



On Balance

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

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Making Progress on Disproportionate Minority Confinement

By **Barb Franks**

The Dane County Juvenile Court is approaching the end of the first of a two-year initiative to address the Disproportionate Confinement/and Contact of youth of color in the County's Juvenile Justice System (DMC).

Disproportionate contact with, and confinement of, people of color in the justice system has been a long-standing national, state and local problem. In the late 1980s, a national movement by juvenile justice advocates began to bring needed attention to this issue. In 1992, the reauthorized Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, as amended required that states receiving Federal juvenile justice

funds address the issue of minority youth being disproportionately confined in secure detention, jails, lock-ups, and secure correctional institutions, in comparison to their presence in the general population. When this federal legislation was reautho-

rized in 2002, the focus was expanded from reducing disproportionate "confinement" to reducing disproportionate juvenile justice system "contact". This provides an opportunity for juvenile justice systems to

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Youth Spotlight: Zonea Mims

By **Sheri Gatts**

Zonea Mims, a beautiful young woman with a warm and engaging smile, is about to begin her third year of college at UW-Milwaukee. This is no small accomplishment for someone whose attitude and behavior often got her into a lot of trouble as a middle and high



school student. Zonea is the first person in her family to ever

attend college, and she plans to become a school social worker after graduation. She has worked very hard to

overcome challenges in her life and she wants to be able to help

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On the web @ www.co.dane.wi.us/juvenilecourt/
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The Changing Faces of Summer School Students

By **Dennis Whitish**

The type of student attending summer school programming in Madison and around the country has changed over the past two years in large part due to No Child Left Behind legislation and a need to reach students who weren't being successful academically. It used to be common practice for classroom teachers to recommend summer school to parents whose children were not doing well academically and who could use a little extra help over the summer. Since new legislation and academic standards have been implemented, teachers are required to assess each child using standardized tests scores and other criteria. These efforts help teachers and administrators do a better job of identifying students who will benefit from attending summer school.

Probably the biggest change in summer school attendees is the increase in fourth and eighth grade students who are at risk of not being promoted to the next grade due to poor academic achievement, especially in reading and mathematics. For these students, summer school is required in order for them to be promoted to fifth or ninth grade. These students receive two hours of reading and two hours of math

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programming to help boost their academic scores. Summer school is a key intervention for these students according to Steve Hartley, Director of MMSD's Summer School programs.

New requirements have caused an increase in the number of MMSD students attending summer school. During the summer of 2003, 1,600 students were enrolled. This year the number of students enrolled in summer programs grew to 5,000. Students enrolled in the extended learning summer school pre-K through 8th grade promotion programs involved 2,000 students.

There were another 1,500 students taking enrichment classes. Pre-kindergarten students who had several deficit areas on their kindergarten screeners were targeted to attend

summer school this year.

It is hoped that by attending summer school, these pre-kindergarten children will return in the fall with academic strengths they did not have prior to attending summer school and be more successful academically. School social workers play an important role in communicating to parents of all students the need and recommendation for their child to attend summer school and to assist them in the enrollment process.

MMSD offered a wide-range of programs to meet the individual needs of their students. A reading academy program was offered for kindergarten through second grade students who needed extra help and were below grade level in literature.

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Spotlight on...

By Sue Milch, Dane County Human Services

To find a dynamic, forward-thinking agency that serves the Latino population, look no further than *Centro Hispano of Dane County*.

Founded in 1983 to address the needs of Dane County's Latino community, Centro Hispano has offered educational programs for youth since 1988. In addition to its other programs and services, Centro now provides youth programming in seven middle schools and two high schools in Dane County.

Recently I had an opportunity to meet with Henry Amaya, Centro Hispano's Deputy Director. Mr. Amaya told me that Dane County is now home to an estimated 20,000 Latinos, an increase of 150% since 1990.

