



Futures NOW!

The Quarterly Newsletter of Montgomery County Juvenile Court and Reclaiming Futures

“Call To Action” Raises Awareness, Support For Reclaiming Futures and Juvenile Court

Many came because they care, others because they are connected, some because they are curious. But on Friday, March 10 they all came together for the sake of our children.



Reverend Eugene F. Rivers III, center, poses with (from left) County Commissioner Debbie Lieberman, Judge Anthony Capizzi, Judge Nick Kuntz, Rev. Samuel Winston, Jr., and Dayton School Superintendent Dr. Percy Mack before the “Call To Action.”

More than 250 community leaders representing churches, local government, the courts, health and human services and philanthropy gathered for a “Call To Action” hosted by Montgomery County Juvenile Court and Reclaiming Futures.

The event was designed to raise awareness of the work of Montgomery County Juvenile Court, especially the Reclaiming Futures initiative, and to recruit volunteers to serve as Natural Helpers for court-involved youth.

Featured speaker during the Call To Action was Rev. Eugene F. Rivers III, founder and co-chairman of the Boston-based National Ten Point Leadership Foundation, which is committed to the

principle that churches and faith-based organizations have a vital role in mentoring, ministering and monitoring high-risk youth. Rivers, a Harvard graduate known

internationally for his work on behalf of at-risk children, called for our community to step up and become the

Reverend Rivers was extremely powerful, and he really got to the heart of the matter. He sure made it seem like taking responsibility for the lives of our children is the right thing to do if you aren't already doing it.

Jane Beach
Natural Helper

‘watchman’ for at-risk children in our community.

“The children, the sheep, have scattered and God is speaking to somebody. A watchman to defend a

generation; unqualified for employment even as slaves,” said Rivers. “If you can help in some small way, raise

What a rousing event! Rev. Rivers placed the responsibility for change, and thus the power to change, squarely on the affected communities. Not on individuals, not on governments, but on communities. That's where the real power is, and Reclaiming Futures is right in there. It was a message of great hope.

Wendy M. Winkleman, PhD
Supervisor, Crisis Care
at Montgomery County
Juvenile Court

your hands, Hallelujah!” A highlight of the program was a powerful rendition of “What About The Children” by gospel artist Tonya Baker.

“Natural Helpers are so important to our effort as we literally try to reclaim the futures of young people caught in the cycle of drugs, alcohol and crime,” said Judge Nick Kuntz. “We’re thrilled that so many community leaders stepped up to answer our “Call To Action,” and we hope they will carry our message back to their churches and organizations.”

To date, 62 Natural Helper volunteers have positively impacted the lives of 74 court-involved youth.

By The Numbers:

- 5,933 young people were referred to Montgomery County Juvenile Court for criminal acts in 2004.
- Of these teens, more than half were in need of substance abuse and/or mental health treatment.
- 2,231 were girls.
- 42% were under age 15; 3% were age ten and under.

RECLAIMING FUTURES—
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
Communities helping teens
overcome drugs, alcohol
and crime.

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LaShae Brown, a member of the November 2005 Natural Helper graduating class, was linked with 17-year-old Kaitlyn late last year.

Spotlight: LaShae Brown, Natural Helper

Each edition of "Futures NOW!" focuses on real-life experiences of Natural Helpers, the volunteer corps of local citizens who mentor at-risk children with Juvenile Court histories. To learn more about how you can reclaim a child's life by becoming a Natural Helper, please call Melissa Sanders at 496-6877.

LaShae is no ordinary mentor. Her life experiences have shaped her and molded her. She went from a high school drop out, to a Job Corp graduate, to a college graduate. She says through all this, what she has learned is that kids really just need a little bit of your time, and they really want you to listen.

Why is helping young people so important to you?

I look around and see so many kids who could just really use that extra person to listen and maybe help guide their choices. Kaitlyn is just one of many good kids who just need a little time. It doesn't even cost money, kids just want to have someone listen to them.

Tell us a little bit about your match with Kaitlyn.

