



# On Balance

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## **Youth Voices Needed!**

By Paige Michels

Do you work with teens with youth justice or out-of-home care experience? Invite them to join the Youth Leadership Team or Youth Advisory Council to connect with other teens, share their experiences, gain advocacy experience, and impact change.

*Youth Leadership Team (YLT)* is for young people ages 14-21 who have personal experience with the youth justice system, either currently or in the past. The purpose of YLT is to elevate youth voice to inform YJ best practices and make the system better for youth, as well as provide training opportunities to enhance youth leadership skills.

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) holds four statewide meetings per year, and youth are **paid \$25 per meeting** to attend virtually or in person. DCDHS Youth Justice Coordinator Alex Maves is also hosting local YLT groups for Dane County youth, who will receive **\$15 per meeting plus food!**

*YLT Upcoming Meeting Dates:*

Monday, April 24 from 3:15-4:45 p.m.: Local YLT Meeting (\$15 incentive plus food)

Thursday, May 18 from 4:30-6:30 p.m.: State YLT Meeting (\$25 incentive plus food)

Contact Youth Justice Coordinator Alex Maves at 608-334-0063 or [maves.alex@countyofdane.com](mailto:maves.alex@countyofdane.com) for more information.

*Youth Advisory Council (YAC)* provides a monthly group and advocacy opportunity for youth ages 14-23 who are currently in or have previously experienced out-of-home care. YAC helps youth build independent living skills and connect with other foster care youth. For example, at a recent meeting, youth learned how to file their taxes. Meetings are youth-driven and a free meal and transportation are provided. Local

YAC members can also join the state-wide YAC, which offers opportunities to advocate for changes in the foster care system.

Contact Pricilla Reyes at 608-249-9001 or [preyes@wdbscw.org](mailto:preyes@wdbscw.org) for more information.

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## **Meet Chauncey Haste, MMSD Youth Transition Coordinator**

By Chauncey Haste

Hello! My name is Chauncey Haste, and I work in the Office of Youth Re-engagement as the Youth Transition Coordinator at MMSD. My duties include working on transitional processes for our students within the Metro schools (classrooms in Shelter Home, Juvenile Detention Center, and Dane County Jail) as they transition to and from their home schools within MMSD. My goal is to make sure that students and their families are given the respect and opportunity to re-engage without feeling like they are misplaced. These particular families need wraparound services to help support the student and increase a student's retention rate. I have been able to settle into my role and understand how my position fits within each space.



I have pushed myself to know more about how my students are affected, which helped to shape how I support them. I have attended court hearings, communicated with parents and community partners, and, most importantly, got to know my students. It is important to continue to treat our students like students and not as criminals or judge them based on their poor decisions. In doing so, I have been able to form genuine connections with them that revolve around trust, comfort, and open communication.

Each student is unique and should be treated as such. Respect is a priority for our students and should be for anyone in this role; our students are often spoken "to" and not "with." They deserve to know what your intentions are for them because they may have a different perspective or vision; working with them is the best-case scenario for a positive working relationship. I have learned that having a balance between accountability, care, compassion, and respect will allow for a great working relationship with our students.

It is an honor to work with students on a daily basis, whether they are in Metro spaces or have transitioned from DOJ facilities. My job does not end once a student is placed. I continually check on students in schools and other programs they are attending. The goal for all is that they are career, community, or college ready.

## **Strengthening Families with FACE**

By Sue DeBuhr and Amy Otto

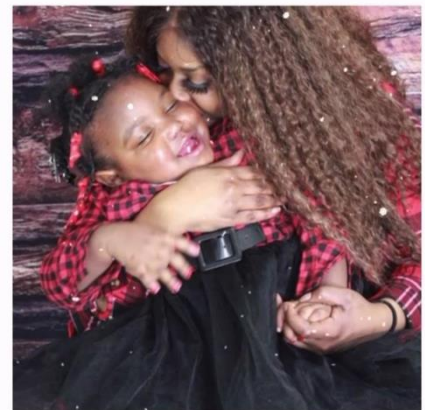
In 2019, Dane County Department of Human Services started a program called Family and Community Engagement, better known as FACE. Our program works with families who have a screened in CPS investigation for concerns of neglect but whose case will ultimately close with a safe finding. The FACE program is voluntary and works with families to increase child and family wellbeing, improve overall family functioning, and ultimately decrease contact with child protective services.

