



# On Balance

A Dane County Department of Human Services and Dane County Juvenile Court  
Program Publication  
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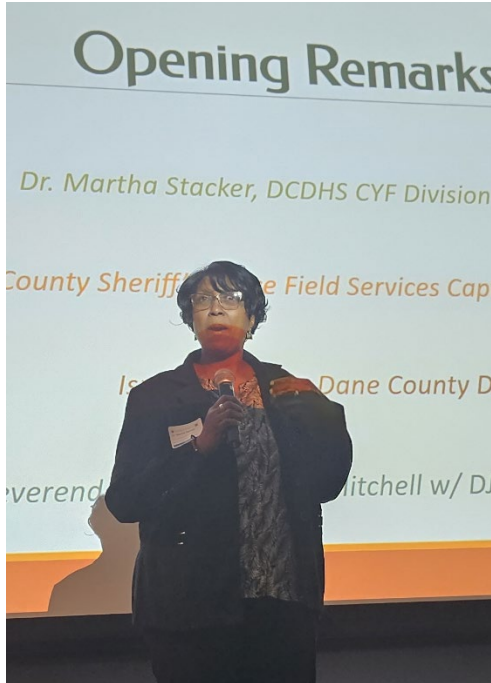
## **Youth Justice Conference**



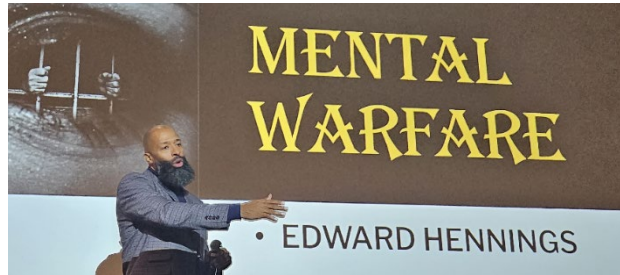
**THE 2023 YOUTH JUSTICE CONFERENCE** took place at American Family Insurance on October 19 and centered on the theme, “Fostering Resilience in Our Youth.” Keynote speaker, Edward Hennings, kicked off the conference with his inspirational story “Mental Warfare” that depicted his journey of both mental and physical incarceration. A wealth of knowledge and experience was brought forth by our breakout speakers throughout the morning and afternoon that covered topics including dialectical behavioral therapy, experiential restorative justice circles, critical response and threat assessment processes in schools, and much more. We were excited to also incorporate youth involvement with our conference’s DJ, Gabriel Braucht, who bumped up the energy level throughout the day with his music and talent. A highlight of the day was our closing conversation that involved the voices of two resilient youth, Zoria Phipps and Antonio Grant, who shared their experiences during their

time on court ordered supervision. Thank you to all who attended, and a special shout out to the conference committee's hard work that made this event a success!

**Edward Hennings, Keynote Speaker**



**Opening Remarks by Martha Stacker, Ph.D  
CYF Division Administrator**

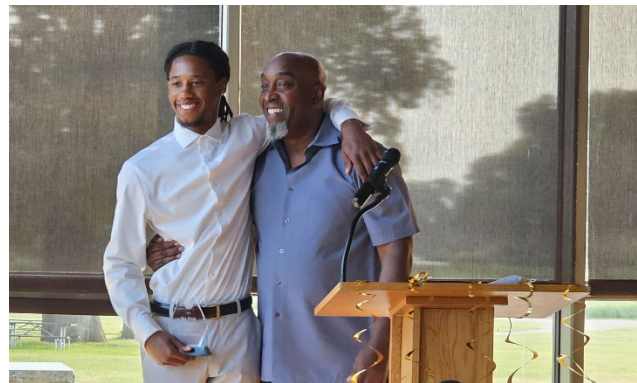


## Youth Justice Awards Banquet

*Community professionals were all inspired by Josh Clauer's helping spirit and wish to continue his legacy in work with youth.*

The newly renamed Youth Justice Awards Banquet (formerly known as the Neighborhood Intervention Program Awards Banquet) was a

great night to celebrate the successes of youth, parents, and professionals in our community. This first annual banquet was dedicated to Dane County Human Service's late colleague Joshua Clauer. Josh was recognized with two new awards in his name. The theme of this year's banquet, "Be the change you wish to see", was largely the way Josh lived his life and carried out his work with youth. Those that received the two awards dedicated to Josh also received a copy of Josh's book, "*Walking the Line: There is No Time for Hate*".



