

WELL SAID

The following excerpts are from New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg's keynote address to the U.S. Conference of Mayors on February 28 as part of a summit on reentry and employment. To read the speech, go to nyc.gov and search for keywords MAYOR and REENTRY.

"[Reentry] is an issue that we all have a stake in.... However, helping these men and women reintegrate into society is much more than simply a public safety imperative. It's also an opportunity to strike a blow against poverty."

"[The NYC] Discharge Planning Collaboration has built an incredible network of city agencies, community-based organizations, and researchers who are true experts at providing people leaving our jails with the services and support they need.... We work with them beforehand to assess their needs and create a plan for where they will go and what they will do after they're discharged."

"We can't be afraid to try new ideas and test new solutions.... Our commitment to this issue and the ramifications of this problem, if we turn our backs to it, are simply too great."

"Helping people leaving our jails and prisons rebuild their lives is not just an investment in safer neighborhoods. It's an investment in good parenting, in healthier families, in a thriving economy and, above all, in stronger cities. That's an investment we can't afford *not* to make."

family matters



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MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT



You don't need me to tell you that there's a tremendous amount of fear in the world right now. Violence and war fill our newscasts. The economic climate in the United States and elsewhere makes the future look uncertain. Sadly, the most vulnerable people are at risk of becoming even more vulnerable.

And yet, one way to combat fear is to remind ourselves of what works and what matters most—and to act. For Family Justice, that means staying true to our mission. It means reaffirming our values as we adapt The Bodega Model® for diverse audiences throughout the country. We know that drawing on the strengths of families and social networks isn't just cost-effective, but *effective*—and that keeps us focused.

And while our work increasingly involves people and places far from our original storefront on New York's Lower East Side, our methods and core message
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familymatters

FAMILIES ARE PART OF THE SOLUTION ■ SPRING 2008



YOUTH MOVEMENT

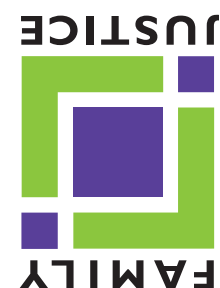
By definition, Family Justice's work has always included young people, but now we're expanding our focus on youth further, to enhance direct services, training, and technical assistance. These important new efforts fall into three main subject areas—gangs, truancy, and the new Juvenile Relational Inquiry Tool—in addition to planning initiatives in California and New Jersey. Looking at the field broadly, Shay Bilchik, director of Georgetown University's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, says two promising developments are taking place in the United States: "There's greater awareness of youth, families, and communities

having strengths—and an understanding that we do better by our kids if we have them in community settings. These two things are beginning to intersect. As a result we have a real momentum to develop this community-family-youth-centric type of approach."

Gangs Family Justice recently received funding from the New York City Council to investigate the support youth derive from gangs as well as the concerns of families and law enforcement. The findings will help shape intervention and prevention efforts across the country.

Family Justice's research suggests that while youth gain *(Continued on next page)*

FAMILIES ARE PART
OF THE SOLUTION



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(Continued) also help us stay focused. We put the common terms *advocacy*, *education*, and *research* to uncommon use. What do these three vital words mean to us on a day-to-day basis?

Our approach to advocacy means encouraging people to empower themselves—including families, communities, and at workplaces where staff members interact with people involved in the justice system. We know that every agency, staff, community, family, and individual has strengths. When we tap those resources, we all benefit.

As for education, you know the cliché about teaching someone to fish? That incredibly valuable concept is at the heart of our approach. Our direct service, training, and technical assistance use proven methods and tools that draw on people's experience and expertise. We lead by example, modeling support and respect—and urging individuals to address the challenges they face while taking advantage of available resources.

In terms of research, our direct-service sites are learning centers, where we test our ideas and where the practice of family case management informs our findings. This research both draws on and enriches our direct services and helps us refine our approach. Research also builds on and nourishes our work with government and community-based organizations throughout the country.

These three elements of our work add up to more than the sum of their parts. We will weather this trying period by staying the course and staying focused. Now is a time to act.



