

2021 HIGHLIGHTS

Dane County Department of Human Services

From the Desk of County Executive Joe Parisi

Year after year, the Department of Human Services works to serve vulnerable residents, address community needs, and make Dane County a better place. From the Dane County Job Center and Early Childhood Zones to the Badger Prairie Health Care Center, Immigration Affairs, and Child Protective Services, our staff and partners are committed to developing innovative solutions, coordinating care, and improving outcomes for residents.

COVID-19 remained a dominant force in 2021, and so did our response efforts. Whether they were on the frontlines or carried out their duties remotely, our staff worked tirelessly to maintain high levels of responsiveness and integrity to our community. I am truly appreciative of their commitment to serve Dane

County residents throughout this difficult time.

As the pandemic shifted our operations, it also impacted many struggling with mental health. Since opening the Behavioral Health Resource Center (BHRC), we've been able to connect people with resources to address barriers in mental health care and those seeking treatment for substance abuse. It has become a one-stop shop for mental and behavioral health care in Dane County.

We're also in the process of developing a Crisis Triage Center. When complete, this facility will help keep individuals out of the criminal justice system and directly link them with services customized to address their needs. Individuals will be able to receive help via referral from

community partners or law enforcement or through self-directed walk-in services.

The Building Bridges school-based mental health program we created several years ago is already helping our young people address mental health challenges, including those who have presented during the pandemic. By expanding these efforts in 2022, we will get more mental health professionals, social workers, and counselors into our schools to help students cope with and heal from the lingering impacts of COVID-19.

Again, I'd like to thank our staff and community partners for going above and beyond this past year. Despite the difficulties of navigating through the worst of the pandemic, their commitment



Joe Parisi,
Dane County Executive

and compassion has never wavered, and our community is a better place. The social safety net the Department of Human Services has cast for Dane County residents remains strong. We made incredible strides to address the needs of our community in 2021, including investments in resources to better address mental and behavioral health, and I look forward to bolstering our efforts in 2022.

The BHRC served
1,881 people in 2021.¹

349 students and parents received
services through Building Bridges in
the 2020-2021 school year.²

From the Director's Desk

Thank you for taking the time to read our 2021 annual report. I continue to be extremely proud of the way our employees, our partners, and our communities have continued to collaborate to meet the unprecedented needs of everyone living in Dane County. Some aspects of how we work and serve our communities have

returned to normal; the Job Center on Aberg Avenue has reopened to the public, Badger Prairie Health Care Center residents are able to visit with loved ones, and My Meal My Way sites were able to start serving older adults once again. Other aspects of how we work continued to be impacted by the pandemic.

One of the most significant undertakings this year was the distribution of millions of federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES ACT) and American Rescue Plan Act dollars across our communities to address emergent basic needs and mental health.

Schools were provided nearly \$1.4 million to support the mental health and basic needs of K-12 students. The

Department awarded about \$5 million in nonprofit grants to help organizations meet community needs and keep their lights on. About \$19 million was distributed through the Dane Buy Local program to support small businesses and help them weather the impact of the pandemic to stay in business.

Another \$21.1 million was allocated to support individuals and families with emergency rental assistance and utility arrears, while \$16.6 million was spent to help maintain social distancing at homeless shelters while also providing a pathway to stable housing for hundreds of individuals in our community. Dane County was able to effectively and efficiently distribute important federal dollars to those most impacted by the pandemic.

There were many other very important things that the Dane County Department of Human Services (DCDHS) continued to do in 2021. As always, we cannot tell every success story here. We are excited to use this space to tell the story of how our clients' successes exemplify the new value statements that DCDHS adopted in late 2020. The stories here demonstrate our commitment to accountability and transparency, collaboration, racial justice, diversity, empathy, and growth and learning.

We thank you for your support and look forward to continuing our collaborative journey together to create a world in which empowered people thrive in safe, just, and caring communities.



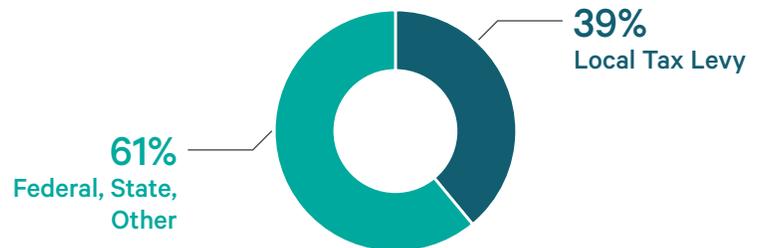
Shawn Tessmann,
Department of Human
Services Director

Accountability and Transparency

We are stewards of public resources. We commit to the evaluation and review of our services and programs. We will be as transparent as possible through open communication within our own organization, with our partners, and with the communities we serve.

