



SMARTLINK

Status Update Spring 2007

HENNEPIN-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

Connecting Where It Counts

In late 2004, Hennepin County and the University of Minnesota launched an initiative to capture value for both organizations through a more strategic collaboration – connecting the two organizations where mutual benefit can be found. This includes collaboration on important community-based research, sharing of academic and practitioner expertise, and providing students with field experience.

The vision is to make the connection between the state's premier research institution and largest county more strategic – to build from existing and historical collaborations towards a sustained and productive relationship – **connecting where it counts.**

If you have ideas for ways that Hennepin and the University could work together, contact the Hennepin-University Liaison, Kathie Doty, at: kdoty@umn.edu 612.625.4383

Check out our new & useful website:

www.umn.edu/hup

UNIVERSITY FACULTY AND STUDENTS HELP HENNEPIN END HOMELESSNESS

Heading Home Hennepin, the ten-year plan to end homelessness in Minneapolis and Hennepin County, was approved by the County Board and the Minneapolis City Council at the end of 2006. Led on the Hennepin County side by Commissioner Gail Dorfman, this multi-faceted plan calls for a bold shift away from managing homelessness to ending its toll on communities. The vision is to ensure that all the County's residents have access to safe, decent, and affordable housing and the resources needed to sustain it by 2016. Support for the plan parallels a growing commitment on the part of University faculty and students to apply their expertise to this pressing social issue.

The plan to end homelessness leverages resources from several levels of government and the private sector. University efforts to combat homelessness also come from within several colleges. Innovative courses offered in the College of Design and the School of Journalism and Mass Communication provide two examples.

In fall of 2006, Tom Fisher, Dean of the College of Design, and Research Fellow Virajita Singh piloted a course they co-designed to address the needs of homeless people through a combination of writing, design and civic engagement. Upon learning about the course, Cathy ten Broeke, Coordinator on Homelessness for Minneapolis and Hennepin County, invited Dean Fisher to participate in the 70 member commission responsible for designing the strategic plan to end homelessness. In addition to interviewing homeless individuals and service providers who served as the clients for their shelter design projects, students and faculty volunteered with *Project Homeless Connect*, a one-stop-shop providing services to the homeless twice a year. Dean Fisher volunteered alongside his students, providing layout suggestions to improve the efficiency of service delivery and helping out on the day of the event. The College of Design continues to support the commission and is working to increase the engagement of University students in these efforts.

During the same semester, Adjunct Instructor Lynn Nelson of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication altered the "Public Relations Writing & Campaign Tactics" course to fo-



Cathy ten Broeke welcomes volunteers, including University of Minnesota faculty and students, to Project Homeless Connect.

cus class projects on the real issue of homelessness rather than fictional clients. Students worked with actual clients, including two homeless shelters, an affordable housing project, and two groups working on the plan for *Heading Home Hennepin*. In addition, they designed a communications campaign to help achieve the plan's goal of ending homelessness, which involves communicating the scope of the plan, engaging volunteers from the University and Hennepin County, educating policy leaders and stakeholders on causes and solutions to homelessness, and encouraging local foundation leaders to fund the plan. The course was a valuable learning experience for all involved. As a result of its success, funding was recently received from the University's Office for Public Engagement to implement some of the ideas generated by the students over the spring semester. Facilitators will continue to work closely with Cathy ten Broeke and Carolyn Marinan, Director of Public Affairs for Hennepin County, as they proceed with the project.

Ed Goetz, Associate Dean of the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs was also a member of the city/county commission to end homelessness, and other faculty and students from the Humphrey Institute, the School of Social Work, and the Law School are addressing the challenges of ending homelessness. Efforts are underway to bring these groups together for a coordinated University effort.

4 PERSPECTIVES:

Interested in collaborating in the area of Community Corrections? Contact those profiled here to learn more about their projects and opportunities for involvement.



Tamra Boyce

Principle Planning Analyst, Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections

Contact: tamra.boyce@co.hennepin.mn.us; 612.348.7059

Projects and Interests:

Tamra Boyce has been with Hennepin County since 1999, when she began working with Delinquents Under 10, a program which created a network of support and intervention for child delinquents.

Currently, she is part of the Department of Community Corrections where she conducts program evaluation, program planning and implementation, and carries out applied research projects. She has worked on a variety of projects focused on improving community involvement in the lives of youth.

