



# On Balance

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

July 2005  
Volume IX, Number 2

## Fighting Among Girls On The Rise

*A Report From The Adolescent Female Offenders Committee*

By **Dave Thorson**, Dane County Human Services

There has been a growing sense that the numbers of girls getting into serious trouble has been on the rise. It was suspected that crimes of aggression were increasing dramatically, female gang involvement was becoming problematic, and that our interventions were not being as successful as we would like. Based on these underlying assumptions, DCDHS brought together a committee of system partners to look at the issue more closely. Membership included representatives from DCDHS, Madison Schools, law enforcement, and a variety of service providers.

The committee set out to look at just what the Dane County numbers were, and how we are addressing the needs of adolescent female offenders.

In 1997, referrals for criminal offenses by adolescent females comprised 25% of the total. By 2004 this had risen to 28%. It would appear this is not that major an increase, until one looks at the distribution of crimes. Due to a recent law change, most retail theft crimes are now charged as municipal violations (223 in 2003 and only 45 in 2004). Battery and disorderly conduct charges have seen a dramatic increase, more than offsetting the drop in retail theft.

**1997**  
Total Female Referrals: 566  
Total Crimes of Aggression: 208  
Aggression Percent of Total: 37%

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## Youth Spotlight:

*Wilborn is "Teen of the Year"*

Ashley Wilborn is a bright, articulate, hard working young woman. She recently completed her freshman year at Madison West High School, maintaining a 3.4 GPA.

Ashley played basketball, was involved in cheerleading activities and also has great artistic talent.



Right Track "Teen of the Year"  
**Ashley Wilborn**

Ashley is a young woman on a mission to be the best she can. She also has a strong commitment to others. She was recognized as the Dane County

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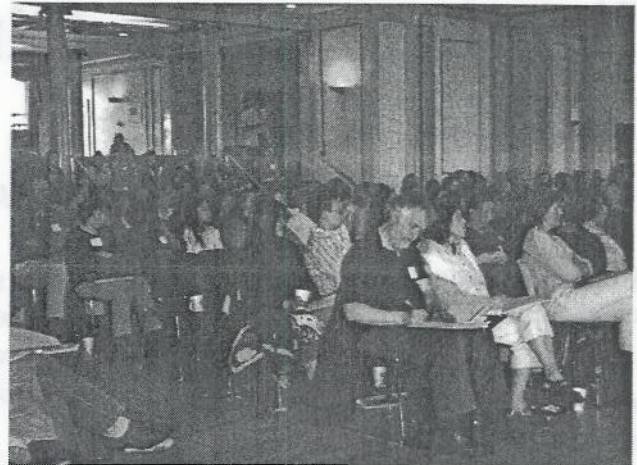
On the web @ [www.co.dane.wi.us/juvenilecourt/](http://www.co.dane.wi.us/juvenilecourt/)  
[www.danecountyhumanservices.org](http://www.danecountyhumanservices.org)

# Subculture Corner

## More Than 350 People Attend Youth Subcultures Conference

This year's Youth Subcultures Conference, held on April 15th, brought more than 350 social workers, law enforcement officers, school personnel, and others to the UW-Madison Memorial Union.

In addition to hearing from a variety of speakers and workshop presenters, participants enjoyed the chance to greet colleagues and mix with others in a relaxed setting...and it happened to be a perfect day to have lunch on the Union Terrace.



### Ashley

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Neighborhood Intervention Program  
Right Track Teen of the Year.  
Ashley is a very kind and thoughtful young woman.

Many of her accomplishments have been made by her drive and desire.

In addition to her high school activities, Ashley is very involved in her church, Fountain of Life. She loves people, especially young children and is always willing to give a helping hand to anyone.

Ashley also finds time to work part-time at JC Penneys - West Towne. For fun she enjoys music and spending time with her family and friends.

As a member and captain of the state and nationally ranked,

Madison Spartans Girls 15U basketball team, she has been a key part of their success. Their team has qualified and will be playing at AAU Nationals in Orlando, Florida this July. Ashley has been a Spartan since 5<sup>th</sup> grade. It has been a joy to watch her grow into the fine young woman she is today.

Ashley's involvement in Right

Track female discussion and STARS is truly where she has shined. She has been an encouragement to others to be their best and a positive role model. Sharon Hardimann, facilitator of the girls group said this of Ashley: "She is a unique kid that strives to be a leader."

