



Quarterly Report to Steering Committee / Co-Chairs March through May 2005

The implementation of the Active Balanced Community grant for Fiscal Year 2004-2005 began December 1, 2004, following approval from the State Bureau of Juvenile Justice. Monthly reports are being submitted to the State; this quarterly report is provided as a formal avenue for keeping the Steering Committee informed of activities, as well as to present challenges that may need to be addressed.

I. Committee Updates

D. **Minority Over-Representation / Gender-Specific / Special Needs Sub-Committee.** [April Corie, Facilitator] . This Sub-Committee met twice during the quarter: March 4, 2005 and April 29, 2005 (as well as on June 3, 2005).

This Sub-Committee has spent time reviewing recent community needs assessments for Monroe County to determine what has been identified as needs for minority youth, female youth, and special needs youth. The group has also reviewed best practice and evidence based programming that has worked in other communities.

DMC information on the eleven identified contact points for youth in the justice system was gathered and reviewed by the group. Discussions were held regarding the apparent disproportion of minority contacts in the juvenile justice system in Monroe County. Some of the disproportion may be attributed to the information gathering system, which is largely based on self-report. Another explanation may be that the disproportion is attributed to the correlation between poverty and minorities in Monroe County.

The Sub-Committee explored possible ways to address crime in high poverty areas. It was suggested that the Sub-Committee look into Community Conferencing, a community based approach to dealing with accountability and resolution which has been proven to reduce minority over-representation in the criminal justice system. A plan to establish a community based conferencing center is in the initial stages of planning and will involve specialized training and consultation from Dr. Lauren Abramson, a pioneer in community conferencing and transformative justice.

Judy Thomas, a member of the Sub-Committee attended a three-day conference on Gender-Specific Programming in April 2005. This training provided information regarding best practice programming that could be implemented in the Monroe Community. The Sub-Committee plans to offer a local training in September 2005 for volunteers to become facilitators of Girls' Circles. The goal is to train a diverse group of facilitators in order to reach youth throughout the community. The training can accommodate up to fifty volunteers; the Sub-Committee established five target sectors to train:

- Youth Center Staff / Probation Staff
- Mental Health Providers
- School Social Workers

- Faith-based Community Volunteers
- Community Volunteers

The Sub-Committee has identified the need to enhance collaboration among the Juvenile Court, Mental Health, and the Intermediate School District to better meet the needs of youth with specialized needs who are in the Justice System. The Sub-Committee has expanded its membership to include supervisors from these three agencies and plans to develop a forum for information sharing and problem solving.