



# On Balance

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

July 2004  
Volume VIII, Number 2

## Implementing Restorative Practices in Schools

By **Jim Moeser, Dennis Whitish, and Sheri Gatts**

School districts around the country, including right here in Dane County, are implementing Restorative Justice principles and practices to find new ways to deal with peer conflict, misbehavior, and even more serious violations of school and criminal rules.

### Moving from "Get Tough" to "Get Together"

Building on the fundamental principles of Restorative Justice that crime (and conflict) causes harm to others and to relationships, school-based practices such as classroom circles, victim-offender dialogue, and circle conferencing are spreading rapidly throughout the education

world. School administrators, school boards, parents, and teachers alike have struggled with the "get tough" choices that districts adopted in the 1990's to address school safety concerns and are

looking for other ways to resolve conflict and rebuild the fabric of relationships that strengthens the school community and supports a safe atmosphere for learning.

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### Staff Spotlight:

*Profiles of three hardworking social workers who are helping to make a difference*

**Pat Mooney**-Social Worker, Madison Metropolitan School District

Anyone that's been around for any length of time working with families and kids needing support and services has probably run into Pat Mooney, a Social Worker par excellence for the Madison Metropolitan School District. Most recently Pat has taken the lead in working with children and families who are homeless or at various stages of transition



**Pat Mooney,**  
MMSD Social  
Worker

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On the web @ [www.co.dane.wi.us/juvenilecourt/](http://www.co.dane.wi.us/juvenilecourt/)  
[www.danecountyhumanservices.org](http://www.danecountyhumanservices.org)

# Shelter Home Builds on Youth's Strengths

By **Jessica Godek**, Dane County Shelter Home

Something we try to do at the Dane County Shelter Home is to recognize and reveal the special talents and strengths in each child who is placed there. In the short time that I have worked at the Shelter Home, I have seen multiple examples of how identifying and encouraging existing competencies of kids can have a defining impact, not only on the child, but on the disposition of a case.

Peter (not his real name) came to the Shelter Home after spending two months in detention for a charge of substantial battery. Quiet and reserved, it appeared that Peter was merely existing at the Shelter Home, awaiting the dreaded day when the judge would place him in corrections. One day, approximately two weeks after he arrived at Shelter, Peter drew a picture for an art class in the Shelter School. Peter had an incredible talent for art, specifically drawings. The teacher praised him for his work and encouraged him to show the staff. Peter shared his drawing with the staff, who then encouraged

him to draw some artwork for the visitor's room walls.

Over the next three weeks, as Peter created beautiful pictures to be framed and hung on the Shelter Home walls, he came out of his shell. He shared his good sense of humor, helped staff with extra chores and showed that he could be a positive role model for the other residents. The last week he was there he earned "resident of the week."

Peter's strength and desire to create and share art with others came out during the dispositional hearing. One by one, the victims of Peter's crime came to the stand to make their statements. Nearly all of them expressed their desire to see Peter, a kid who clearly had enormous potential,

make something positive of himself and his life. One victim even agreed to do the community service with him, as she had that much faith and hope for him. Another victim asked the judge if it would be possible to order community service that included Peter making art for himself and other people who could benefit from Peter's artwork.

Peter did not go to a correctional facility that day. Instead, he was placed with his grandmother. Identifying a way that he could turn a strength or competency he possessed appeared to have a very positive outcome on Peter as a person, as well as his case. Perhaps it can have a similar outcome for the kids you work with too.

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

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# Subculture Corner

*The Sub-Culture Corner is a recent addition to On Balance. Since its inception in 1990, the Dane County Youth Gang and Sub-Culture Prevention Task Force has felt it was important to provide the Dane County Community with information, trends, successful intervention strategies and coordination relating to sub-culture activity.*

*In addition to our annual Youth Gang and Sub-Culture Conference, which continues to be a highly anticipated event, and our monthly Trends meeting, chaired by Kathy Sorensen of Project Hugs, the Sub-Culture Corner will be yet another way to share information with system professionals.*

*For more information about the Dane County Youth Gang and Sub-Culture Prevention Task Force, or if you have any questions about the Sub-Culture Corner, contact co-chairs Stephen Blue or Kathy Sorensen.*

## 2003-2004 Was an Active Year for Youth Gang Activity

By Stephen Blue

A new school year is fast approaching for most of the Madison Area School Districts. This seems like a good time to look at where we've been and where we're headed in youth gang activity.

Highlights of the 2002 National Youth Gang Survey point to a decline in youth gang activities in rural counties and smaller communities.

