

**HANOVER TOWNSHIP YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
ANNUAL REPORT
2008-2009**

This year Hanover Township Youth and Family Services experienced transition on multiple levels while continuing to offer quality affordable services. In May, Kathy Fox, MS, RN, retired as Director after 18 years of service at the Department. John Parquette, LCSW, Clinical Director, was promoted to Director and Susan Alborell, LCSW, was promoted to the newly titled Clinical Manager, formally held by Parquette. With this shift in leadership came changes in the organizational culture within the Department - which promotes openness, respect, and collaboration of the talents, skills, and differences of staff.

Laura Lea Rioux, LCSW, family therapist, was recruited and replaced Ms. Alborell's former position as Senior Clinician. Ms. Rioux brings with her years of experience as a clinician with interest and expertise in trauma and its impact on children and families. Ms. Rioux also has training and experience in Adventure Therapy, which utilizes nature to expose children, teens, and their parents to challenges and opportunities that promotes growth, healing, and team building. We look forward to Ms. Rioux' work and to her contributions within the Department.

Our Family Therapy Services continues to have a wait list. Therapy Services is offered in English, Spanish, and Polish. 2126 family therapy sessions were provided and 100 families were seen in ongoing therapy. Families seeking Therapy Services have experienced stressors related to finances, family and marital adjustments, and various difficulties with their children and teens.

Other changes in the Department included a search for a new consultant. The role of a consultant is to provide the staff with support, education, research, and to promote quality professional services. Starting in FY 10, we will have three consultants from Loyola University's School of Social Work. Michael J. Kelly, Ph.D., who is returning to the Department with expertise in school-based practices, family therapy, and research practices. Julia Pryce, Ph.D., comes with expertise in mentoring and research. Philip Young P. Hong, Ph.D., comes with expertise in creating and researching innovative community programming and community building efforts. We look forward to learning and expanding our skills and talents in best practices with our new consultants.

We are also excited to secure an agreement with Alexian Brothers Behavioral Health Hospital's Outpatient Program to offer psychiatric services if needed by a family member in Therapy Services. We have secured this agreement in order to have services in close proximity to our residents, have more hours available for service, provide more continuity of care, and to have access to current research and best practices in psychiatry.

Another transition experienced by the Department included Hanover Township's Welfare Services moving into the Astor Avenue Community Center. This transition has been of

great value to the residents of Hanover Township and the Astor neighborhood. Additional services offered at the Center include a food pantry, access to Federal and State medical programs, energy assistance, toy and coat drives, and various drives for those in need during the holidays. Youth and Family Services staff and Welfare Services Staff have learned how to work together and share space in the Center. We look forward to a continued collaborative working relationship and to future joint programming to benefit the residents of Hanover Township.

The Astor Avenue Community Center continues to offer quality programs and services to approximately 400 residents every month. The Department recruited and hired Stephanie Kossler, BS, as a Program Assistant. Stephanie has been a great help in program development and in the delivery of services. Core services continue to be offered include: Teen Café, elementary activities, after school programs, family activities, teen job fairs, computer classes, information and referral, job search and resume assistance and workshops to assist those seeking employment.

New programming at the Center includes a conversation club for English and Spanish speakers, community caroling during the holidays, and more employment seeking programming. Continued collaboration occurred between the Astor staff and Hanover Township's Community Health Nurse with monthly clinics offered. Hanover Township's Senior Services joined the Astor staff in hosting a Sock Hop Hip Hop Snowflake Ball in January. The Ball brought teens and seniors together at the Senior Center for a night of mixed music and dances from a spectrum of generations.



Teens and Seniors taking a break from dancing at the "Hip-Hop Sock Hop Snowflake Ball."

The Astor Avenue Community Center will be implementing a model of community building developed by researchers at Northwestern University, John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight. The model, Asset Based Community Development, is based on three premises: 1. It is based on the assets of the neighborhood including the skills, gifts, and talents of the residents. It does not start with needs, problems, or what is absent in the neighborhood. 2. It is internally focused and the community building strategy is based

on the agenda and problem solving strategies of the residents, local associations and institutions. 3. The mode of delivery is relationship driven.

The Astor staff will be trained in April and May by the Asset Based Community Development Institute of Northwestern University. Implementation of the Asset Based Community Building model will benefit the Community Center and the residents in the neighborhood by mobilizing the neighborhoods strengths and empowering residents to improve functioning and build resources.

The Astor Avenue Community Center staff partnered with our Outreach Services Coordinator, Michael Cohen, MS, to develop and offer a large scale Job Fair and Expo. This event was held on May 21, 2008 at Tefft Middle School in Streamwood. The Job Fair and Expo had 43 employers who had staff available for interviewing and networking. Over 600 residents came to the event. Residents as young as 10 secured jobs as newspaper carriers; and several teens and adults secured employment in various settings. Staff also held a smaller Teen Job Fair at the Center on October 22, 2008. Panera Bread, Chiro One Wellness Center, and Target came to the fair with jobs available. 40 youth attended the fair and 7 secured employment. Staff continues to offer workshops and make themselves available daily to help residents with resume writing and other employment seeking skills.



Job Fair and Expo:
Residents received resume help and job seeking skills at the Job Fair and Expo.

