were children/youth of color – predominantly African-American. We continue to recruit foster homes of color, and currently 30% of our homes represent this demographic. A total of 64% of Level 3 and 4 homes in Dane County are also foster homes of color providing care to our most challenging youth. 70% of kinship placements in Dane County are children of color (56% African American). Children between the ages of 0-5 years old make up the majority of foster home placements (43%), while youth between the ages of 12 – 17 comprise the highest numbers of kinship placements (39%).

Compared to the rest of the state, Dane County has a high percentage of youth re-entering care within 12 months, with youth between the ages of 14 and 16 years old driving this rate. Thus we continue to evaluate how to better serve youth and families when reunification occurs. We have added a position to assist with licensing and maintaining kinship homes and are looking to shift the focus of our Social Service Specialists to support those homes. Studies show that after 90 days, disruption rates in relative homes are significantly lower than in foster homes.



See Out of Home Care
Page 12

On Balance

Out of Home Care

Continued from Page 11

There are a number of statewide and federal initiatives geared toward youth aging out of foster care, starting with mandated Independent Living Skills Assessments as a part of permanency planning. In addition to Life Skills groups, the CASA Teen program has also been established to provide additional support to youth placed in out-of-home care. Youth ages 16+ must have a credit check, including remediation if needed. The National Transition Database has been implemented, which measures outcomes of youth transitioning to independence. Finally, we are providing Independent Living Transition to Discharge (ILTD) meetings for all aging out youth to help them develop a personal portfolio with information needed to support their independence. Enrollment in BadgerCare Plus, provision of education/training scholarships, and vouchers and assistance with housing are all part of helping the youth prepare to live on their own. In 2013, Dane County facilitated ILTD meetings for 40 youth.

Our goal is to continue to provide exceptional care to our children and youth within a community setting. We strive for our foster parents to be trauma informed and to provide shared parenting opportunities. This year, we hope to increase the number of teen foster homes to adequately address placement needs. Although there continue to be new mandates, we welcome the opportunity to improve the services we provide to our families and hope in the long run, it will make a difference for all of us in Dane County.

Green

Continued from Page 6

referral to treatment, she noted, but in the last few years they've been certified as a multidimensional family therapy (MDFT) treatment program, incorporating drugs and alcohol, mental health, and behavioral treatment. The program's focus is on the teen, the family system, and the community they interact with. In working with families, a major goal continues to be empowering parents to be the most effective they can be.

Despite a busy work schedule, Cynthia manages to make time for a variety of interests. She loves to cook, especially "apple things" (cider, pies, sauce) from fruit grown in her family's orchard. She belongs to a book club. (Book recommendation: **Cutting for Stone** by Abraham Verghese.) Her family enjoys outdoor activities (canoeing, sailing, gardening) and traveling. A hiking and sightseeing trip to Peru and Machu Picchu is planned for later this year.

When asked where she sees herself in five years, Cynthia's response was, "Probably right here." "I feel so energized about my work right now," she added. What about 10 years? "I'll still be here."

The many people who've worked with Cynthia over the past 10 years would certainly be pleased to know that she's planning to stay on for another long while.

On Balance

Castañeda

Continued from Page 4

Recently I emailed Justice a few questions relating to his journey through the world of secondary education, his personal take on Dane County's juvenile justice service delivery, and his view on the definition of success in the world of juvenile justice.

Bossenbroek: Your accomplishments in the realm of post-secondary education are many, varied and impressive. What is the basis for your motivation to delve so deeply into the world of academia?

Castañeda: The answer here is really three-fold: At the most basic level, the military afforded me the opportunity to not only attend school for free, but to get paid (relatively well) while doing so. After my undergraduate work at UC-San Diego, I was offered the chance to complete dual-master's degrees from many of the more competitive universities in the United States (e.g. Columbia, Stanford, Harvard, NYU, Brown, MIT.), and actually get paid for doing so. I would say that given this opportunity, it was an easy decision, and I decided on Stanford (MA; focus in Education Policy) and MIT (MCP with a focus in Housing Policy, Community and Economic Development).

The second reason was that, when I initially returned home from the war in Iraq in 2004 (I subsequently returned to active duty on Presidential Recall Orders), like many men of color in Madison, WI, I had extreme difficulties getting even a volunteer job without a college degree. Even though I felt (and still feel) like my Marine Corps experience was more than sufficient in training me to perform the duties of many of the jobs I was applying for, without the gold-standard of the college degree it was painfully difficult to find any employment. I promised myself that I would never be in that situation again, and I am fortunate to have been able to take advantage of my opportunities in higher education.