In looking back at our communities past school year from a youth gang/subculture perspective, it was quite an active year. A number of trends did emerge that bare watching:

- Increased numbers of girls involved in violence and

intimidation acts resulting in (Battery and Disorderly conduct). Girl gang development, Block Burners, Saditty, and Divas all boasted gains in membership and new territories.

- A new trend of masked armed robberies by juvenile youth color, with loose gang affiliation. In interviewing most of the individuals involved these were not gang sanctioned crimes, but involved 2 or more individuals.

- Growing tension and hostility at area high schools between African American and Latino youth.

- As a community, the juvenile justice system, schools, and purchase/nonprofit agencies,

must step up to address the underlying causes that contribute to the emerging trend in our youth/gang subculture arena. A collected effort that directs resources to:

- Improve outreach and retention of disenfranchised youth in our schools and neighborhood with a special focus on the needs of African American females.

- Staff training and heightened involvement in conflict resolution, that quickly addresses potential conflict before they are full-blown and nipping all bullying in the bud.

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## Asian People in Dane County

### Asian Children

By Neil Gleason, Dane County Human Services

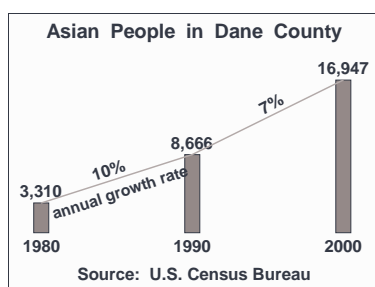
following the U.S. war in Indochina (1964-75),

- large Hmong families, and
- employment in growing

### Population

In the 2000 Census, nearly 17,000 Dane County residents reported Asian or Hawaiian/Pacific Island ancestry.

(Note: 1 in 8 Asian people report multi-racial heritage.)



In 1980, Asians comprised only 1% of the population. By 1990, Asians had increased to 2.4% of the population and grew to 4% by 2000.

Dane County's Asian population is multi-national: 27% Chinese, 26% Southeast Asian (Hmong, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand), with significant numbers from South Asia (India, Pakistan), Korea and Japan.

### Asians by Nationality

The growth of Dane County's Asian population is the product of 4 forces:

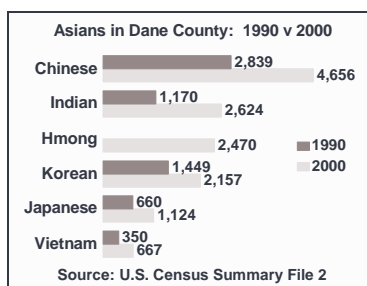
- links to UW-Madison as students, faculty and staff,
- settlement as refugees

Nationality	2000 Population
Chinese	4,656
Indian	2,624
Hmong	2,470
Korean	2,157
Japanese	1,124
Filipino	819
Vietnamese	667
Laotian	587
Cambodian	418
Pacific Isle	408
Thai	377
Indonesian	253
Pakistani	157
Other	230
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,947</b>

Source: US Census Summary File 2

high technology industries.

During the past decade, all of Dane County's major Asian nationalities grew rapidly:



### Similarities and Differences

A striking characteristic of Asian families, irrespective of nationality, is family structure: five of every six children live with two parents.

Source: US Census Summary File 2

Pre-existing cultural diversity, combined with different motives for settlement in Dane County, are evident in the social and economic difference among the Asian nationalities.

Chinese, Indian, Korean and Japanese residents tend to have a link to UW-Madison, which is reflected in their high levels of education. On the other hand, a high level of college enrollment constrains median family income to the mid-to-high \$40,000's, well below the 1999 county median of \$62,000 for families with minor children.

### Southeast Asians

People of Southeast Asian descent comprise 1/4 of all Asians in Dane County. Most emigrated to the U.S. during the late 1970's as refugees from the war in Indochina. Some came directly to Dane County, while others settled in California, Minnesota or elsewhere in Wisconsin before resettling in Dane County. They came from rural backgrounds and

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## Test Your Knowledge About Youth Restitution in Dane County

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1. The average restitution order in 2003 was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. \$345</li> <li>b. \$380</li> <li>c. \$410</li> <li>d. \$435</li> </ul> <p>2. How much money was paid back to victims in 2003?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. \$60,000</li> <li>b. \$65,000</li> <li>c. \$70,000</li> <li>d. \$75,000+</li> </ul> <p>3. Youth completed how many hours of service in 2003?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 8400</li> <li>b. 8800</li> <li>c. 9200</li> <li>d. 9600</li> </ul> | <p>4. How many victims received services from YRP in 2003?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 350</li> <li>b. 420</li> <li>c. 480</li> <li>d. 530</li> </ul> <p><b>Bonus Question</b></p> <p>5. Since its inception, how much money has been paid back to victims by youth?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. \$500-700,000</li> <li>b. \$700-900,000</li> <li>c. \$900-1,100,000</li> <li>d. \$1.1 Million+</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

Answers on Page 9

### Asians

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tended to be less educated. The largest and fastest growing Southeast Asian ethnic group is the Hmong.

