



WCS Connection

February 2021

Celebrating Black History



From the desk of the WCS Executive Director:

On Being a Person-Centered Organization

Wisconsin Community Services has long held the belief that those we serve should be at the center of our practice and engagement. In short, this means that we should seek to understand what is important to them and what goals and aspirations they have to live their lives. This is more commonly referred to in human services and health care services nomenclature as a person-centered practice. Person-centered practice is not new. It originated in the disability community. Person-centered practice has grown over the years and is now used across several sectors including behavioral health, healthcare, education, and the justice system. Person-centered practices are very effective in achieving positive outcomes. These positive outcomes are based on the service providers and those receiving services working in partnership and developing a relationship based on mutual respect and positive regard. It means that individuals working in human services organizations like WCS, genuinely care about the people they are working with and want to support their desire to live fulfilling lives in ways that make the best sense to the individual and their family. Examples include talking with a person and not about the person, focusing on the person's strengths, abilities and skills versus labels or deficits. It also means finding solutions that could work for anyone versus supports or solutions that are derived solely from a label or diagnosis. Being a person-centered organization does not mean that we find excuses or dismiss accountability, but rather that service provision is more effective when those we serve are placed at the center of the relationship and the focus is on what matters to the individuals and families receiving the supports. It means that we see people as unique individuals with valuable gifts and contributions. Being a person-centered organization ensures that we will work with individuals in ways that place them in the best position to grow from adversity.

Clarence Johnson



Black History is ABSOLUTELY American History!

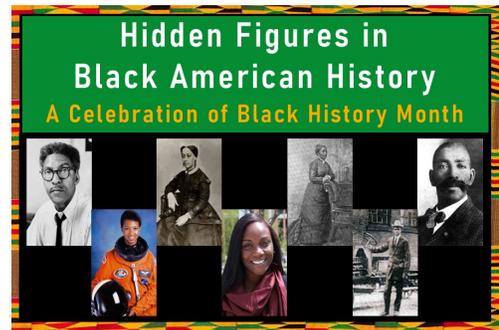
By Paulita Payton-Murphy, WCS Recovery Services Program Director

I fondly remember gathering around my grandma's rocking chair on her back porch in Mississippi as she shared story after story with her grandchildren. I clearly remember how she always reminded us that we needed to learn about our past so that we could better understand our lives. Now so many years later, I found almost her exact words echoed in an article by author and civil rights activist Dr. Herron Keyon Gaston. He said, "If you don't know your history, you don't know your past. If you don't know your past, you don't know your present, and if you don't know your present, you don't know your future" (Gaston. "Black History Is American History." HuffPost, 2015).

The African American influence on history is extensive and is deeply engraved in the fabric of America. We cannot talk about American history without talking about African American history. These two stories are essentially intertwined. African Americans have made significant contributions to every field of the human endeavor, including science, technology, engineering, mathematics, theology, arts, literature, athletics, politics, and especially to the American economy. In every part of the American experience rests the story of African Americans. "Since the inception of this country, with the exception of perhaps the First Nation peoples, African Americans fertilized and impregnated the soil with the drippings of their blood, sweat, and tears" (Gaston, 2015).

The African American experience is settled in struggle and liberation. "It is undergirded by multiple forms of oppression and degradation. It is a story of how we survived the horrors of slavery, the domestic terror and violence of the Ku Klux Klan, the ferocity of Jim Crow Sr., and the lingering residue of Jim Crow Jr. in the 21st century" (Gaston 2015). But in the heart of that suffering, we see a heritage of perseverance, resilience, and a determination to reject as false the notion that African Americans are at the bottom of American society.

Though the month of February is set aside to celebrate Black history by remembering the lives of our forebearers who relentlessly sacrificed their lives as martyrs for liberation and advancement of the Black community, we must not forget that every day in America Black history is being made. African Americans have struggled through decades of injustice, and still, carry on in that legacy today; yet with persistent resolve and unwavering grit, we



WCS celebrated Black History Month with a special virtual event led by the agency's Black Male Advisory Council (BMAC). Titled *Hidden Figures in Black American History*, the presentation featured information presented by agency employees about important, and sometimes forgotten, African Americans in our country's history.