2021 DCDHS Budget

In 2021, the DCDHS adopted budget totaled \$241.9 million; 61% (\$147.6 million) is financed by Federal, State, and other outside sources and the remaining 39% (\$94.3 million) is supported by county tax levy. Much of the county levy spending is required to obtain federal funds.



In 2021, DCDHS services and resources directly touched the lives of **100,850ⁱ** Dane County residents.

- Approximately **78,000³** individuals in Dane County were enrolled in BadgerCare.
- The Area Agency on Aging served about **7,100** individuals.
- Child Protective Services (CPS) completed **760** initial assessments for suspected cases of abuse or neglect.
- The Aging & Disability Resource Center had **43,000** contacts.
- **9,800** individuals accessed county-funded behavioral health services offered by DCDHS.
- CPS, Youth Justice, Foster Care, and related services and resources touched the lives of **11,300** people.
- Over **400** investigations were completed by Adult Protective Services.
- The Behavioral Health Resource Center had nearly **7,800** contacts with Dane County community members.

FoodShare helps all of Dane County

The number of Dane County residents facing food insecurity increased significantly in 2021 due largely to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Public Health Service Act has allowed states to increase FoodShare allotments to the maximum allowed per individual due to the Public Health Emergency. Therefore, the amount of FoodShare benefits issued has risen significantly during the pandemic.

FoodShare not only helps the families that receive it, but also the local economy. Economists consider it one of the most effective forms of economic stimulus during a recession.⁴ The \$140 million in FoodShare benefits had a \$238.5 million impact in Dane County.

DCDHS' Economic Assistance and Work Services (EAWS) Division is critical in connecting residents with FoodShare. In

addition to their role in FoodShare, EAWS assisted more than 1,700 households that do not have a permanent address by using the Job Center address to receive their mail. People can also get in-person help to apply for services or have questions about their case answered by a caseworker. Some of the feedback received from monthly customer surveys conducted in 2021:

- "Customer service is great. The staff seem patient and clear in explaining and being friendly."
- "They communicate well. Very kind and respectful."
- "Very quick and easy, employees are extremely kind."

EAWS heard from many people in 2021 who never imagined being in a situation where they would have to apply for assistance. These

customers were appreciative and impressed with how quickly benefits were issued. Here's what some customers said about receiving benefits as a result of COVID-19:

- "I am sincerely grateful for the benefits that have been provided me for this past year and more. It is truly a blessing."
- "This agency has gotten me through tough times and I'm grateful that I have it!! Thank you!"
- "Thank you for all your assistance through the pandemic, I couldn't have kept my family afloat without it."
- "I obtained work after being out of work for about 9-10 months. I called as soon as I was hired. Thank you, the food share program helped very much."

FoodShare
WISCONSIN
A Recipe for Good Health

Dane County issued **\$140.2 million** in FoodShare benefits to **35,473 households** and **65,224 individuals**.⁵

"Thank you for all your assistance through the pandemic, I couldn't have kept my family afloat without it."

ⁱ This is an approximate number of unique individuals served across many, but not all, large DCHDS programs. This number does not include small programs and information referral services where client name and information is not typically collected.

Collaboration

We commit to building collaborative, inclusive, and informed relationships with staff, clients, partners, and the larger community to foster trust, respect, and effective partnerships across all programs and services.

DCDHS partners with over **250** organizations to provide services and resources to those living in Dane County.

Collaboration enables mother to reach her goals

“Being a single mother is hard and scary, but I will get through it. I love my daughter to death,” says Marquita, a recent graduate of the Ready Set Go (RSG) program.

That love motivated Marquita to enroll in RSG after hearing about it from a FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) case manager who is part of the team in the Northside Early Childhood Zone (NECZ). The case manager leveraged NECZ’s integrated model, making a direct referral to RSG, and RSG’s program coordinator connected with Marquita to facilitate her enrollment.

NECZ is a collaborative social work model that offers voluntary services, mostly to families

with young children who live on Madison’s Northside. Services can include home visits that focus on child development, attachment, emotional well-being, and family stability. There are also employment services available to a broader population.

