

## Benedict Center & Advocacy

Restoring Best Practices at the County Correctional Facility-South

The Benedict Center, in conjunction with Milwaukee Inner-city Congregations Allied for Hope (MICAH) and Wisconsin Community Services (WCS), are calling for a change in administration at the County Correctional Facility-South (CCF-S) in Franklin. Formerly known as the House of Corrections, the institution also oversees the Electronic Monitoring Unit and Huber Work Release Facility. Restoring a House of Corrections Superintendent is needed to restore evidence-based correctional practices that reduce recidivism and re-incarceration by helping individuals to rebuild healthier, safer lives.



When individuals are sent to the CCF-S, it is typically for sentences of less than one year, which means that they are returning to the community in a short period of time. The best way to ensure public safety is to provide individuals at the CCF-S with the kind of programming, treatment, and support proven by empirical studies to reduce the risk of recidivism. Electronic monitoring and the Huber Work Release Program are also proven community alternatives to incarceration that promote participants' recovery, employment, and connection to their families and communities.

Since the county gave oversight of the House of Corrections to Milwaukee County Sheriff David Clarke three years ago, these well-established, nationally recognized correctional approaches have been largely underutilized or eliminated.

Drug treatment and employment programming at the CCF-S is practically non-existent. The electronic monitoring program was reduced from approximately 200 individuals in 2011 to five individuals today. Additionally, the Huber Facility has been moved to Franklin, where there is insufficient public transportation.

The story of Margaret, a recent graduate of the Benedict Center, illustrates how conditions could be improved. After serving seven months in the CCF-S, she was not offered any substance abuse treatment, even though she had been arrested for shop-lifting to support a drug addiction. When she was released, she immediately relapsed and was arrested again. Thankfully, Margaret was tried in Milwaukee County's Drug Court and sentenced to drug treatment at the Benedict Center. As a result of the gender-specific, professional AODA counseling she received, she is now living a drug-free and crime-free life, and is a valued volunteer in the community.

Creating a House of Corrections Superintendent position to administer the CCF-S is a critical step in implementing evidence-based practices and programs. This policy change will ensure individuals receive the treatment and employment support needed, which will increase public safety and create a healthier community for everyone.

## Domestic Violence Awareness

The recent tragedy that occurred at Azana Salon calls for renewed awareness about domestic violence and prevention efforts in our community. The National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence Against Women reports that nearly 1 in 4 women are beaten or raped by a partner during adulthood. Children exposed to violence in their homes are more likely to attempt suicide, abuse drugs and alcohol, run away from home, engage in teenage prostitution, and commit sexual assault crimes.

According to the Task Force, a significant turning point in the effort to end domestic violence was the authorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in 1994. Since the passage of VAWA, there has been an increase in the coordinated efforts and services of government and advocacy groups. More victims now report domestic violence to the police and the number of women killed by an intimate partner has decreased. However, there is still a great deal of work to be done.

An astounding 78% of women served by the Benedict Center's Women's Harm Reduction Program report a history of abuse and trauma. Sadly, this level of trauma is consistent with several national studies showing that incarcerated women suffer physical abuse by intimate partners at a rate as high as 49-96%.

The Women's Harm Reduction Program provides a comprehensive set of gender-specific, trauma-informed services to help women live healthier and safer lives. One key program is a nationally recognized curriculum called Seeking Safety, which was developed by Lisa M. Najavits, PhD at Harvard Medical School. Seeking Safety has been proven to help women understand and address the effects of trauma in their lives in a present-focused manner.

The Benedict Center also works with local domestic violence agencies to connect women in its program to legal services, shelters and counseling.

By offering a safe, nurturing place that integrates best practices and partnerships to address the harsh realities of some women's lives, the Benedict Center is able to help women improve their personal safety and begin the journey of healing for themselves and for their children.

Thank you for your interest in this under-served population and for your partnership in mitigating the effects of violence on their families' lives.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the victims and families of the Azana Salon tragedy. We seek hope, healing and actions to prevent future tragedies rooted in domestic violence.



# Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

One of the Benedict Center's guiding values is Transformation, as symbolized by the butterfly in our logo and featured in our recent Monarch Appeal.