Carol Shapiro



POSTCARD FROM NEPAL When Family Justice president Carol Shapiro traveled to Kathmandu recently, she took this photograph of children at Prisoners Assistance Nepal, a groundbreaking program run by Indira Ranamagar, whose work led to her recognition as an Ashoka fellow. Check the next issue of *Family Matters* for an update on Indira's family-focused work, as well as reports from our colleagues David Waterford, executive director of the Social Inclusion Unit in South Australia; Ng Joo Hee, director of the Singapore Prison Service; Vince Fletcher, Coordinator of the Scottish Prison Service's Choose Life projects; and Venessa Padayachee, a national program specialist from the National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO) in Cape Town, South Africa.

YOUTH MOVEMENT (Continued) many benefits from gang affiliation and membership—including protection, a sense of membership, pride, loyalty, and a source of support and acceptance—the possibility of violence and death are among the many factors that threaten young people involved in gangs. The youth and community members who participated in the study reported that though peer relations had the greatest influence on young people, strong ties to the neighborhood—including religious institutions and community-based organizations—were instrumental in preventing gang involvement.

Tina Santiago, program manager at Family Justice's direct-service center La Bodega de la Familia, explains that her staff views gang affiliation as an "alternative family structure." She adds, "We are exploring how, in family case

management, we can address the topic of gangs with sensitivity. As with any challenge, we need to approach it in a strength-based way."

Based on our experience and this investigation, Family Justice found that strength-based inquiries during the intake process can effectively draw out information regarding gang involvement and how it affects families. Our report also recommends that service providers should be offered staff development on gangs (with a component specific to their community) and on the juvenile justice system.

Truancy After more than 18 years as district attorney in New York's Kings County, Charles J. Hynes says, "I am convinced now more than ever of the important role played by families in contributing to a healthy,

productive, and law-abiding society." Family Bodega, Family Justice's direct-service center in Brooklyn, has entered into a partnership with his office's TRACK program to work with truant youth and their families. Drawing on The Bodega Model®, Family Justice's family-focused approach, the partnership has the goals of reducing truancy, crime, and delinquency among participating youth; intervening in intergenerational cycles of justice-system involvement; and improving family well-being. District Attorney Hynes adds, "TRACK has helped countless teens by providing much-needed counseling and service referrals to their families. Social workers on staff throughout my office do invaluable work with families, as well as with crime victims themselves. Family Justice recognizes just how crucial it is to provide these systemic interventions in order to break cycles of intergenerational crime, poverty, and hopelessness." Family Bodega staff will run a summer project with youth who are participating in the TRACK program; the partnership is funded by the NYS Division of Criminal Justice Services. Staff will plan the project with young people after assessing their strengths and goals.

Juvenile Relational Inquiry Tool The Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections is the first of three partners joining Family Justice to develop and test a tool for use in juvenile facilities to identify social connections. "In terms of effective practices, we need to get families involved to have any lasting change," says Dr. Lee Underwood, clinical director for the ADJC. He says his department (Continued on next page)

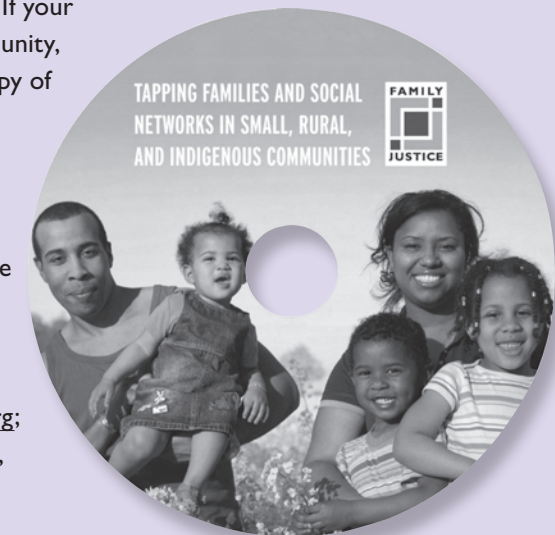
news & events

COME TO OUR SPRING CELEBRATION

On Tuesday, May 13 from 6 to 8 p.m., please join us in celebrating Family Justice's 12th anniversary, as we honor Michigan Department of Corrections Director Patricia Caruso and CB Richard Ellis Project Management's Senior Managing Director Thomas R. Nelson. We will host this year's party at our national headquarters at 625 Broadway in New York. For information about tickets or inclusion in the event program, please contact Jennifer Cinclair at 212-475-1500, ext. 228, or jcinclair@familyjustice.org, or visit our home page at www.familyjustice.org.

