



Wisconsin Community Services, Inc.
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES TO OVERCOME ADVERSITY

WCS Connection

August 2023



From the desk of the WCS President & CEO:

Time to do Something about Gun Violence Involving Youth

The City of Milwaukee Police Department recently reported that crime in several major categories is showing declines in the first half of 2023. Unfortunately for our youth, there is a more disturbing national trend. According to a Pew Research Center analysis, the number of children killed by gunfire in the United States increased by 50 percent between 2019 and 2021. In 2022, firearms became the number one reason for youth death in the United States, according to Michael Levas, a medical director with Project Ujima, a Children's Wisconsin and Medical College of Wisconsin partnership focused on reducing the number of children hurt by violence. Much of this involves youth who are both victims and perpetrators.

It is shocking and mind numbing to think about the reality of how guns and gun violence have penetrated the lives of children locally and nationally. The fact that so many of our youth have access to and are in possession of guns, should move adults to act quickly and stem this disturbing trend. Unfortunately, we seem to be going in the opposite direction and the level of complacency becomes more evident every day. If this was a problem that was plaguing all communities, then the reaction might be different. Because gun violence disproportionately impacts low-income urban and communities of color, the collective voice for widespread action is missing or silent.

On Monday evening, Aug. 28, Wisconsin Community Services (WCS) staff member Dwayne Mack, Mack Productions and boys residing in WCS Bakari Center, will perform a presentation of "Hurt People are Hurting People." The presentation takes place in a courtroom and attempts to ascertain from the boys involved in the play, why youth are involved in serious and violent crimes. A complex question on the one hand, and on the other, answers are clear. There is a saying that if you want to know what is wrong with the children, you look at what is ailing the adults. In the case of rising youth gun violence, the answers are many, including the evolution of a culture of violence, oppressive conditions that strangle out hope and dreams, neglect, and of course, easy access to guns. These are all factors influenced by adults and therefore are within our power to change for the better. What better time to get started than the present?



Patricia Parker



Evan Reed



Tyler Sims

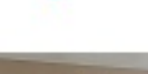
WCS Welcomes New Board Members

WCS recently welcomed three board members, bringing its 2023-2024 Board of Directors roster to 15.

Patricia Parker runs PA Parker Consults, which she founded in 1984. She has also been a training consultant at The University of Iowa's National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice since 1989. She holds degrees from University of Wisconsin-Madison, Milwaukee Theological Institute, and Trinity College of Vermont. *"I am most excited about being given the opportunity to serve an agency with such a broad reach in Wisconsin, as WCS has," Parker said. "I have served a population of people who faced many challenges in their life, on both micro and macro levels. Working on the WCS Board of Directors enables me to stay abreast of the needs of the various communities where they have programs and provide services, but also share expertise with a consortium of professionals whose aim is to effectively address those needs."*

Evan Reed has been the Senior Director – Impact Strategy at Northwestern Mutual since 2021. He came to Northwestern Mutual after serving as the Regional Director for Southeast Wisconsin at Forward Community Investments. He holds a Bachelor of Science from Marquette University. *"As a new WCS Board Member, I am excited about the possibility of helping shape an organization that directly impacts the lives of some of the most vulnerable individuals in our community," Reed said. "I believe that being able to positively impact just one person's life can have a ripple effect which, ultimately, could lead to broad change and I'm grateful to serve an organization that works to make this impact many times over every day."*

Tyler Sims has been the Manager of Corporate Development at Versiti since 2021. He came to Versiti from GE Healthcare, where he was responsible for regional service sales and was also an Associate of Strategy & Development. He holds a Bachelor of Business Administration in both Finance and Marketing from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and an MBA from Cardinal Stritch University. *"Joining the WCS Board is an exciting opportunity to strategically support an organization with a myriad of people centered services that meet Wisconsin residents' most pressing needs," Sims said.*



Pictured from left to right are WCS staff members Clem Richardson and Nathan Jussila and WCS board member Shannon Ross. All three spoke at the Milwaukee Reentry Housing Conference in July.

