



# On Balance

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

September, 2007  
Volume XI, Number 3

## Enhanced Gang Task Force Report Released

In 2006, County Executive Kathleen Falk and City of Madison Mayor Dave Cieslewicz created the Enhanced Youth Gang Task Force, bringing together community stakeholders and leaders to study the gang issue and recommend a comprehensive and viable prevention, intervention, suppression and re-entry strategy to reduce gang activity in our community.

To better understand the scope and complexity of gang activity and factors influencing gang involvement, the Task Force held county-wide listening sessions, reviewed data, and dialogued with experts in the field. Seven work groups—*Basic Needs, Prevention, Education, Faith Communi-*

*ties, Employment Development, Public Safety, and Re-Entry from Incarceration*—were formed to consider specific issues and to formulate recommendations.

Collectively the work groups developed a comprehensive prevention, intervention, suppression and re-entry response strategy to youth gang activity in Dane County. Their recommendations included system changes that build upon the existing infrastructure, and call for better collaboration and resource enhancements. These recommendations include:

- § **Develop a coordinated and integrated system of response using promising models**
- § **Establish and adequately staff a Public Safety Coordination Team**

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## New Juvenile Court Judge Rotation

By **David Thorson**, Dane County Department of Human Services

Why is it that just when you think you finally have it straight who the juvenile court judges are and are starting to understand their preferences, quirks, and hot buttons, there is all of a sudden a new group? As it turns out it's because every two years the judges rotate case assignments. There are now 17 circuit court judges in Dane County with four of them covering juvenile cases. The other judges handle civil, family, criminal/traffic, and probate cases. Beginning in June 2007, the incoming juvenile court judges started taking all the

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

## New Juvenile Reception/ Detention Center Opens

After nearly 15 years of planning and working through issues related to the courthouse and City County Building, the new Juvenile Reception & Detention Center facility is a reality.



Following bids for demolition and then eventually construction, actual construction began in September of 2006 and was largely completed at the end of July, 2007.

An Open House was held for system partners and others on August 9, and youth were moved to the facility August 28.

Some notable highlights:

- Going from approximately 7,000 sq. feet to 28,000 sq. ft.
- Going from a bed capacity of 18 to 24
- Inclusion of recreation space in a gym, dedicated classrooms, and a variety of program

of doors and keys to keep track of!

Beginning with a program design that included direct supervision and a desire to provide more space for making connections with community groups to do pro-social programming, the design phase took shape over the course of about 18 months. Fol-



rooms

- Increase in technology for supervision (e.g. DVR recording of occupied areas, over 50 cameras, and a variety of electronic controls)
- There are over 150 doors in the facility – that's a lot

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

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# ??? Where Are They Now???

## *ON BALANCE* presents a look back at the life and career of: **Conrad Landness**

By **David Thorson**, Dane County Department of Human Services

1968 was a year of many strange and star-crossed events. It was the year Richard Nixon became president, Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, the first heart transplant took place, and the

Packers won Super Bowl II. "Hey Jude", "Born To Be Wild" and "Respect" were topping the record charts, and since no one had air conditioning in those days, 2001:

A Space

Odyssey, The Graduate, and Guess Who's Coming To Dinner were packing them into movie theaters all summer. Helen Keller and Charlie Chaplin died, but LL Cool J and Celine Dion were born so that sort of evened things out. Led Zeppelin played for the first time, 60 Minutes aired for the first time, and the Vietnam War was in full swing. Radicals were protesting and hippies were turning on, tuning in, and dropping out.

1968 was also the year our

featured former colleague was hired as the first child protection social worker ever for Dodge County. Before that, economic assistance and child welfare were typically done by the same worker. Conrad spent the next 34 years devoting himself, between songs, tee times and cocktails, to helping families.



*Conrad Landness retired from DCDHS in 2002*

He came to Dane County in 1972 and was made a supervisor in 1974. From 1990 until his retirement in 2002 Conrad supervised the Stoughton Office for Dane County Department of Human Services.

Somewhere along

the way he managed to marry and raise a family.

Conrad participated in developing Dane County Human Services' first policy manual. If you think decision-making seems pretty random now, imagine what it was like with no agreed on procedures for anything! The metamorphosis of the social work field from gut instinct, learn as you go, to highly specialized, extensively trained staff following rigorous practice standards has been among the greatest

changes Conrad has observed over the years. He deeply misses the opportunities to help people and his many work colleagues, but not for a nanosecond does he relish a return to the stressful and demanding nature of the work.