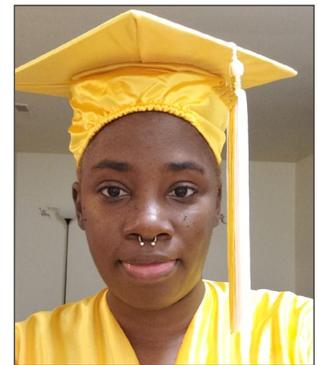
Ready Set Go is an employment and training program that is provided in the NECZ and supports participants in looking at how trauma, self-determination, and relationship skills impact the world of work. As an RSG participant, Marquita built self-confidence in her abilities and learned to identify the steps needed to accomplish her goals – the biggest of which are to write a book and to open her own book store/coffee shop.

Marquita had the honor of speaking to the class of RSG graduates in September 2021.

“We have learned and gained so much from this experience – confidence in our abilities, trust in ourselves and each other, learning to be thankful, and how to keep our head on straight in heated situations because, as we all know, you can’t control what anyone else does. But you can control yourselves,” Marquita says. “Now we are embarking on a new journey to better ourselves, to reach our highest potential in life, no matter the circumstances or obstacles that may come our way. So as we venture out into the world, let us continue to live by our class motto: ‘We are the greatest version of ourselves; we

fight, we win, we prevail right to the end!”

Since graduating from RSG, Marquita has written that book – which is published – and continues to pursue becoming a business owner.



Marquita on graduation day

100% of participants report having a new mindset about life after the program. (NECZ annual report)

89% of NECZ families participating in RSG completed the program.

Dreams achieved through partnership

Sokhim was 8 years old when he came to the United States as a Cambodian refugee and, as he became an adult, he dreamed of raising kids and owning a house in the Madison area. As a single parent, this was a difficult goal to accomplish on his own. But in the summer of 2021 Sokhim and his two children indeed became homeowners.

The collaboration between DCDHS and Habitat for Humanity of Dane County allows families to acquire a newly built home in Dane County with their ‘sweat equity’. The monthly payments are affordable because of the unique way that the mortgage loans are structured. Both the first loan offered through Habitat

for Humanity and the second loan offered by Dane County are at 0% interest. And, even better, the Dane County loan payments are deferred for as long as the homeowner lives on the property. This allows low- to moderate-income families to obtain homeownership much more quickly than they could in the traditional housing market.

Staff have noticed that Habitat homeowners not only invest their ‘sweat equity’ during the construction phase, but they continue to contribute to the community. They go on to build friendships in their neighborhood and families help each other out, which ultimately leads to a stronger community.

“Being a new homeowner, I find that I can make this our own more than any apartment and, as I am learning these last 3 months, there are tons of pieces that I have never thought about,” Sokhim said of projects around the house. “I have come to appreciate those surprises which makes it all worth it, especially seeing my kids chasing each other throughout the house and hearing them laughing and enjoying their home.”

“Lately I am reaching out [and] getting to know my neighbor. I understand that being a good neighbor will create an atmosphere of positivity even if it’s just a simple hand wave hello. I am feeling a sense of welcome

these last few months as we continue to build relationships together and help build a strong community.”

“Surely my heart is glad and so happy for where we have come as a family. I’m forever grateful for Habitat for Humanity.”

Habitat for Humanity of Dane County, Inc. helped **nine households** purchase their first home using the Mortgage Reduction Assistance program in 2021.



Louella doesn't mind getting a little messy

When Louella was 19 months old, she was referred to UCP Connections of Greater Dane County for Birth to 3 services, Wisconsin's early intervention program for infants and toddlers with developmental delays/disabilities and their families.

The program employs evidence-based practices and collaborates closely with local health care and early childhood educational providers to ensure all Dane County children under the age of 3 get the help they need to meet important developmental milestones.

After an assessment of her needs, Louella was connected to the services of an occupational therapist and a physical therapist. "Heidi, Louella's physical therapist, worked with us for over a year and a half. When we started, Louella was not even walking, only scooting on her butt. It was so special for us to see her take her first steps in front of myself, dad, and grandpa," Louella's mother Lindsay writes.

And in regard to her sensory issues, "Julie, Louella's occupational therapist, gave us many ideas to get her more comfortable with eating sticky

textures and being OK with getting messy. Louella enjoyed all the activities Julie recommended and towards the end, Louella didn't mind painting, and getting paint all over her hands, which was such an improvement!"

Fast forward to today and Louella is in preschool, enrolled with peers her age, and thriving. Lindsay writes, "Her teachers report you would never know she was behind because she is able to keep up without issues. Kim (service coordinator), Heidi, and Julie were always there to support Louella. I can't thank them enough."