FACE works with families using a strengths-based approach. We allow parents to drive their case plan, not the assigned social worker or the court system. We use the Strengthening Families protective factors assessment with each family, which helps guide our work and set short- and long-term goals. Research shows enhancing the five protective factors in this assessment decreases the likelihood children will be victims of abuse.

Damalish and her daughter, Kybella, joined FACE in January 2022. At that time, Damalish was a 22-year-old single mother of 1-year-old Kybella. Outside of parenting, Damalish was working part time and attending online culinary school. Kybella did not attend daycare, and there was a family expectation when Damalish was home she would be caring for her daughter, even if it took her away from her studies. Additionally, Damalish was open about struggling with depression for many years, including postpartum depression following the birth of Kybella. Kybella's father is not involved, and Damalish did not always feel supported by her family. At the time FACE became involved, Damalish was feeling extremely overwhelmed and suicidal due to the stresses of being a single parent, working, and going to school. While the goals she had set for herself were not impractical or unachievable, she wanted to give up because of the stress and fatigue she was feeling. Her stress was affecting not only herself but also her ability to be patient with Kybella. Damalish recognized this but felt so overwhelmed it was difficult to make a change.

Damalish met with FACE and set short- and long-term goals she could achieve with support. FACE provided protective daycare until Damalish could secure long-term daycare through Wisconsin Shares. Damalish focused on treating her depression and sought assistance through her primary care provider. She continued her studies and maintained employment. Despite a death in her family, homelessness, and a setback in her graduation date, Damalish faced those stressful events head-on and did not lose focus on her goals.

Damalish proudly graduated from Culinary School in March 2023 and is employed at The Cheesecake Factory as a chef. She has goals of moving forward as a chef in the future and is confident she can reach these goals. Damalish secured an apartment for Kybella and herself and is proud of these accomplishments. She also finds that she is more patient and comfortable parenting Kybella.



When asked what was helpful to her, Damalish indicated she simply felt supported. She knew she could call her social worker to help problem solve without being judged or ridiculed. Something as simple as being told for the first time it was OK to allow herself time away from Kybella helped her not feel guilty for utilizing daycare. She has observed Kybella thrive, she is better able

to manage her stress and depression, and she has allowed herself to be proud of all of her accomplishments.

## **Changes on the Juvenile Bench 2023**

By John Bauman

There have been some changes in the Juvenile Division of the Dane County Circuit Court, and there will be more this summer. Judge Colás retired in December after serving as a judge for almost 15 years, the last six of which were in the juvenile division. Thank you Judge Colás! Judge Ryan Nilsestuen was appointed by the Governor and began in January in Branch 10. Judge Crawford will be moving to the Civil Division and Judge Nia Trammell will return to the Juvenile Division this summer in Branch 6. Judge Crawford will finish any juvenile cases that are pending, and Judge Trammell will have all new juvenile cases beginning June 1 and then all existing Branch 1 cases beginning August 1. Thank you to Judge Crawford for four years in the Juvenile Division!

Judge Mitchell will continue to be the Presiding Juvenile Judge for the next two-year rotation. Following is an introduction to Judge Nilsestuen and Judge Trammell. Please welcome them to the Juvenile Division!



***Judge Ryan Nilsestuen***

I attended Luther College and UW Law School. I am married and have a five-year-old son and enjoy spending time with my family, downhill skiing, reading, and traveling.

**How long have you been on the bench?** I have been on the bench since January 16, 2023.

**Which divisions?** Juvenile Division, with some civil cases.

**What did you do prior to becoming a Judge?** I was Chief Legal Counsel for Governor Evers and prior to that was Chief Legal Counsel for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

**What is your philosophy on working with juveniles and children?** Being in the Juvenile Division is like returning home for me, as much of my career was at DPI doing school law. Being a judge in this division is a tremendous responsibility and an awesome opportunity to help kids get resources and support that will help get them to a better place in their lives.

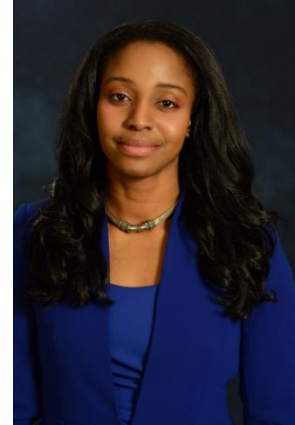
**What can people expect when they have court in your branch?** People can expect my branch to not be overly formal and for me right away to try to establish a connection with the children in my court. It is important to have a conversation with the youth and family and I can usually find something that connects us.