### Hmong

During the 25 years since their arrival, the Hmong have made remarkable strides in mastering a new language and culture. The Hmong community is organized around cohesive, multi-generational families.

- Fully 94% of Hmong people live in a family (a household with 2 or more related people). Only 1.5% live alone; only .2% live in an institutional setting (e.g., a nursing home).
- Hmong children tend to live in families with 2 (or more) adults present:
- Nearly ½ of Hmong families contain 7 or more people.
- Due to large family size, the

Hmong are a youthful group:

- Children comprise more than

### Hmong Children

Living Situation	%
2 parents	82%
1 parent	10%
Family	6%
Other	2%

Source: US Census Summary File 2

one-half (53%) of the Hmong population, compared to only 23% in the general population.

Due to its youthfulness and large families, the Hmong population is experiencing rapid natural growth (births > deaths). Beginning this summer, the closure of a large Hmong refugee camp in northern Thailand will bring

several hundred new immigrants to Dane County.

Despite the difficult circumstances of their arrival, Dane County's Hmong community is doing well with a bright future.

- Although their grandparents have little formal education, more than ½ of the 1<sup>st</sup> native-born generation has some post-secondary education.

- Family income is steadily rising, but remains quite modest: \$37,609 in 1999 for an average family size of 5.66 people.
- Despite modest incomes, 35% of

### Hmong 18-24 year-olds

Educ. Attainment	%
<i>Count of people</i>	435
HS graduate	82%
Enrolled, post-second	48%
Asso. or BA degree	14%

Source: US Census Summary File 4

Hmong people own their own homes.

### CYF Caseloads

Asian children and adolescents are *under*-represented on the CYF caseload. While Asians comprise about 5% of Dane County children, they contribute only 4% of juvenile delinquents and 3% of out-of-home placements.

### Asian Children

Statistic	%
2000 All Children	5.0%
2003 Juv. Delinq.	3.9%
2003 Out-of-home	
Foster Care	2.5%
Group Home	10.3%
CCI	0.4%
Corrections	1.0%
Total	3.0%

Source: 2003 administrative data.

Note: DCDHS does not collect information on specific nationality.

# On Balance

## Profiles

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in housing. Pat was asked to reflect on what he's seen over his years of service.

How long have you worked for the Madison School System?  
30 Years

What have you enjoyed the most about your work with youth, families, and the community? Observing the resiliency of very low income parents and kids as they face overwhelming bureaucracies.

What have been a couple key changes during that time in terms of working with youth and families? The change from AFDC to W-2 and the continuously increasing number of homeless families in Dane County. Meanwhile, Dane County freezes the number of dollars for shelter beds at the level of ten years ago and the United Way reprioritizes resources away from shelter beds for 2004-05.

What would you like to tell others about working with youth and families in Dane County? There are over 6,000 moves in and/or out of MMSD schools each year. The mobility of our low income kids and families is overwhelming. Both the mobile and non-mobile kids are impacted with each school move.

Thanks to Pat for all his work on behalf of children and families for over 30 years!!!

**Rhonda Moore**

Social Worker, Wisconsin  
Community Services Network

Rhonda Moore is the daughter of Sandra Watkins, a long time Allied Drive resident and community activist, currently on staff at Cherokee Middle School. Rhonda is a West High School graduate and received her bachelors' degree in social work this year from U.W. Milwaukee. She was hired in February 2004 by Wisconsin



**Rhonda Moore,**  
WI Community Services  
Network Social Worker

Community Services Network, associated with the Children's Hospital, located at 2801 W, Wisconsin Ave. in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Rhonda's decision to go into social work was influenced by former N.I.P. staff social worker, Miriam Sido and others. But the idea really became a reality when she entered college and took a few classes in social work. Rhonda said she knew then, it was her calling. Rhonda is working as a child protection worker and sees some

difficult situations for children.

