



Legislation Text

File #: 82490, **Version:** 1

Fiscal Note

No fiscal impact.

Title

Honoring and celebrating the 50 years of service of JustDane and recognizing their enormous and invaluable contributions to our community

Body

WHEREAS, JustDane, which was founded in 1971, incorporated in 1973, and received its non-profit status in 1974, is celebrating 50 years of service and working for justice, inclusion, and equity in our community; and,

WHEREAS, JustDane has particularly focused on the areas of racism, poverty, education access, fair and affordable housing, and criminal justice reform; and,

WHEREAS, JustDane, originally known as Madison Urban Ministry, was created by a group of community members who were concerned about social justice issues; and,

WHEREAS, as JustDane engaged more and more members of the community, they saw their mission and impact expand throughout Dane County; and,

WHEREAS, from the beginning, JustDane has served as an incubator for new ideas and projects to bring solutions to problems facing our community and individuals who have been traditionally and intentionally marginalized and undervalued; and,

WHEREAS, since their inception, JustDane has successfully incubated 20 initiatives that became separate non-profits, which includes: Centro Hispano, The Allied Wellness Center, WI Faith Voices for Justice, Family Enhancement (now part of RISE Family Services), Transitional Housing (opened the first men's shelter at Grace Episcopal Church in 1985 and later merged to become part of Porchlight), The Interfaith Coalition for Worker Justice (now Worker Justice WI), and the East Madison Community Health Center; and,

WHEREAS, JustDane continues to serve as a fiscal agent and incubator for a variety of local initiatives meeting the needs of individuals in our community, including the Allied-Dunn's Marsh Neighborhood Association, Allied Partners, Moms on a Mission (MOMs), Bleed Shamelessly, and the Madison Performance Collective; and,

WHEREAS, in the mid 1990's, JustDane began to focus on the criminal justice system via reentry support for individuals returning to the community from prison as they realized that was where many of the systemic and institutional injustices they had been focused on converged; and,

WHEREAS, JustDane worked to educate themselves about the challenges faced by those involved in the criminal justice system and recognized that being in daily proximity with individuals and families impacted by the criminal justice system made them better and more informed advocates; and,

WHEREAS, JustDane provides reentry support for individuals returning home after incarceration through an array of initiatives including Circles of Support, the Journey Home in collaboration with the United Way, The

Phoenix Initiative Peer Support group, reentry peer support, and case management; and,

WHEREAS, JustDane's Journey Home and Circles of Support reentry initiatives have helped strengthen our community through a significant reduction to the return to prison rate among program participants since 2006; and,

WHEREAS, JustDane launched the vocational training program, Just Bakery, in 2013, for individuals who face chronic barriers to employment, including conviction history, mental health and/or substance use challenges, lack of education, and homelessness; and,

WHEREAS, Just Bakery offers skill building, nationally recognized training certificates, college credit and acceptance into Madison College, and employment placement and retention support, as well as other supports and resources to help students succeed; and,

WHEREAS, JustDane addresses the impact of parental incarceration through their Just Connections Youth Initiative, Mentoring Connections, Reading Connections, and Family Connections; and,

WHEREAS, through these programs, JustDane shows that they understand that no parent serves their sentence alone and that it is vitally important to keep families connected in a positive way whenever possible; and,

WHEREAS, JustDane understands the unique challenges faced by these youth and the benefits of dedicated and trained mentors from the community with whom to establish a lasting relationship; and,

WHEREAS, in 2019, JustDane responded to a need in our community and opened Healing House, the first medical recuperative shelter in the United States specifically for families that are unhoused and have a member being discharged from the hospital; and,

WHEREAS, in the four years since opening, Healing House has provided 24/7 recuperative medical respite for 116 families and 307 individuals, with members in need of medical recuperative shelter for issues including high risk pregnancies, new moms and their babies, including some being discharged from the NICU, terminally ill children, surgeries, broken bones, and other illnesses; and,

WHEREAS, Healing House is now consulting with shelters in other parts of the United States to assist them in creating recuperative shelter for families; and,

WHEREAS, JustDane has been a leading voice for 50 years in local advocacy focused on compassion, justice and equity;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and the Madison Common Council honor and celebrate the 50 years of service of JustDane and recognize their enormous and invaluable contributions to our community.