



## WCS Connection

June 2020



*From the desk of the WCS Executive Director:*

### A Remarkable First Six Months

A subject line like the one above is usually reserved for newly elected political leaders and the heads of major corporations. In this case, it refers to the tumultuous and historic first six months of the decade of the 20's, and 2020 itself. As it stands now, 2020 will undoubtedly be remembered by historians as one of the most challenging, and perhaps pivotal years of the decade of the 20's and perhaps, even of the 21st century. The emergence of the Coronavirus earlier this year has created a public health crisis and challenge that many of us thought that we would never see or experience. For Wisconsin Community Services, our work to provide essential and critical human services and criminal justice services to vulnerable, high needs, and low-risk individuals during this pandemic remains increasingly important. COVID-19 will undoubtedly impact a world that will change dramatically over the next several years. Indeed, it already has. As we work our way through this pandemic, we will be challenged now, and in its aftermath, to apply critical lessons learned and to bolster those of us who have been most adversely impacted. And, if the emergence of COVID-19 was not enough, the United States has been rudely awakened to a call for reform, justice, and an end to racism, with young Americans leading the push. This movement has been spurred on initially by the brutal death of George Floyd, and also the shocking realization of a number of other seemingly unnecessary deaths of young African Americans this year at the hands of law enforcement officials. The slowdown of life for many of us that the COVID-19 pandemic has created allows time to reflect and to examine events and realities that might have otherwise been brushed aside or blurred in our busyness. As a collection of individuals and communities armed with these new realizations, we have a unique and historic opportunity to overcome adversities that have plagued us for far too long.



*Clarence Johnson*



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## What Happens in the Aftermath of Mr. George Floyd's Death?

It is with a heavy heart that we write this letter. The sad, tragic, and unnecessary death of Mr. George Floyd on May 25th at the hands of the Minneapolis Police Department, has set off a level of unrest this country and our local communities have not seen in generations. The demand and drumbeat for a changed nation is resounding across all 50 states as protesters of all backgrounds demand an end to racism, police brutality, and an elevation of Black lives to the same level as those of White lives in America.

WCS was founded in 1912 as the Society for the Friendless to befriend those who were disenfranchised and ostracized because of their involvement with the criminal justice system. During the past 100 plus years of our existence, we have seen progress in how we work with individuals whose life circumstances, such as substance use issues and mental illness, bring them into contact with the criminal justice system. Sadly, we have also seen the manifestation of racism, oppressive policies and practices leading to disproportionately high rates of incarceration of black and brown people.

The death of Mr. Floyd was a shocking and grim revelation for all to see and laid bare the oppressive and hostile treatment that is visited on communities of color on the part of some law enforcement officials, which too often leads to deaths that should never happen. We understand that real progress in ending systemic and institutional racism, police brutality, and creating a country that provides true justice for all citizens will only happen if there is a collective and urgent effort to do so. It is clear locally and nationally that we are at a place where we cannot return to business as usual. In the end, most of us know that it is time for true change once and for all, as well as an end to all that harkens back to one of the original sins of this country.

We encourage everyone to join with WCS to do what you can with what you have to achieve the change that is long overdue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Lynn Menefee'.

Lynn Menefee,  
President, WCS Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'James Gramling'.

Hon. James Gramling  
Past President, WCS Board of Directors



## New WCS Programming

A newer initiative at WCS is our Treatment Foster Care Program. WCS holds a Foster Home License and a Child Placing Agency License. From the Department of Children and Families we received our initial Child Placing Agency License in December 2019 and are now fully in the phase of licensing and placing children. We have begun recruiting individuals interested in foster parenting and providing care for children in their homes. Please see the notice below for an online recruitment meeting for those interested. If you know of someone or if you are interested, please give Megan a call at 414-840-3503 or Aimee at 414-460-6130 or email at [muskaggs@wiscs.org](mailto:muskaggs@wiscs.org) or [asmith@wics.org](mailto:asmith@wics.org). We would be very excited to talk with you about this opportunity.

Do you want to make a difference in a child's life?

Have you ever thought about fostering a child in your safe & caring home?

Learn how you can become a licensed Treatment Foster Care Parent by attending an informational session at Wisconsin Community Services, Inc.

Information will include:

Who can be a treatment foster care parent

The responsibilities of a treatment foster care parent

How long it takes to become a treatment foster care parent

The support you will receive from WCS once a child is in your home

There will also be time for questions and answers.



If you are interested in learning more, please attend an informational session via Zoom.

Sessions will be held on Thursday, July 16 at 12:00 pm & Thursday, July 23 at 5:30 pm.

Register by contacting Megan Skaggs at [muskaggs@wiscs.org](mailto:muskaggs@wiscs.org) or 414-840-3503

Once you register you will be sent the direct Zoom link to participate in the informational session.



## Online Circles of Connection

In Milwaukee, across the country, and around the world, people are crying out to be heard. Community Building Milwaukee (CBM) events endeavor to create a safe environment, free of judgment, so participants can speak freely and authentically. Perhaps you have a personal experience that can help others. Perhaps you can give the gift of your rapt attention and empathy. Perhaps you do not yet know what gift you have inside you. Our Online Circles of Connection create the opportunity to hear and be heard. This is a truly unique experience of self-care. Through experiential learning you will leave with tools to listen with greater depth and empathy and be heard in this manner by others. Upcoming Online Circles of Connection will happen on Tuesday, July 14<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 to 7:15 pm ([click here to register](#)) and Tuesday, August 11<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 to 7:15 pm ([click here to register](#)).



## Career Opportunities at WCS

WCS is looking for dedicated and attentive individuals to fulfill the following positions:

### Resident Care Worker-Outpatient Plus – Sankofa House

The resident care worker provides supportive, recovery-oriented interaction and monitoring of individuals residing in Sankofa House, a WCS transitional living center house. Essential functions include supervising resident and guest activity to ensure safety, monitor the environment of Sankofa House, act as a role model for residents, and interact with residents in a recovery focused, strength based, trauma informed, person centered manner. A high school diploma/equivalency is required for this position, plus no less than one year of experience serving adults with substance use and co-occurring needs.

## Did You Know?

Are you looking to enhance your MI & TIC skills?

If "YES," then why not join the 2-part workshop *8 Tips to Enhance MI & TIC Skills through Community Building?*

To learn more or to register [click here](#).

### Case Manager – Targeted Case Management Program

This position encompasses the care of people dealing with and recovering from mental illness. Under supervision, the case manager will develop a treatment relationship with the participants of the program. They will also provide psychosocial rehabilitation, symptom monitoring and management, and supportive counseling to participants on their caseload. Applicants must have a bachelor's degree in a behavioral health science and experience in social work is preferred. Individuals with a master's degree are strongly encouraged to apply.

Visit our website to learn more and find a listing of additional opportunities!



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[www.wiscs.org](http://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 over 100 years.

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