Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

Bureau of Youth Services Newsletter

June 2019

It has been a busy few months at DCF, and I’m sure the same is true for you all as we wrap up the school year and head into summer. We are looking forward to our foster youth graduation event (details on page 6 of this newsletter). I am very pleased to announce the selection of Shelby McCulley as the new Bureau of Youth Services Director, effective June 24, 2019. As many of you know, I have been with the Bureau since its inception in 2013. I continue to be inspired by the work you all do on behalf of some of Wisconsin’s most resilient, and most vulnerable youth. I am still connected to BYS in my new role as Division Administrator and look forward to seeing all of your innovation and exciting work continue in the years to come. Thank you all for your hard work, dedication and continued partnership.

Welcome to the Team!

BYS is pleased to welcome our new Bureau Director and a new Youth Justice Policy Coordinator to the team!

Shelby McCulley

What are your hobbies?
Cooking, gardening, and running my kids around.

What are you most excited about in this role?
I’m excited about being able to take everything I’ve learned and experienced working in the “deep end” of the youth justice system of the past 9 years and using it to help promote positive change throughout the rest of the continuum, from prevention and diversion through community-based services.

BYS Director

Where are you from?
Fond du Lac.

Where did you work before coming to BYS?
I worked at the Division of Juvenile Corrections in the Department of Corrections.

Why are you in this line of work?
I’m in this line of work to make a difference.

Who or what inspires you?
All of the people out there in our systems working hard to improve the lives of children, families, and communities.
Welcome to the Team! (continued)

**Youth Justice Policy Coordinator**
Areas: Act 185, Truancy, Technical Assistance, Youth Leadership Teams

**Where are you from?**
I grew up in California, Arizona, and Massachusetts. I also lived in DC before moving to Madison in 2001.

Devon Lee

**Where did you work before coming to BYS?**
I worked at the State Public Defender’s Office from 2001-2019: first, as a staff attorney in the Madison juvenile trial division, then as a staff attorney in the Madison appellate division, and then in the administration as the agency Legal Counsel. Before that I worked at the National Center for Prosecution of Child Abuse.

**Why are you in this line of work?**
I’m in this line of work because teenagers are awesome.

**Who or what inspires you?**
My kids, who happen to be teenagers. They amaze me every day as they navigate the social, academic, and emotional challenges that adolescence presents.

**What are your hobbies?**
In the winter, I usually have a few knitting projects going; in the summer, I like to garden. I also like to read and hang out with my family.

**What are you most excited about in this role?**
I’m excited to get to work with everyone in the Bureau on behalf of young people in our state.

**Training Opportunities**

*Are you interested in future conferences or trainings coordinated by or sponsored by the Department of Children and Families?*

DCF contracts with the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System (WCWPDS) to put on events and develop resources and training materials, many of which are web-based. Recent conferences include BYS’s 2019 Bureau of Youth Services conference (held in May 2019; see page 3 for more information) and the 2018 Child Welfare Conference, held in September 2018.

Additional learning opportunities are always in development. For more information, check out WCWPDS’s conference listing ([https://wcwpds.wisc.edu/conferences-2](https://wcwpds.wisc.edu/conferences-2)) and training schedules ([https://wcwpds.wisc.edu/training-calendar](https://wcwpds.wisc.edu/training-calendar)) for 2019 (and beyond!).
BYS Hosts Bi-Annual Youth Services Conference

The Youth Services team would like to thank those who shared their time, energy, artwork, and stories with us at the 2019 Youth Services Conference. We set a record with 549 attendees and were incredibly motivated by the meaningful connections that were made across systems and across Wisconsin! The establishment of the new Facebook group (Youth Service Workers of WI) was a highlight of the conference and we are hopeful that those connections will be sustained until we meet again in 2021. Additionally, we hope that the resources obtained through the conference will assist you in your professional development and ongoing commitment to ensuring youth have the tools they need to thrive in adulthood.

If you are interested in serving as part of the conference advisory committee for the 2020 input session, please contact Kim Eithun at keithun@wisc.edu OR the Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System at office@wcwpds.wisc.edu.

YAC Hosts Annual Hands Around the Capitol Event

On May 22, 2019, the state Youth Advisory Council (YAC), which is made up of current and former foster youth, coordinated its 3rd Annual Hands Around the Capitol event in honor of Foster Care Awareness Month.

The event took place in the rotunda of the state capitol building and included interactive activities such as a selfie frame, photo props, and vendor tables. Various speakers also lent their voices to the event; these included DCF Secretary-Designee Amundson, State Representative Subeck, State Representative Snyder, UW-Parkside Director of Admissions Troy Moldenhauer, and YAC members themselves sharing their stories and speaking about initiatives that are important to them. This year, their speeches pertained to housing and homelessness issues for aging out young people, access to post-secondary and secondary education resources, mental health, and dispelling the stigma of being a foster youth.