Louella shows off her tomatoes.

1,670 Dane County children participated in the Birth to 3 program in 2021.

"There are no words for how grateful we are to have had Birth to 3 in our lives over the past one and a half years for our daughter." —Lindsay

Innovative problem solving leads to homeownership

In the summer of 2021, the Dane County Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Commission received an unusual request from two key partner agencies – Project Home, Inc. & Movin' Out, Inc. The request was the first of its kind, yet served as an example of the interdependencies that our programs' policies may have with each other.

Alan, a Movin' Out client, was interested in purchasing the house in which he was a renter.

However, per the CDBG program's requirement, the property needed to pass a Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection to have the mortgage loan approved. The home was in need of extensive repair and Alan did not have the funds available to do the necessary rehabilitation work to pass the inspection. And the seller was unwilling to make the repairs or contribute financially to the work.

Staff from Dane County, Project

Home and Movin' Out met to see if Alan could participate in the Major Home Rehabilitation Program operated by Project Home and funded by CDBG. But, this program is only open to home owners and Alan could not become a home owner without an approved HQS inspection (which he could not pass without extensive home repairs). Alan was caught in a 'no win' situation.

Seeing the potential of homeownership for Alan,

Movin' Out and Project Home collaborated and presented a request to waive the HQS inspection to the Dane County CDBG Commission. Immediately the Commission recognized the importance of the waiver request to both agencies, but more importantly to Alan.

"This was a great example of multiple organizations coming together, pooling resources, and capitalizing on their strengths in order to get me into homeownership!" Alan says. "There was no hurdle too tall. Not only did staff at Movin' Out, Project Home, and Dane CDBG/HOME join hands with Old National Bank, but they went the extra mile to present a compelling case to the Dane County Community Development Block Grant Commission in order to secure the necessary waivers due to the unique situation. Once they knew it made sense, they didn't give up until they worked it out!"



Before repairs



Alan's new home

Racial Justice

We commit to pursuing racial justice through institutional change to actively dismantle policies, practices, messages, and attitudes that both perpetuate and fail to eliminate racism and differential outcomes by race.

DCDHS acknowledges the harm caused by systems that contribute to socio-economic and other disparities and inequitable outcomes, especially among communities of color. DCDHS understands that these systems still exist and seeks to chart a path of improvement by committing to a new aspirational vision, mission, and set of values.

89 DCDHS staff, supervisors, and managers participated in racial justice trainings or affinity circles offered in partnership with YWCA.

FACE support leads to positive outcomes

Ask Riconda about her time receiving services from the Family and Community Engagement (FACE) program and she doesn't hesitate, saying "This has been the best two years I have had in a long time."

FACE provides intensive prevention and early intervention work to families with the goal of preventing reoccurring reports

"The FACE program has been awesome for me and my family." — Riconda

of child abuse and further formal involvement in the child welfare system. Accusations of abuse or neglect are correlated with race and adversities related to poverty.^{6,7} FACE works to address systemic racial and economic injustice by connecting families to community resources to meet basic needs, and then, once basic needs are met, supports families in addressing longer-term goals. "I have been working with Rebecca in the Family and Community Engagement Program (FACE) since January 2020," Riconda says. "Before the program I was homeless and I felt very overwhelmed. During this

time I was stressed, depressed and struggling with my mental health. I laid in bed a lot and it was hard for me to parent my kids and do other basic things.

"Once I started working with Rebecca, she helped me organize my life. She encouraged me to make and go to doctor appointments. This helped because I started taking my medications again and I started feeling more like myself.

"I soon started applying for apartments, but kept getting denied. Rebecca was able to reach out to a landlord, who agreed to

take a chance and rent to me and my kids. Once we got our place, Rebecca reached out to community members and was able to get everything donated that I needed to furnish my apartment. Since we have had a home, my relationship with my kids has improved because I am not dealing with that stress.

"Rebecca has helped me apply for jobs, has gone to meetings at the school with me, and has attended court with me, which made the process less terrifying. The FACE program has been awesome for me and my family."

Empowering relationships

When Jer-Riana was first referred for Youth Justice services, her guard was understandably up. Teenagers can feel like the youth justice system focuses only on their worst moments or decisions.

"I didn't really know what to expect," she says. "I didn't get why other people needed to be involved in my life."