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

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## Connecting Mentors With Kids of Incarcerated Parents

By **Dave Thorson**, Dane County Human Services

Dane County has over 1,600 children with an incarcerated parent. These numbers reflect national statistics where by the year 2000, more than 1.5 million children had parents in prison. Seventy percent of women sent to prison leave behind dependent children. In Dane County, this problem has had a particularly devastating impact on the African-American community. While African-Americans comprise 6% of the population of Dane County, they are 60% of those sent to prison. This disproportionate level of minority confinement is startling and represents a community crisis that must be addressed.

In August 2004, Madison Urban Ministry, along with Family Connections of Wisconsin and Big Brothers/Big Sisters, received a grant to provide mentoring services in Dane County to youth ages 4

through 15 whose parents are incarcerated or on the way to state or federal prison. (Unfortunately this grant does not apply to youth whose parents are in Dane County jail.) These youth face increased risk for poverty, health problems, unstable housing, and unpredictability in their caregivers. This three year grant provides \$180,000 in the first two years with a 25% match expected, with the third year match growing to 50/50. The goal is to match 70 children by the end of the first year, with this rising to 130 by the third year.

As of March 2005, the project had recruited 48 mentors. Many of these volunteers come various faith communities and already have a match. Mentors are asked to make a one year commitment. They must be at least age 18 and must pass a background check. They attend four training sessions covering:

1. Orientation – Working with

at risk youth

2. Working across cultures
3. Substance abuse, rage, and anger issues
4. Returning prisoner simulation exercise

This is not a prisoner visitation program. Although visitation may be one component, it is not an expectation. Each child's situation is assessed individually. The parent providing care must agree to the mentoring services and give approval to any visitation or activity plan.

Our children are our future. Dane County is resource rich and we hope you agree that it is our obligation as a community to ensure that all youth have access to stability, nurturing, and those resources that make life fulfilling. To refer a youth or to volunteer your time, contact MUM or Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

## Summer Internships Bring Students of Color to DCDHS

Beginning in 1994, as part of an ongoing effort to increase staff diversity, the Department of Human Services put money in its budget to hire students of color for summer internships. Over the years, students have been placed in a variety of positions — child protection, delinquency, substitute care—in the Children, Youth & Families Divi-

sion. This year's summer intern is Erica Galindo, originally from Texas and now an MSW student at UW-Madison. Placed at the Department's Stoughton Office, Erica is getting experience in the areas of delinquency and child protection.

Some DCDHS summer interns have been hired as perma-

nent staff; others have gone on to positions elsewhere. Either way, the internship experience is a positive one: it contributes to the student's professional development, and Department staff benefit by their association with someone whose ethnic or racial background may be different from their own.

## Positive Behavior Support Team Program Continues in MMSD

By **Dennis Whitish**, Madison Metropolitan School District

In 1999 Madison Metropolitan School District created the Positive Behavior Support Team program using funding from the Safe Schools/Healthy Student grant. The program was a collaborative effort between Madison Metropolitan School District and the Mental Health Center of Dane County. The program was successful and when the grant money was no longer available a few years ago, the district picked up funding to continue the program.

When the program first started there were three teams consisting of a special education teacher, a

support staff person, (either a school social worker or school psychologist), and a mental health clinician from the Mental Health Center of Dane County. The mental health clinicians were part of the Youth Crisis Unit, but their salaries were paid initially by the grant and later by MMSD.

With fiscal constraints facing Madison Metropolitan School District over the past several years requiring millions of dollars to be cut from the school budget each year, the program managed to survive intact until this coming 05-06 school year. The mental health center was unable to secure funding and MMSD had no available

resources to continue funding the mental health clinician positions on the teams. Without the additional funding, the teams will be comprised of only a special education teacher and a school social worker or school psychologist. This leaves some uncertainty as to how the teams will function in the fall.

Many of the students served by PBST have mental health issues. In the past the mental health clinicians were a valuable resource and a link to other available resources in the community for students and their families as well as for school staff. Previously, the supervisor of Youth Crisis met weekly along with the PBST administrator with all

### **Chief Wray** Continued from Page 5

families.

