



# Brighter Futures

Meeting Summary: October 21, 2009

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## *Peer juries show success in high school conflict resolution program*

An exercise in conflict resolution was featured at the October 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Milwaukee Brighter Futures initiative at Aurora Family Services.

Natalie Fleury, coordinator of the Conflict Resolution project at Marquette University Law School, said the effort was a partnership with the Peacemaking Institute at Marquette and is focused on conflict resolution and education.

She said the program includes a "peer jury" process, which began at Pulaski High School with expansion following at Washington High School. The group also does peer jury training at various middle schools, as well as developing education for adults.

There's a peer jury DVD which includes many of the youth who presented at the BF meeting. It's available on the website, <http://marquetteconflictresolution.org>.

She said the project is based on the Restorative Justice model. Communications in one of the key aspects of the model; helping to see how different behaviors affect the community is a key aspect of the project.

The youth from Pulaski High School who volunteered for the peer juries are led Marcia Lee and Yvette Mitchell, two peer leaders.



**Participants at October Brighter Futures meeting broke into "Peer Groups" to learn how the conflict resolution process works at Pulaski High School.**

Fleury said the process involves youth who are feeling powerless in a difficult conflict situation in a school; "we're interested in developing a process that gives them a feeling as if they are participating and deciding about their fate."

The student leaders then moderated several breakout groups to show an example of the peer resolution process. The leaders opened the various sessions with "icebreaker" questions to help warm up the audience.

Each of the students provided a fic-

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**Pulaski high school tell results of process; hopes to head off bigger conflicts**

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tional conflict situation and then asked the group to discuss ways to resolve the situation.

Troy Braxton, an administrator at Pulaski High School, praised the restorative justice process as helping to ensure safety in the schools. He said the process helps to defuse problems before they escalate.

Pulaski has a high suspension rate, expelling about 25 students a day, a shocking figure, he said. In an effort to provide a safe environment for students, the school has adopted a "zero tolerance policy," and students caught up in those problems will not become part of the conflict resolution process.

For other issues, however, he said the conflict resolution process works,

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## Parents also urged to get involved in program



Yvette Mitchell (left), Marcia Lee (center) and Natalie Fluery of MU's Conflict Resolution program led the session with Pulaski High School students.



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because it helps to head off bigger fights. "You can get one argument with two people that will escalate and before you know it you will have 40 or 50 people who are in a fight," he added.

The Milwaukee Public Schools Superintendent William Andrekopoulous has adopted the restorative justice initiative for use at Vincent High School.

Braxton summarized it by saying "it's a great program."

Some some 26 students have gone through the process so far.

Braxton explained the process, noting that the parents are called since their permission is needed to get the kids into the program. He said teachers have little time to take part in the process, but they are informed of the results.

The process has been most successful in the middle and high schools, largely because the students must be old enough to recognize the need to take responsibility.



Troy Braxton of Pulaski tells of success of program.

### Visit Website:

<http://milwaukeebrighterfutures.org>

It was noted a major goal of the process is a shift in mindset from the punitive model to healing the situation, and that shift can happen in any process, and even in grade schools.

Another strategy is to defuse situations though various behaviors such as "truly listening" to the other person and to work on other interpersonal tactics.

One student said she learned not to judge a person immediately upon what he or she did, and that you learn there may be a reason for the behavior.

It was noted that most students, after they complete the process, agree that the peer jury worked, even though many of them were wary at the beginning.

The program is working on greater parent outreach, Fleury said. One of the students noted that parents largely have had a positive response to the peer resolution process; Braxton added that parents tend to prefer it over a suspension, which requires them to come into the school.

### Next Brighter Futures Meetings

#### General Meetings:

9:30 a.m., Tuesday, Nov. 17, at Aurora Family Service, 3200 W. Highland Blvd.

#### MCAPS Public Policy

2:30 p.m., Monday, Dec. 14, at United Way, 225 W. Vine St.

#### Teen Pregnancy Prevention Network

Noon, Thursday, Dec. 10, at Silver Spring Neighborhood Center, 5460 N. 64th St.

#### Teen Parent Work Group

TBA

## REPORTS: Teen Pregnancy Prevention/MCAPS/Family Resource Connection

### Teen Pregnancy Prevention Network

Anthony McHenry of Silver Spring Neighborhood Center, invited all interested persons to join the Network meetings at noon on the second Thursday of each month at the Silver Spring Neighborhood Center, 5460 N. 64th St., for the Network's regular meetings. He suggested all persons who work with youth and families would find valuable information at the meetings.

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**The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Family Unity Night** was held Oct. 8 with greater success this year, he said. The Unity Night event was started to reunite families at the dinner table to help them build dialogue in an effort strengthen communications. The Network had pledges signed by families promising to hold regular meals, and those signing pledges were given \$50 food baskets in a raffle. The gifts were very popular, he said.