BMAC ●
BLACK MALE ADVISORY COUNCIL



continue to shatter the glass ceiling. We must not be limited to a month in telling our stories, but our stories must be told each and every day.



WCS Acquires Building from Employ Milwaukee

WCS has acquired a 57,355-square-foot building at 2342 N. 27th Street from Employ Milwaukee, previously known as the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board. The agency has leased space in the building from Employ Milwaukee for several years and now has over 90 staff members working there. Employ Milwaukee will continue its operations in the building. Other building tenants include Centers for Health



Care Careers, H&R Block Enterprises, and Center for Youth Engagement. Leadership at both organizations acknowledge a strong working relationship between the two organizations.



CLARENCE JOHNSON

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

WISCONSIN
COMMUNITY
SERVICES, INC.

Clarence Johnson has been the executive director of Milwaukee-based nonprofit Wisconsin Community Services, Inc. (WCS) for four years.

In that time, under his leadership, WCS has expanded its breadth of programming and impact on the communities it serves.

When Johnson became executive director in 2017, WCS had 35 programs, 260 employees and an annual budget of \$25 million. Today, it has more than 50 programs, more than 420 employees and an annual budget of \$45 million.

Johnson has overseen a number of significant and complex agency initiatives. These include the expansion of shelter care and mental health services for youth and young adults; the addition of Community Building Milwaukee, an initiative that aims to reduce crime, violence, and poverty through Community Building Workshops; and the growth of WCS' Black Male Advisory Council, a committee of African American men who work at WCS dedicated to working on projects that strengthen themselves and the community.

He has also overseen the re-opening of the Joshua Glover Residential Reentry Center; the establishment of a partnership with the city of Milwaukee Department of Public Works, resulting in well-paying seasonal placements for WCS program participants; and the implementation of the Bakari Center, which houses a residential care center for adolescent males involved in the youth justice system and a youth crisis stabilization facility.

Clarence Johnson Named a Milwaukee Notable Minority Executive

On February 22, the BizTimes Milwaukee published their inaugural roster of "Notable Minority Executives." WCS is proud to announce that Clarence Johnson, our Executive Director, a worthy leader and role model, was chosen to be honored! We invite you to read his profile, as well as the profiles of many other notable minority executives that are impacting our area, in the BizTimes.



Career Opportunities at WCS

WCS is looking for caring and enthusiastic people to fill the following positions:

Case Manager – Targeted Case Management (TCM) Program

As a TCM Case Manager, your work will have a significant impact on those who are often overlooked and underserved. The position encompasses the care of people experiencing mental health concerns. Under supervision, you will develop and implement treatment plans and provide the necessary follow-up, case management, and intervention. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree in a behavioral science (master's degree encouraged) and the ability to work with individuals living with a mental health concerns.

Care Coordinator – Adult Comprehensive Community Services (CCS)

We are looking for a kind and compassionate team player for this full-time position. As a Care Coordinator, you will work with participants in CCS, a psychosocial rehabilitative program, to help them understand, navigate, and progress in their recovery. Qualified candidates must have a bachelor's degree in Social Work or a related field (master's degree preferred). At least one year of experience working in the mental health and substance use field is preferred.

Resident Care Worker – Bakari Youth Residential Care Center

If you are passionate about working with youth and have effective communication skills, then this is a position for you. As a Resident Care Worker, you will provide supervision of the youth placed in the residential care center. This includes implementing daily educational and recreational activities and serving as a mentor and role model to the youth. Applicants must have an associate or bachelor's degree in a social or behavioral science field and one year of experience working with children in a residential setting.

Did You Know?

You can make a tax-deductible donation to WCS and help us carry out our mission.

[Click here](#) to make your donation today!



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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 100 years.

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