You can find more content and pictures related to the YAC and the event by following the Council on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/wiyac2005). Pictures of the event are also available via https://saraholson.smugmug.com/HAC19/n-745RgV/.

Please join us in congratulating our young people on a successful event!

Region 3 YAC gives back to Milwaukee Community

In January 2019, as part of a larger effort to streamline funds and processes, BYS rebranded its DCF Scholarship, a resource to support the postsecondary goals for eligible youth. As part of this effort, BYS had a competition among its local Youth Advisory Councils (YACs) to help rebrand these postsecondary supports. Members of each YAC submitted name ideas and members of the statewide YAC voted on which best fit with the postsecondary funds available to youth. They selected Brighter Star, the idea put forward by the Region 3 (Milwaukee County) members.

To celebrate their winning idea, BYS provided two gift cards to the Region 3 YAC—one to be used for fun and one to be put towards helping their community. The council used the money to provide donations to two local organizations: Robyn’s Nest and Care Net. Supplies included kids clothing, toys, and basic need items. YAC members note that visiting the agencies to provide the donations was especially impactful—they learned more about the work being done and the services available to those in need, while also sharing information about the YAC. Most importantly, they had the chance to see the impact of their generosity by having the chance to meet the staff on-site and join in their joy and appreciation. Thanks for being such bright stars, Region 3!

For more on these changes, visit https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youthservices/pdf/brighterstar-etv.pdf.
Data on Youth Justice Referrals Yield Key Insights

Last summer, DCF rolled out two new eWiSACWIS features: the Youth Justice (YJ) Referral page and the YJ Case Information page. In the 11 months since launch, approximately 15,000 referrals have been captured for a total of over 9,000 unique youth.

In April 2019, DCF launched reporting functionality for these pages so stakeholders can have a more complete picture of youth served in the YJ system. Reports include summary statistics on youth demographics, offense types, and school-based referrals. Monthly reports contain data both at the state level and comparing across counties, and eWiSACWIS users can create on-demand reports either at the state level or for their individual county.

These data already reveal important insights, such as the extent of dual-systems involvement for youth in contact with YJ. Of 6,061 unique youth referred for YJ services statewide in the six months between October and March:

- 81% had at least one prior Child Protective Services (CPS) referral.
- 66% had at least one CPS referral screened in.
- 20% had at least one prior out-of-home care placement.
- 5% were in an out-of-home care placement episode at the time of their referral.

It is important to note that DCF’s eWiSACWIS team released several updates and fixes improving accuracy within several weeks of the initial reporting launch, so any users who immediately downloaded reports at that time are encouraged to revisit the reports. If you encounter any errors or bugs in the reports, please contact Carlton Frost, Youth Justice Policy Coordinator, at Carlton.Frost1@wisconsin.gov.

Phase 1 of YASI Roll-Out

On May 15 and May 16, 2019, BYS hosted Orbis Partners CEO David Robinson and YASI Master Trainer Diana Wavra in Madison, Wausau and Portage for the official DCF Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument (YASI) Phase 1 kick-off. Dr. Robinson provided an overview of the CaseWorks software including the YASI assessment tool and case planning module and Ms. Wavra described Orbis’ two 2-day training modules, Collaborative Case Works 1 and 2 (CCWI and CCWII).

Counties currently using the YASI are identified in orange in the graphic on the left. Phase 1 counties are identified in yellow. Rock County is the only current YASI user to also be included in Phase 1. Each county will receive CCWI and CCWII training between June and August and will begin using the YASI shortly after completing the first two days of training.

Counties that submitted letters of interest for Phase 1 but were not selected will have the option to automatically be enrolled in Phase 2 or opt into a subsequent implementation phase. BYS will issue an informational memo later this summer for Phases 2, 3, and 4 that will include implementation selection criteria as well as a schedule for the YASI roll-out through the beginning of 2021, the YASI policy, Implementation Checklist, and Service Matrix in order to assist counties with choosing their preferred timeframe for implementing the YASI. Training for Phase 2 counties will take place later in 2019.
**Roadmap to Independent Living**

Supporting any youth’s transition to independence needs to be a team effort, but collaboration is even more important for youth in out-of-home care who engage with multiple stakeholders (ongoing workers, judges, teachers, therapists, and most importantly-the youth)! That’s why BYS staff set out to create a guide that would be accessible and relevant to all those invested in the well-being of youth involved with the independent living continuum. The result was the Roadmap to Independent Living, a handy and comprehensive guide intended to assist workers, service providers, and young people! BYS first introduced the document to foster and adoptive parents at the Wisconsin Foster and Adoptive Parent Association (WFAPA) meeting in April 2019. Since April, staff have shared the Roadmap with attendees at the Bureau of Youth Services Conference, as part of the Regional Independent Living Summits, and through the Bureau’s Independent Living contacts throughout the state.