Over time, Jer-Riana started to open up as she built relationships with her social workers. She became more willing to engage with what Youth Justice had to offer and agreed to try therapy with one of DCDHS's providers, Anesis Therapy Center, which focuses on culturally specific interventions for clients of color. DCDHS partnered with Anesis as

part of its commitment to pursue the value of racial justice and provide access to services that support and uplift communities of color. Jer-Riana has found a safe space to talk about what is going on in her life and is a fierce advocate for her voice in team meetings.

Jer-Riana has also been participating in DCDHS's Neighborhood Intervention Program (NIP), a service dedicated to redirecting at-risk youth by holding them accountable and building youth developmental competencies.⁸ NIP program leaders promote positive outlooks in youth through collaboration by investing their time and resources to build trusting and influential relationships.

Jer-Riana has been spending a couple hours per week with NIP program leader Choua Her. They often can be found working on community service projects such as cleaning local parks. Sometimes they just hang out and talk about life.

"Choua is so cool," says Jer-Riana. "We have so much fun. She doesn't make me feel like I'm just my mistakes, she just treats me like a normal kid."

NIP has had to adjust its services due to the COVID-19 pandemic, meeting youth individually or in small groups instead of running larger group programs and activities. While this has been challenging, it has allowed program leaders to build even

stronger connections with the youth they have been able to serve.

"There have been some challenges during this pandemic, but I do love the chance it gave me to work one-on-one with the youths," says Choua. "My job as a program leader is to not only hold youth accountable for their actions but also mentor them and help them see their possibilities as a person in their world, not anyone else's."

"She doesn't make me feel like I'm just my mistakes, she just treats me like a normal kid." —Jer-Riana

Diversity

We celebrate our differences, recognizing diversity as a strength that will help us effectively tackle the challenges we collectively face. We strive to create an inclusive culture by authentically bringing diverse voices and perspectives into discussions and decision making.

Include. Embrace. Empower.

Three years ago, the DCDHS Immigration Affairs Office (IAO) reached out to Maria after receiving a referral from a partner agency. The IAO staff's bicultural and bilingual capabilities proved invaluable in initially communicating and cultivating trust with Maria.

Maria and her children were facing difficult circumstances. Maria's husband had been deported, her family was homeless, and they had experienced other traumatic events. The IAO quickly began to access Dane County resources and obtained funds for a security deposit. Soon Maria successfully secured housing and took a huge step toward stability for her and the children.

As a devoted, loving, hard-working single mother, it was difficult and stressful for Maria to manage a household and provide the support her children needed — all while working two jobs. The IAO recognized additional on-going assistance was needed and facilitated the introduction of Maria to a local volunteer, an impactful and powerful way to bridge cultures and foster inclusion.

"And importantly, it took weight off Maria's shoulders to have a reliable friend to help with tasks that many of us consider ordinary," says Immigration Affairs Supervisor Fabiola Hamdan.

"These tasks included things such as setting up online bill payments,

renewing a license plate, sending certified mail, signing up her sons for soccer, and providing transportation to games and practices.

"It has been heartwarming to witness a family overcome struggles, establish stability and engage with our community."

The family recently renewed the lease on their home for another year. The children are enrolled in neighborhood center activities and enjoying events such as the local block party.

Dane County IAO staff continue to stay connected. The family was included in the annual holiday gift distribution DCDHS employees organize. IAO provided financial



Immigration Affairs Office assisted Maria in obtaining passports for her children.

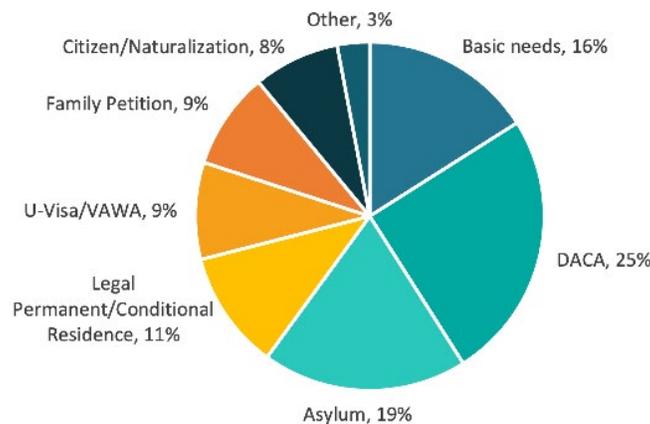
assistance to secure passports for the children so they can visit family in Mexico in the near future. Additionally, IAO has been supporting Maria during her U-Visa process and is continuing to assist with her immigration status.



Maria's family was one of the families receiving holiday gifts from the program coordinated by the County employee group.

