

COMMUNITY CHAMPION 2008

By Kerry Bickford

At our 5th annual Youth Summit on March 21, 2008, we proudly named Mary LeClair our 2008 Community Champion. It was a bittersweet moment for all who know and have worked with Mary, as this is her final year as a Barnstable County Commissioner. Mary's work with and for children, youth and families is legendary on this ever-changing peninsula we know as Cape Cod.

As Retired Judge Joseph J. Reardon said in his presentation of the award, "Mary is like a mother to Barnstable County." Her passion for the issues families face motivates her to fight for the underdog and presents a human face to homelessness, hunger, poverty, addiction and other problems that families face each day. Mary's tireless devotion to children and families have resulted in some very tangible responses, such as the residential drug program (Emerson House) where mothers can recover without being separated from their babies, a place called Children's Cove, where a sexual abuse victim is not forced to relive the experience repeatedly, and the Diploma Plus Program, which allows a non traditional approach to obtaining a high school diploma...but these are just a few of the programs about which Mary is passionate.

The Barnstable County Council for Children, Youth and Families would like to thank Mary for her support over the past three years, and especially this last year, when we lost the funding for our Coordinator. Mary insisted that we should apply for the 100 Best designation again, despite the obstacles we faced, called Congressman Delahunt's office in DC when we DID win and asked them to accept our three time winner plaque, then helped us to host our 5th annual Youth Summit, which was almost doomed for sudden death without the help of someone to coordinate the event. A friend in deed...

We have been fortunate to have Mary's voice and look forward to her continued presence and wisdom after she retires in the Fall. Not only has she been like a mother to Barnstable County, she has also been an inspiration to all of us who have known and worked with her.

Mary LeClair & Senator Ted Kennedy celebrating Barnstable County's 1st designation in Washington DC



Photo by Kerry Bickford

WHAT KIDS SAY ABOUT HANDLING STRESS

By Peggy Meenan, LICSW

What Kids Say About: Handling Stress In today's uncertain world, families have significant stressors on a daily basis. Job loss and financial concerns are real worries for many families. It is easy for caregivers to believe that they are hiding their stress from the kids they care for. However, kids are smart, and are able to pick up on the stressors that are felt in their home. Unlike adults, kids often do not have the resources to cope with stress. In an article, titled *What Kids Say About: Handling Stress*, kids tell us how they want to be helped during times of stress. Compared with what adults face, it might seem like kids don't have that much to stress about, but kids have their own concerns and sometimes feel stress, just as adults do. Kids' stresses can be just as overwhelming, particularly if they don't have effective coping strategies. The latest KidsHealth KidsPoll lists a number of stressors identified by kids and strategies for adults who want to help. For the full report, visit www.kidshealth.org.

CHILD CARE PLANNING PROJECT

By Beth Gaffney, Jennifer Sheehan & Cindy Horgan

Research has repeatedly shown that low-income children and those at risk fare better in school and later in life if they have participated in high quality preschool experiences. School-age children who regularly attend after school programs are less likely to engage in risky behaviors. Also, parents who have reliable child care are more stable employees. However, the availability and affordability of quality child care and after-school programs have been growing concerns for the families of Cape Cod.

The Cape Cod Times (February, 2006) issued a challenge to this community with an editorial in 2006, and the county responded by allocating funding to conduct a strategic planning process and develop recommendations to address these concerns. The Child Care Planning Project was overseen by the Barnstable County Council for Children, Youth and Families, through the Department of Human Services, and was completed in December of 2007.

There is no single, simple solution to this complex issue. As of May, 2008 a sub-committee of the Council continues to work on solutions and have hired consultant Christine Johnson-Staub back to identify schools in BC that provide, contract, or collaborate for after-school care. The purpose is to identify the gaps in meeting this need, and present a report on these gaps as an appendix to the December 2007 report. We will report on these findings when we re-group on September of 2008, and explore necessary action steps in the 2008-2009 BCCCYF plan of work.

Child Care Planning Project report available of www.barnstablecounty.org or by contacting Barnstable County Dept. of Human Services @ 508/375-6628

MAKING GOOD ON A PROMISE: WHAT POLICYMAKERS CAN DO TO SUPPORT THE EDUCATIONAL PERSISTENCE OF DROPOUTS

Bobbi Moritz

Double the Numbers: A Jobs for the Future Initiative

Making Good on a Promise offers several suggestions that give dropouts a second chance and presents youth perspectives that align with the extraordinary work of the Barnstable County Council for Children, Youth and Families. Qualitative research indicates that "relationships with adults are the most important factor in a student's school experience". Youth identify the significance of consistent, positive, connections with caring adults as key elements for success. From an educational perspective, young people become more connected to school if they find adults who care and understand them.