In the spirit of elevating youth voice, BYS did not complete the Roadmap without the crucial input from young people who represent the Independent Living population. BYS staff collaborated with Wisconsin’s 2018 FosterClub All-Stars who played a primary role in its development. The All-Stars provided their expertise and perspective to craft the Roadmap as a visual guide of the broader independent living continuum, showing how the needs and suggestions the youth identify intersect with DCF’s independent living requirements. We encourage those working with youth to use this as a conversation starter regarding their needs, dreams, and future plans.

Please contact DCFILCoordinator@wisconsin.gov if you would like a digital copy of the Roadmap. It will also be available online soon. See page 6 of this newsletter for more information on the All-Star program.

**Program Analyses**

BYS staff are in the early stages of evaluating parts of the Independent Living (IL) and Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) programs to determine what allowable changes may help improve service provision to youth who qualify for the services, and their feasibility according to workforce, financial, and other logistical considerations.

- **Kelsey Hill**, State Independent Living Coordinator, will evaluate IL eligibility criteria according to federal and state legislation, the needs of Wisconsin’s eligible youth, and budget availability. Though federal legislation (via the John H. Chafee and Family First Prevention Services Acts) outlines some parameters that frame program eligibility, individual states also have discretion to develop IL eligibility criteria to best serve their population. In addition to reviewing guidelines and requirements, Kelsey’s analysis will include stakeholder feedback, review of IL population and outcome information, and consultation with other states, among other methods.

- **Greta Munns**, Policy Coordinator, will evaluate possible options for creating more robust RHY programming, particularly in more remote parts of the state. Her review will also include a review of federal and state legislation, data, and research pertaining to this population and program area, but will also rely heavily on direct input from service providers, youth and families, and community members. Greta will facilitate five listening sessions throughout Wisconsin between August and September 2019 to support her information-gathering and frame any recommendations to improve the RHY program.

BYS plans to have the results of these analyses available by early 2020 to help identify what, if any, adjustments are necessary to one or both of the programs and inform next steps. If you have questions or would like more information, please reach out to KelseyR.Hill@wisconsin.gov or Margaret.Munns@wisconsin.gov.
Wisconsin’s All-Stars!

Join us in congratulating Brandi and Amanda, this year’s FosterClub All-Stars! As in past years, BYS is once again sponsoring two slots for Wisconsin youth to attend FosterClub’s All-Star internship in summer 2019. FosterClub All-Stars are young people with lived experience in the child welfare system who are selected to do advocacy on behalf of their peers currently or formerly in out-of-home care.

With BYS’s sponsorship, these young people are able to bond with peers from across the country, learn leadership skills, and become strong advocates for themselves and others with no financial obligation. Many youth carry their experience beyond the summer internship, continuing to develop resources, present at conferences, facilitate trainings, and use their elevated platform and network to advocate for change.

For more information about the All-Star program, including who is eligible, how they can apply, and important deadlines, please visit https://www.fosterclub.com/what-we-do/young-leaders/all-star-internship.

Way to go, Brandi and Amanda! We cannot wait to see what you achieve!

Foster Youth Graduation Celebration!

On Friday, June 28, 2019, BYS will host its 7th annual graduation celebration for youth who spent time in out-of-home care. Young people graduating from high school and above this year are invited to attend the event, surrounded by guests of their choosing and located on the grounds of the Governor’s Mansion in Madison, WI. This event is a favorite for BYS staff and the population they serve; it is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our smart and accomplished young people! Congrats, grads!

Look for updates about this event in a future newsletter! And keep it in mind if you have a youth in your life who you think may qualify to participate in a future celebration.

Department of Children and Families  Bureau of Youth Services

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May every youth in, at risk of, or aged out of the child welfare system transition to a successful adulthood.

The goal of the Bureau of Youth Services is to improve outcomes for youth in the child welfare and youth justice systems and other vulnerable youth. Specifically, the Bureau supports service delivery systems that move youth towards academic success, safe and stable housing, employment, permanent connections with supportive adults, and healthy lifestyle behaviors. Youth aged 12-21 in or at risk of entering the child welfare and a youth justice system present unique and complex challenges. The Bureau brings a more coordinated program and policy focus to youth in the child welfare system and other vulnerable youth.

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