In Madison and in many other places, he said, Latinos and African-Americans are the two most likely groups *not* to graduate from high school, and Latinos are underrepresented in many key

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For students in grades three, four and five who met criteria in literature and mathematics and who were not at grade level, the district offered a half-day summer school program, two hours devoted to math and two hours devoted to literature. Students in

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fields. In order for Latinos to become successful as a group, more kids need to graduate from high school and eventually seek a college education. There's a need for more bilingual or bicultural professionals in this community... "so we need to grow our own and have the community be part of it." More than ever, education is extremely important. "We need to provide pillars of support for Latino children in schools."

To their list of other fine programs for youth, (*Aspira, Juventud, Juventud MAS, Juventud de Verano*) Centro recently added *New Routes for Adolescents*. This new program serves middle school youth with beginning delinquency issues. Its focus: helping kids stay in

sixth and seventh grade also received similar literature and math programming.

The 2004 Summer School program was a six-week program running from June 21 thru July 26. MMSD operated six sites at Marquette, O'Keefe, Gompers/

school, away from trouble and out of the juvenile system.

New Routes for Adolescents staff will provide

support to youth and parents and will collaborate closely with the Juvenile Reception Center and court system, schools, and other service providers. Social workers, school staff, JRC, parents, or others may refer youth to *New Routes for Adolescents*, or to any other Centro Hispano program, by calling 255-3018.

Henry Amaya favors a community approach, with agencies working together to serve youth and families. Centro "is doing whatever we can within our means to help the Latino population in Dane County. Because of the demographic growth, it's important that other agencies ... make avenues to serve the Latino community." He added, "I want to thank other agencies that are making an effort to help this demographic and by doing so are making the community better."

Blackhawk, Allis, Van Hise/Hamilton, Orchard Ridge Elementary/Toki and Leopold School. Two high school sites were operated at East and Memorial High Schools. In addition to academic programming, MMSD also offered transportation services, breakfast and lunch as well as recreational/enrichment programming in the afternoons

David Johnson, Social Work Supervisor Says Goodbye

On the evening of June 6th, after 30 years of service to Dane County, David Johnson shut down his computer, turned off his light, and walked out of the office. On June 7th, he woke up as a retiree.

Dave held many positions during his years at the Department of Human Services. Most recently, he supervised the Delinquency Intake unit in South Madison, a job he held since 2001.

The following is excerpted from a message Dave sent to his Dane County colleagues:

“Over the past couple of weeks I have heard about what a wonderful person I was, am and will be. I was given gifts and cards, cash and memories.

I was visited by folks I haven't seen or heard from in a while. Thanks for all of that.

Would I do those thirty years again?

I have done a whole lot of other stuff prior to my rebirth as a case aide in '74. I did a stint as a kid, a teen, a college boy, a night laborer in a rubber factory, a construction worker twice [I guess they didn't like mouthy shovelers], a ground pounder, ...a teacher and maybe some other stuff I lost memory of.

In the end I can't imagine a better thing to do with a life than what we, what you, do for a living...trying to help kids and

families out. I love what you do for a living. I love what you try to do for our community. I love what we as a community, even a sometimes seemingly vocally ungrateful community, allow us to do.

Would I do it again? Hell, yes. But only if you will too. You are the best of the best. You are what it means to be human.... You all are why this place called Dane County is a show place.

Thank you. Thank you very much.”

Dave, we thank you, too.



Youth Spotlight

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other young people do the same.

When she was nine years old, Zonea moved to Madison from the projects in Chicago with her mother and three older sisters. They had family living in the Madison area and her mother wanted her daughters to have a better life than they were likely to experience in Chicago. Even though her mother has experienced some legal difficulties over the years, “she has always been a

very good mother,” Zonea explains. She describes their relationship as loving and close, and Zonea credits her mother with being the most important person in her life.

While in the sixth grade, Zonea was placed in a foster home for about one year. She had many difficulties in school and exhibited a very negative attitude. She found herself unmotivated and frequently in trouble at school. When she was a freshman at East High School, she started attending the Choices

Group for girls at Briarpatch (now a division of Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin). Lin Giovanni, coordinator of the Choices Group, describes Zonea as “being very quiet and shy when she first started attending the group.” Over time she became a “shining star and an excellent role model for the younger girls in the group.”

