

Weed and Seed Update

December 31, 2007

The Weed & Seed coordinator continues to attend service provider and other neighborhood meetings pertinent to the three Weed & Seed designated neighborhoods: Allied, South Madison, and Broadway Lake Point. She continues to facilitate the monthly Allied Stakeholders meetings, and she continues to serve as the South Neighborhood Resource Team leader.

The coordinator continues to support the graduates of the South Madison Grassroots Leadership College (GLC) training series. The group organized a small holiday project – they made and distributed fruit baskets to seniors in the neighborhood. They also participated in the neighborhood association's holiday party for children and youth that attend Lincoln elementary. The coordinator is also working with South Metropolitan Planning Council (SMPC) and neighborhood leaders – including one of the leaders from the GLC group - from Burr Oaks to help plan the association meetings and encourage more neighborhood participation in the association.

The coordinator continues to participate in the prostitution workgroup spearheaded by the neighborhood officers from BANA and Burr Oaks. Officers from the workgroup, including those that work with *Amigos en Azul* (an MPD staff team that is interested in working more effectively with the primary Spanish-speakers in Madison), and the coordinator developed a proposal for program changes to the Weed & Seed Year 5 strategy to direct some funds to the prostitution reduction activities. The Weed & Seed Steering Committee officially adopted the proposal at their December meeting, and it will go to the federal grant administrator for final approval in January. Using newly released funds from the Mayor's office (in response to increased safety concerns of residents), the South District was able to conduct two "prostitution stings" – one at the end of November and one at the beginning of December. There were more than 15 arrests, some with multiple charges. The workgroup is planning to begin the deferred prosecution program in April with the "johns" arrested during these stings. Sandy Cullen from the Wisconsin State Journal wrote a comprehensive article about the workgroup's activities focused on reducing prostitution, including a small piece on the work of Project Respect, one of the workgroup members. The article appeared in the WSJ local section of the Sunday, December 2nd, edition.

The coordinator continues to staff the Allied Community Youth Court Steering Committee and offer support to the staff from Youth Services of Southern WI that operate the Court. In November, Madison Municipal Court Judge, Dan Koval, started holding court for youth offenders from Allied and surrounding neighborhoods at the Boys & Girls Club. Youth from Allied are then referred to the Youth Court, which happens later that same evening. Six cases were referred to the Allied Youth Court in December, with misdemeanor violations including disorderly conduct, trespassing, being on school grounds without proper permission, and truancy. The coordinator will also be meeting regularly with youth workers, neighborhood officers, educational resource officers, and youth court staff to better coordinate the training and activities of the two (and soon to be three) peer courts in Madison.

MY CRIB staff reports that 11 youth remain enrolled in the truancy program – the majority of which are referrals from the Toki middle school social worker. He expects to have 3-4 more youth at the beginning of the next semester. MY CRIB staff are also actively involved with the Allied Youth Court – both in recruitment of peer jurors and with providing some follow up services for youth referred from Youth Court. He and his volunteer mentors have found that a number of the youth involved in the truancy project are lagging behind their grade levels for reading skills. MY CRIB staff and volunteers continue to use the "Keeping It Real" curriculum out of California, which has demonstrated success with minority at-risk youth, as part of their reading/tutoring sessions.

In partnership with Family Support 360 and the Epilepsy Foundation, the Allied Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood Association (ADMNA) hosted a Latino-themed meal at the end of November with about 50 people in attendance. They also held their December mobile pantry on Friday, the 21st. Because the regularly scheduled day for the mobile pantry is the 4th Saturday of the month, association members had to do a significant amount of outreach and planning to make sure that volunteers and residents knew about the schedule change. They had more than 100 households participate.

The coordinator has also been working with the Alder in Allied on the transition of management for the G&H properties and the redevelopment planning. She helped publicize and encourage residents to attend pertinent meetings, and she arranged for Allied residents to provide child care and food for the community meeting with the architects hired by the CDA.