INTRODUCING FAMILY JUSTICE'S RURAL CD-ROM

Our new CD-ROM, *Tapping Families and Social Networks in Small, Rural, and Indigenous Communities*, is out! The curriculum will soon be online in a downloadable format. It builds on Family Justice's one-day training about challenges and resources for families involved with the justice system in small, rural, and indigenous communities. If your organization works in such a community, you are eligible to receive a free copy of the CD-ROM. We developed the curriculum through numerous collaborations across the country, with support from the Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. For more information, please contact Nicole Martin at nmartin@familyjustice.org; to receive a copy of the curriculum, e-mail rural@familyjustice.org.



OUR GROWING FAMILY

Five new staff members have joined Family Justice as our organization continues to grow and evolve. At Family Bodega in Brooklyn, we welcome family case manager Teresina Gray-Morgan. At La Bodega de la Familia on New York's Lower East Side, receptionist Delilah Campos and custodian Juan Altieri have joined us. And at our national headquarters, we're pleased to introduce Nijah Cunningham, executive assistant to the president, and Niloufer Taber, research assistant.

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YOUTH MOVEMENT (Continued) has recently added family liaison positions in juvenile facilities and family services coordinators in parole. “We need to look for some deeper ways to address family issues,” he says. With support from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the modified tool will build on the success of Family Justice’s Relational Inquiry Tool for adults; its questions will provide a user-friendly way for case managers to gather information to draw on young people’s strengths and social connections; recognize and address their challenges; and enhance reentry plans.

California In the first phase of a statewide initiative, California’s Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) is partnering with Family Justice to test new forms and approaches that focus on families and their strengths. The state has selected the O.H. Close Youth Correctional Facility in Stockton to pilot this work. Family Justice is learning about the facility’s entire process—reception through parole completion—and working with a group of O.H. Close staff and people who concentrate on reform at the state level.

O.H. Close has taken strides to make its family-orientation packet more user-friendly and is considering the types of tools that could enhance the work done by youth correctional counselors and their supervisors, who have the title of “parole agent.” In January, Family Justice staff interviewed 30 youth and surveyed more than 20 families at the facility. Information gathered through their responses will guide Family Justice and the staff at O.H. Close in our collaborative effort to improve DJJ’s work with families and youth in

Stockton and throughout California. Our learning will also help shape reform initiatives elsewhere in the country.

“O.H. Close’s collaboration with Family Justice has already increased its responsiveness to the parents of its youth as a result of the survey’s analysis,” says the facility’s superintendent, Yvette Marc-Aurele. “We have increased communication by having the parole agent of the youth contact the parent or guardian upon his arrival here. The youth correctional counselor makes contact with the parent or guardian after each case conference to provide information regarding the youth’s progress and meets with his visiting family members to answer any questions and provide an update.” Superintendent Marc-Aurele says her staff’s perspective extends beyond the time a young man spends at O.H. Close. “Family involvement plays a key role during the youth’s incarceration and ultimately with his reentry to the community and success on parole.”



BROOKLYN HEIGHTS Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez (left) addressed an audience celebrating International Women’s Day, when she and Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes recognized contributions of residents from Brooklyn’s Bushwick community. Seven women were honored at a March 15th event sponsored by Family Justice and its partner Bushwick IMPACT, a project of the nonprofit organization Agenda for Children Tomorrow. The women’s accomplishments on behalf of their children’s education and in the community were celebrated at Brooklyn Public Library. They are (from left, seated in front row) Sabina Mendoza, Verónica Bermeo, Simona Flores, Yolanda De Jesús, Ana Fernández, Sister Elizabeth “Betty” Nickels, and Eudocia Rodríguez. Congratulations to all! (Photo by Nilufer Taber)

New Jersey In 2005, with the support of the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission (JJJC), Family Justice collaborated with two community-based programs in New Jersey: Family Services of Newark and New Brunswick’s Affinity Counseling Group. The project’s focus was to help both groups strengthen family-focused practices through partnerships with juvenile probation and parole.