Zonea's advice for young people who are struggling today is “don't be afraid to ask for help, and don't give up when things get rough.” She has certainly followed her own advice and is well on her way to becoming a successful and inspiring

What Can We Expect From Residential Care Centers?

Mary Kay Wills, Dane County Department of Human Services
Residential Care Centers (RCCs) are state licensed institutions designed to provide treatment for children and youth whose behaviors are not well managed in a community setting. There are twenty-one RCCs registered with the state of Wisconsin, and Dane County contracts with the majority of these facilities. RCCs have been revamped a few times over the years, resulting in changes to their title (formerly Child Caring Institutions and Residential Treatment Centers), their licensing requirements and their programming styles. Today, many of the facilities provide targeted services and/or specialize in serving very specific populations. So given these changes, we must ask, who does Dane County place in RCCs, and what can we reasonably expect as outcomes from these placements?

The vast majority of Dane County children who are placed in RCCs (95%) have a severe emotional disturbance. Some are CHIPS or JIPS, but a greater number are adjudicated delinquent. Boys outnumber girls in placement 2 to 1. The DSM IV diagnoses of children in RCCs cover a vast range, but the majority carry a diagnosis of attention deficit disorder, conduct disorder and/or depression. The remaining

5% do not have a DSM IV diagnosis, but have been adjudicated delinquent.

As with correctional settings, children and youth of color are over-represented in RCC placement demographics, especially African Americans.

RCC's in 2003
Average Daily Population

Ethnicity %	
Black	44%
White	42%
Hispanic	11%
Indian	2%
Asian	1%

Although we place children as young as 8 and as old as age 17 the majority of youth placed in RCCs are between the ages of 14 and 15. Children and youth placed in RCCs are generally not responding to community treatment and/or are deemed at risk to their peers or others if they remain in a community setting.

So the real question is, given the population and their presenting issues, what are reasonable outcomes from RCC placement? This question is debated by experts, both locally

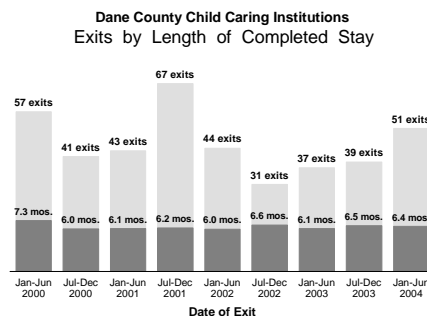
and nationally.

Today, a typical RCC placement costs about \$48,500 (\$7,475 per month for an average stay of 6½ months).

All but one of Wisconsin's RCCs are located outside Dane County, thereby relegating the vast majority of children to institutional placements far from their families. Presumably, given the cost, the restrictiveness of placement, and the distance from home, we must be expecting proven state of the art treatment and significantly improved outcomes.

Generally Dane County does have high expectations for children in RCCs placements, but sadly, real outcomes do not always match expectations. In fairness, some outcomes are not reasonably achieved in an institutional setting. For instance,

research suggests that children and youth who are truant and/or doing poorly in schools are best served by alternative programs in their school



settings (Walls, Charles, Columbia University, New Approaches to Truancy Prevention in Urban Schools, Educational Resource Information Clearinghouse). The premise being that children and families need specialized services to assist in forming school

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policies, procedures and practices that may contribute to DMC.

The State of Wisconsin, through the Office of Justice Assistance, has begun a concerted effort to tackle this problem. Dane County is one of six Wisconsin counties targeted to address Disproportionate Minority Contact/Confinement (DMC) in the juvenile system. The other five counties are Milwaukee, Racine, Rock, Kenosha and Brown.

The first task was to select a coordinator, and then convene a DMC Oversight Board to examine the issue. Dane County has had tremendous support and participation by a broad range of decision-makers and citizens interested in ensuring fairness and equity for all Dane County juveniles: Law Enforcement, Courts, Prosecution, School Administrators, Social Services, community youth and family agencies, civic and faith-based organizations, youth, and others.

“Minority”, in the context of DMC refers to the following categories: American Indian or Alaskan Natives, Asians, Black or African Americans, Hispanic or Latino, and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders. A Criterion for inclusion in the DMC analysis is that the minority group must account for at

least 1% of the juvenile population in the given county.