Dropping out is a gradual process that can begin at any point along the K-12 continuum. Multiple factors are attributed to this national epidemic, many of which are identified and addressed within individual school districts and communities. The model developed by the Barnstable County Council for Children, Youth, and Families provides strategies for improving our Cape Cod communities in tangible ways. The America's Promise Alliance for Youth recognized Barnstable County and the work of the BCCCYF for excellent reasons. Our focus areas ARE the promise areas that build on strengths and develop assets for young people. These promises include: Caring Adults, Safe Places, Healthy Choices, Effective Education, and Opportunities to Serve.

As the BCCCYF expands, more school districts, non-profit organizations, and agencies will be able to collaborate and address the needs of our most vulnerable population, our young people.

CAPE COD JUSTICE FOR YOUTH COLLABORATIVE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT INITIATIVE

By Steve Brown

In 2006, Barnstable County District Court Judge Joseph Reardon visited the Council to share his vision of a system-wide response to juveniles and young adults cycling through the justice system. As he prepared to retire, he envisioned using his time and experience from 14 years on the bench to seek better alternatives for youth than repeated incarceration.

With the support of the Barnstable County Department of Human Services and the Cape and Islands District Attorney's Office, Judge Reardon convened a conversation among human service and youth providers, police/sheriff, corrections officers, and probation officers. This first conversation soon grew into a series of meetings, culminating with a "Summit" in on December 5, 2006 attended by 68 advocates and community leaders. The Summit led to working groups to focus on specific points of the continuum of youth involvement in the justice system. These working groups met throughout 2007 and have begun to develop specific objectives to be pursued and documented by data on the well-being of youth in the County.

The Cape Cod Justice for Youth Collaborative is directed by a steering committee comprised of Morgan Clark, Bill Ferney, John Clarendon, Judge Joseph Reardon, Kathy Quatromoni, Toni Saunders, Traci Wyse, Kerry Bickford, Paul Murphy, Steve Brown, Larry Mahan, David Park and Robin Robinson. This committee has planned a facilitated follow up symposium on June 11 at 2:30 PM at the First Lutheran Church, Route 6A in West Barnstable to address positive alternatives to incarceration for school-aged youth.

Meanwhile, our community, in collaboration with the University of Massachusetts Donohue Institute and the Cape Cod Justice for Youth Collaborative received a 1.5 million grant to build the capacity of non-profit and faith based organizations on Cape Cod. This grant also includes trainings and sub-award grants through the newly formed **Youth Empowerment Initiative**, under the direction of Steve Brown

C & I YOUTH CONGRESS 2007-2008

By Kristin O'Malley

This was the 2nd year of the incarnation of the C&I Youth Congress and it was a success! We had approximately 30 young people that met monthly from October-May to accomplish their mission, which is to be a diverse group of youth leaders who unite youth of C&I to inform others of the issues facing young people today and to promote change.

To that end, this year's activities included: learning to use Robert's Rules to run meetings; debating issues such as casinos, school times, and driving laws; presentations by community leaders such as Ruth Provost, Lance Lambros, and Janice Barton; composing essays for America's Promise 100 best competition; serving on panels for the Youth Summit; and working on projects in subcommittee groups, which includes Safe Places, Cape Youth Force, Public Safety, and Civil Rights.

We would like to thank the following schools and their students for being actively involved in this year's Congress: Barnstable; Bourne; Cape Cod Tech; Chatham; Dennis-Yarmouth; and Harwich. A special thanks to this year's officers: Katherine McMahon, Speaker; Allison Parent, Deputy Speaker; Hannah Greenspan, House Clerk; Hailey Bettencourt, House Clerk; Mike Stelma, Parliamentarian; and Gabby Hayward, Treasurer.

If you are interested in learning more about Youth Congress, please contact Kristin O'Malley at komalley@capecodfoundation.org or 508-790-3040.