Kaitlyn has incredible strengths. She attends Mound Street Academy where she is involved in a Knowledge Bowl, and she's going with her school team to Mount Vernon at the end of the month for a competition. Kaitlyn and I talk almost every week about school, about Drug Court, and about her life. I like to just let her vent while I listen. I wait and offer advice only when she asks. We have gone out to eat at a Chinese restaurant and at Applebee's. Sometimes, I just hang out with her at her house and we don't go anywhere. Currently, we are focusing on trying to find Kaitlyn a summer job and

trying to complete the community service hours that she owes. We are both excited about a trip that we plan to take to King's Island real soon.

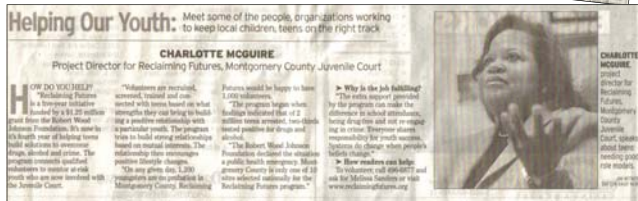
In Kaitlyn's words:

LaShae is cool. I feel like I can trust her and count on her. She makes me feel good about being me. She likes me. I've been working real hard for the Knowledge Bowl and she encourages me and helps me out. We go out to eat and sometimes just hang out. She is helping me to look for a summer job. I'd like to finish school and go to college. I want to be a pediatrician one day.

**Reclaiming Futures—
Montgomery County
Creating positive
futures with
court-involved youth
and families by
building community
solutions.**

Reclaiming Futures In The News!

Two articles in the Dayton Daily News this spring shared the Reclaiming Futures story with our community. Project Director Charlotte McGuire was profiled in the DDN's weekly Helping Our Youth feature, which reports about the good work leaders in our community are doing to help young people. The other article told the Reclaiming Story and featured Amber Euell and her Natural Helper, Yvonne Sherrer, along with Rickol Jones and his Natural Helper, Julianne Williams. Both articles generated numerous calls of support to Reclaiming Futures and resulted in a number of people volunteering to become Natural Helpers.



Strength-Based Approach Enables Court, Probation Staff To Be Agents For Change

Court-involved youth are being looked at in a whole new way, thanks to recent a strengths-based training session hosted by Reclaiming Futures and Montgomery Juvenile Court for the benefit of court staff and other youth service providers throughout Montgomery County.

An all-day training session on April 6 taught best practices and "how to" methods for implementing a strengths-based approach to staff from the Juvenile Court's Intervention Center, Nicholas Treatment Center, Center for Adolescent Services, Detention

and Probation. Training participants learned how to put policy into practice and how to become change agents to help youth and families see the inherent potential within themselves. Among the techniques presented were motivational interviewing, implementing a solution-focused model and guidelines for strengths-based case management

By focusing on a child's strengths, rather than his or her weaknesses or shortcomings, the staff will be better able to bring about a positive outcome for that child.

Eight Join Ranks Of Natural Helper Graduates

Eight volunteers have joined the growing group of Natural Helpers and are ready to provide support, advice, encouragement and hope to court-involved youth and their families.

Montgomery County Juvenile Court and Reclaiming Futures honored the graduates during a dinner and reception at Christ Episcopal Church on April 3.

Graduates include Shirley Bush, Tom MacDonald, Percy Marshall, Melissa Phillips, Tom Shoemaker, Clifford Stumpff, Darryl Williams, and Megan Wilson. All completed a five-week training course that provided an orientation to Juvenile Court, strength-based approaches to mentoring, an overview of probation, an overview of treatment, a discussion of diversity, and information about how volunteers can complete the circle of care as mentor in Juvenile Court.

The group has a variety of inspiring reasons for joining our local effort to reclaim youth. "I really want kids to win in life," said graduate Percy Marshall. "I want to encourage youth to believe in themselves and reach for

the stars." Graduate Megan Wilson said "I want to help make a difference in a young person's life, to provide support and encouragement that may make an incredible impact."

Keynote speaker was Natural Helper Carl McDonald Sr. A devoted husband, father and grandfather and the founding pastor of "I Believe Ministries," McDonald graduated from the Natural Helper program in November of 2005 and has actively mentored three young men. His passion is to work with youth and young adults to help encourage them to change their lives.