Research shows that families that eat together are much more likely to have positive impacts upon their children, he said.

"We're going to try to pick up steam in the future and get more media involved," he added.

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**The Youth Ambassadors**, under the leadership of Jody Rhodes of Neu-Life Center, assembled the baskets and helped to deliver them to the families. Rhodes said the young people were excited to take part.

McHenry said another role of the Network is to educate about the availability of the Family Planning Waiver to young people. The waiver offers free prenatal and family planning services.

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**The next Teen Summit** will be held Wednesday, Dec. 2 at Work Institute Enterprise Center. Rhodes said she is looking for agencies to do workshops. It's an all-day event at the school. There's both fun and learning, she said.

### MCAPS Report.

Jan Buchler of The Parenting Network outlined the meeting schedules of the various committees of the Milwaukee Child Abuse Prevention Services Coalition (MCAPS). The Public Policy meets regularly at 2:30 p.m. on the second Monday of every month (except August) at United Way, 225 W. Vine St.; the Teen Parent Task Force meets every other month on the second Monday at 1 p.m. at United Way. The Family Resource Connection meets at 9:30 a.m. on the fourth Tuesday of every other month.

Buchler announced a new initiative called "Healthy Babies," as a grant from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation. The program offers cribs and other items to assure infants are raised safely.

Awareness to Action, funded by the Children's Trust Fund and the Child Abuse Prevention Fund, trains facilitators in a national program called, Stewards to Children. Workers at various family resource centers are being trained in this nearly 3-hour program in the well-being of children. The training, which will be done at any requesting agency, teaches adults to protect children by helping adults to recognize the signs of abuse.

**Family Resource Connection.** Trudy Ranallo of Parents Plus discussed the Family Resource Connection, urging that any agencies that operate family resource centers or have family-support program should consider joining the Connection. Even though the group has little funding the Connection has been able to accomplish much; it could accomplish much more with greater participation, she said.

**SES Tutoring Opportunities.** There are tutoring opportunities available in many MPS schools; she said there are many vacancies in the SES program and urged participation. Ranallo pointed to The Milwaukee Public Schools Supplemental Educational Services, known as SES, to eligible students for the 2009-10 school year. SES is an opportunity to receive additional instruction in Math, Reading and/or Science in a motivational setting. For information, contact Trudy Ranallo at Parents Plus Wisconsin.

## Meeting Attendance Oct.21, 2009—Hillside Family Resource Center

**NOTE: All Brighter Futures funded agencies are expected to attend monthly MY-FDA meetings, according to their contract**

First Name	Last Name	Agency
Glenda	Mc Miller	BEAM
Cyndie	Ody-Weis	Bethany
Christina	Treiber	Big Brothers Big Sisters
Sandy	Malone	Boys and Girls Club
Janet	Peshek	Cathedral Center
Angela	Pien	COA
Kari	Nervig	COA YFC - Riverwest Ctr
Racquel	Bell	Community Advocates
Aricka	Evans	Community Advocates
Kenneth	Germanson	Community Advocates
Wendy	Mc Carty	Dept. of Children and Families
Patrick	Schrank	Hope House
Bernell	Hooker	Images of Us Sports, Inc.
Clarence	Rice	Innerworks
Betsy	Heinen	La Causa FRC
Cristina	Ledezma	Latino Community Center
Joanna	Love	Marquette Univ. Behavior Clinic
Natalie	Fleury	Marquette University
Eilene	Buege	Marquette University - Penfield
Dan	Idzikowski	Marquette University Law School
Sarah	Wittmann	Marquette/Penfield Behavior Center
Deborah	Bryant	Milwaukee Adolescent Health
Emilio	Lopez	Milwaukee Christian Center
Julie	Bock	Milwaukee LGBT
Odell	Chalmers	Neu-Life Community Resource Ctr
Tracy	Hrajnoha	Neu-Life Community Resource Ctr
Jody	Rhodes	Neu-Life Community Resource Ctr
Debbie	Wilhelms	New Concept Self Development
Quintana	White	Pan African Community Assn.
Trudy	Ranallo	Parents Plus, Inc.
Sherri	Daniels	Pathfinders
Joseph	Stanley	Pathfinders Youth Shelter
Gerry	Howze	Pearls for Teen Girls, Inc.
Marge	Kreuser	Perez-Pena, LTD
Anthony	Mc Henry	Silver Spring Neighborhood Center
Theresa	Post	Sojourner Family Peace Center
Jan	Buchler	The Parenting Network
Viki	Olsen	The Parenting Network
Daphne	Jackson	United Healthcare
Stephany	Pruitt	Vincent Family Resource Center
Marissa	Lopez	Walker's Point Youth and Family Ctr.
JohnRae	Stowers	Wis. Foundation of Independent Colleges

### Milwaukee Brighter Futures:

**A better community  
through prevention**

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