Community professionals were all inspired by Josh's helping spirit and wish to continue his legacy in work with youth.

Attendees of the banquet enjoyed a meal provided by FEED Kitchens while listening to presenters. The Honorable Judge Everett Mitchell was highlighted as the evening's keynote speaker. Judge Mitchell described the impact Josh had on Dane County's youth and commented on the topic of "be the change you wish to see." The awards presentation after the keynote speech was a celebratory occasion where over twenty awards were given out. There were stories shared of youth overcoming their struggles and professionals assisting youth to overcome those struggles, and finally parents were recognized for all that they do for their youth. This award banquet recognizes the work of youth who are often overlooked by the community and the professionals whose work with them can go unrecognized. The Department is looking forward to many more successful banquets to come!



## Coach Clauer "None in the Gap" Award

Youth Award Janiyah Green

Adult Award Lily Nimmer

## Youth Awards

### Improved GPA



### All Star Award



### Stella School Attendance



### Leadership Award



# Adult Awards

## Outstanding Parent Award



## Beth Gentilli Award



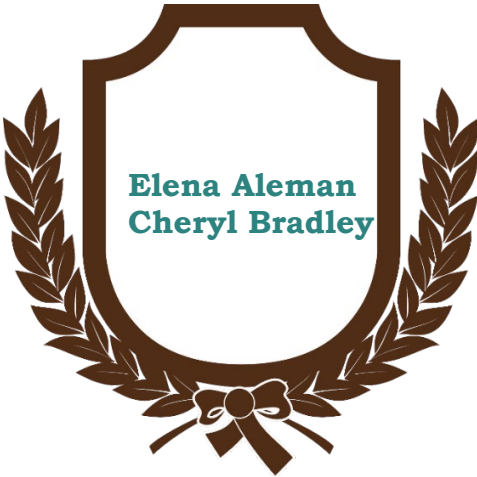
## James Rumfp Community Service Award



## Joe Thomas Positive Image Award



## Gene Weidemann Award



## Youth Justice Summer Youth Groups

By Amanda Wiza

*They worked many hours with local artist Jerry Butler and the Bubbler program to design and paint bollard columns at the entrance of the Youth Justice & Prevention building.*



Despite the heat, DCDHS Youth Justice Program Leaders and the youth they support were busy this summer! Program Leaders hosted weekly group gatherings for Youth Justice-involved young people to engage in group activities and positive social interactions. Throughout the months of June, July, and August, the youth completed community service activities, worked on building social skills, completed art projects, cooked and shared meals together, and experienced field trips. Group time includes participating in group discussions (some based on Carey Guides) focused on topics

such as maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships, decision-making, and positive engagement with peers. The participating youth are from all over the Dane County area, from Madison to Deforest to Mt. Horeb. Program Leaders are committed to eliminating barriers to attendance and often assist each other with providing transportation. The time commitment for transportation has ensured interested youth are always able to participate.



The Court Diversion Unit Program Leaders Rick Naylor and Joe Muellenberg operated a summer boys group on Wednesdays for low-medium risk youth ages 13-16 years old. The group has been on field trips to the Madison College Challenge Course, volunteered in a community garden, and supported the Parks Alive events at Warner Park in the Brentwood neighborhood. They worked many hours with local artist Jerry Butler and the Bubbler program to design and paint bollard columns at the entrance of the Youth Justice & Prevention (formerly Neighborhood Intervention Program) building to create colorful and vibrant artwork for staff, youth, families, and community members to enjoy. There is also an end of summer event in the works as well.

Program Leaders Choua Her and Martha Vradenburg hosted a group for girls on Mondays. These youth shared meals, participated in discussions focused on social skill building, and engaged in youth-directed activities such as nail painting and art and craft projects. The girls also participated in Madison College Challenge Course event.