To no one's surprise, Conrad can be found on a golf course 3-4 times a week and spends the rest of his waking moments conspiring to spend as much time as possible with his four grandchildren. A trip to Hilton Head for his 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary was the highlight event since his retirement that would generate the greatest envy – at least among his fellow golfers.

I asked Conrad to serenade me with song one final time, but believe it or not, the breakfast crowd at the Green Lantern Restaurant must have intimidated him, as he politely demurred. So either he's turning into an introvert in his retirement (no way), or his pipes aren't what they used to be (unlikely), or maybe we just hadn't had enough Bloody Mary's yet (it was a little early, even for Conrad). In any case, it's always great to catch up with dedicated professionals who have preceded us and be assured that there is indeed a life after human services waiting to be embraced.

# Foster Youth, Aging out to Independence

By **Marybeth Wilk**, Dane County Human Services

The number of youth nationally who “age out” on their own at adulthood has been increasing even though the total number of children in foster care has been decreasing. According to a Pew Foundation report, between 1998-2005 there was a 41% increase in number of youth aging out of the system without a family of their own. On average, those youth spent 5 years in the system by the time they aged out.

A recent National Opinion Research Center study found that most Americans do not consider a person to be an adult until age 26 or until they finish school, are employed full time and begin to raise a family. Many youth leaving our system are entering “emerging adulthood” but are nowhere ready to assume the roles of adulthood. Youth who are connected to families, even if they go off to college or live away from home, still have a place to come home to for holidays, school breaks and summer vacation. They have someone to co-sign for car loans or apartments and can even be included on a parent’s health insurance policy. Relationships are a key to success in life. It is important for youth to know that someone out there cares and is there to fall back on when needed. Although some youth in our system have developed those

relationships with foster families, many others do not feel connected.

Much more needs to be done to support transitioning teens to adulthood. A variety of bills being introduced in Congress advocate for funding programs and services that support permanency for children and older transitioning youth. See [info@kidsarewaiting.org](mailto:info@kidsarewaiting.org) for more info.

Dane County Human Services offers some programs and services to ease the stress youth experience as they age out of the system. Family Group Conferencing can help transitioning youth find connections by bringing together family members and other involved people to discuss a plan of support for the youth. As far as educational support, youth in foster care may continue to live in their foster home until their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday if they are behind in high school and not ready to graduate at age 18. Youth who graduate may apply for state-funded educational scholarships up to \$5,000 per year to enable them to attend college until age 23. The county’s Teen Life Skills Program (TLSP) assists youth in identifying knowledge, skills and resources important for self-sufficiency. The youth’s Transitional Living Case Plan is then developed out of this process. A life skills/support group is also offered for 12 weeks twice a year to help youth learn skills and

resources and also find support in meeting other foster youth. Because relationships are so key to success in life, the TLSP also connects adult mentors with willing foster youth as an additional “support bridge” to help youth transition to independent living.

A new Dane County initiative is the creation of a Foster Youth Advisory Board, comprised of former foster youth as well as youth still in care. The Board’s mission is to inform and educate foster parents, the community and governmental systems on the needs of foster children and to provide support and advocacy for foster youth. This group is always open to any new, current, or former foster youth volunteers.

Keeping youth involved and connected in meaningful ways is so important. We all need to be able to believe in ourselves and that we have something of value to offer others and the community. Foster youth often approach adulthood with the experience of a “half empty cup” and don’t feel truly ready to take on all the responsibility that is quickly placed in their lap. As adults, we need to help them see their beams of light through all the muck of their lives. We need to help them see their potential, just waiting to take off, at just the right time. This often requires lots of

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## Five Things You Should Know About UA's (Urinalysis)

By **Javier Velasco**, Toxicology Director, Meriter Labs

Drug testing with adolescents is always a challenging experience. Not only is it complicated to collect a proper sample, but once the sample is tested, then comes the task of interpreting the results. In order to make an accurate assessment, the clinician must use a combination of drug test results, medical evaluations, self-report measures and/or other clinical signs of drug use. None of these by itself will provide the perfect answer. We have to keep in mind that the main purpose of testing for drugs, is to reduce the use and/or relapse of drugs and alcohol.