African-American youth comprise the only minority group substantially over-represented in the juvenile justice system in Dane County. While African-American youth only make up approximately 6.5% of the juvenile population in Dane County, they make up 60 to 70% of youth confined in secure detention and correctional facilities.

Although the proportion of Hispanic and Latino youth appears to be multiplying rapidly, a number of issues prevent an accurate count of the Hispanic/Latino/ Chicano presence in Dane County. One factor that contributes to under-counting of Hispanics is that there is no identified method for law enforcement officers to delicately inquire about an individual’s ethnicity when the officer is unsure. As a result, Hispanic youth may be inaccurately identified as “white”.

Over the past year, the Dane County DMC Project has focused on collecting data at various decision points (i.e. arrests, referrals to juvenile court intake, placement in secure detention, decisions to file formal petitions or divert the case, and ultimately, placement in secure correctional facilities or waiver to adult

court). Briefly, the data demonstrates that:

- In 2002, African American juveniles accounted for 26% of all juvenile arrests in Dane County, 54% of all arrests at High Schools; 62% of all arrests at Middle Schools; and 56% of all arrests at Elementary Schools.

- In 2002, African American juveniles accounted for 44% of all referrals to Juvenile Court intake (i.e. Juvenile Reception Center); In 2003, the proportion increased to 49%.

- The Average Daily Population (ADP) of African American juveniles in secure detention increased from 62% in 2002 to 71% in 2003.

- Two categories of Detention Admissions in 2003 demonstrated a substantial disproportionality among Minority youth (particularly African Americans):

Minority youth represented 78.4% of referrals to Juvenile Reception Center for missed court appearances (capiases) and were held in secure custody 76.8% of the time; Additionally, Minority youth were 63 % of referrals to JRC for Battery, and were securely detained 57% of the time.

- Preliminary examination of Dane County juvenile correctional residents also evidences a startling disproportionality of African American juveniles in the system..

Policy and program initiatives designed to reduce DMC will be data-driven. Over the 2004 the DMC Oversight Board has

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policies resulting in secure confinement of minority juveniles who miss court appearances. Another is to perform a careful analysis of school and law enforcement policies that have a disparate impact on minority juveniles.

The Board is also in the process of implementing a School/ Community /Parent/ Student/ Law Enforcement Collaboration Program (Youth for Peaceful Options) at a select High School for the 2004-2005 school year. The goal of this program is to galvanize all stakeholders to address school issues that result in the disproportionate contact of minority juveniles with the justice system. At-risk youth who are transitioning from eighth to ninth grade will be provided extra support and encouragement to aid a successful transition.

Several strategies are being

utilized to both educate the public and receive input about DMC. One of the Subcommittees of the Oversight Board is in the process of planning two community forums to solicit input from parents. These forums will also provide an opportunity for school administrators and juvenile justice decision-makers to interface with parents and address their concerns. The first *Community Forum on Race, Schools, and Juvenile Justice Issues* was held Saturday, October 16, 2004 at East High School. The second forum is being scheduled for the West side of Madison, with a target date in November, 2004.

Two DMC Conferences are currently being planned. The Youth Resource team of the Oversight Board is planning a statewide, multi-ethnic Youth Conference entitled "Stop the Rail to Jail". This conference will examine DMC issues from a youth perspective. The date for

the conference has not been finalized. Additionally, the Governor's Juvenile Justice Commission will sponsor a statewide DMC conference on November 9 and 10, 2004 in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin.

Examination of the DMC issue would be incomplete without soliciting the perspectives of juveniles at the deep end of the juvenile justice continuum— correctional residents. The Law Enforcement, Courts and Corrections Subcommittee of the Oversight Board has developed a survey instrument which is currently being administered to all of the Dane County residents of state correctional institutions.

