

**Human Services Department Report to County Board
September 2020**

ADMINISTRATION (ADMIN)

New Housing Specialist

The 2020 Human Services budget included a redirection of the \$50,000 in annual funding provided to the Salvation Army so that it could support a new housing specialist position. Although the pandemic has caused some delays in hiring the position, the Salvation Army recently held a press conference announcing the position's start. The Human Services Department serves a number of individuals and families who reside at the Salvation Army, and for whom permanent housing is a vital component of their journey toward healing and self-sufficiency. This position will be of great help in collaborating with case managers within Human Services and elsewhere in the community to provide good outcomes for these individuals and families. A recent article about the new housing specialist position can be found here:

<https://www.wizmnews.com/2020/07/21/la-crosse-county-funds-salvation-army-housing-specialist-position/>

Community Collaboration Impacting Child Welfare

Over the past year Human Services has participated in a new community collaboration called Community UNITED for Families (CUFF). The group, which includes representatives from the Family and Children's Center, Gundersen Health System, the School District of La Crosse and others, is focused on leveraging and coordinating community resources to support children being served by or at risk of entering the child welfare system. CUFF is pleased to welcome into our community a new chapter of Safe Families for Children (SFC). Safe Families is a national organization that recruits volunteers from within the faith community to provide "host homes" and other wrap-around supports for families. SFC is aimed at preventing children from having to enter the foster system. The La Crosse Community Foundation recently announced a \$58,000 grant award to support the launch of the program. A recent article about the La Crosse Community Foundation's support of SFC and the related collaboration can be found here:

https://lacrossetribune.com/news/local/safe-families-voluntary-intervention-program-to-help-keep-kids-out-of-foster-care-reduce-trauma/article_6403ec9b-4e54-5b73-b602-62d1c911e379.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter&utm_campaign=user-share

AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER (ADRC)

Aging Mastery Program (AMP)

Inclusa, in partnership with the ADRC of La Crosse County, National Council on Aging and Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources, is bringing the Aging Mastery Program (AMP) back to our community, virtually! AMP is a 5-week program that empowers participants to take key steps to improve their well-being, add stability in their life and strengthen ties to the community. This virtual session will be held Wednesdays via Zoom from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm starting September 2. For more information, or to register, contact Kari Enders of Inclusa at 877-622-6700 or

kari.enders@inclusa.org

ECONOMIC SUPPORT (ES)

Emergency Supplemental FoodShare Benefits due to COVID 19

The Department of Health Services (DHS) has received approval from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) to provide emergency supplemental FoodShare benefits due to COVID 19 for July and August 2020. Households eligible for FoodShare for July and August will receive the maximum FoodShare allotment for their household size. FoodShare recipients previously received emergency FoodShare benefits for May and June 2020.

FAMILY & CHILDREN'S (FC)

Grant Recipient Collaboration

Due to the health pandemic, our implementation of the Safe Babies Treatment Court was put on pause, but I'm happy to share that we are going to move forward on this. We received funding through the Department of Health Services (DHS) under the Birth to Three Innovation in Social/Emotional Development grant for \$50,000 to receive technical assistance through the national infant-toddler court program, Zero to Three. Our collaboration with Zero to Three will begin in August 2020 and will go through October 2021.

Foster Care Training

During the month of July, the Permanency Resource Unit was able to team up with the Health Department to offer La Crosse County foster parents a virtual training on emergency sheltering and evacuation. It was a great success as families learned about what they should do if there was a community disaster and we were able to give each home the necessary equipment to safely shelter in their home in the event that a chemical emergency was evident.

JUSTICE SUPPORT SERVICES (JSS)

Grant Funding Awarded

La Crosse Youth System of Care was awarded an unsolicited grant award from the La Crosse Community Foundation's June Kjome fund, in the amount of \$2,050 to be utilized for unrestricted purposes to support the good and necessary work of our System of Care Administrator within the community. Initial thoughts for this funding include the support of the Southside Moms United group in their quest to advocate for social justice issues within the La Crosse Community.

Department of Children & Families, Community Impact Program Funding

La Crosse County Youth Justice received its yearly Community Intervention Program allocation from Department of Children & Families in the amount of \$62,191 that assists in offsetting the costs of the Acute Protective Supervision Program (APSP) which is an intensive tracking program within Youth Justice that works with the highest risk youth to ensure placement remains within their home rather than an out of home placement.