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CFCSJ

focus

SUPPORTING THE STRENGTHS AND RESOURCES WITHIN INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Reflections from our Board Chair: Dr. Gerald Groves

Dr. Gerald Groves has over twenty years experience addressing the issues that face urban youth and their families. The problems that residents of underprivileged communities face are due to a social dislocation that makes it very difficult for family life. Groves believes that most communities lack the resources needed to ensure successful family development. Groves suggests that many youth within these populations, face a major drawback as individuals of single parent households, a universally common phenomenon but more stressful in the face of economic adversity.

Some parents are forced to raise their children alone, often working two or three jobs. Changes in economic conditions force very young children into less desirable childcare. This lack of parental availability can affect children's academic achievement and overall individual development. The challenges of parental guidance can weaken the family structure. Within two-parent families the father and mother share a

common residence and can develop an economically cooperative environment. Without it, the family structure is compromised in part by the father's absence and inability to share parental responsibility. Because roles are unevenly distributed by one parent or other family members, resources become scarce in impoverished communities.

Households without a strong parental unit can be lacking in disciplinary action and support; and parents or guardians with monetary challenges are less likely to approach issues of child development until a problem ensues. Overall, Groves believes the work of the Center gives families the support they need to work cohesively in managing behavioral problems and child development issues. The services, workshops and trainings offered prove that a system for empowering families is desperately needed for enhancing positive relationships between students and educators and the communities where they reside.



Dr. Groves holds a medical degree from the Faculty of Medical Sciences of the University of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica. His psychiatry residency training was completed at the University of Rochester, New York and he completed a fellowship in Behavior Therapy at Temple University. Dr. Groves received a Doctor of Public Health Degree from the Harvard School of Public Health and completed an Addictions Treatment and Research Fellowship from the University of Pennsylvania. He currently works as a psychiatrist for Capital Academy and Mentors New Jersey in Warren County and has a private practice in Princeton, NJ.



Trustees of CFCSJ host Benefit Concert

On Saturday, June 4th from 4pm to 6pm the Board of Trustees will host its Spring Benefit Concert featuring **Barbara Highton Williams** and **Sylvie Webb**. Williams, principal flutist of the Bravura Philharmonic Orchestra, is a member of the Volanti Flute Quartet and Bravura Winds. Webb, French pianist, has been featured soloist with the Westminster Community Orchestra, Manalapan Battleground Symphony, and Princeton Symphony Orchestra's outreach program, *BRAVO!* We welcome your attendance at this late spring celebration of virtuosic performances, a wine reception and light refreshments. You will also hear directly from members of the counseling staff of the Center who work with children, youth and families in urban schools. Suggested Donation : \$100. To reserve a seat or for more information please contact admin@cfcsj.net.



The Directors Corner: Hinda Winawer, MSW, LCSW

It has been a hard year for many people in our state: unemployment, lost housing, budget reductions in schools and essential services, ongoing poverty and its frequent companion, violence. This academic year began with an increased level of volatility in many schools and cities: hall fights, disruption in classrooms, frequent violent acts against students, their relatives or community members. Almost weekly, someone is “jumped,” stabbed, or loses a family member to violence. In Lakewood, the tragic shooting of police officer Christopher Matlosz was a sorrowful loss for his fiancé, family and colleagues. The community was volatile. According to the associated press, “More than 100 local, county, state and federal officers completed a house-to-house search overnight in the neighborhood where the shooting occurred, at times barging into homes at gunpoint and ordering inhabitants to get on the floor.” The Center’s Lakewood Family Empowerment Team, historically the Center’s “oldest” team (Kamess Haki, George Paulsen and doctoral candidate Jerome Robinson) visited with the families that were searched, to listen to their feelings. With local community pastors, the team convened a special assembly at the high school in which students could be heard. Individual and family sessions were held. On the surface, at least, the community remained calm.

The response of the Lakewood staff was exemplary, but is also emblematic of the dedication of many Center staff. In a year of hardship, we have expanded programs. Data for the Center’s 8 TANF (Temporary Aid to Needy Families) grant sites for last year indicate that 93% of students in the program either remained in school or graduated. This year there will be graduations, students attending two and four-year colleges or moving on to employment. Against the backdrop of violence and loss, perseverance in the face of adversity in the communities we are privileged to serve constitutes a core capacity for resilience that commands respect.