Dane County stakeholders have demonstrated a sustained interest and commitment in addressing DMC. The issue is complex and sometimes elusive. Nevertheless, the work that has been poured into this process to date, will undoubtedly benefit the system as a whole, and hopefully result in more positive outcomes for our youth.

ments to successfully re-direct delinquent behavior. The expert opinions on this issue are mixed. Some research suggests that placing delinquent youth together in any setting will most likely continue or even enhance delinquent behavior (*National Institute of Mental Health –Study on Child Violence*). This is especially true for youth age 13-17.

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attachment and ensure school success.

Dane County has found that many children do well in the RCC-based school, but they are unable to continue this success in their home school. This sad reality is not surprising given that the two environments are so dissimilar. RCC programming cannot adequately address family economics, home environment,

family culture, and teacher/ school staff engagement which are the leading issues impacting truancy and school success. Therefore, despite our best hopes, it is unreasonable to expect that any of Wisconsin's RCC programs will be able to impact truancy and school success in any meaningful way.

If we are unable to impact school success, perhaps we should focus our RCC place-

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Dane County data from 2000-2002 show that 49% of the youth discharged from RCCs had committed another delinquent by the end of 2003.

Length of stay in the institution seemed to have little impact on delinquency either (current average is 6+ months of placement).

The biggest predictor of re-offense seems to be age; fifteen year-old youth appear to be at greatest risk factor for re-offending.

So if RCCs don't significantly impact school success or delinquency what can they address?

Despite their specialty areas, and treatment options, all RCCs provide some form of milieu treatment designed to structure behaviors.

Debate continues regarding the effectiveness of these methods, most notably because it is impossible to replicate the institutional environment in a community setting. Nonetheless, Dane County has found that youth who respond well to a structured environment can demonstrate improvements in anger manage-

ment and impulse control post RCC placement. If family therapy is provided consistently, family interactions and parenting can also improve. It is important to note, however, that all of the

aforementioned services can also be provided within a community setting. Unfortunately, the majority of young people who are placed in RCCs did

not, for whatever reason, benefit from community treatment.

In addition to the more mainstream services mentioned many of Wisconsin's RCCs are choosing to offer an in-house

assessment model. The assessments are designed to provide a comprehensive overview of a child's placement, treatment and educational

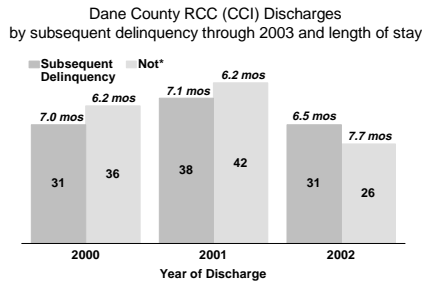
needs, and involve a 30 to 45 day stay at the institution. A written report summarizing testing and observation are supplied at the end of the assessment period. Children with psychiatric needs are most often prescribed any recommended psychotropic medications, but otherwise the program does not provide any

direct treatment.

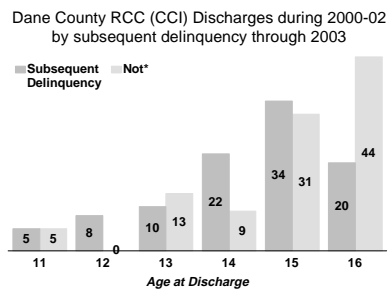
Dane County has found this service helpful for children who are not able to wait for or make themselves available for a comprehensive community evaluation. However again, we have great evaluation services here in Dane County that can easily case plan needs for even our most challenged children.

So what can we expect from RCCs? We should be able to expect a solid behavioral plan that incorporates elements of traditional treatment (individual, group and limited psychiatric services) with milieu interventions to re-direct problematic behavior. We should be able to expect family therapy to take place twice per month. We can't expect that school improvements will necessarily continue, nor that delinquent behaviors will be eradicated. We can't even guarantee that delinquent youth will be "locked up" during RCC placement. These institutions are not locked facilities.

We can guarantee that we will strive to provide community intervention and supervision wherever possible and only recommend RCC placement for those youth who will most benefit from the kinds of treatment available in these institutions.



* The Period of non-delinquency is limited by the 17th birthday. The average length of RCC stay is shown above each bar.



* The Period of non-delinquency is limited by the 17th birthday. Therefore, older youth have less to time re-offend as juveniles.