At present, Boyce is working on the Families in Dysfunctional Systems Project (FinDS). This project involves interviewing members of families that in have been involved for generations in the criminal justice system in order to better under-

stand the dynamics of these families.

All of the projects Boyce has worked on have included partnerships, an element that allows the County to support their efforts with outside expertise. While she recognizes that in any partnership there has to be a lot of give and take due to often conflicting regulations and business practices, her experience is that solutions can always be discovered. Matching sometimes competing and conflicting agendas can be frustrating and rewarding, but is worthwhile if the final product benefits the clients.

Perspective on Partnership:

"Partnerships that are outside of the county are uniquely beneficial because they usually have a different perspective regarding our clients – and that brings new ideas to planning programs."

"Understand the social, economic, and political parameters you work in, because those all have a bearing on success."

-Gunnar Bankovics



Gunnar Bankovics

Division Manager, Family Court Services, Hennepin County Department of Community Corrections

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Projects and Interests:

In his nine years of working as Division Manager for Family Court Services (FCS), Gunnar Bankovics has seen first hand the value of partnering with researchers in the process of restructuring services.

One example of an FCS program in need of research to support and accompany its growth and expansion throughout the state and nation is the Early Neutral Evaluation (ENE) program. The ENE program, which had its inception in 2003, is a confidential, settlement-oriented and accelerated alternative dispute resolution technique that has been applied to custody and parenting time cases in Hennepin County. The court refers interested parties to a team of evaluators who provide early feedback regarding the probable outcome of a full evaluation and offer the opportunity to negotiate a settlement.

In its first few years, the outcome data demonstrates significant success, with the majority of cases resulting in an early settlement. The stress

and expense of custody disputes on clients and their children is reduced, and the efficiency of FCS staff is maximized.

While the outcome data provides measurable results, further research is needed to determine the elements essential to the program's success so that it can be exported to other districts; a process that is already underway. The bottom line that motivates FCS staff like Gunnar to continually fine-tune the program is its ability to reduce the harmful effects of family change on children. In his words, "This is a true gift for families, because it significantly reduces the acrimony surrounding divorce, custody, and parenting issues."

Perspective on Partnership:

"Partnerships need to be centered around a common mission statement. Clearly define what you're after, and understand the social, economic, and political parameters you work in, because those all have a bearing on success."

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS



Christopher Uggen

Professor, Sociology Department

Contact: uggen001@umn.edu; 612-624-4016

Projects and Interests:

Christopher Uggen is a Distinguished McKnight Professor of Sociology, head of the Sociology department, and a native Minnesotan who is deeply committed to working with community partners like Hennepin County.

Uggen's current research is a hot topic both nationally and within the state of Minnesota and Hennepin County: the issue of re-entry into society. Uggen is interested in how mental health patients, juvenile offenders and war veterans make their way in society after their experiences, the barriers they encounter and the services that are available to them. He is also invested in the civic participation of felons and changes in the behavior of prisoners over their life course. More information about Professor Uggen and his work can be found at his website: www.soc.umn.edu/~uggen.

Perspective on Partnership:

Uggen considers the relationship between the U of M and Hennepin County to be extremely important for collaboration and innovation. His history of partnership with the County goes back 20 years—as an undergraduate he worked with public defenders, and he presently uses the County as a resource for his own research as well as a place to send students in his department for internships and data.

“As the state's land grant University, we want to be involved in our community, and Hennepin County has a great history of innovation, particularly in criminal justice matters. It is something that our faculty wears with pride—to be scientific and to serve communities.”



Michael Bloomquist

Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry

Contact: Bloom008@umn.edu; 612.273.9711

Projects and Interests:

Before joining the U's Psychiatry Department, Michael Bloomquist worked for the Hennepin County Mental Health Center, where he provided mental health services to children and families. Since coming to the University, he has been involved with the Community-University Prevention Partnership, which works with Hennepin County, Minneapolis Public Schools, Pillsbury United Communities, and a group of U of M prevention specialists in the Department of Psychiatry.

The Partnership's current focus is on truancy prevention. Hennepin County's Strategic Initiatives and Community Engagement Department (SICED) is funding a one-year pilot project for Pillsbury United Communities to deliver the “Early Risers Truancy Prevention Program.” The program has been in effect since November 2006 and targets 40 children in grades 4-6 who have school attendance and behavior problems.

Bloomquist provides assistance to the family advocates who deliver services and is also conducting a program evaluation. Look for more about Professor Bloomquist and the Community-University Prevention Partnership in the next H-UP newsletter.