WCS Speaks at Milwaukee Reentry Housing Conference

The housing shortage is a significant issue across the United States, and Milwaukee is no exception to this problem. Unfortunately, the search for adequate housing is doubly difficult for individuals that are justice involved because they are often struggling to have their rental application approved. Even when those applications are approved, many are having trouble paying rent because finding adequate employment is more difficult for them due to their previous convictions. To help improve upon the situation, two WCS staff members and one of its board members participated in the Milwaukee Reentry Housing Conference Friday, July 21 on the Marquette University campus.

Clem Richardson, a Counselor at Joshua Glover Residential Reentry Center, and Nathan Jussila, Program Director at the Milwaukee County Day Reporting Center and Swigart House, participated in a panel discussion that featured four other area professionals. Richardson discussed the amount of stress the lack of housing options has on people reentering the community from incarceration. He also shared the successes of individuals who went from trying to survive after reentering the community to thriving after finding employment – sometimes at WCS. Jussila explained the difficulties often faced by those living at Swigart House, which provides supportive housing for 24 men as they receive treatment and other needed services at the Milwaukee County Day Reporting Center during their journey toward successful reintegration. Jussila said some individuals have had to stay at Swigart House even after successfully completing their program because they are unable to find a residence. Sometimes when they find an affordable place to live, it's discovered that the dwelling isn't fit for habitation due to issues like substantial mold. After the first panel spoke, WCS Board Member Shannon Ross led a second panel that explored additional housing issues citizens face.



**The Wisconsin Community Services
Black Male Advisory Council
Presents**

7TH ANNUAL COMMUNITY RESOURCE & JOB FAIR

**September 13th
10am - 1pm**

Located at-

WCS North Campus
2342 N. 27th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53210

- Hiring employers will be in attendance •
- Community resources available •
- This is a free event • Lunch will be provided

Visit our website for more info

www.wiscs.org



Looking for People to Join the WCS Team!

Are you a dedicated, diligent, and caring individual? Why not work at WCS and become part of the team in one of the following positions:

Case Worker – Waukesha County Intensive Tracking

Help make the future brighter by providing in-home monitoring and support to youth who are either at elevated risk for placement out of their home or are returning home from institutional placement. The case worker will help keep youth at home by providing them with intensive support, mentoring, and monitoring. They will also ensure that youth follow court-ordered supervision and Department of Human Service treatment planning. Qualified candidates will have a Bachelor's degree in the Human Services field and knowledge of the juvenile justice system or an Associate's degree plus extensive experience working with youths in the field. They should also be bilingual.

Youth Advocate – Waukesha County Intensive Tracking Program

Better the lives of youth by helping them develop skills in problem solving, conflict resolution, communication, self-regulation, and more. This position involves face-to-face contact with children in their homes, at school, and in the community. Other duties involve processing assigned referrals, opening electronic and paper files, attending initial staffing meetings, and providing intensive support and mentoring. Qualified candidates will have either a Bachelor's degree in the Human Services field and knowledge of the juvenile justice system or an Associate's degree plus extensive experience working with youth in the field. They should also be bilingual.

Jefferson County Youth Residential Program – Open Positions

WCS has several positions open in its new Jefferson County Youth Residential Program. These openings span various shifts and involve both part-time and full-time work. Vacant positions include: Lead 3rd Shift Youth Treatment Specialist, Youth Treatment Specialist Supervisor, 3rd Shift Youth Treatment Specialist, Youth Coordinator, Part-time Registered Nurse, Quality Assurance Specialist, Program Support Specialist, Lead Youth Treatment Specialist, and Clinician.

Visit www.wiscs.org/careers to view a full list of current job openings at WCS.



**Click Here to Make a Donation to
WCS**

Wisconsin Community Services, Inc.
3732 West Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 320
Milwaukee, WI 53208
Phone: 414-290-0400
Fax: 414-271-4605
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 111 years.

Having problems seeing the content of the newsletter? Click here to view the WCS Connection online.



Greater Milwaukee
& Waukesha County