58% of families are unable to speak English. IAO staff mainly work with families who speak Spanish but also help families who speak many other languages as well.

Immigration Affairs Office helps with:



In 2021, IAO worked with **359** families from **46** countries of origin. A total of **313** children were served within these families.

"Establishing the community volunteer connection is an impactful and powerful way to bridge cultures and foster inclusion," said Fabiola Hamdan, Immigration Affairs Supervisor.

Passionate about work

By providing person-centered services, DCDHS strives to recognize and celebrate the diverse and unique talents and skills of participants in an inclusive way. Stephon embodies the ways that diversity adds richness to our community!

During his days as a student at Madison West High School, Stephon was known as the “Dragon Maker.” A gifted artist, Stephon excelled at transforming pipe cleaners into spectacular sculptures of dragons that not only caught the attention of students and staff, but also many local artists. He also creates ceramic versions of his colorful dragons.

As a young man with a disability, Stephon and his mother knew that he would need help to successfully transition from high school to life in the community. Dane County’s Vocational Futures Planning and Support (VFPS) service helped Stephon create a path to employment by identifying his assets and barriers to work. In Stephon’s case, that meant helping him to find a “traditional job” that fit his skills

and a mentoring program to help him channel his creative passion into sellable art.

The VFPS team worked collaboratively with school staff to develop a position at the Community Action Coalition (CAC). Each weekday morning, Stephon works in the CAC warehouse assembling boxes and filling them with non-perishable food items. He then seals and stacks the boxes for delivery to area food pantries and senior centers throughout Dane County. A job coach from MARC-Responsive Employment Services assists as needed. His supervisor shared, “Stephon is always here with a positive attitude and a strong work ethic. We are very lucky to have him here as part of our team.”

After lunch, Stephon heads to ArtWorking, a Dane County organization that provides art instruction and support to artists with disabilities. They also help artists sell their work at area art shows and fairs. Staff at ArtWorking come alongside Stephon to nurture his artistic talents and enhance his



Stephon posing with a dragon he created.

Image by Jennifer Engelbart-Tarter for the Isthmus⁹, used with permission.

understanding of how to sell the art that he creates.

With a little help from VFPS, Stephon is well on his way to becoming not only a Dragon Maker but also a Money Maker, known for his talents – not his limitations. He is just one of many productive, creative members of our diverse Dane County community.

VFPS enables young adults to find their unique niche as workers, regardless of severity of disability. Believing that everyone can work if they have the right support, VFPS creates pathways to employment that create belonging and increased independence in our community.

Dane County’s “employment first and for all” approach has produced a rate of integrated employment 3 times the statewide average. Individuals with developmental disabilities in Dane County earn more than **\$3.6** million per year.¹⁰



Stephon spends his mornings at the CAC warehouse.

Empathy

We recognize the existence of generational, historical, community and personal trauma. We approach every interaction, with clients and staff, with the empathy and compassion necessary to address trauma and repair harm.

Fostering hope and future touchdowns

In March 2020, Ben, a young teenager, found himself struggling with suicidal ideation and was admitted into the inpatient child and adolescent psychiatric unit at Meriter Hospital. He had been struggling for some time, both at school and at home, doing things like kicking out windows and self-harming.

While hospitalized, Ben's guardian Nate received a referral for Ben to Comprehensive Community Services (CCS). CCS is a voluntary, community-based program that provides psychosocial rehabilitation services to individuals with a mental health and/or substance use diagnosis to help them work

toward their self-identified goals. Upon enrolling in CCS, Ben was connected with a team of providers who collaborate to support him, including a case manager, a therapist, an in-home provider helping him learn some activities of daily living (ADLs), and more.

Nate notes, "I can't even tell you how much it's changed our lives. I had a really angry, belligerent child and now I have a son. I was afraid I was going to lose my job because 2-3 days per week, I had to go into school. We've worked really hard to increase our communication skills and he's letting go of all the trauma he experienced as a kid."

Now, Ben looks ahead to his future with more optimism as he finds things he enjoys, like football. Nate says, "Because of what he's doing with CCS, he's able to be a better teammate. I can't imagine my kid before this - keeping good enough grades to play." Nate is "grateful beyond belief" and also can't wait to see what the future holds for Ben.



Ben has had success on the field thanks to support from CCS.

CCS served
2,218
people in 2021

Compassionate team effort leads to stability and success

Joining Forces for Families (JFF) and its community-based teams work together to strengthen, support, and advocate for families and their communities across Dane County. Teaming has never been more important and needed as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to create challenges for families.