I asked Rhonda what was her most rewarding experience as a social worker so far. Rhonda: "I would have to say it was my first case closing; seeing a family move from system involvement to non neglect of children and self-sufficiency."

Rhonda stated her most trying experience to date has to do with being the youngest professional on most teams and trying to earn the respect of her peers and the families she serves. When I asked what she would like to change about her job, like the rest of us she said, "paperwork and deadlines."

She prefers to live in Milwaukee because of the diversity but is disappointed in the level of poverty, poor housing stock and apathetic landlords.

When Rhonda returns to her Allied Drive roots she notices that it has gotten much worse than when she was a young girl. She doesn't like to see the concentration of felons and having a probation office. "I would like to see more youth programs for teens, like Neighborhood Intervention did. Most of the current programs deal with children under ten. What about the teens?"

I asked her why she thinks she was able to make it. "I credit my Mother. She pushed me and

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## Profiles

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always had high expectations. She always made sure I was involved in positive activities.” When asked what her fondest memory was of her six year N.I.P. involvement she stated, “There are so many. I enjoyed being part of the Spartan’s Basketball Program and getting the opportunity to travel, also our team was good. Our record was 52-3. I enjoyed Dance Troupe and performing in front of the crowds at the Civic Center. But if I had to pick just one, it would be Future Leaders Club (FLC). That really inspired me to want to go to college. I liked the fact that younger kids looked up to me. I was proud to wear my FLC jacket to school and in the neighborhood. It also introduced me to older Black people who were either attending college or college graduates. It showed me what was possible.”

Milwaukee County is lucky to have a young talented social worker like Rhonda but we sure hope she will find her way back home to Dane County.

### Jesse Sprague

Social Worker, Dane County Department of Human Services

## Subculture

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□ A strategic look at the root cause of the increased numbers of young people in our community willing to take the risk of involvement or the commission of a masked armed robbery.

1. How long have you worked for Dane County Department of Human Services? What jobs have you worked in (if relevant)?

I have worked for Dane County for thirty years, six of which were spent with the Sheriff’s Office.

I began with Human Services in 1980. I did CPS intake for 10 of years. Mixed in these years were periods in on-going and substitute care. For the past 9 years I have been a Joining Forces social worker on Badger Rd.

2. What have you enjoyed most about your work with youth, families, the community?

I’ve enjoyed the people, the kids and characters I’ve met over the years, both in the community and in the Juvenile System.

3. What have been a couple key changes during that time in terms of working with youth and families in Dane County?

For me the key change took place several years ago. It was the conscious effort to provide the resources necessary to keep kids in their own homes, the community, and out of the formal system when possible. This is not as things were here 15 years ago. It’s required lots of changes but it’s

It has been said that youth gangs are a barometer of the overall health of your community. If this is so, strategic efforts are needed to improve the lives of numerous youth and families in Dane County.

been the right thing to do and has made us a better system as a result.

4. What would you like to tell others about working with youth and families in Dane County?

I’d tell them that it’s good and rewarding work. One of the least favorite things I hear from my kids is that they’re bored. I was never bored. When I take the time to reflect on my work with kids and families, I am sure that I will wonder where all the time went! 30 years, how could it go by so quickly?

ED note:

Jesse Sprague none better, none finer; first in, last out; And Mr. Sprague in answer to your question about where did 30 years go? For you and thus for us it went into making our little corner of the world a better place to live. It went there and you did a magnificent job. With love and admiration for your dedicated efforts, thank you

Mr. Sprague. Please turn the lights out and lock the door when you leave.

Mark your calendars for the next Dane County Youth Gang/ Subculture Prevention Task Force conference April 18, 2005 and future information on our half day, Subculture Hot Topic Series for fall of 2004.

## Schools

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Restorative Practices when applied to school discipline problems is focused on:

□ Viewing misbehavior first as a violation of relationships, secondly a violation of rules.

□ Understanding that those most impacted by the behavior have a role in the solution.

□ Identifying the harm of the behavior and what needs to be done to “make it right”

□ Resolving conflict as soon as possible and with the maximum amount of cooperation as possible

□ Sharing responsibility for repairing the harm and building relationships that will prevent reoccurrence.

While there is a clear role for authority and administrative responsibility in schools to deal with situations that pose a danger to others, many situations that have traditionally been resolved through suspension and expulsion may lend themselves to a more restorative response and resolution.

### It's Already Happening Here

At MMSD, several social workers attended a workshop on school-based Restorative Practices at the annual Wisconsin School Social Workers Association Conference held in Madison in October 2003, and since then interest among school social

workers has grown.