The Madison Police Department, under Chief Wray's guidance, would like to have a more viable alternative to arresting and incarcerating individuals. "It is important for people who offend to be held accountable to the victim

and to the community, not just locked up," Chief Wray explained. The difficulty is that funding sources demand measurable results, such as number of arrests, length of incarceration, etc. Prevention and earlier intervention strategies are more difficult to measure and the positive results are slower to observe.

According to Chief Wray, "There is a major advantage to using a multi-faceted approach with more emphasis on families." He acknowledges this is a very complex problem, but he also believes

See **Chief Wray**, Page 7

# What's Happening with?

## GIRL NEIGHBORHOOD POWER

By Sue Milch, Dane County Human Services

Among the many fine programs run by the Atwood Community Center, Girl Neighborhood Power stands out. Started with a grant in the mid-90's, Girl Neighborhood Power is a successful leadership development program for middle and high school age girls.

More than 70 girls participate in this program through the Atwood Community Center, one of several sites in the city of Madison. Most participants attend Lowell Elementary School, O'Keefe Middle School, or East High School.

When the Atwood Community Center took over ownership of the Lussier Teen Center at 827 East Washington Ave., they moved the High School GNP program to new digs. This summer the remainder of

the GNP program will move from its home at Zion Lutheran Church to the Teen Center.

For those who choose to participate, Girl Neighborhood Power is no small commitment. In addition to meeting academic and behavioral expectations, girls have contact with the program three times a week. Individualized case management is provided for each middle and high school student. Academic goals are set every quarter, and program staff are at the schools on a regular basis, checking and monitoring each girl's progress. Mentors are provided, and tutoring is offered after school and evenings. In the third quarter of 2005, 100% of the high school girls increased their GPA significantly after an intense quarter of tutoring, mentoring, and of course

lots of support and recognition.

In addition to the academic component, Girl Neighborhood Power emphasizes health and fitness, community service, and leadership. The program pledges to do 1000 hours of community service annually, and girls in each grade level participate in monthly community service. Leadership classes are available; for 8<sup>th</sup> graders, the Girl Council provides additional opportunities for training and leadership experience.

How to become part of Neighborhood Girl Power? Referrals can be made by school staff, social workers, parents, or girls can self-refer. Contact Jalateefa at the Atwood Community Center at 241-1574, x14.

### Chief Wray

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that models such as Joining Forces for Families can and do work well. Chief Wray was involved in the organizing and creation of this model, which incorporates trust-based policing, social work, the schools and community health.

"The Madison area has so many positive things happening," Chief Wray noted, "and any time the police department can support a restorative approach, we will do that." His belief in supporting individuals and families who are struggling with multiple stressors will certainly go a long way toward

maintaining the safety and peace in our community. His dedication as Chief of Police, and his style of leadership are just what are needed to keep the positive forces on target in the Madison Police Department.

# On Balance – Staff Spotlight – Where are they now?

This issue we catch up with **Mustafa Sabree**, former NIP Social Worker.

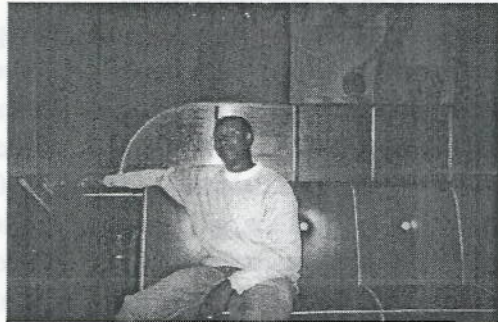
**What is your current Job?**  
Currently employed with State of Wisconsin, Department Human and Family Services, Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare. Current position is Service Manager, primarily responsible for the supervision of a Child Protective Services Unit.

**What types of employment did you have prior to the current position?**

Ongoing Social Worker - Dane County Neighborhood Intervention Program  
Child Protective Service Worker - Fulton County, Atlanta Georgia

Child Protective Service Worker - Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare

**What is the number one youth**



*Mustafa Sabree currently works for the State of Wisconsin in the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare*

**or family issue that you face in your work?**

The number one issue facing families we serve is lack of community based resources. Families have become too reliant on traditional ser-

vice involvement to resolve their day to day concerns.

**What could you do with more resources?**

Assist families in becoming more self-sufficient.

**What do you do in your free time?**

In my free time I enjoy riding my motorcycle. I'm a member of a local motorcycle club. I hold the position of Sergeant at Arms. I also participate in a few men's basketball leagues and spending time with my family.