Kaytie, a single mother of six children, has been working with JFF and Stoughton Area Resource Team (START) for years. The relationship started with addressing her family's basic needs and developed into an ongoing, supportive partnership she could turn to in times of need. This past year was full of challenges for Kaytie and her family.

The pandemic shut down Kaytie's service industry job, and when the business reopened her hours were

reduced. She struggled financially and needed assistance with rent, food, and utilities. Her pregnancy was diagnosed as high risk and she was put on bed rest, just when she was getting back to work. She applied for unemployment and was denied.

It was then that JFF and START moved into action. START provided Kaytie's family with financial support, baby formula, beds, bedding, and other resources to meet basic needs. Referrals were made to Reach Dane and Building Bridges and those agencies helped her with parenting issues and ways to cope with the stress of her situation. When she found herself without funds to repair her car, the team mobilized resources to get it fixed.

Kaytie then found out her lease wouldn't be renewed. Despite numerous denials, the team

advocated for Kaytie to obtain housing, eventually using the offer of funds and ongoing case management to gain access to a new place to live one day before her lease ended. After moving in, her entire family was diagnosed with COVID-19. Again the team responded by getting food and other supplies to her family while quarantined.

Without this support, parents often lose their jobs and families become doubled up or homeless. This story had a different ending. A collaboration of empathetic care resulted in Kaytie having a job and a new home so she could continue being the best mom she can be.

"START is proud to collaborate with JFF and the many other agencies in our area when advocating for families such as Kaytie's," says Laura, a START

staff member. "The opportunity to work together allows for the maximization of resources that provide basic needs and assistance toward housing stability. Working with this team and alongside Kaytie, we can support her as she achieves her life's goals. Thank you to all our partners - it takes all of us."

"It takes a village to raise a family, and with a network of people behind me to see me succeed, the stronger my power is to succeed and to be the best mom I can be. Thank you to my team!" —Kaytie

Growth and Learning

We commit to organizational learning and growth by listening, training, collaborating, and innovating, to ensure our work is responsive, current, engaged, and focused on positive change.

Badger Prairie offers a home for growth and learning

Badger Prairie Health Care Center (BPHCC), a skilled nursing facility located just outside of Madison in Verona, has been serving the citizens of Dane County since 1880. BPHCC primarily serves people whose needs cannot be met in other care settings by providing exceptional person-centered care and treatment to individuals with physical, behavioral, emotional, or psychiatric disorders.

Germaine, a resident at BPHCC, is excited to share the positive impact the facility has had on her life.

“I was born in West Allis to parents who highly valued work, family, church, education, community, and charity. My mother was determined we should all graduate from college and I did fulfill her dream. Our parents taught us the value of service to those around

us and what it means to have a sense of purpose in the world.

“In college, my art studies taught me creative coping mechanisms for my mental health issues. I have held many jobs and always worked my way from the bottom up – most notably overseeing the dining rooms at Marshall Field’s in Chicago, where I learned organizational skills. Later in life, I discovered how important my connection to the natural world was while working overseeing three different plant companies.

“It was not until I was 40 years old that a doctor finally diagnosed and treated me for depression. My depression had been worsening and I had distanced myself from family who supported me. I moved to another state and began a series of poor choices that led me to a breakdown.

“In my 60s, I was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease and family convinced me to move back to the Midwest. They found an

independent living residence and did everything I needed to move there. But my Parkinsonian symptoms worsened and I no longer enjoyed living there.

My family was there again to help me transition to the next phase of my life at BPHCC.

“The constant threads running through my story are those of family, friends, work, art, and the natural world as they have carried me to a place where I now find peace in my life and mind.

“At 80 years of age I have learned to pay attention to what life presents daily and to watch for those ‘Aha!’ moments. To know my purpose, learn about my environment, and myself and to improve myself, my situation, and that of others. BPHCC is a comfortable, safe place that provides for my needs while allowing me to continue to experience the joy of caring for plants and my art.”



“I believe as we go through life, we have periods of struggles and periods where we are rewarded for what we’ve been through. My reward is living at BPHCC.”

—Germaine

Germaine enjoys caring for the plants at BPHCC.

Responsive approach leads to growth in meal program

Dane County continues to be a leader of Senior Dining Program innovation throughout the state and nation, through its efforts to listen to the needs of clients and build collaborative partnerships.

The program has continued to seek diverse restaurant and community food supply partners to bring freshly prepared breakfast and lunch meals to a new generation of older adults who want to dine out.