Our Women's Harm Reduction Program helps women to transform their lives from places of brokenness to healing. The Benedict Center also seeks change in the criminal justice system, with an emphasis on providing community-based alternatives to incarceration that are proven to work. Both our programmatic and advocacy efforts contribute to transforming our community by promoting public safety, public health, and social justice.

Community building and transformation requires relationships and partnerships. This newsletter provides us a regular opportunity to highlight the stories of the individuals and organizations who have been, and continue to be, a vital part of our story. We have forged several new partnerships this year, which increases our capacity to help women involved in the criminal justice system to rebuild their lives and move us toward a criminal justice system that treats everyone with dignity and respect.

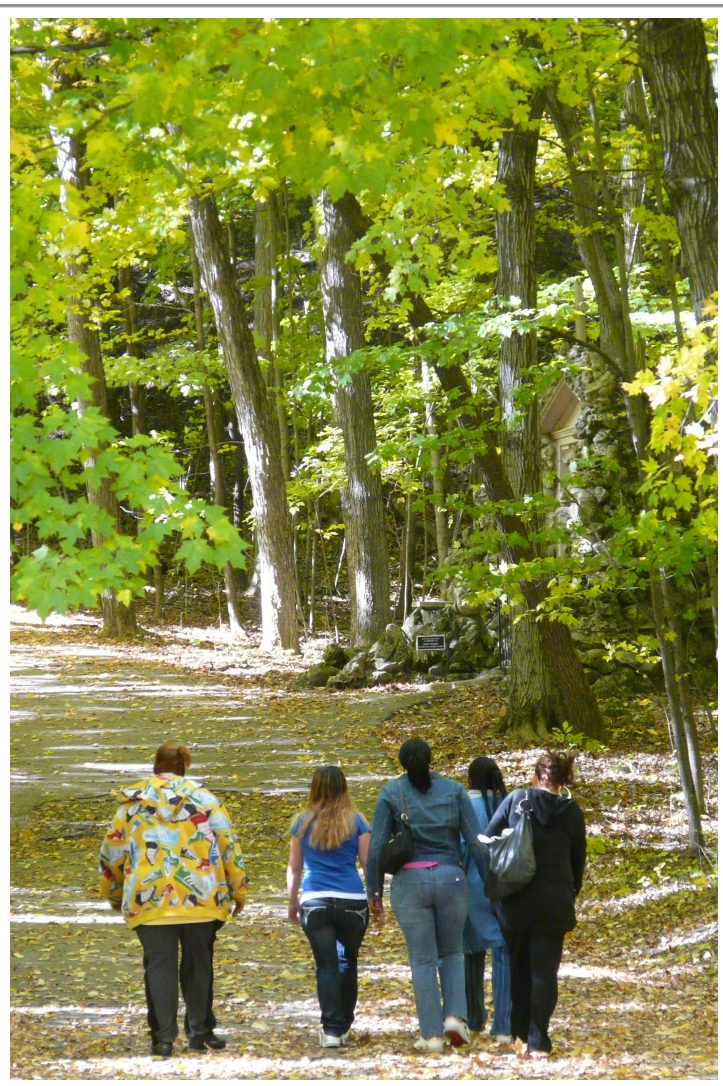
We are delighted to have begun partnering with Wisconsin Community Services (WCS) in several meaningful and innovative ways. In 2012, we began sharing the services of a Medical Director and a Clinical Supervisor for our Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (AODA) program. In 2013, the Benedict Center will expand this partnership as WCS assumes oversight of the Milwaukee County Day Reporting Center (DRC). The Benedict Center will provide gender-responsive AODA treatment and trauma-informed services for women at the DRC. We will continue to provide our Restorative Community Service Program at the DRC as well.

Other new partnerships include collaborating with Mental Health of America-Wisconsin to provide evidence-based parenting and nurturing classes to women at the Benedict Center. And in 2013, we will begin working closely with Justice Point to provide gender-responsive case management to women through Milwaukee County's Treatment Alternatives and Diversion program. We are also pleased to begin a new partnership with the Johnson Controls Women's Resource Network, whose members volunteer as tutors in the adult education program and support activities like the monthly awards luncheon for the women served by the Benedict Center.