Restorative Practices are a great fit for school staff who have been trained in “*Tribes Learning Communities*”, a process that develops:

- **inclusion** (caring and support),  
- **influence** (a sense of value-meaningful participation) and  
- **community** (positive expectations).

Following a three to four month series of thefts at the Shabazz City High School, the regular classroom routine was halted temporarily and each classroom held a Circle Conference to address the theft issue, which was a violation not only of the law but also of Shabazz's community values. Following the Circle Conference the students wrote on note cards what they were willing to do to become more intentional about theft and their school and what they were willing to do to look out for each other. A month following the Circle Conference, each student received their own card back to remind them of what they had agreed to do. Staff and students felt the use of a school-wide Circle Conference was helpful at resolving theft at their school.

Another school social worker involved in AOD programming at another High School used Restorative Practices to address some harassment issues involving students who ended up being suspended from school.

Instead of the usual readmit

conference often required of parents and students, a Circle Conference was held involving parents, both students, supportive teachers for each student and a facilitator. The facilitator found that having supportive teachers participate and share their own feelings about how the harassment impacted the time they had spent in lesson preparation, in lost teaching time, and the impact their behavior had on other students gave the two students insight and an appreciation of how their behavior impacted others. All involved felt that the process was worthwhile and positive.

At a Madison Middle School where harassment seemed pervasive across one particular grade level, each of the affected classrooms was divided into two groups with a facilitator assigned to each group. Each group answered the Circle Conference's four questions:

1 - *Who do you think was affected or impacted by what happened?*

2 - *What are your personal feelings about what happened?*

3 - *What do you think needs to happen to repair the harm that has been caused?, and*

4 - *What are you personally willing to do to help repair the harm (or make things better?)*

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## Schools

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Teachers and students felt that the conference was helpful in resolving the harassment issue at this particular school.

At the elementary level, several school social workers are using Restorative Practices to work on issues related to playground problems, disruptive classroom behavior and suspensions.

School social workers report that the four questions asked at Circle Conferences are powerful tools which help engage students and encourage kids to think about how their behavior impacts other people and what they can do to make things right.

The McFarland School District has begun to implement restorative practices at many levels. One practical application occurred at Indian Mound Middle School, where one or two students were in constant conflict with numerous other students. Allegations were made from both sides of the issue regarding who started what, when, where and how. The constant conflict was affecting many aspects of the school environment. With the goal of reaching a peaceful resolution, Ms. Suzanne Zentner, Principal, convened a restorative circle with about 30 students, parents, a community member, and school staff. Participants described what each perceived to be the problem, who is being affected, and how they are being affected. Each of the stu-

dents was asked to make a commitment of what they personally were willing to do to end the conflict. As the discussion unfolded, participants began to understand the underlying dynamics of the conflict and the students came up with creative and insightful comments and solutions.

The school district plans to continue using restorative practices to help resolve conflicts between students.

Dr. Jim Hickey, the Principal of McFarland High School has begun utilizing Restorative Practices with some challenging situations, and believes that it has contributed to students learning how to take responsibility for creating a peaceful environment.

Dr. Hickey says: "The more we learn about and develop restorative practices within our McFarland High School learning community, the more we see the value of restorative practices in providing our young people with meaningful 'growth opportunities.'"

Restorative practices encourage the mediation of conflict and the 'repairing' of the relationships and 'making things right' after harm has been done, as opposed to just the administration of punishment. The long-term impact for making long-term gains within a community is moved forward with the use of Restor-

ative Practices."

## We Are Not Alone

The use of Restorative Principles and Practices are growing in use throughout the state and nation. In Barron County, Wisconsin, dozens of teachers have been trained in Restorative Principles and using Classroom Circles to build relationships and solve problems. In schools in Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Colorado, and other states around the nation, Restorative Practices are transforming how schools deal with conflict and discipline.

For more information about implementing Restorative practices in schools, check out:

[www.ssw.che.umn.edu/rjp/](http://www.ssw.che.umn.edu/rjp/)  
[www.responsiveclassroom.org](http://www.responsiveclassroom.org)  
[www.bcrjp.org/index.html](http://www.bcrjp.org/index.html)  
[www.restorativejustice.org/](http://www.restorativejustice.org/)  
[www.disciplinethatrestores.org/](http://www.disciplinethatrestores.org/)  
[www.makethepeace.net/](http://www.makethepeace.net/)

### Restitution Quiz Answers from page 5

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 1.) | d |
| 2.) | d |
| 3.) | a |
| 4.) | c |
| 5.) | d |