The third, and probably most important reason, was that after everything I had experienced as a child, as a Marine, and as an educator in San Diego, there were a number of questions as to how and why certain problems and challenges persist in the United States, and how these challenges are affected by trends in the global economy. Throughout my life there were a number of people who invested in my growth and development. Many times they went above and beyond what might be expected of them. As long as I had/have the opportunity, I wanted to make good on that investment by spending the time to really delve into some of these questions in a way that would prepare me to address those same questions.

Many of my friends from my childhood in Madison ended up incarcerated, with a few ending up dead in the same neighborhoods where I came back to work years later. People make arguments as to what the purpose and/or value of academia is/should be. What I can say for certain is that since time immortal, these spaces have been great for thinking about hard questions. This is how I see it today - my academic work is the space I go to in order to think about the work I do.

Bossenbroek: Madison is your hometown and in the middle '90s, you had direct personal experience with the juvenile justice system here. Since you were a teenager, how have things changed and/or remained the same here in Dane County? How would you change the way we currently deal with young people caught up in the system?

Castañeda: My father (whom I love and respect) was too young to raise me right. While he has always had many virtues, being a responsible father was not one of them. I had my first contact with the police at the age of 12 and by 13 had already been charged with a serious crime. In spite of my father's shortcomings, he was smart enough to drop me off at the gym at Marquette School one day where the Southside Spartans were practicing. My father had worked with Stephen Blue at a hospital in their youth, and at the time Stephen was running the South Madison Neighborhood Center and Neighborhood Intervention Program. The coach was (now retired detention supervisor) Dennis McClain, and my time as a Spartan probably changed my life forever. Although, I still don't have a jumper.

*See Castañeda
Page 14*

On Balance

Castañeda

Continued from Page 13

Dennis was someone who spent an inordinate amount of time engaging us, driving us around Southern Wisconsin to tournaments, hosting "study-table" at the Center (where the Boys & Girls Club is now on Taft Street). I was one of the only (if not *the* only, at the time) Latino youth at the Center. Dennis provided an example of what it meant to be a man. The folks who were running the programming there were the "who's who" of youth services in Dane County: Peter Rubin, Dennis McClain, Shelton Kincade, and of course, Stephen Blue.

In spite of their work, however, I still managed to end up in more trouble, eventually getting locked up at JRC during the summer following 8th grade. Dennis McClain (who was also the detention supervisor) remained a source of counsel. Eventually I made it out and was sent to CAP (now Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin), where my counselors again consisted of a "who's who" of the local youth services world: Kevin Belcher (now deceased) and James Bester ran our groups and my individual counselor was John Bauman. (I believe there was a young YRP Counselor by the name of Dean Bossenbroek who worked there then as well).

I fought, kicked and screamed as a youth in CAP. Although at the time I may not have seen it this way, John (while not always amused) stayed engaged and continued to press me with high expectations, giving no slack on curfew even though I wasn't in a stable housing situation at the time. I spent over a year in CAP before I was done with my obligation.

Still, I ended up getting in a fight at East High School shortly after my 18th birthday, and I narrowly beat a felony charge. At that point, I finally realized that I had to right-my-ship and right it fast. So I enlisted in the Marine Corps. The story with these youth workers didn't end there, at least in terms of their commitment to me as one of their own. As I alluded to, upon returning to Madison after completing a tour of duty in Fallujah, Iraq, in 2004, I found myself without the necessary credentials for employment. Like many veterans then and now, I was extremely frustrated at not being able to translate my military success into the job market. At this point I reached out to Dennis McClain, Dean Bossenbroek and Stephen Blue. They took me under their collective wing as a Youth Service counselor. While I did eventually return to active duty to complete my 8-year obligation, I stayed in contact with these folks, along with John Bauman, and to this day they all remain my mentors and closest advisors in the work I continue to do with youth all over the United States.

Whenever I get to Madison, Stephen, John, Dennis and Dean are my mandatory first phone calls and their guidance and advice now not only benefits me, it vicariously affects the youth I have worked with in Roxbury, MA, The Bronx, San Diego, and now in San Francisco and Oakland. I also worked on a number of projects in Madison with incarcerated youth from 2008-2013.