Family Justice’s research staff recently met with an independent evaluation team from Rutgers University to further the progress made in New Jersey. Officials from the JJJC have collaborated with Family Justice throughout the evaluation process as we learn about the benefits of family-focused programs for youth. As our organization continues to grow, we will attract more external evaluations of the Bodega Model and our training and technical assistance work. ▬

—Ryan Shanahan

LEADING LADY

When the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported in December that the number of women in U.S. prisons had increased by almost 5 percent, it was hardly news to Ann Jacobs. “I was dismayed,” she says, “because so many others close to the system were surprised. It was clear evidence of our lack of progress toward the goal of reserving prison for people who present a threat to public safety,” she adds, “which women, largely, do not.”

In 17 years as executive director of the Women’s Prison Association, Ann was determined to respond meaningfully to these issues. On the occasion of her recent retirement, we recount her contributions and look at where the organization is heading under the leadership of Georgia Lerner. As Robert Maccarone, state director of the New York State Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives, reflects, “Ann Jacobs has led WPA to work each day to help women and children rebuild their lives. While many of these families face significant challenges, the caring, nurturing, and support WPA provided has helped them heal and grow.”

According to WPA, the number of incarcerated females grew by 592% between 1977 and 2001. Ann rolled up her sleeves. “I was intrigued and moved by the passion of generations of women associated with WPA through the years,” she explains, recalling her interview in 1990. “And I felt some deep sadness that I, like so many others, had done this work for years without thinking much about the special issues of women.”

Though WPA was founded in 1845, the group’s work took on a new urgency with the advent of mandatory sentencing and its consequences. When Ann came to WPA, as now, criminal-justice reform efforts focused mainly on incarcerated men. Women had to navigate a number of bewildering systems with little or no assistance. “The quality of their lives was shaped by all of these systems,” Ann says. “As much as

we focused on criminal justice, we had to focus on health care, housing, and child services.”

“These women were faced with unfathomable choices,” she maintains. WPA now provides services to an estimated 2,500 women every year, and to their loved ones. The work concentrates on livelihood, housing, family, health and well-being, and criminal justice compliance.

WPA programs—including a national policy center, the Institute on Women & Criminal Justice, the Women’s Advocacy Project, and numerous training initiatives—operate on multiple levels, “from policy to people.” As Ann puts it,

“Women are relational beings and similarly, it is all about relationships with these systems and *all* the people involved in their lives.”

Georgia Lerner, who was WPA’s associate executive director before taking the helm this year, says, “Ann really looked at what the needs were for women in the system. She found ways to support the kinds of programs that would help women see different options for themselves. And she took the agency—which had a tiny operating budget and a staff of about 10—to a staff of more than 100 and a budget of just under \$8 million a year.”

“Ann got it,” Lerner continues. “Our clients need what we all need—a place to live; a way to support themselves; positive relationships; and access to health care. Ann understood that the criminal justice system alone is not positioned to address the range of needs that get people to the door of that system in the first place.”

Ann believes WPA is in good hands. “Like all of us who work there, Georgia has grown and developed in profound ways that inform her leadership,” Ann says. Going forward, the new director says she is especially excited about programs that involve women and children in preventive strategies. “We are really taking advantage of opportunities to work with people and reduce the risk of them ever getting involved in the criminal justice system.” ▬

—Nijah Cunningham and Jules Verdone



Dr. Anne Elliott (left), executive director of Greenhope Services for Women, with Ann Jacobs. Dr. Elliott says that at WPA, Ann “eloquently and passionately advocated for justice for women and children...and developed comprehensive, compassionate, and smart criminal-justice reform.”

BRIDGE PARTNERS

To improve the health and well-being of families in San Francisco neighborhoods that face tremendous challenges, Family Justice is participating in a three-year project with the SF CAN DO partnership. “Our work with Family Justice to develop a family-centered, coordinated case-management approach for San Francisco is another step in my administration’s long-standing commitment to break through traditional silos and ways of doing business to make government work better for the people we serve,” says San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom. “I believe that this new approach will dramatically improve the lives of residents involved with our government agencies and will improve the effectiveness and job satisfaction for the dedicated workers who work with those families.”

Given an acronym that stands for Strength from Families, Communities, Agencies, and Neighborhoods Deciding as One, the partnership’s collaboration with Family Justice is a natural—and not just on paper. SF CAN DO brings together the San Francisco Human Services Agency’s Family and Children’s Services Division and the Mayor’s Office’s Communities of Opportunity (COO) initiative, with a mission of reducing the number of families involved in the child welfare system and increasing “permanent connections” in these neighborhoods. Family Justice’s services will focus on assessment, capacity building, enhancement, and evaluation.

