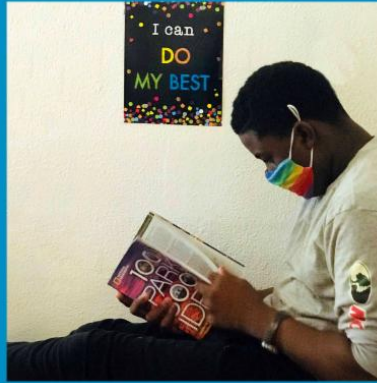




## WCS Connection

September 2020



*From the desk of the WCS Executive Director:*

### Milwaukee County Board Takes Action to Support Second Chances

Some years ago, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors adopted a policy that essentially resulted in individuals being barred from working with youth for several years for the offense of simple possession of marijuana. Moreover, this policy went much further than the Wisconsin's Caregiver background check requirements. Earlier this year, the Board took action by adopting a policy to amend the background check process for the Milwaukee County Department of Health and Human Services and other departments that provide services to youth directly or through contracted vendor services. The policy adopted the barrable offenses outlined in the Wisconsin Caregiver Law and to accept the rehabilitation of any individual as determined by the State's appeal process under Chapter 50.065 of the Wisconsin State Statute. For many people, the policy will probably have little impact on their lives.



**Torre Johnson**

However, for WCS employee Torre Johnson, and other individuals with similar life circumstances, the enactment of this policy has major significance. As a young adult, Torre made mistakes involving drugs. He has spent the last several decades living a drug-free life and is a well-known role model for many youth in the Milwaukee area community. Torre was instrumental in educating the Board as to why the old policy was not only harming his ability at getting a second chance, but it also limited his ability (and those like him) to positively influence others. By adopting the policy to amend the background process, it will allow Torre and others like him to share their gifts, talents, and life experiences in ways that will positively benefit numerous young people in Milwaukee County. We applaud Milwaukee County officials for taking this long overdue action and supporting second chances in a way that will benefit others for many years to come.



Clarence Johnson



## WCS Youth Staying Strong

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has drastically changed the world as we know it, and the youth engaged in programming at WCS have demonstrated incredible resilience and adaptability during these tough times. They have enjoyed being outdoors as much as possible, going for nature walks, making smores, and visiting the zoo when it was safe to do so. The youth in our Community Service & Restitution Coordination Program have helped in community gardens; cleaning up the streets, sidewalks, and parks; packaging bag lunches for the Rescue Mission; and are engaged in making masks for distribution by the City of Milwaukee Health Department. The youth in our Youth Shelter Care Program helped to paint a "Black Lives Matter" street mural on Juneteenth, held their group sessions outdoors, and have played basketball and football at local parks while observing all precautions. Communication and etiquette have been essential in our residential programs during this time; video calls have been required for court appearances, team meetings, telehealth appointments, and virtual learning. The importance of personal and public cleanliness has translated into better personal habits of the youth. The staff have had many conversations with the youth about both the pandemic and the recent movement calling for racial and social justice. These conversations and their observation of this unique moment in history, has resulted in them being kind to one another, protecting each other, and holding each other accountable. Check out the photos at the top of the newsletter to see some of the activities the youth have participating in.



## Treatment Foster Care and WCS

At any given time in the United States, there are well over half a million children who are part of the foster care system. The average length of stay for a child in the system is approximately two years. In Milwaukee County, there are about 2,200 children in foster care placements. While each situation involving placement in a foster home is different, there are some common reasons that causes a child to enter the foster care system. Abuse, neglect, illness of a parent or guardian, incarceration of a parent or guardian, death, and drug abuse are some of the more common reasons for placements. Children enter the foster care system due to a family crisis, and most placements are intended to be temporary while the family finds the right path to stabilization and safety. The time that a child will spend in foster care is critical and finding the right home is essential. All of this begins with the process of recruiting and licensing homes that will provide the most appropriate type of care, safety, and a loving and nurturing environment. If you believe this is something that interests you or you know someone who fits that description, please join the October 6<sup>th</sup> Zoom recruitment session hosted by WCS, so you can learn more about





the agency's Treatment Foster Care Program and how you or someone that you know can help meet the needs of many children in our community. For more information or to register, please contact Megan Skaggs at [mskaggs@wiscs.org](mailto:mskaggs@wiscs.org) or 414-840-3503.

**Do you want to make a difference in a child's life?**  
**Have you ever thought about fostering a child in your safe & caring home?**  
**Learn how you can become a licensed Treatment Foster Care Parent by attending an informational session at Wisconsin Community Services, Inc. (WCS)**

**Information will include:**  
Who can be a treatment foster care parent  
The responsibilities of a treatment foster care parent  
How long it takes to become a treatment foster care parent  
The support you will receive from WCS once a child is in your home

**There will also be time for questions and answers.**



If you are interested in learning more, attend an informational session via Zoom.  
Sessions will be held on  
Tuesday, September 29th at 5:30 pm  
&  
Tuesday, October 6th at 12:00 pm.

Register by contacting  
Megan Skaggs at  
[mskaggs@wiscs.org](mailto:mskaggs@wiscs.org) or  
414-840-3503

Once you register you will be sent the direct Zoom link to participate in the informational session.



## Career Opportunities at WCS

WCS searching for passionate and hard-working individuals to fill the following positions:

### Youth Program Coordinator – Youth Enhanced Support (YES) Program

Located in Waukesha, the Coordinator provides intensive support, mentoring, and monitoring to assist youth with addressing behaviors that put them at risk for involvement in the juvenile justice system. Also, the Coordinator will communicate with school social workers, work with youths' parents/guardians, and provide 24-hour coverage, via cell phone, for crisis intervention. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree in human services and knowledge of the juvenile justice system.

### Drug Testing Technician – Drug Testing Services (Waukesha)

This opportunity is ideal for students or individuals seeking entry level criminal justice experience. The position performs drug tests for the WCS Adult Court Service Programs in Waukesha, which includes 40 hours of oral and urine testing, following all chain of custody and specific program protocols. Applicants must have a flexible personal schedule. A high school diploma or equivalent is needed for this position, an associates degree in criminal justice or related field is preferred.

### Case Manager – Waukesha County Intoxicated Driver Intervention Program



## Did You Know?

Community Building Milwaukee will be hosting an Online Circle of Connection on Tuesday, October 13 from 6:00 pm to 7:15 pm. This is unique experience of self-care.

Through experiential learning you will leave with tools to listen with greater depth and empathy and be heard in this manner by others. [Click here to register.](#)

For more information about the Online Circle of Connection and/or Community Building Milwaukee, please contact Ken Ryback, Community Building Milwaukee Project Specialist, at 414-234-6246 or [kryback@wiscs.org](mailto:kryback@wiscs.org).

The Case Manager provides pretrial case management of repeat intoxicated driving offenders for the Circuit Courts of Waukesha County. They will monitor bail conditions, provide written reports, conduct random drug tests, write court letters, and maintain accurate client records. This position does require the Case Manager to work one Saturday, 7:00 am to 10:00 am, per month. Applicants need to have a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, social work, or a related field.



**Wisconsin Community Services, Inc.**  
3732 West Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 320  
Milwaukee, WI 53208  
Phone: 414-290-0400  
Fax: 414-271-4605  
[www.wiscs.org](http://www.wiscs.org)

*Wisconsin Community Services, Inc. (WCS) advocates for justice and community safety, providing innovative opportunities for individuals to overcome adversity.*

WCS is a 501(c) 3 non-profit agency that provides services in southeastern Wisconsin.  
WCS has been serving the community successfully for over 100 years.

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