**Where do you see your self in ten years from now?**

In a perfect world the most appropriate answer would be Director of one the divisions within the State of Wisconsin.

## Madison Schools Offer Information on Restorative Practices

By **Dennis Whitish**, Madison Metropolitan School District

Each summer the annual Principal's Summer Institute is held in Madison at which time all MMSD principals and other school administrators receive training and information on various educational topics. This summer for the first time, many MMSD principals received information on the research and theory of Restorative Practices. Joan Lerman a social worker with Madison Metropolitan School District organized the Restorative Practices presentation for this summers Principal's Insti-

tute.

During a one day workshop in the summer of 2004, a few MMSD administrators and support staff heard from Nancy Reistenberg from the Minnesota Department of education about the theory and research behind the Restorative Justice model. A number of school staff had also learned about this model at various training opportunities that they had previously attended and become interested in bringing this approach into their school buildings.

At this summers Institute, Principal's heard from a panel of

professionals who are involved in the Restorative Justice model and also heard from administrators in other

Districts who currently implement the Restorative Justice principles. This was the first time a district-wide approach to learning about Restorative Practices has been offered to administrators from Madison Metropolitan School District. Ms. Lerman hopes to be able to secure training opportunities for four or five schools to be trained in the Restorative Justice model before the beginning of the 2005-06 school year.

## CASE - A Small Focus with Big Results

By Jim Moeser, Dane County  
Juvenile Court

Hey, what could be better than a new acronym to learn? What does CASE stand for, you ask? What genius thought up another program with another fancy name? And, how the heck am I supposed to keep track of all these programs and initials?

The idea for CASE, which stands for *Coordinated Action Service Enhancement*, was born many moons ago as part of the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders. The Comprehensive Strategy outlined 5 core strategies that communities should attend to in thinking about delinquency and how best to allocate resources, energy, and programming. These core strategies include:

- § Supporting Families
- § Supporting Core Social Institutions
- § Investing in Prevention
- § Intervening Early and Effectively with Youthful Offenders
- § Controlling the Serious, Violent, and Habitual Offender

More information about the Comprehensive Strategy can be found at <http://www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles/guide.pdf>. Essentially the

Comprehensive Strategy says that there have to be investments across this continuum and that it is a continuum of effort(s) that will, in the long run, be the most productive. *[By the way, the Guide to Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy..... is one of the most complete and well-researched documents related to juvenile delinquency that exists, so check it out!]*

Many jurisdictions have implemented a program called SHOCAP (Serious Habitual Offender Coordinated Action Plan) as part of the “fifth” core strategy to essentially “ramp up” the level of coordination, information sharing, and services provided to youth in the community who fall in that small percentage of youth who are seriously delinquent. Dane County Human Services, in partnership with the Madison Police, Madison Schools, and the Juvenile Court is in the process of developing a home-grown version of this model, in this CASE called CASE (wait a minute, is that redundant?).

There are a number of reasons for developing a CASE model, including:

§ Oftentimes there is a lack of coordinated information about our

most “at-risk” youth that runs across agencies (e.g. law enforcement, schools, human services, courts, etc.); the “right hand doesn’t know what the left hand is doing” syndrome!

§ Minimizing the likelihood that a high-risk youth will reoffend has multiple benefits, including (most importantly) a reduced likelihood of further victims, less “spin-off” to peers and siblings of continued delinquent behavior, and the youth themselves who may be able to be maintained, supervised, and supported in the community instead of being incarcerated.

§ A small number of youth can have a large impact on any social setting such as a school, a neighborhood, a community center, etc.. Therefore, it is important that we work with our most at-risk youth to become productive members of those peer groups and that they contribute to a positive atmosphere vs. “pushing” those systems to have to react to the negative atmosphere they could create if left unattended.

§ Agencies or professionals in the system often deal with youth “the same” regardless of what their status in the system is, yet we all

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## CASE

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know that there are some youth who are more “at risk” than others, and who are more likely to reoffend than others, who need both more supervision and more support than others. But, we often work in isolation from each other, with only “part of the puzzle” that can help us make good decisions at that point of contact and intervention that are good for the community and the youth.

◆ Reducing the number of high-risk youth that reoffend can reduce the overall “costs” associated with supervising and placing youthful offenders. Hopefully this allows resources to be directed to other parts of the comprehensive strategy.