To the CFCSJ community--the counseling staff, the clinical supervisors, community partner heads of local agencies, the administrative staff, the board of trustees, those who support the work of the Center, and to the students and families from whom we learn —thank you.

- Hinda Winawer

Special thanks to the
Princeton Area
Community Foundation

for supporting the continued growth of the Trenton Central High School counseling program. The grant awarded will contribute to our Mental Health Clinician Program’s expansion of outreach and counseling services to youth at Trenton Central High School.



Ethan Evans, Zakiyya Jordan, Mary Drahofsky; members of the Center’s team at Trenton Central High School SBYS.



SAVE: Visions of Nonviolence for Urban Youth: Kamess Haki, CRS

The SAVE Program (Students Against Violence Everywhere) was originally started in 2006 by Kamess Haki and Anthony Tims (now deceased). Kamess Haki is Senior Community Resource Specialist in the CFCSJ’s Lakewood Family Empowerment Program (FEP). SAVE was incorporated as a school and community-based program with 12 components to provide life skills and enrichment activities for students at Lakewood High School. The components include: *The Law and You, Drug Education and Penalties, Violence Education Awareness, Bullying, School Violence, Public Safety, Healthy and Unhealthy Relationships, Teaching Tolerance, Character Education, How to Manage Your Anger, STD’s and Sexuality and Entrepreneurship*. On a typical day, students are trained to assist elementary school students, their peers, and community members in areas that affect their lives and overall well-being. The program receives generous support from the local prosecutor’s office for trainings and workshops. Weekly meetings are held at the high school with 20 – 60 students who discuss upcoming events, ways to enhance the program and solutions to address issues of violent misconduct in their surroundings.

Kamess and Anthony’s major influence for starting SAVE began with their involvement in a program called No Put Downs. No Put Downs was geared towards helping youth make positive choices, but the two men realized a need for a more detailed initiative. After a number of gang shootings and killings, students began to express a desire for a program that helped them manage their problems without violent resolutions.

Kamess Haki and student supporters worked tirelessly to develop a mission statement and goals to present to the SAVE national office. The program emerged into a nationally recognized program and in its third year became a National Chapter, starting its first round for the election of student officers. SAVE works in conjunction with a program called, *World Changing Awareness Ministries, Inc.* a nonprofit organization and outreach ministry that helps expose students and community members to the different cultural backgrounds in their community. Members of SAVE work one-on-one with friends as student mediators helping resolve conflict and organize speaking engagements and workshops for other groups throughout the state. They had a community based trip to Asbury Park where a community-based workshop, *No More Losses*, was implemented to address shootings and gang related activities. A panel of parents, community members and over 30 SAVE students talked about ways to prevent, and intervene in conflicts that arise within their own communities. The Center for Family, Community and Social Justice has sponsored family nights for students who participate in Center programming and SAVE sponsored activities. The Center’s mission to “strive toward compassionate justice in our counseling relationships with fellow human beings” encourages SAVE students to remember the grounding principles supporting their peers in their daily challenges.

Norman Parrish Builds Future Entrepreneurs

Norman Parrish is Community Resource Specialist (CRS) in CFCSJ's Family Empowerment Program at Camden High School. He has coordinated various programs for families and children in the City of Camden for many years. While reaching out to area residents for support of his teen based fatherhood program, Mrs. Sharon Shields, Director of SBYSP in Camden NJ, a local CFCSJ program partner in Camden, invited him to apply for the position as Community Resource Specialist at Camden City High School. After developing a relationship with Mr. Willi Smart (Site Manager), the two began to discuss the lack of after school programs offered within the school district. These discussions fostered the creation of an organization called *The Entrepreneur's Club*. The two educators worked to complete the goals and program guidelines and formulated the club in 2004. In the beginning students were taught job readiness and the values associated with starting your own business. However, as student involvement grew, they recognized a need for more hands-on activities. Fortunately, Mrs. Edwins, a teacher who taught an entrepreneurial course at the high school started coming to their meetings. Skilled in the areas of arts and crafts, she suggested a partnership to sell products and develop course materials for ensuring entrepreneurial success. The students began by selling gifts baskets filled with body products and scented candles.



Norman Parrish and student members of the Entrepreneurs Club at Camden City High School.