Pastor McDonald's words were inspiring for not only the volunteers but for all in attendance. "It is my responsibility to give back to our youth," he said. "I had hardships that I endured and someone helped me along the way. Now it is my turn."

Probation Director Eric Shafer highlighted Montgomery County Juvenile Court's three fundamental beliefs: every youth can succeed; everyone shares responsibility for youth success and strong families;

and systems do change when people's beliefs change.

"There is so much talent and commitment among our Natural Helpers, and I'm pleased that we're successfully recruiting more men and more volunteers from the suburbs, said Melissa Sanders, Natural Helper Coordinator. "All of our volunteers have great potential to impact the lives of our children."

Already, Reclaiming Futures has trained 62 Natural Helpers and has impacted the lives of 74 court-involved youth.



Natural Helper graduate Clifford Stumpff is shown here with Judge Tony Capizzi (left) and Judge Nick Kuntz (right).



Keynote speaker Pastor Carl McDonald poses with Eric Shafer, Director of Probation.



Natural Helper graduates, Juvenile Court judges and Reclaiming Futures staff gather following graduation ceremonies in November. Shown (left to right) are Judge Nick Kuntz; Shirley Bush, Melissa Phillips, Darryl Williams, Natural Helper Coordinator Melissa Sanders, Clifford Stumpff, Megan Wilson, Tom McDonald, Judge Anthony Capizzi; and Tom Shoemaker. In front is RF Project Director Charlotte McGuire.

Local Team Attends National Reclaiming Futures Conference

In May, the San Antonio Leadership Institute brought together Reclaiming Futures' ten local community teams and offered a forum for members of the five fellowships to describe and celebrate the many innovations and ways that the RF model is becoming

institutionalized in each locale.

Attending from Dayton were Project Director Charlotte McGuire; Judge Nick Kuntz; Judge Anthony Capizzi; treatment fellow John Goris; juvenile justice fellow Eric Shafer; communications consultant Stephen Avakian;

and communications subcommittee chair Ramona Stevens.

This year's theme, *Institutionalizing Change—Celebrating Accomplishments and Overcoming Barriers*, enabled attendees to look to the future by describing

specific efforts that have become standard operating procedure and to seek peer, National Program Office and Leadership faculty assistance in overcoming barriers that prevent implementing or integrating essential components of the model locally.

Research Shows Significant Improvements In Communities Piloting Reclaiming Futures Approach To Teens In Trouble

Coordination of substance abuse treatment in the juvenile justice system has improved significantly in Montgomery County and in nine other communities that are piloting Reclaiming Futures, according to research conducted by the Urban Institute and the University of Chicago's Chapin Hall Center for Children.

"Early findings indicate that the 10 pilot communities have significantly improved their coordination of juvenile justice and substance abuse treatment services since 2003," said Jeffrey A. Butts, research fellow with the University of Chicago and member of the Reclaiming Futures evaluation team.

For example, there have been significant improvements in drug and alcohol assessments, effectiveness of treatment and access to services. Communities report more families are involved in helping teens turn their lives around, and more teens who have struggled with drugs and alcohol are involved in positive social activities in their communities.

"Through systems change, Reclaiming Futures is making a difference in the health of our youth and their families," said Nick Kuntz, Administrative Judge for Montgomery County Juvenile Court. "Our judges, justice workers, treatment providers and community

members are working hard to bring about these important changes. Montgomery County, along with the other pilot communities, ultimately can serve as models for juvenile justice improvements across the nation."

Montgomery County uses the Reclaiming Futures model to screen and assess teens entering the juvenile justice system, match young people to clinical services and positive community opportunities, and provide

care coordination and family support. Community leaders work together as a team to assure that each part of the process functions effectively, remains accountable to the community and demonstrates progress, such as decreasing recidivism. "Key to our success has been our recruitment and training of Natural Helper volunteers, who are carefully matched and provide much-needed support, guidance and encouragement to court-involved youth," said Charlotte McGuire, Project Director.

Help Us Get The Word Out!

If you belong to a professional or social organization, congregation or neighborhood group or club that is in need of a speaker and would be interested in learning more about Reclaiming Futures, please contact Charlotte McGuire by phone at (937) 496-6884 or by e-mail at mcguirec@mcoho.org.



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