Kimberly Wicoff, deputy director of COO, describes her office as “a public/private partnership started by the Mayor that looks at the huge levels of disparity in two neighborhoods—in every measure you can look at, including health, education, jobs, safety, and child welfare.” Despite San Francisco’s prosperity, Wicoff says Bayview–Hunters Point and Visitacion Valley “are the communities that have really been left behind, for lack of a better way to say it.”

“When we looked at the work that Family Justice has been doing, the whole organization’s family-centered value system was really critical,” Wicoff says. “We heard [founder and president] Carol Shapiro talk about Family Justice’s approach in a meeting with a bunch of our departments, saying, ‘You want to value and honor the good work that people in these systems are already doing—and hear from the residents about what they need—and try to work through making the most powerful intersection of those two.’ It’s very much the philosophy of Communities of Opportunity...mirrored in the work Family Justice does.” During the three-year partnership, Family Justice will deliver an ongoing series of training and technical-assistance services.

“SF CAN DO will allow the City to more effectively serve these children with a family-centered approach,” says Trent Rhorer, executive director of the Human Services Agency in San Francisco. “This approach recognizes that families are the experts in determining what is best for themselves and their children,” he continues. “We view families as active participants and decision makers in selecting services they need. When we

can provide comprehensive services that engage, involve, strengthen, and support families across the spectrum of City agencies, we are better positioned to ensure that children are safe and families thrive. I am excited and confident that SF CAN DO will help us achieve those goals.”

Wicoff says the SF CAN DO effort involves thinking about the city’s resources and asking, “How do we use them more efficiently? It’s ‘smarter government,’ if you will, but also in a way that involves the residents in making decisions about their community and their lives.” The partnership puts that philosophy into action: When a delegation of 10 people traveled from San Francisco last fall to meet with Family Justice staff and visit its direct-service centers in New York City, four resident leaders from Bayview–Hunters Point and Visitacion Valley joined Wicoff, along with representatives of the Family and Children’s division of the Human Services Agency; the Adult Probation Department; the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Family to Family initiative; the Violence Prevention Planning Team from the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice; and Florence Crittenton Services.

Wicoff’s enthusiasm extends beyond the invested residents and the partnership with Family Justice. She also has high praise for her colleagues in San Francisco: “We’re working with a willing staff, people who intuitively get this idea, are excited about it, and willing to jump in with both feet. We’ll have a chance to see how it works, show it to other folks who may not have the same intuitive vision of it, and get *them* excited about it.”

The three-year plan will focus first on Bayview–Hunters Point

When a delegation from San Francisco visited Family Justice in New York, they posed for a picture at the 59th Street subway station. From left are Janet Carter, Kimberly Wicoff, Tooa Dunson, Gwen Henry, Maya Dillard-Smith, Lottie Titus, Pat Boyd, Dedria Smith, and Deborah Dean-Rivers.

(Photo by Debby Jeter)

and then on Visitacion Valley before its implementation citywide. “We’re going to start it in one place and then *continue* to roll it out,” Wicoff stresses. The work will begin in these two communities, where, as she describes it, reentry, child welfare, and substance abuse are concentrated and “a lot of case management is required.” San Francisco’s leadership recognized the disproportionality in these predominantly African-American neighborhoods and set out to address it. “In our city, 70 percent of the children in the child welfare system are African-American,” Wicoff explains. “The population in San Francisco is less than 9 percent African-American. You look at that and think, ‘Oh my goodness, something is going on here.’ ”

As for making the initiative a reality, Wicoff again gives credit to a colleague, Debby Jeter, deputy director of the Family and Children Services division: “Debby has an incredible vision of how we change this system to make it family-centered and keep families together, *not* with the goal of taking kids away. It’s about engaging families and their natural support systems. For us, it’s what we liked about the Family Justice family-based case planning.”

Wicoff paraphrases Carol Shapiro: “As Carol was saying, government is temporary in the lives of these families, but family is always there. If we can do the work in a new way, we believe families will have a better chance of staying together, of building that natural support network both within their own family and within their communities. That, we think, is the long-term answer to change some of these trends. We think this is going to make a huge difference in the lives of families we’re working with.”