Perspective on Partnership:

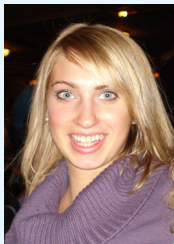
Bloomquist has had success partnering with Hennepin County and other community groups. Reflecting on the Community-University Prevention Partnership, he says, “We are able to focus on locally meaningful endeavors and the partnership synergy creates a very good project.” Each arm of the Partnership has a unique role and working together in concert produces a successful and enduring program. Bloomquist says that community input is another key component to the Partnership and that “over the year we have learned to be more collaborative from the beginning and throughout every phase of project implementation.”

“As the state's land grant University, we want to be involved in our community, and Hennepin County has a great history of innovation, particularly in criminal justice matters.”

-Christopher Uggen

STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

Stephanie Archer
Senior Strategic Communications major



Tell us about your experience working on Project Homeless Connect...

My group and I worked on ideas to improve the existing Project Homeless Connect and to create awareness. Because we were working with real clients, we had the opportunity to make a difference in our own lives as well as the lives of others.

What did you learn?

Working with Project Homeless Connect and learning about homelessness was one of the most eye-opening experiences of my life. I learned about homelessness in general: statistics, how prevalent it is, and what is being done to resolve the problem. I also learned that homelessness is a devastating and hard to break cycle.

How was the overall experience working with this project and with Hennepin County as a partner?

My overall experience with Project Homeless Connect and Hennepin County was very positive. I have realized that while a lot of ground has been covered, there is so much more that needs to be done to resolve the problem. Currently, I have applied and hope to obtain an internship working with homelessness. Now that I have worked with homelessness, I plan to be involved for life.

MICHAEL BELTON: JUVENILE HOMICIDES PROJECT



Michael Belton, *Juvenile Corrections Division Manager*

For more information, email mbelton@umn.edu or call 612-625-0347

Michael Belton, a 30-year veteran of Hennepin County, is on special assignment with the H-UP to work on a juvenile homicides project. The project involves working with the Minneapolis Police Department on an eleven-year retrospective study of juvenile homicides. The research collected will be used to look at the cycle of multi-generational criminal families.

Belton has worked in the Juvenile Detention Center, the County Home School, and Juvenile Probation, where he spent five years as a manager. While he admits that he still has “a lot to learn” about the University, he has enjoyed partnering with the academic community at the U and its ability to provide the latest research and best practices around a particular policy or initiative. Along with the benefits of partnering, Belton

notes that quality partnerships take time and require patience, especially because “the U is decentralized and it’s overwhelming how large it is.” He has had good experiences working with the U in the past on sex offender and female

“It is my belief that as individuals and as members of institutions that we get further down the road together than we do by ourselves.”

offender studies, and working with the Juvenile Corrections Institute at the Law School. He sees potential for future collaboration following the Survivors of Violence conference that took place at the end of March, and within the field of juvenile corrections.

NOTES FROM THE LIAISON: MEASURING PROGRESS



Kathie Doty, *Hennepin-University Liaison*

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Part of the job of the Liaison is to gain consensus on goals of the Hennepin-University Partnership and to assess progress in achieving those goals. When the partnership was formalized in 2005, officials at Hennepin County and the University agreed that the Partnership would strive to:

- *Develop knowledge: Conduct joint research on issues of mutual interest*
- *Share expertise: Both academic and practitioner expertise*
- *Provide students field experience to enrich their learning experience and build a more capable future work force*
- *Share knowledge and best practices around the operation of large institutions*

A status report was prepared in late 2006 to describe progress in achieving these goals and to propose next steps for the Hennepin-University Partnership (posted at www.umn.edu/hup/publications). In assessing progress, connections

and collaborations were documented including those initiated by County staff, by University faculty and staff, and through the Liaison. Since the Partnership was established not only to initiate, catalyze, and enhance collaboration, but also to support and build upon connections made by staff and faculty, it is important to track connections made. Information gathered from collaborators is entered into a database so that we can track connections, study what works, and look for opportunities to build upon successes.

The Hennepin-University Partnership exists to pave the way towards more strategic collaboration in part by adding structure to and formalizing the relationship between Hennepin County and the University. Part of this work is documenting the innovative and collaborative work of staff and faculty who are expanding the possibilities and improving their effectiveness through tapping into rich resources available at the County and the University.