Here are the answers to five important questions about UA's:

### 1.) How Important is proper collection?

A proper collection is king. I can make the difference between a valid result and results that will have no use to the clinician. During the collection process the collector must pay close attention to the donor's conduct and take action as necessary if he believes there is a possibility of the tampering of the sample. If the donor's actions or items on his/her person indicate an attempt to tamper with the collection then a direct observed collection should be done. In some cases the donor will intentionally bring an item that could be used to adulter-

ate (e.g., a small vial containing a suspicious liquid), or substitute (e.g., a vial containing water or other liquid) the sample. If a proper urine sample is not collected, the results will have no clinical meaning and the assessment will be jeopardized.

### 2. Is the temperature reading necessary?

When the sample is collected and there is no evidence of tampering, the temperature strip will aid in making sure the sample collected was urine. The best temperature strips are affixed to the collection container in which the donor will directly give the sample. The temperature strips will read between 90°-100°F (32°-38°C), which is what you would expect for urine after it comes out of the body.

When the temperature is out of range, the clinician should:

- Collect a second sample and make sure it is an observed collection.
- Never collect and add or combine urine from two separate voids. (If the donor refuses to provide a second specimen, this would be the same as a refusal to test.)
- Indicate why two specimens were collected
- Cross reference to specimens by the specimen identification number

- Send both samples to the laboratory regardless of the amount collected on either of the collections.

### 3. What is an adulterated, diluted, invalid and/or substituted sample?

In many cases the individuals will attempt to tamper with the sample. There are many ways to do this. At the laboratory we identify samples into multiple categories depending on what has been done to the sample in an attempt to mask the presence of the drugs. The four main types are:

- Adulterated - The sample is urine but something has been added to it.
- Diluted - There is a high consumption of fluids. Usually done in an attempt to mask the presence of drugs. However, a very small percentage of the population will provide perfectly normal dilute urines.
- Invalid - The sample does not meet the necessary characteristics of a "normal" urine sample. It is however still possible for the sample to be urine.
- Substituted - The sample is not urine.

When tampering is suspected or if the temperature is out of range, the clinician should inspect the specimen for adulteration or substi-

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## UA's

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tution by examining its physical characteristics. Any abnormal characteristics should be noted.

Examples:

- Unusual color (e.g., specimen is green),
- Presence of foreign objects or material,
- Unusual odor (e.g., bleach), or
- Signs of adulteration (e.g., excessive foaming when shaken).

If any abnormal characteristics that appear to be due to adulteration or substitution are observed, the clinician should make a notation on the 'Remarks' area of the collection form.

### 4. Does a negative mean they are not using?

Not always. The timing of the test is critical. Remember that the drugs stay in the system for only a

few days. If an individual uses drugs on a Saturday and the test is not done until the next Friday, the drugs will most probably be out of their system. Some drugs last only an hour to a few days in the body. A good rule of thumb is to collect samples on Mondays or Tuesdays since a large portion of the drug use occurs on weekends. Samples collected early in the the week will have the best probability of demonstrating weekend use. One note, do not test exclusively on these two days, if the donors notice the pattern they will know that they can use drugs after their test and just hold on for the last days before the test and still come out negative. Random testing appears to be more efficient as a deterrent to drug use. The interpretation of the tests combined with the frequency of the testing will give the clinician the best possible opportunity to assess an

individual's drug use.

### 5. How often should drug tests be administered?

It is always necessary to take a look at the reason for the testing. Because each case is different, no one rule can be applied to all individuals.

- If an individual has just entered a program or if you want to find out if a person has discontinued using, it is best to test them 2-3 times a week until you get negative urine sample results. At this initial phase it is necessary to make sure that every time a drug is consumed, action will immediately be taken.
- If you have a maintenance program it is necessary to test the individual a couple times per month to ensure there has been no relapse.
- Keep the process as random as possible.
- If symptoms of drugs use are observed, a test should be done at that time.

## Gang Report

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- § **Increase the number of Gang Squad workers to provide outreach services**
- § **Enhance the capacity of work skill and employment development resources**
- § **Increase positive youth**

### **programming and support as a long-term prevention strategy**

- § **Pilot re-entry from incarceration programs to specifically address gang issues**
- § **Support the creation of Gang Free School Zones**

The work of the Enhanced Gang Task Force concluded with their report. The task of implementation and creation of real community change now begins and will only be realized through the collective effort demonstrated during this planning process.