2007 100 BEST COMMUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE NATIONAL FORUM

By Beverly Costa-Ciavola

Last year on October 10th - 11th, BCCCYF co-chair Kerry Bickford, Steering Committee member Beverly Costa-Ciavola and Diploma Plus Coordinator Coren Peacock attended the 2007 National Forum on 100 Best Communities for Young People in Washington, DC. From the opening remarks by Alma Powell, Chairwoman of America's Promise Alliance urging us all to continue to carry out the 5 promises in our communities, to the closing ceremony presentation by the Youth Partnership Team, the National Forum was an experience to remember. Inspiring speakers imparted profound messages to the audience, including Gary Warlene, the CEO of the National PTA, who said "children are the message (we send) into a time we will never see." Bill Milliken (Founder and Vice Chair of Communities in Schools, Inc.) proclaimed "we don't have a youth problem, we have an adult problem" and "if a kid isn't turned on to living he isn't going to be turned on to learning."

During both days, a variety of panel discussions featuring the 5 promises and highlighting best practices were both informative and engaging. Subjects included: *Serving Underserved Populations*, *All Kids Ready for College and Work* as well as *Building on Community Strengths and Support for Parents and Caregivers*.

In between workshops, we managed a whirlwind visit to Congressman Delahunt's office at the State Capitol, as well as Senator Kennedy's, followed by "An American Street Festival" at the National Building Museum, celebrating the 2007 100 Best Communities featuring many famous speakers and youth performers. It was an experience to remember, and provided at least a portion of the inspiration we needed to open the 2008 application upon our return to Massachusetts.



2008
Cape & Islands Youth Congress



The Council Connection

Barnstable County Council for Children, Youth and Families
JUNE 2008



Dear BCCCYF Participant:

It is hard to believe that we are approaching the end of the 3rd year of the Barnstable County Council for Children, Youth and Families. We began, last August, with the knowledge that we would have to work even harder to keep up the momentum, as we had lost funding for our coordinator in the spring of 2007. Our retreat facilitator urged us to keep the work focused so that we would not become overwhelmed. This was good advice and we were able to complete our 2007-2008 plan of work, with some very solid steps toward our work in 2008-2009.

Rather than duplicate information that lies within this newsletter, we urge you to read on, as there are reports on each of the goals and priorities that were set last summer. These include the continued development of the Cape & Islands Youth Congress, the Cape Cod Justice for Youth Collaborative, the Child Care Planning Project, and the 5th Annual Youth Summit that was held on March 21, 2008. In addition to this, we submitted a third application to America's Promise for designation as one of the 100 Best Communities for Young People in America, and received word in January that we were 3rd time winners, one of only two communities in the state of Massachusetts to receive this prestigious honor three consecutive times! I believe this reinforced that when the going gets tough, the tough **keep** going- so we did!

We couldn't have done any of this without the support and contributions of this community, which is a good example of how the BCCCYF works. We try to elevate issues that children, youth and families face daily on Cape Cod and identify emerging models and promising/best practices that are in various stages of responding to those issues. In this way, we operate as a true collaborative, with a "check your ego at the door" policy, knowing that none of us has all the answers. It is a shared triumph when we can answer a need by providing the information and/or resources a family might need to help them find the information, program or service they alone are often times not able to discover. It is work that nourishes the spirit and soul and reminds us every day that, in the beginning, and in the end, it is people that matter.

I have enjoyed my two years as co-chair of the Council, and although I am stepping away from my role as chair, I will continue to be a member of the team as a dedicated and committed partner. I cannot thank my colleagues enough for their hard work, commitment and friendship. It truly is a remarkable group of professionals, and I know I am leaving it in competent and caring hands, with PJ Richardson moving into his second year as co-chair, and Kristin O'Malley serving as incoming chair. Thanks again to members of the Steering committee, all of our application partners, Council members, Senators, State Representatives, County Commissioners, Assembly of Delegates, with a special thanks to the children, youth and families who inspire us all to do our best work every day.

Sincerely,
Kerry J. Bickford, Outgoing Co-Chair

Barnstable County Council for Children, Youth & Families 2007-2008 Steering Committee

- Barnstable County 4-H/UMASS Extension ~ Kerry Bickford, Co-Chair
- Barnstable County Dept. of Human Services ~ Steve Brown
- Barnstable Public Schools ~ Bobbi Moritz
- Cape Cod Children's Place ~ Cindy Horgan
- Cape Cod Foundation ~ Kristin O'Malley, Alternate Chair
- Cape Cod Neighborhood Support Coalition ~ Jennifer Sheehan
- Cape & Islands District Attorney's Office ~ Kathy Quatromoni
- Child Care Network ~ Beth Gaffney
- Harwich High School ~ Kevin Turner
- Independence House ~ Beverly Costa-Ciavola
- Kids & Teens Behavioral Health Assessment Center—Peggy Meenan
- YMCA of Cape Cod ~ PJ Richardson, Co-Chair



Missing from photo: Cindy Horgan and Kathy Quatromoni

THANK YOU, KERRY!