There are several “steps” being developed in the CASE model, including:

◆ Youth will be identified and referred for CASE coordination based on set criteria of offending and/or other behavior-based criteria.

◆ Once referred, an inter-agency group will review the criteria and make a determination of whether or not the youth in question needs this higher-level designation and coordination.

◆ Information about CASE youth will be shared with other agencies (as permitted by statute and/or inter-agency agreement(s)), and a “central registry” of CASE youth will be kept in Juvenile Reception Center.

◆ The Madison Police Department (the “pilot” department) will “flag” their records in such a way that if an officer has contact with a CASE youth, there will be some direction on who to contact and how to make sure that information related to that contact is shared immediately with others in the system (for example with one of the Intensive Supervision program staff).

§ Other procedures and protocols related to arrest, custody, court scheduling, and other aspects of the system will be developed to ensure a timely response to issues occurs.

§ Youth may receive enhanced treatment, assessment, or other intervention services to help ensure that underlying problems are addressed.

In many ways, the response for CASE youth will simply be

doing what is already done, but doing it “faster” and in a more coordinated manner in the hopes that prompt and proper intervention and support can re-direct the youth in a positive way as well as provide greater safety for the community.

Finally, CASE is not for everyone. While there are elements of CASE that would benefit all youthful offenders, most of them don’t need the extra attention and frankly we do not have the resources to do it for all kids. Not all youth who need to be “controlled” need to be confined. While short-term community safety is achieved by incarcerating a youth, long-term community safety comes only when everyone (including the youth and family) is working together in a coordinated way to direct the youth to make law-abiding choices and become engaged with pro-social peers and activities.

CASE is a small, evolving step as part of a larger comprehensive effort, so watch for more details and information in the weeks and months ahead.



## Girls

Continued from Page 1

### 2004

Total Female Referrals: 518  
Total Crimes of Aggression: 320  
Aggression Percent of Total: 52%

Studies have shown that effective programming for girls is not merely a carbon copy of what works for boys. Girls need to feel a sense of safety and trust, programs that emphasize long term relationships, female only space, and education about female health issues and positive relationships. It is crucial that to meet these ends programs be girls only. In mixed groups, the boys tend to dominate, sensitive issues are risky to bring up, and then there is the constant hormonal distractions inevitable when teenage boys and girls are brought together.

Girls need to learn about female physical and sexual development, how to change old unproductive habits, and have a program where they feel a sense of control and the ability to set and achieve goals. Staff need to be trained to understand how gender differences alter the approaches used. Additionally, there must be an acknowledgement and ability to address victimization and trauma. An enormous percentage of female offenders who act out aggressively

or make risky sexual decisions have histories of abuse that has not been effectively dealt with. Positive school attachment and achievement are also critical. By addressing these issues it is hoped that a reduction in female gang identification will also be impacted. It is by taking a strength based holistic approach to the problem of female offenders, incorporating all these elements, that gender specific programming can make an impact.

In Dane County we have a vast array of services for adolescent girls, but few that meet the complete description of ideal programming for this population. And there is certainly insufficient coordination between programs in order to ensure consistency of the message, or continuity of service.

Committee recommendations included a suggestion to develop a group supervision pool for more serious offenders so that there are always sufficient numbers. This group would include clients from NIP, CAP, HDP, Shelter Home, Girls Group Homes, etc. There is also assistance available through the Office of Juvenile Justice to receive grants to help develop a county wide coordinated response and provide training to staff and system partners. A greater collaboration between DCDHS and the school

system is recommended. Acts of aggression by girls in schools that resulted in delinquency petitions has doubled since 1997. If there is a way to incorporate Alternatives To Aggression, Trauma treatment, AODA education/intervention, and relationship skills building into a school based program involving all these partners, it should be further explored.

The Mental Health Center of Dane County just received a four year grant to provide trauma treatment for females involved in the juvenile justice system. This however only begins to address this part of the issue, and needs to be part of a continuum of service rather than a stand alone project.

It is clear that the work of this committee has only exposed the tip of the iceberg. There is much still to do in order for Dane County to have the cohesive continuum of services necessary for girls to receive effective, positive outcomes. While there may be a shortage of money and resources, the members of this committee showed that Dane County has the expertise, dedication and motivation to become a national model if we maintain our momentum.

2004

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 Total Cases of Aggression: 320  
 Aggression Percent of Total: 52%

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