Norman Parrish assumed the initiative to invite students with attendance and behavior problems to join the club. After working with other students and realizing their creative ability, their social skills and ability to recognize their self worth became paramount. Mr. Parrish said, "You could really see the greater good, the smiles on their faces were priceless. It really improved their self esteem, and most of the students who participated in the program went on to graduate." The club incorporates a value-based system that focuses on honesty, reliability, being kind to and respecting others. Often, Mr. Parrish speaks out "give me five" to his students so they remember their value and the important aspects of educating themselves on character development. Mr. Parrish also helps students edit resumes, develop interview skills and prepares them for working with employers with different leadership styles.

Many of the clubs supporters are local businesses that provide resources, food, clothing and monetary funding for student participants and their families. Mr. Parrish doesn't believe there are bad children, only bad circumstances. He believes all children have good qualities and often need reassurance and a positive role model to support that belief. For Mr. Parrish, recruiting students for the Entrepreneurs Club is an easy task. Most participants enroll in the 9th grade and continue until they graduate; and most students will, almost always, bring a friend.

Over the years Mr. Parrish developed a curriculum specifically designed for the program implementation in public schools, community groups and after school programs. Program participation ranges from 10-20 students per week, between the ages of 14-20. Many of the students are participants in the Center's Family Empowerment Program (FEP) and use the skills learned there to support their efforts in other activities. The club often welcomes guest speakers to discuss STDs, Anger Management, Gang and Teen related violence and challenges of everyday life. Mr. Parrish developed the program to help students learn their personal value and the power of using their own voice. When students express their feelings, they strengthen their interpersonal skills and are better equipped to face issues with family members, friends and in the environment that surrounds them.

Center Counseling Staff

Family Systems Specialists (FSS) are licensed Masters Level Counselors, Community Resource Specialists (CRS) are BA or BS level counselors. Mental Health Clinicians (MHC) are Masters Level Practitioners.

Ruby Aparicio, CRS, Bridgeton
Kamess Butler, CRS, Lakewood
Sheena Davis, FSS, Camden
Mary Drahofsky, MHP, Trenton
Eihan Evans, MHP, Trenton
Tricia Floyd, CRS, Elizabeth
Jose Garcia, FSS, Paterson
Kamess Haki, CRS, Lakewood
Zakiyya Jordan, MHP, Trenton
Corey Laramore, YDC, Trenton
Shanell Lee, FSS, Irvington
Tahira Lesure, CRS, Irvington
Corey McNair, YDC, Trenton MS
Lisette Mora, CRS, Elizabeth

Emmanuelle Nagbe, FSS, Bridgeton
Gary Nelson, YDC, Trenton MS
Norman Parrish, CRS, Camden
George Paulsen, FSS, Lakewood
Alison Pujols, CRS, Paterson
Angela Ramsey, FSS, Camden E
Veronica Rivera, CRS, Coopers Point
Denise Robles Pech, MHP, Trenton MS
Juliana Rosenbleeth, CRS, Atlantic City
Elissa Santoro, CRS, Plainfield
Alexandra Tarsitano, FSS, Paterson
Denisha Warren, FSS, Coppers Point
Quintina Wells, FSS, Atlantic City
Eliza Willms, MHP, Trenton MS

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- Bridgeton School Based Youth Services Program, Mr. Richard Elwell
- Camden Regional School District, Camden School Based Youth Services Programs, Ms. Sharon Shields
- Department of Children and Families, Division of Prevention and Community Partnerships, State of NJ
- Elizabeth School Based Youth Services Program, Ms. Lisa Perry, Trinitas Hospital
- Irvington School Based Youth Services Program, Ms. Beverly Canady, The Bridge Inc.
- Lakewood School Based Youth Services, Ms. Mariame Bradley-Arkush, Preferred Children's Services, Ms. Gina Polese-Grosso
- New Jersey Psychological Association Foundation, Dr. Mary Kelly, Chair
- Paterson School Based Youth Services Program, Ms. Paula Howe
- Plainfield School Based Youth Services, Mr. Stacey Greene
- Trenton School Based Youth Services, Ms. Melda Grant, Trenton Regional School District

HIGHLIGHTS

We are proud to announce the Center's expansion to include the Safe Schools/Healthy Students Federal Project, coordinated by Mr. J. Young in Trenton, NJ. CFCSJ has thereby extended its services to three K-8 Trenton schools: the Martin Luther King, Joyce Kilmer and Grace A. Dunn K-8/Middle Schools.

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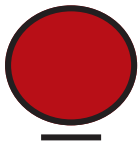
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Djenaba Figueroa: Newsletter Editor



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