Hy-Vee grocer is the latest to join our My Meal – My Way partnership with dining sites across Dane County. In July 2021, Dane County older adults began

dining out each week at all three of the local Hy-Vee Market Café locations (Westside, Eastside, and Fitchburg) and chose breakfast or lunch from eight specially selected meals.

Shannon Gabriel, Senior Nutrition Program Dietitian, regularly stops by to chat with participants about their experience.

“They just love coming here!” Gabriel says. “The restaurant is so big – there’s always a place to sit. No need for reservations and no standing in line to sit. Many order something different every time and say they love everything! Several have told me they do their

grocery shopping after their meal and their stomach is so full that they actually stick to their list.”

Eastside Store Director Ryan Evers says, “We enjoy the partnership. We find it rewarding to partner with such a great organization and look forward

to working together far into the future.”

The partnership has been so successful it is being replicated in Eau Claire County at a newly opened Hy-Vee location.

My Meal-My Way sites re-opened in June of 2021

2,561 older adults dined-out in the second half of 2021

More than 36,700 meals were served through December of 2021

27 senior dining locations are offered throughout Dane County



Volunteers answer questions at Hy-Vee



Growing and learning together

DCDHS values growth and learning as a means to achieve our vision, which is to see empowered people thriving in safe, just, and caring communities. The goal is to provide services that are responsive, empowering, and foster positive change. What better way to grow and learn than to invite program participants to share their own stories and experiences?

In the autumn of 2021, staff members in the DCDHS Disability unit, along with staff from their partner agencies, participated in a Citizen-Centered Leadership Development course designed to bring persons with disabilities and their case managers together to learn from one another. Young adults with disabilities enrolled in the Children's Long Term Support

(CLTS)ⁱⁱ program received a stipend to be "Primary Learning Partners" throughout the 15-week course. Amanda was one of those learning partners. She is bright, spunky, thoughtful, kind, and has a great sense of humor. She loves anything related to Harry Potter and gladly shares this passion with others!

As a mentor to staff in her Citizen-Centered Leadership learning circle, Amanda shared honestly about her experiences as a young person with a disability who receives services via CLTS. Staff learned that Amanda is striving to be fully included – not only as a student at Wisconsin Heights High School, but also in her community. Amanda sees herself as not just a member of her community. She intends to be

a valued contributor in all areas of her life. For Amanda, that means finding a job that will utilize her engaging personality and her many interests and talents. The CLTS program provides services that support these aspirations in a highly person-centered way.

CLTS program manager Angela Radloff says, "As Amanda went through the (Citizen-Centered Leadership) process, she became more confident and empowered as she shared her support needs and dreams." And her DCDHS case manager Julie Scheuer observes that Amanda "showed maturity and responsibility in her collaboration with program professionals."

Empowered people like Amanda thrive when they can provide

input to the programs that serve them. And program staff change for the better as they grow and learn from participant mentors like Amanda.



Amanda is about to see the capital building

1,669 children and youth received services through the CLTS program

ⁱⁱ The Children's Long Term Support (CLTS) Program helps children with intellectual, physical and/or emotional disabilities reach their goals through effective case management and carefully targeted services.

Citations

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- [2] "Building Bridges Yearly Measures," Dane County Human Services, December 2021, <https://www.danecountyhumanservices.org/documents/pdf/Reports/RPT2021---Building-Bridges-final.pdf>.
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- [9] John McLaughlin, "West High's 'Dragon Maker,'" *Isthmus*, March 22, 2018, <https://isthmus.com/arts/visual-arts/stephon-chill-ashley-west-high-dragon-maker/>.
- [10] Developmental Disabilities Coalition et al. "Building on the Dane County Difference," January 2017, http://ddnetworkinc.org/17-01-20_Building_on_the_Dane_County_Difference.pdf.



Key Phone Numbers

Dane County Department of Human Services

Aging and Disability Resource Center	855-417-6892	(toll free)
Area Agency on Aging	608-261-9930	
Elder Abuse/Adults at Risk Hotline	608-261-9933	
Badger Prairie Health Care Center	608-845-6601	
Child Abuse reporting (business hours).....	608-261-5437	
Child Abuse reporting (non-business hours)	608-255-6067	
Foster Care Licensing	608-242-6333	
Behavioral Health Resource Center	608-267-2244	
Economic Assistance and Work Services	888-794-5556	
Dane County Job Center	888-794-5556	

www.danecountyhumanservices.org

