



## **WCS Connection**

May 2022

# **May is National Foster Care Month**



*From the desk of the Wisconsin Community Services, Inc. CEO:*

### **Celebrating National Foster Care Month and Foster Parent Appreciation Month**

In 1988, President Ronald Reagan issued the first presidential proclamation that established May as National Foster Care Month. It was established to raise awareness of the needs of children in foster care and to recruit more foster parents. National Foster Parent Appreciation Month is also celebrated in May in honor of all those individuals that serve as foster parents. According to the Children's Bureau at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families there were approximately 407,000 children in foster care in the United States at the end of 2020. Most children are in foster care because of neglect or abuse. The number of children in foster care at any given time (during the year) and the number of children served in foster care throughout a given year has been decreasing over the past five years. This is seemingly good news, we hope. Much of what goes on in any family unit takes place behind closed doors. We certainly have no way of determining if cases of abuse and neglect that should be reported are being reported.

In 2019, WCS was licensed by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (under Chapter 54) to provide child placement services. WCS is helping to fill the need to find and license homes for children who need foster care. While the number of children in foster care has been on the decline in recent years, so has the number of licensed foster homes. Finding good, stable foster homes and foster parents is a critical link to break the cycle of abuse and neglect. If these children are left in homes or placed in homes where there is chronic abuse, there is a good chance that they may repeat the same behavior when they have families. Children who are abused or neglected also have a higher likelihood of developing mental health issues, substance use, homelessness, and involvement with the criminal justice system. We understand that all things being equal, children should be raised in their biological homes whenever possible. Every effort should be made to provide supports and services for parents who have issues with abuse or neglect and to improve these problems so children can remain in, or safely return to, their homes. Foster parents are integral and critical to ensuring that children are safe during a period of crisis

and when there is a need for an out-of-home placement. WCS held a Foster Parent Appreciation Breakfast on Saturday, May 21st to demonstrate how much the agency appreciates the contributions that are made by our foster parents. An appreciation that goes far beyond the homes licensed by WCS and extends to all foster parents who have chosen to open their homes to children who need a safe and nurturing environment. If you have an interest in opening your home as a foster home, please email Romona Waters at [rwaters@wiscs.org](mailto:rwaters@wiscs.org).

Clarence Johnson



## New Member of the WCS Leadership Team

WCS is excited to welcome Dwayne Marks as our Vice President of Operations! In this new role, he will oversee the operations of Human Resources, Development & Communication, and Program Quality and Improvement.

A longtime resident of the city of Milwaukee, Dwayne has years of nonprofit and governmental experience. Most recently, he served as Vice President of Child and Family Wellbeing, and Fiscal Operations Specialist, for

Wellpoint Care Network. He also served as an advanced Research Analyst for the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. Dwayne, who earned his MBA from Concordia University, is also the owner and founder of Black Orchid Research, a small research company founded on the idea that data and storytelling should complement each other in solving problems. He has written and presented extensively about the impact of trauma on developing minds and how it adversely effects emergence into adolescence and adulthood.

Dwayne is passionate about the work and mission of WCS, and we are thrilled that he has joined our WCS team!



## In Search of Excellence Award Honors a WCS Employee

Mary Sweeney, WCS Director of Waukesha and Jefferson Court Services, recently received the In Search of Excellence Award from the Wisconsin Family Based Services Association (WFBSA). She received the award during a luncheon at the 34th Annual Conference of the WFBSA. Mary was recognized for her work at WCS and for going above and beyond the Association's mission of advocating for policies and practices which respect the diversity and dignity of families. In her 25 years at WCS, Mary has been active in providing the best services possible for every person who has been served by



Anne Villeneuve, *Supervisor of Adolescent and Family Services at the Department of Health and Human Services*, and Mary Sweeney.

the agency. She has also been an excellent and caring leader for her staff. WCS is proud to have Mary as part of our team!



## WCS 110th Anniversary Fun Facts

In 1960, it was estimated that WCS served 1,100 to 1,200 people a year. In 2021, despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the agency served about 15,000 individuals through 60+ programs with more than 450 staff members.



## Career Opportunities at WCS

WCS is looking for caring and dedicated people for the following positions:

### Caseworker - Waukesha Pretrial Services

The Caseworker position is an important part of Waukesha Pretrial Services that provides supervision and monitoring of adult program participants charged with misdemeanors and/or felonies while awaiting trial or adjudication. They will monitor participants on bail to ensure adherence to bail conditions, complete reports to the court, and conduct random drug tests. Qualified candidates must have a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, social work, or another related field, as well as knowledge of the Wisconsin Criminal Justice System.

### Care Coordinator - Wraparound

This is an opportunity for those who wish to work with youth and adolescents through dedicated, individualized care. Working under the Wraparound Practice Model of Care, the Care Coordinator will provide coordinated community-based support and services to families of youth with complex emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs. They will have a hands-on approach while working with families, the court system, and community resources. Applicants must possess a bachelor's degree in a relevant area of education and a minimum of one year of continued experience providing mental health services. They should also have a working knowledge of positive youth development, understanding of traumatic life situations, and the ability to interact with escalating youth and/or parents.

### Case Manager - Community Support Program (CSP)

WCS is searching for an organized, independent, compassionate person who has experience working with individuals who have mental health needs to take on the role of a Case Manager in the Community Support Program. The Case Manager will provide treatment planning, symptom management, medication monitoring, and crisis intervention to participants in the program who have serious and persistent mental health needs and co-occurring substance use. Qualified applicants must have a bachelor's or master's degree in behavioral science; sensitivity toward cultural, ethnic,

## Did You Know?

WCS has been operating a Treatment Foster Care Program since 2019.

The program recruits, trains, and licenses foster homes to provide quality placements for children/youth who are at risk of being placed in or are returning from residential care. The Program licenses both Treatment Foster Care Parents and Professional Foster Parents (PFP).

[Click here](#) to visit the WCS website and learn more.

and disability concerns; and knowledge of DSM V and psychotropic medications and their side effects.

#### Quality Assurance Analyst – Administration

The PQI Analyst position requires someone with a passion for data analysis. The successful candidate will turn data into information, information into insight, and insight into business decisions. The PQI Analyst will provide support, expertise, and direction to program staff regarding: the creation, analysis, utilization of program outcomes, and accreditation standards. The PQI Analyst position works closely with programs and must have the ability to think at a systemic level to ensure quality services are provided to individuals served in accordance with the mission of WCS. Minimum qualifications include a bachelor's degree in human services, organizational management, business, analytics, or related field along with two years of related experience or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Knowledge in visualization tools like Tableau or PowerBI preferred.



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*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 110 years.

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