As we welcome our new partners, we are also thankful to all of our ongoing friends and supporters, who make the transformational work of the Benedict Center possible. Together, we are creating a community that supports justice and healing.

Sincerely,

*Jeanne Geraci*



*Wisconsin's four seasons also create a rich illustration of transformation, perhaps none so vibrant as the changing colors of autumn.*

## In Memory of David Lerman

Former Assistant District Attorney David Lerman, who was known as the "Father of Restorative Justice in Milwaukee," passed away on October 19, 2012 with his family by his side.

The Benedict Center feels fortunate for the opportunity to have honored him in 2007 for his commitment to justice. As a result of his tireless work, community conferencing and restorative justice practices are well-established and respected in Milwaukee. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family.



# The Benedict Center Spring Appeal

## A Monarch's Journey

Thank you for supporting our Spring Monarch Appeal!

The Benedict Center extends its gratitude to the following donors who responded so generously to our spring appeal, which likened the amazing sojourn of monarch butterflies to the inspiring journey of the many women we serve. Thank you for your generosity, and we hope that you will once again consider participating in our upcoming fall campaign. We could not continue to provide holistic services to over 300 at-risk women annually without the support of individual donors like you.

Thanks to the Friends of the Benedict Center  
for a **Splashin'** Good Time



*Friends of the Benedict Center* is an organization founded in 1992 to provide financial and volunteer support to the Benedict Center.

This summer, Friends underwrote a picnic outing at the David A. Schultz Aquatic Center. Over 30 women enjoyed each other's company and a refreshing day away from the stressors of daily life. The majority of women who attended the picnic had never visited the water park before. The experience helped the women see that there are safe, healthy, and substance-free ways of having a great time. Having been to the park once also encourages women to feel more comfortable planning a picnic/pool party for their families.

We truly appreciate the generous and fun spirit of this gift, which provided an uplifting experience for all involved. You are good Friends indeed.

Our Generous Spring Appeal Donors by Level:

### The Monarch's Journey \$600 and above

Andy and Barb Doermann

### The Monarch Emerges \$300 - \$599

William and Barbara Fernholz  
Julie and John Linehan  
Philip Schumacher and Pauline Beck  
Terry Sherman  
Carol Wiensch

### Chrysalis Level \$120 - \$299

James Gramling  
Joanne and William Lange  
Mary McCormick and Timothy Hawks  
Deborah Raehl  
William and Judith Shinkwin

### Caterpillar Level \$60 - \$119

Barbara Armstrong, in honor of Fran Bauer  
Katherine Arndt  
Cynthia Barnicki  
Rick and Mardi Bridich  
Kristina Finsel  
Anna and George Gaspar  
Cathy Grogan  
Gerald Harmon and Ellen Croke  
Marianne King  
Martha Love  
Joan Lucke  
Neil McGinn  
David McIntosh  
Diane and Scott Pollard  
Mary Van Beck Voelker  
Elizabeth Vogt

### Leaf Level \$30 - \$59

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Gerry and Marjorie Schlosser  
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Kathleen Scullin, in memory of Kay DelaHunt  
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***Rational Justice*** is a publication of the Benedict Center

Thank you for your support and interest in justice. Please share this newsletter with friends and colleagues.

## Support the Benedict Center through Workplace Giving

We're proud to be member of **Community Shares of Greater Milwaukee** and urge you to support us at your workplace! If your workplace doesn't offer payroll deduction yet, please contact CSGM at 414-342-0883 to learn more.

If your workplace offers a United Way campaign, you can simply name the Benedict Center under the optional designation area on the form (no code required).

At the Benedict Center, we believe in change... and by giving a little of your paycheck today, you can create a lot of change tomorrow.



**We hope to see you at our annual Holiday Open House!**

Please join our staff, Board, and women we serve to usher in the holidays, tour the agency, and learn more about the Benedict Center.

Holiday Open House  
Friday, December 7, 2012  
11:30 am -2:00 pm