

8/30 MTg

Alan Sweet, Chair
City of Madison Community Services Committee

Mr. Sweet:

As a board member of the Rainbow Project, I am deeply concerned about the recent decision to list this organization as a B2 priority. Rainbow Project serves as a vital resource to the community that cannot be cut. This is an integral service that heals children who have suffered serious mental trauma. Madison, like any city, is only as strong as its community and without a healthy population our city will suffer.

I encourage you to look at the success rate of the Rainbow Project. Their mental health solutions model has helped thousands of individuals go on to lead better lives because of their care: better lives for the children, better lives for the parents, friends, coworkers and the community as a whole. The legacy of their programs is far reaching; it is not a cost but an investment.

The Rainbow Project has been a partner of the city for thirty years. This is a testament not only to how well managed the organization is but also to how great the need is for its services. The city has believed in the mission of the Rainbow Project for three decades, a mission dedicated to help at risk children.

I have benefited greatly from a safe home and parents who raised me in an abuse free environment. From being on the board of Rainbow, I know as a city we have a responsibility to take care of our children. This is because, if we don't help these children, no one else will.

This funding for the Rainbow Project is significant and I ask the city to grant the same level of funding to Rainbow as it did last year.

Thank you,



Robert T. Cramer
Board Member – The Rainbow Project, Inc.

Ellen Schwartz – President of the Board
Board Members:

Allison H Cooley
Deirdre Hargrove
Diane Sorenson
Erica Serlin
Eve E. Dennison Pollock
Fred Bove
James M. Greaney
Jason Speich
Jim Campbell
Sandra Rivera
Steven Koslov

8/30

Attn.: Allan Sweet, Chair and
Members of the City of Madison Community Services Committee

Date: August 30, 2010

RE: 2011 City Budget Recommendations for the Rainbow Project


Dear Mr. Sweet:

On behalf of the Rainbow Project staff members, Board of Directors, Advisory Committee members, volunteers and especially, on behalf of the young children and families impacted by trauma, with whom we have the honor of working with and those children and families, who are waiting for our services, I want to express our deep dismay, with the committee member's recommendations. Rainbow early intervention and prevention services are suddenly being slashed. The evidence-based, best-practice, specialized services, established over the past 30 years, have helped nearly 6,000 young children and 5,000 adult caregivers, who have experienced abuse, neglect, domestic violence, community violence or other traumas, benefitted from Rainbow services.

We oppose recommendations that choose to make choices to balance a budget at the expense of our communities youngest and most vulnerable and fragile. The shortage of mental health services for children has been documented for the past several years, locally, statewide and nationally, by school boards, community leaders, law enforcement, crisis services and hospitals and parents. To dismantle the few resources left in the community, in the throes of an economic crisis, is perplexing. We can be proactive and address the core problems of poverty but not sacrifice children's lives as we do this. Children are being expelled from early childhood programs, schools, after school programs and community centers, due to lack of early intervention and prevention services. One of the largest growing populations committing crimes are children. Removing the scarce services available to turn their broken lives whole again, is baffling. Objectivity in making informed funding decisions is important, however, these recommendations appear detached from the reality of real lives in our community.

We have experienced the city funding and budget process as confusing and divisive and the goals and priorities established arbitrary. We hope that the CSC members will reconsider their decision and fund the Rainbow Project at 2010 levels. The impact in dollars and human cost is critical. Every minute and every penny spent needs to be spent wisely.

Sincerely,



Sharyl J. Kato, Director
Child & Family Therapist, the Rainbow Project, Inc.