**Is there anything else that you would like readers to know?** I am excited to join an effort to help youth that includes so many hard-working people. It is a privilege to serve in this role as a Judge in the Juvenile Division, which can sometimes be overlooked in the larger judicial system. I find it very rewarding to be a

part of an effort to have a positive impact on children by helping them get the resources they need to do well.

***Judge Nia Trammell***

My parents immigrated to the United States from Nigeria in the 1970s to attend the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I am a longtime Madisonian and graduate of West High School. I attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison and earned a B.A. in Behavioral Science and Law. I obtained my Juris Doctor from the University of Wisconsin Law School. I am married with three children.



**How long have you been on the bench?** I began serving as the Branch 6 judge on October 11, 2020.

**Which divisions?** I first served in the juvenile rotation. Because I was finishing out my predecessor's assigned rotation, I was in the juvenile rotation for about nine months. I am currently serving in the civil rotation.

**What did you do prior to becoming a Judge?** I initially worked at Michael Best & Friedrich, LLP after law school in the commercial litigation practice group. My work was varied, handling business disputes, some employment law litigation, and transactional trademark and copyright matters. I then became an Administrative Law Judge for the State of Wisconsin, primarily focused on adjudicating worker's compensations claims. My career took a twist when I left the legal sector to serve as the Deputy Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services. In that role, I served as the equivalent of the chief operating officer for the agency.

**What is your philosophy on working with juveniles and children?** At the most rudimentary level, I believe that no child is born bad or unworthy of being loved, nurtured, and uplifted. I understand that there can be a constellation of factors and circumstances that result in children and families coming before the court. The primary goals of the juvenile justice system undergird my philosophy on working with juveniles, children, and their families. I am sensitive to the need for maintaining public safety, attune to the rehabilitative function of our juvenile justice system, and appreciate the continuum of CHIPS interventions available to help children and families. I recognize the need for a trauma-informed approach, and the need to exercise patience and to grant grace, while not yielding to roadblocks that prevent the fashioning of solutions that best move juveniles, children, and their families forward. I operate from a place that allows others to feel respected and heard. While proceedings in the juvenile court are often adversarial in nature, I view the work from a lens of cooperation – I believe that when all parties and actors are collaborating to identify the underlying issues which brought the juvenile/child and the child's family to court in the first instance, we are in the most optimal position to create pathways for reintegrating them into the community or keeping families intact.

**What can people expect when they have court in your branch?** I foster an environment where parties and others interacting with the court can feel respected and heard. I am collaborative by nature, and open to dialogue and creative solutions. I welcome invitations and opportunities to visit facilities and to learn about programs that intersect with the juvenile court. I appreciate timely filings to give me the opportunity to review and digest matters coming before the court. Our branch loves it when the players

play well and treat each other with dignity and courtesy, and we value learning about the positive things happening with juveniles, children, and families who have cases pending in the branch.

**Is there anything else that you would like readers to know?** Branch 6 is looking forward to returning to the juvenile rotation in August 2023.

## **Updates from MMSD School Social Workers**

By Joanna Whitrock and Laura Glaub, MMSD social work support

We are glad to be partnering with the county to provide updates on support for students in the Madison Schools. Below are some updates for summer support for students.

### **Summer Semester Information**

Summer Semester runs from Tuesday, June 20, 2023 – Friday, July 28, 2023. Classes for grades 4K-8 will be held Monday – Friday and high school will be held Monday – Thursday. Criteria varies depending on the grade level. Please see the [Summer Semester Website](#) to learn more about the criteria, administration for each school, and more support for the summer semester.

### **Summer Programming: MSCR**

MSCR is having many different programs this year to support students beyond summer semester. Please see [MSCR Summer Programming 2023](#). School social workers can help families apply for scholarships beyond financial aid. If you have any questions around scholarships for a student, you can contact Laura (middle and high) and Joanna (elementary).

### **Second Harvest Food Pantries**

MMSD, in partnership with Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin, is proud to offer a number of school-based food pantries for MMSD families and, in the case of the drive-through distributions, the entire community. There are multiple pantries across town that support families (with drive-up service). Please see [MMSD Food Pantries List](#) to learn more and see updates throughout summer.

### **Enrollment for '23-'24 School Year: Starting in July!!**

We will be enrolling students earlier this year to support families with the process and free and reduced lunch status application. Please see the [Enrollment for MMSD 23-24](#).

*Any questions? Contact:*

Joanna Whitrock for elementary support at [jlwhitrock@madison.k12.wi.us](mailto:jlwhitrock@madison.k12.wi.us).