I tell this story, because outside of the youth services circles in Madison, most folks probably have never heard of John Bauman, Dennis McClain, Dean Bossenbroek or maybe (!) even Stephen Blue. They weren't trying to make headlines; these men just went to work each day and ground-pounded. They knew, and know today, that the work we do with youth isn't about the meetings we sit in or in trying to come up with the "silver-bullet" in terms of this or that particular program or effort.

With youth who are involved with the system, it is more about the day-to-day interactions, going out to the streets, person-to-person engagement, and consistently leading by example. When I needed them as examples while I was an angry boy, they were there; when I needed them as a struggling Marine War-Veteran, they were there; and when I need them

*See Castañeda
Page 15*

On Balance

Castañeda

Continued from Page 14

now for guidance in the work I do with youth experiencing the same types of violence that I and some of my counterparts experienced, they are always willing to talk and guide me through my challenges as a professional.

That is my story; that is why I am the man I am and able to be effective in the work I do today. In terms of Madison/Dane County, and the challenges we continue to face, I will keep it civil and just say that for a town that prides itself on its educated population, we seem to exhibit an extreme dearth of creativity in our programming. My experience has been that there is a lack of the people like the men I just mentioned who are actually out there on the streets engaging youth. If we are waiting for youth to somehow "walk up", we are never going to have the type of impact we are going for. From what I have seen from my work in Madison over the past five years, there is not the type of adult-to-youth mentorship I benefited from so many years ago.

Bossenbroek: How do you define success, when it comes to measurable outcomes with youth in the juvenile justice system?

Castañeda: When we are working with youth experiencing different iterative levels of the "darker side of the human experience," the big questions I always ask myself at the end of each day are, "Did I do everything in my power to ensure that the child was not placed in a situation where they could harm themselves?" and "Did I put myself in a position to further punish children, who are already in pain?"

I have witnessed folks working with youth who think the way to reach them is by quite literally yelling at them, or harshly disciplining them. As a Marine, I understand where this logic comes from. In terms, however, of youth who are already experiencing extreme levels of pain, the data on cognitive development in youth is plain and simple and demonstrates that such approaches are not only ineffective, they are counterproductive.

It works with Marines because we are volunteers into that system, and because all of our basic needs (including a realization of safety) are being met. This is a very hard transition to make, when for so many years there has been a type of conventional wisdom, where we think that the "problem" with children in pain is that they are not being adequately disciplined.

So, to answer the question, I would start by saying that we have to understand that any time we are interacting with youth, the space should always be looked at as an educational space. In order for a child to respond to an educational space, at a very basic level they have to have comfort whereby they are not feeling like they are in a position to be hurt or further punished for their actions. The successes come day-to-day and should always be viewed as such. As organizations, school districts, cities and counties, it is hard to grasp this, because we are so focused on the long-term outcomes; however, it is an operational imperative to understand that these long-term outcomes are simply culminations of multiple day-to-day engagements between youth workers and youth.

At the end of any given day, we should measure success by whether the child is put in a position where they could further harm themselves and whether the environment the child is in is one that could maximize their potential through that space being utilized as an educational opportunity versus just places where we are "warehousing" youth. In terms of "measurable outcomes" of success, I guess it really depends on the child and the situation. If we strictly looked at recidivism, I would say that I would be looked at as a "failure", as I had repeated infractions throughout my adolescence and one huge close call as an 18-year-old adult. With follow through and continued mentorship, I was finally able to gain my footing when I was 19 years old. In between all of this were multiple educational moments when adults took the time to mentor and guide me. It was not about a long-term mission statement on an organiza-

*See Castañeda
Page 16*

On Balance

Castañeda

Continued from Page 15

tional masthead, but about the hard and arduous work of people willing to step out and engage me as a very angry youth.

The most sacred and privileged position in any society, in any civilization from time immemorial, has been that of the person who is entrusted with standing in front of a group of other people's children and tasked with their protection. This is not for the faint of heart. As youth workers and as educators this is what we represent, and what we are tasked with doing.

Bossenbroek: Where do you see yourself in ten years?

Castañeda: I am an educator, and I come from a long line of righteous Brown People who will stop at nothing to bring music and art to children. This is what I do, and while the job descriptions change from town to town and from place to place, if I am fortunate, in 10 years I will still be able to do this work and continue to make good on the time and investment the folks in Madison made in me.