Determined. Dedicated. Compassionate. Trustworthy. Giving. Altruistic. Modest. These are but a few words to describe our outgoing chair, the woman we all know and love, Kerry Bickford. Not that there was any question before, but this year especially Kerry has proven herself as an unsung heroine in our community. Not only does she balance a hectic schedule and run amazing programs to benefit children and families in her day job, but she lovingly raises her grandchildren, and in the face of adversity this year, with no coordinator for the Council, devoted herself tirelessly to ensure that this was one of the Council's best years ever-and it was! From the Child Care Planning Project, to the 5th Annual Youth Summit, to the Cape & Islands Youth Congress, & Cape Cod Justice for Youth Collaborative, Kerry played a major role in the success of all. We would like to particularly acknowledge her hard work and unrelenting drive to follow through with the 100 Best application, which earned our County a three-peat as one of the 100 best communities for young people in the country!

There is so much to say about Kerry, but we especially want to say thank you-for your hard work, your commitment to the Council, and for being you! Seeing as you have been named "Honorary Chair" for 2008-09, we know you will not stray far (yes, this was strategic on our part!). We are looking forward to partnering with you for many years to come to continue making the Cape & Islands the best possible community for our young people and our families.

With much gratitude,
PJ Richardson & Kristin O'Malley, Co-Chairs
The Steering Committee and the general membership of the Barnstable County Council for Children, Youth & Families

Barnstable County
Dept of Human Services
PO Box 427
Barnstable, MA 02630



BCCCYF—YOUTH SUMMIT 2008 By Coren Peacock & Kerry Bickford

The Youth Summit held on March 21st, 2008 at Cape Cod Community College attracted over 160 members of our community from human service agencies, schools, families, youth, funders and the business sector. This years' theme for the Summit centered around highlighting some of the Best Practices described in our 2008 winning application to America's Promise.

The Summit agenda included a morning session mc'd by youth from Diploma Plus and Barnstable Youth Commission, Barnstable Middle School acappella singers, a PowerPoint presentation highlighting Barnstable County's 3x designation from the America's Promise Alliance as a "100 Best Community for Young People", a martial arts demonstration and the presentation of multiple citations to the Council in recognition of their 3rd time 100 Best designation.

Keynote speakers were State Representative Cleon Turner along with his Legislative Aide, Stephanie Coxe, who inspired us with reflections on civic engagement and youth advocacy. America's Promise panels emphasizing successful models in our community were divided into Caring Adults, Safe Places, A Healthy Start, Effective Education, Opportunities to Serve, and every panel had youth participation with organizations educating the audience on how to access, many free award-winning services in our community. The Youth Summit '08 commenced with The Honorable Retired Judge Reardon presenting Mary LeClair with the Community Champion award, as well as a number of other citations from State Representatives, Senators, and Congressman Delahunt.

Special thanks to Cape Cod Community College, Bob Rogers, the Kauffman Foundation, the Barnstable County Commissioners, & the Barnstable County Department of Human Services for their support of the Summit.

YOUTHFUL DIVERSION PROGRAM By Kathy Quatromoni

In September 2007, Cape & Islands District Attorney Michael O'Keefe's Office applied for an Executive Office of Public Safety grant to expand the Youthful Diversion pilot program that currently covers the towns of Barnstable, Orleans and Yarmouth. The grant was awarded in December, and will soon be offered in all Cape towns.

The Youthful Diversion Program was created in response to widespread concern and supporting data about the effects of underage substance abuse. Substances in general and alcohol in particular have been shown to increase the likelihood that a young person will engage in criminal activity or become a victim.

It is also well-documented that treatment works and is cost-effective. A California study reported that the economic benefit of treatment outweighed the cost of treatment by seven to one, which makes it difficult to dismiss.

The Youthful Diversion Program mandates first-time offenders charged with certain alcohol and drug offenses to participate in appropriate assessment and treatment programs, and to perform community service in lieu of the regular court process. In addition, the youth attends the Brains-At-Risk educational program, and writes an essay articulating what he/she has learned from the program. By intervening and providing treatment and other services the first time a young person is charged, the District Attorney's office expects to reduce court caseload as well as reduce recidivism among this population.

For additional information, please contact Kathy Quatromoni at 508-362-8113 or Kathy.Quatromoni@state.ma.us