Meanwhile, DCDHS YJ and Prevention Program Leader Ty Mahone ran his annual “work crew” this summer for youth in 8<sup>th</sup> grade or older. These youth spent 10-15 hours per week earning first-time employment experience working with a non-profit. This summer the crew worked for Second Harvest

Food Bank, packaging food for distribution in Dane County and throughout southeastern Wisconsin. The crew also spent time learning financial literacy on topics such as opening a bank account and understanding debit vs. credit. Ty stays connected with his 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders by planning activities throughout the summer such as outings to Goodman Pool, Sky Zone, and the movies. Overall, 25 youth received services from Ty during the summer months so support and connection can be maintained throughout the school year. Most of these groups will reform once school begins this fall and will meet during after school hours to continue offering support, connection, and skill building throughout the year.



# Briarpatch Youth Services

## “Groups That Provide a Difference”

By

Jasmine Benson and Dominique Smith

Briarpatch offers many different outlets for groups year-round. From *atonement* and *accountability* to workforce development to a safe space to thrive in, Briarpatch Youth Services exists to serve in the best interest of our community’s youth and families. Here are some of the support groups offered to youthful people involved in Briarpatch programming.

**Peer Mediation – Intensive Supervision Program, Competency Development Group:** This group is set up to allow youth a space of self-reflection on past and future decision making through open discussion with their peers.

**F.L.E.E.K. – Youth Restitution Program, Competency Development Group:** Financial Literacy and Employment Etiquette Knowledge (F.L.E.E.K.) is a group set up to provide insight into financial security, economic knowledge, and employment etiquette. Youth are offered resources that will help them to be responsible, productive, and financially comfortable citizens.

**Mindfulness Group – Intensive Supervision Program, Competency Development Group:** Provides youth with the necessary tools to navigate life’s circumstances, helping them to understand their choices and outcomes. Mindfulness Group empowers youth to believe that opportunities in life often happen when they process their thoughts and feelings, which affects their behaviors.

**I Am A Man – Intensive Supervision Program, Competency Development Group:** This is a group structured for the purpose of raising the awareness of young men of color. This group was founded by ISP Coordinator Cliff Davis and Menkhu Ara Meri Maat, who believe that every young man is brilliant, talented, and has unlimited potential. The key to young men reaching their unlimited potential is recognizing the potential within themselves.

**FLY – Intensive Supervision Program and Youth Restitution Program, Competency Development Group:** This group targets female youth with the mission of building character and leadership skills through activities, service to the community, social and recreational bonding, economic education, and self-exploration. Start date is set for late September 2023.



**Work Teams – Youth Restitution Program, Group Community Service Projects:** Work Teams provide bi-weekly, adult-supervised opportunities that assist youth in completing court-ordered community service and/or restitution obligations through a variety of tasks in the community.

**Restorative Circles – Restorative Justice Program:** A facilitated sit-down between the youth, victim, and family or advocate to discuss the details surrounding a youth justice case. Here youth are able to take accountability and work towards healing solutions for their actions.

### Groups at Briarpatch for the Broader Community

**Teens Like Us:** The Teens Like Us (TLU) group provides support and education for queer youth ages 13-18, providing a safe, brave place for queer and questioning youth to meet with their peers.

**Youth Job Fair – Youth Job Center:** A resource fair for youth seeking employment. It allows youth to network and apply to participating companies/organizations in one setting. This experience provides youth with the opportunity to enter the workforce and gain financial stability.

**Work Ready – Youth Job Center:** Workforce development training that focuses on communication, on-site conduct, job responsibility, skills maintenance, and financial sustainability. Youth are taught how to obtain employment through activities and coaching.

**Peer Support Group – Runaway/Homeless Youth Program and Restorative Justice Program:** This group is referral-based from other groups within Briarpatch. It provides social support while discussing pressing topics from a youth point of view. Its focus includes learning how to set boundaries, self-advocacy, self-expression, and the building of relationships. This group is especially recommended for youth with Autism, ADHD, and other neurodiversities.

On Balance Committee Members:  
Andre Johnson, Rhonda Voigt, Erik Nielsen, Veronica Hereford,  
Paige Michels, John Bauman, Noah Hoeper, Nikki Sanders,  
Julie Ahnen, Emily Pyszora, Christina Fruin, Jackie Kaminski,  
Catherine Haag, and Amanda Wiza