Our Youth Outreach Services continues to provide services in various schools. Outreach Services includes mentoring, group work in schools, and providing youth with a positive role model in the community. Outreach Services served 1,400 youth this year. As mentioned above, our Outreach staff has been also involved with program planning and delivery at the Astor Avenue Community Center. Our successful Open Gym and Fun Program is managed by our Outreach Services Coordinator and we are looking forward to our 14th summer program. This year we had 2535 children and teens attend the Open Gym Program during summer and winter breaks.

We are excited to make our Open Gym Program into a year round program starting in September. The new Year-Round Open Gym Program will include all the fun and activities already offered with the addition of homework help, fitness and health screens, community building, and leadership opportunities. We are grateful and thankful to the Town Board, Finance Committee, Township Administrator, and to our community partners for their ongoing support and dedication in making this successful program go year round.

Tutoring Services celebrated its 10th year last year. The Department held a 10 year Celebration in May at the Senior Center. Fun, games, and awards were given as well as plenty of cake to celebrate all the students past and present in their accomplishments and growth academically. This year, 120 students in grades 2-9 received tutoring assistance from a team of certified teachers. Jeopardy tournaments were held twice to break up the study and completion of homework. Challenge, fun, and joy were experienced by those who participated. Surveys completed by teachers who referred students for tutoring were very positive on students' academic progress.



Jeopardy!
Families and students of Tutoring Program enjoy a Jeopardy tournament.

We are excited to expand Tutoring Services in offering a summer program this year. We are responding to a consistent need expressed by parents of students as well as current research that supports structured learning during summer break to prevent loss of academic achievements. Currently, we are working on developing the program.

Group Services were provided this year to Streamwood High School Academy Students and to parents at Laurel Hill Elementary School. The group at Streamwood High School was developed after concern and desire was expressed to the Department by the schools

administration and staff. Brian Fask, LCSW, family therapist, spear headed the research and development of the group. Mr. Fask co-leads a weekly group with Streamwood High School Social Worker, Danyce Saul. The group offers students support and techniques to manage stress and multiple responsibilities. Karen Low, LCPC, Bilingual Family Therapist, facilitates weekly parenting classes offered in Spanish at Laurel Hill Elementary School. Parents support each other and learn skills to improve parenting and to help their children advance at school. Suellen Shively-Mack, LCSW, Bilingual Family Therapist, has facilitated 3 Systematic Training for Effective Parenting classes this year. Classes were offered for parents who have child ages 3–6, 7–12, and 13-18.

Department Goals for the 2009-2010 year include: a). Re-establish methods of clinical practice by evaluating existing documentation procedures, hiring of new consultants, establishing a formal in-service schedule, and securing new psychiatric care to improve the quality of family therapy, outreach, and other clinical services. b). Implement a business plan for a year round open gym program. Expand offerings of programs beyond school breaks within budget, research new internship placements, partnerships with park districts, and other resource options. c). Research, develop, and implement an alternative to the suspension program to service the middle school population within the township. Research the idea of an alternative to the juvenile court program.

We want to extend our appreciation to the Committee on Youth for its support, experience, and input into Youth and Family Services solid and professional programming and services: Robert Wojtowicz, Katelyn Mucci, Veeral Vyas, and Mariah Ten Hoven. Thank you to Judy Walsh, Bill Peterson, and Greg Herbert, former members for their years of service.



Trustee Westlund-Deenihan (Standing second from left) and Committee on Youth Student Members, (left to right) Mariah Ten Hoven, Katelyn Mucci and Veeral Vyas welcome Superintendent of School District U-46, Dr. José Torres (Center)

We would like to thank Trustee Sandra Westlund-Deenihan for her passion, commitment, and drive in serving as Trustee Liaison to the Committee on Youth. We also thank all of our Elected Officials for their ongoing support. Thank you to the other Departments within the Township for their support and collaboration in providing great service to the residents of Hanover Township.

To the staff who work diligently in meeting the mission of the Department and providing quality professional services, I am honored and thankful for: Susan Alborell, LCSW (Clinical Manager), Debbie Swiatek, MA (Astor Avenue Program Manager), Carmen Chavez (Office Manager), Michael Cohen, MS (Outreach Service Coordinator), Karen Low, LCPC (Bilingual Senior Family Therapist), Brian Fask, LCSW (Family Therapist), Laura Lea Rioux, LCSW (Senior Family Therapist), Anita Chlipala, MFT (Bilingual Family therapist), Mariana Proske, BA (Bilingual Outreach Worker), Andrea Freerksen, BA (Astor Program/Volunteer Coordinator), Mary Beahan (Administrative Assistant), Kira Sardinias and Susan Graffy (Secretary/Receptionist, and our 2nd year Masters Interns Kristin Langer, BS, and Lynn Fagerlie, BGS.

Many thanks to our Tutoring Services teachers: Debbie Swiatek, Maria Petrov, Rich Olivarez, Patricia Maynard, and Kristi Holm; and our Open Gym Program Assistants: Diana Turk, Flavio Ramirez, Kelly Richards, Nirali Shah, and Veronica Padharia and the police officers of Bartlett and Streamwood, Renz Addiction Counseling Center Prevention Staff, and our great volunteers.

Respectfully Submitted,
John J. Parquette, LCSW
Director
Youth and Family Services