## An Interview With: Jim Gilson

**Editor's note:** Jim retired from Bockari Group Home last July. On Balance caught up with him at his new home in Colorado.

### **When did you start at Bockari?**

I was a co-founder of the program (with Rick Rosen) waaaay, waaaay back in 1976. We started in a rented house at 322 E. Mifflin Street, moved to 3225 Atwood Avenue in 1978 and to the present location on Claire Street in 1987.

### **How many kids did you work with over those years?**

I'd estimate about 2,500 kids. In the early years, we often had more than 100 kids in placement each year. Occupancy has dropped significantly within the last several years, with many of the same kids coming into placement multiple times.

### **You've worked with youth for a very long time. What has this taught you?**

Kids and their families are all so very unique - their ability to create chaos and dysfunction as well as their ability to adapt, overcome and persevere is limitless. Kids are a lot more resilient than they're often given credit for. A colleague once commented that by now I "must have seen everything." One thing I'm certain of is that no one will ever do so. I learned to

appreciate coming to work every day never knowing exactly how I'd be spending my time. I "wore different hats" on different days and within the same day, sometimes as an administrator, sometimes as a boss/mentor, sometimes as a parent/counselor. My experiences at Bockari also reinforced my belief that staff is capable of performing at high levels if given opportunity and responsibility.

Oh, and I've become an expert at drywall repair.

### **Looking back over the past 30 years, are there any accomplishments that stand out? What are you most proud of?**

I'm probably most proud of having established a program that has maintained quality in its mission and in its level of service, despite dwindling resources. Lots and lots of kids have received outstanding care at Bockari. I'm also proud to have established a unique, unconventional workplace. It's a casual, energized setting where people who aren't afraid to work hard and be creative do serious work and who've shown incredible commitment and dedication. It's been important to the stability of the program to have had so many long-tenured staff over the years. I'm proud of having established a place where staff and interns can learn and grow.

### **What changes (kids, system, other) have you observed over the past 30 years?**

One frustration is that Bockari is not used as often as it once was by workers as a place to provide needs assessment for case planning. The structured setting is great for assessing how kids can handle a community placement and staff is very experienced at knowing what resources kids can benefit from. Workers seem less interested in getting that information than they once were.

Another change I perceive is that, because of lack of resources, the system is shutting out a lot of the kids it used to serve, essentially waiting until their issues become too acute to ignore. These "deep end" kids have behavioral and mental health issues that are beyond the expertise of many community providers, yet case planning usually emphasizes home or community placement.

I also perceive a disconnect between the juvenile court and the human services/mental health systems. There appears to be little meaningful dialog or collaboration between the two, with the best interests of kids often taking second seat to questions of authority ("turf") or responsibility (power, ego). For example, a kid caught

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## Gilson

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stealing a car will sit in detention indefinitely while a promiscuous, drug-abusing 13-year old girl who has sexually transmitted diseases will be able to run the streets until she's "ready" to commit to treatment. There needs to be more collaboration.

### **What do you think you'll miss most about your life as a group home director?**

The stimulation and the energy of the group home; the interactions with so many different people (kids, staff, other professionals); the ability to be privy to and involved in so

many different and interesting situations, and the challenge of trying to understand, resolve or have an impact on them; mentoring staff and interns; giving tours to visitors; and, believe it or not, doing lunch dishes. My "daily hand bath" was important down time for me over the years.

### **What do think you'll miss least about your life as a group home director?**

Developing budgets within a system of diminishing resources; confronting the same behavior for the umpteenth time; being cussed at and spat upon (usually just by the

kids or their parents); dealing with the state licenser; and listening to rap.

### **Is there anything else you want to comment on that I haven't asked you?**

It's probably not necessary but I want to assure people that my leaving Bockari will have little effect on how services to kids are provided. If I've done my job well (and I have!), you can rest assured that the staff will continue to provide outstanding care and supervision.

### **Can we come visit you?**

Sure. Bring your fly rod and hiking boots!