Laura Glaub for secondary support at [lglaub@madison.k12.wi.us](mailto:lglaub@madison.k12.wi.us).

# What Is Briarpatch?

By Dominique Smith and Jasmine Benson

*Each year, many youth and their families throughout Dane County benefit from the many services provided by Briarpatch. With over 50 years of service to the community, Briarpatch is constantly evolving to remain a safe haven of support.*

**Here are Briarpatch Youth Services' Programs:**

**Youth Restitution Program** – Gives minors the opportunity to perform community service with a counselor that is a youth advocate first. YRP also helps with collecting restitution payments and provides a form of mentoring for youth while they are completing restitution or community service obligations.

**Runaway and Homeless Youth/Youth Shelter** – Offers a safe, temporary shelter for ages 12-17. It is open 24 hours a day/365 days a year. Briarpatch also offers support to runaway youth and youth experiencing homelessness and their families.

**Intensive Supervision Program** – Allows youth the opportunity to avoid out-of-home placement and remain in their community. Services provided include structured time outside of school, mentoring, curfew monitoring, competency development groups, and school attendance support.

**Restorative Justice Program** – This program helps first-time youthful offenders who would like to take responsibility for decisions they have made. Through sessions held at Briarpatch and in the community, the clients learn how to restore harm caused by their actions. The youth are given a chance to learn alternative ways of accountability and healing.

**Teens Like Us** – A group that meets at Briarpatch or through Zoom for LGBTQIA2S+ youths. Ages range from 13-18. TLU provides opportunities for LGBTQIA2+ youth to discuss the highs and lows of day-to-day life experiences. These meetings are run by Briarpatch staff. Youth who attend TLU plan activities for other LGBTQIA2S+ youth to participate in a safe and supportive space.

**Youth Job Center** – Provides youth with the necessary tools to find and maintain employment. Youth participants benefit from individual job search assistance, skills assessment, and job placement with other agencies within the community. Serving youth ages 14-21.

**Street Outreach** – Offers a hub of resources for youth and young adults experiencing homelessness or life's adversities with the main objective of helping them meet their basic and long-term housing needs.

**Parent Support Program** – An outlet for parents to share and discuss challenges and solutions from life’s experiences. Brief counseling is available to parents and their families. Open groups are offered twice monthly.



## **Where Are They Now?**

By Rhonda Voigt



**Ginny Whitehouse**

I had the chance to catch up with Ginny Whitehouse recently. She retired in 2015 after 26+ years as a social worker with Dane County Department of Human Services. Ginny has already been retired for eight years! Although she misses her coworkers, she does not miss the paperwork. Ginny reports that being required to use the COMPAS assessment tool was the number one factor that pushed her to retire, since workers had to enter that the youth had been adjudicated when that rarely was the case in YJ intake. Per Ginny, COMPAS helped her decide that it was time to move on.

Since retiring, Ginny has been working part-time. Initially she worked as an obituary clerk for Capital Newspapers, editing, proofing, and billing for obituaries. She says that working part-time really helps her appreciate her days off! After four years with the newspaper, during which time she got to know many of the funeral directors in Madison, she contacted Gunderson Funeral and Cremation Care to see if she might be able to work for them. She was hired and continues to write, edit, and proof obituaries for Gunderson, while also doing other administrative tasks. Ginny has been with Gunderson for four years. She has enjoyed learning about this industry and the associated technology.



Ginny's three grown children are living in Green Bay, La Crosse, and Las Vegas. Two of her grandchildren are in the Madison area, the third is in Milwaukee; she has five great-grandchildren. She stays busy in "retirement" by working, going to the Princeton Club four times per week, and volunteering monthly at a local food pantry. Although she does not travel as much as she expected she would, Ginny enjoys attending concerts like the Rolling Stones and the Doobie Brothers. And, of course, she still likes tuning in to SpongeBob SquarePants on a regular basis.

## **Summer Opportunities for Youth**

### ***Bethel Horizons Summer Camp***

Bethel Horizons Camp is a mostly outdoor youth camp offering week-long adventures (Sunday through Friday) for 2<sup>nd</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> graders. Located next to Governor Dodge State Park in Dodgeville, it is a beautiful location with woods, prairies, cliffs, and a swimming beach. Older kids can sign up to go on bigger adventures such as caving, canoeing down the Kickapoo River, a ropes course, and mountain biking. Younger kids have options for music, art, star watching, and learning more about nature. The camp also offers a "Leaders in Training" camp for 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> graders.

