



**OUR  
RECLAIMING FUTURES  
TEAM**

# Reclaiming Futures: Orange & Chatham Counties

**Volume 1, Issue 1**

**SUMMER 2010**

**Lead Judicial Fellow: The Honorable Beverly Scarlett (see photo insert at top right corner of 1st article):**

Judge Scarlett is the primary judge for Orange County Adult Drug Treatment Court and Family Drug Treatment Court. She implemented Orange County Truancy Court, Chatham County Truancy Court and Orange County Domestic Violence Court. She was appointed to the NC Domestic Violence Commission and serves as the chair of the legislative subcommittee. She is also a member of the NC Drug Court Commission. A native of Hillsborough, she obtained her JD from North Carolina Central University School of Law and her bachelor's degree from Saint Augustine's College.

**Judicial Fellow: The Honorable Page Vernon (see photo insert at bottom right corner of 1st article)**

Judge Vernon began her career as an assistant district attorney, later worked as a research associate at UNC's School of Govt., and then went on to join a law firm in Pittsboro specializing in juvenile delinquency defense, child abuse and neglect cases, and child support and child custody cases among others. She has been a visiting associate professor at the UNC's Criminal Law Clinic and at Duke University's Children's Education Law Clinic. Judge Vernon has also served as a Guardian ad Litem advocate.

**Justice Fellow: Peggy Hamlett, Chief Court Counselor, District 15B Dept. of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention**

**Lead Treatment Fellow: Lisa Lackman, System of Care Coordinator, OPC Area Program**  
**Treatment Fellow: Erin Roma, DJJ/MH Liaison, OPC Area Program**

**Lead Community Fellow: Shirille Lee, Youth Services/Volunteer Coordinator, Chatham County Together!**  
**Community Fellow: Pat Cameron, Coordinator, Adolescent-in-Need Project**

**Special Team Members: Tammy Yarborough, Chatham County Dept. of Social Services and Bernard Miles, Orange County Dept. of Social Services**

**Interim Project Director: Shirille Lee**  
shirille@chathamcountytogether.org

## District 15B Selected as Reclaiming Futures Site



Reclaiming Futures is a national initiative that promotes new standards of care to help young people in trouble with drugs, alcohol and crime. In 2001, with a \$21 million investment from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), ten communities located throughout the United States were selected to redesign the way the juvenile justice system, the mental health system and the community work in concert to truly address the needs of juvenile offenders and their families.

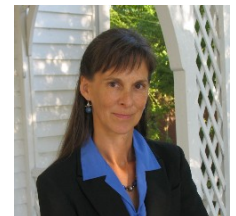
Since its inception, a total of 26 communities have been designated Reclaiming Futures sites with additional funding and support from federal agencies and partner foundations. Reclaiming Futures in Orange/Chatham is one of six sites in North Carolina, made possible by the support of The

Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust who worked hard to bring Reclaiming Futures to North Carolina and continues to support our efforts state-wide.

Orange/Chatham, along with the other NC sites were selected as Reclaiming Futures sites in 2008 and shortly thereafter named several local "fellows" who represent diverse and important components of the holistic Reclaiming Futures model (see left sidebar). The Mental Health Association, OPC Area Program, the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and the Orange County Courts were the founding partners in this endeavor.

Local efforts are driven by our vision of a system where youth and families with mental health and substance abuse issues involved with the juvenile justice system will have access to and will be engaged in an array of appropriate and culturally competent, evidence-based treatment options that address the holistic needs of young people and their families.

For more information visit, [www.reclaimingfutures.org](http://www.reclaimingfutures.org) or contact Shirille Lee, Interim Project Director (see email in sidebar).



### Local Team Creates "Parent Video" and is Working on Developing "Youth Handbook"

The local Reclaiming Futures team worked in partnership with community partners, such as Chatham County Together! and the Orange County Sheriff's Department to create a 7 minute video for parents of young people involved with juvenile justice. The video is intended to help parents and guardians understand the mental health and substance abuse screening and assessment process and to encourage them to seek early treatment

for any issues identified in the screening and/or assessment.

The team is also in the process of developing a youth handbook to distribute to young people to help them understand the juvenile justice process and what to expect. The handbook also includes a section entitled, "Do's and Don'ts" while in the courtroom.

A special thanks to **Reclaiming Futures El Paso** for allowing our site to use their Spring 2010 newsletter as a guide for this publication. One of the many benefits of being part of this initiative is learning and sharing with other sites around the nation. Thank you, **El Paso**, for your generosity.

# Focus Group with At-Risk Young People

In April, with the assistance of Boomerang and their MSW/MDiv. Intern, Ryan Frack, the Reclaiming Futures team did two, 3-hour focus groups with youth. The team wanted to hear and incorporate into the implementation plan, the voice of young people.

During the focus group, the youth were asked questions about how they define success, how their community helps support them in reaching their goals and what additional resources are needed to help young people succeed.

The youth in these groups spoke frequently about the need for positive, alternative, “pro-social” activities for youth. They expressed a need to be valued and listened to, particularly by adults in their lives, both formal (i.e. teachers, probation officers) and informal (i.e. parents, pastors). The youth also reported, that for the most part, that the opinions and influence of the adults in their life are more important than those of their peers.

To the left are collages made by the youth that represent their vision of success.



**In their own words:**

**“Your surroundings play an important role in your life — if it’s negative, it affects you — if it’s positive, it affects you.”**

**“My family is my helping hand — they’re the people that support me in what I do.”**

**“There are other kinds of success than just going to college. I plan to go into the military because college isn’t an option for me.”**

**“My probation officer was good; he took the time to talk to me about what was going on with me, instead of just telling me what to do. He listened to me and told me I could call him if I needed anything.”**

## **“CRADLE TO PRISON PIPELINE” Campaign**

Our local Reclaiming Futures team attended a national fellowship conference with all of the other Reclaiming Futures sites throughout the United States, last April in New Orleans, Louisiana. We were honored to have Ms. Marian Wright Edleman, founder and president of the Children’s Defense Fund (CDF), as the keynote speaker.

CDF’s *Cradle to Prison Pipeline* campaign is to reduce detention and incarceration by increasing preventative supports and services children need, such as access to quality early childhood development and education services and accessible, comprehensive health and mental health coverage. According to their website, “nationally one in three Black and one in six Latino boys born in 2001 were at risk of imprisonment during their lifetime. While boys are five times as likely to be incarcerated as girls, there also is a significant number of girls in the juvenile justice system. This rate of incarceration is endangering children at younger and younger ages. This is America’s pipeline to prison — a trajectory that leads to marginalized lives, imprisonment and often premature death. (<http://www.childrensdefense.org/helping-americas-children/cradle-to-prison-pipeline-campaign/>)



### **Some highlights from Ms. Edleman’s inspiring speech:**

**“When people talk about issues at the intersection of race and poverty, they talk as if they’re intractable. The cradle-to-prison pipeline is not an act of God — it’s a set of choices of policies that we can change.”**

**“Our states are spending three times more per prisoner than they are on education. I can’t think of a dumber investment...”**

**“When people ask me, “What’s wrong with our children?”, I say “Adults are what’s wrong with our children.”**