## Youth Spotlight

### **ASHLEY SMITH— On to Bigger and Better things!**

**By Debbie Vieux**, Dane County Department of Human Services

Ashley Smith is a recent graduate of the Dane County Juvenile justice system, and also a recent graduate of Monroe High School (where she ran track). Go Cheesemakers! The very same week she graduated and was released from court/DCDHS involvement, she received her driver's license, and her (foster) parents helped her buy a repossessed car through the bank at a great deal! That is the kind of stress that would send most of us over the edge but Ashley managed things in her way. She is now a paid employee at the Green County Humane Society where she volunteered countless hours and worked summers over the past 3 years. Ashley has always loved animals

and found solace in helping save them and finding them good homes. Ashley has the highest principles—and works for Green County because it is a no-kill shelter. She has taken several animals home herself including a hamster, a cat and a dog. Ashley continues to reside with her family in Monroe and plans to stay in that community.

If Ashley sounds familiar, you may have heard her name when she earned recognition at the Juvenile Court Awards in 2006. Ashley is looking forward to and preparing to attend Madison Technical College next spring. She would like to take several credits this fall to acclimate to college at the Technical College in Monroe while she continues to work and save money. Her juvenile court scholarship will help her afford those credits to take the next

step. Dane County Human Services was able to assist Ashley in securing the specially licensed foster home that she told us she wanted and then cultivated herself, in Monroe, WI while residing in a group home for girls there.

Ashley has surrounded herself over the years with good adults to mentor her. Given the listening ear of her team of service providers she has been an excellent advocate for herself and has taken advantage of her opportunities.

I had the privilege of going to dinner with Ashley recently. She was amazingly well mannered, polite, decisive, and insightful. She tells me she will keep me posted on her successes. It is certain she will pave her way to success in whatever she chooses to do!



# On Balance

## Judges

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new cases. Over the next several months the outgoing judges have been transferring their pending cases once they reached disposition, with the transition anticipated to be pretty much complete by late fall.

For the past two years the juvenile court judges have been Moria Krueger, John Albert, Shelly Gaylord and Stuart Schwartz. In February 2007, Judge Krueger retired after 30 years on the bench. She was replaced by Judge William Hanrahan. Prior to being appointed by Governor Doyle, Judge Hanrahan served as an Assistant Attorney General at the Wisconsin Dept of Justice beginning in 1998. Before that he was an Assistant District Attorney in Milwaukee County. Judge Hanrahan began his career after receiving his law degree from Hamline University in 1988. Rather than cycle out of juvenile after only four months on the bench, Judge Hanrahan will be remaining in the juvenile rotation for another two years.

Judge Steven Ebert is taking over Judge Schwartz's juvenile caseload. Judge Ebert has been on the bench since 1997. From 1979-1997 he was an Assistant Attorney General and before that was the Municipal Judge for the City of Stoughton for three years. He

received his law degree from Drake Law School in 1976.

Judge William Foust takes over for Judge Gaylord. He too has been on the bench since 1997. An apparent glutton for punishment, this is his second term in the juvenile rotation. Judge Foust was the District Attorney for Dane County from 1989-1997. He has also served as a Public Defender and was in private practice for several years as well. His is a homegrown talent, having graduated from the UW-Madison Law School in 1978.

Initially the plan was for Judge James Martin to replace Judge Albert. Since this change would have meant a complete turnover of every juvenile court judge, Judge Albert agreed to stay for an additional two years. As the system works on a number of critical issues, whether that be addressing juvenile sex offender concerns, trying to reduce disproportionate minority confinement, examining the use of sanctions, permanency planning, etc., the ongoing presence of Judge Albert will ensure continuity in both knowledge and direction. Judge Albert has served as Chief Juvenile Judge for several years and has demonstrated a deep interest and commitment to juvenile law for much of his career. He has been a judge since 1999, but before that was in private practice for over 20

years during which he handled a wide variety of juvenile cases. He is a UW-Madison Law School graduate (1973).

Juvenile court is sometimes quite intricate, occasionally heart-breaking, too often frustrating, rewarding just often enough to keep you coming back for more, and always interesting. It gets that much more complicated when a new set of judges and their staff enter the picture and begin to learn the nuances of juvenile court. It remains gratifying that over the years, no matter what their background, the new judges consistently bring a high level of commitment to juveniles and their families. As much as Judges Krueger, Gaylord, and Schwartz will be missed, there is anticipation that the changes will bring new opportunities and fresh approaches to this vital branch of our government. *Vive la difference!*

## Foster Youth

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patience and allowing them to fall and pick themselves up more than once. As adults we need to guide youth to choose relationships that will be positive and connecting. We need to encourage opportunities that will lead to permanence for these youth so that they too can find happiness and fulfillment in their own lives.