More information can be found at

<https://www.bethelhorizons.org/what-we-do/summer-camps/>.

The camp also offers "camperships" (scholarships to cover most of the costs of camp) sponsored through Bethel Lutheran Church if the family is involved with DCDHS. Bethel Horizons also offers transportation to and from the camp and Bethel Lutheran, located near the Capitol.

Bethel Horizons Camp is already open for registration and awarding camperships. The first week starts June 11 and the last week ends August 11. Sign up soon. It is a great adventure for active and curious kids. Please look at the website for additional details.

### ***Camp to Belong-Wisconsin***

By Jennifer Keip

Camp to Belong-Wisconsin (CTB-WI) is a camp affiliated with Camp to Belong-International (CTB). CTB is a national non-profit dedicated to reuniting siblings placed separately from one another in out-of-home care by providing fun, emotionally empowering connection events and opportunities that allow siblings to build and maintain relationships with one another. In addition to connection events and opportunities throughout the year, Camp to Belong-Wisconsin provides a weeklong summer camp for siblings held at Camp Anokijig in Plymouth, WI. This year, Camp to Belong-WI is scheduled for August 13-18. Referrals are due by June 1.

The voices of children who have participated in Camp to Belong are incredibly powerful and highlight the importance of sibling relationships and connections. Take a listen here:

<https://youtu.be/Xgluw0LjVKE>

To learn more about Camp to Belong, click on this link: [Camp To Belong-Wisconsin, Inc. \(ctb-wi.org\)](https://www.ctb-wi.org); or reach out to (920) 904-5643 or [camptobelongwisconsin@gmail.com](mailto:camptobelongwisconsin@gmail.com)

Make a referral: [CTB-WI 2023 Camper Referral Form \(google.com\)](#)

**Madison Police Department Youth Programs**

By Detective Shannon Siirila

***CampHERO Summer Camp for Girls***

Pre-K – 12th grade girls

July 17-28

<https://camphero4girls.org/>

***Late Night Basketball***

Warner Park Community Recreation Center: Fridays, March 24-May 26, 8 p.m.-10 p.m.

Allied Boys and Girls Club: Fridays, June 23-July 26, 7 p.m.-10 p.m.

***MPD Leadership Academy***

7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Dane County youth enrolled in MSCR Summer School

June 12-June 16

Email [core@cityofmadison.com](mailto:core@cityofmadison.com) or call 608-267-1965

***MPD Latino Youth Academy***

7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Dane County youth

August 14-August 18

Email [core@cityofmadison.com](mailto:core@cityofmadison.com) or call 608-267-1965

***Club Badge***

Partnership with MSCR for middle school youth

Allied Neighborhood: Wednesdays, June 21-August 9, 2 p.m.-3 p.m.

Meadowood Neighborhood: TBD

***Amigos en Azul Summer Soccer Series***

Youth soccer camp

Three consecutive Saturdays in June or July – TBD

Location TBD

For more information about any of the MPD summer youth events, contact Sergeant Meg Hamilton at [mhamilton@cityofmadison.com](mailto:mhamilton@cityofmadison.com).

**In Memoriam**



**John M. Borquist**

John Borquist passed away on New Year's Day, 2023, at home after a brief illness. A graduate of East High School and UW-Madison's master of social work program, many knew John Borquist from his many years as manager for Dane County Human Services' contracted mental health and substance abuse services, oversight of the foster care/substitute care unit, incorporation of trauma-informed care practices, and significant role in the development of Joining Forces for Families. He served as a Dane County Human Services manager from 1991 to 2007. Following his retirement, John became a field instructor for social work students at UW-Madison, was a part-time special education assistant for Madison schools, and was heavily involved in the Madison's Hmong community. His daughter also worked for DCDHS. John touched the lives of many at Dane County, both directly and indirectly. If you were fortunate enough to know him, he was the epitome of a kind, caring soul, and his presence will be missed. Even in his passing, he asked for memorials to be made to either the Dane County Foster Care Unit or the Adopt-a-Family program, both c/o Dane County Human Services, 1202 Northport Drive, Madison, WI 53704.

**On Balance Committee Members:**

Andre Johnson, Rhonda Voigt, Erik Nielsen, Veronica Hereford, Paige Michels, John Bauman, Noah Hoepler, Nikki Sanders, Julie Ahnen, Emily Pyszora, Christina Fruin, Jackie Kaminski, Catherine Haag, Amanda Wiza