

DMC Action Network eNews

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DMC Action Network

The DMC Action Network is a project of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's [Models for Change](#) initiative.

The Network aims to share knowledge and accelerate progress in the reduction of racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system.

[Lisa Garry](#), DMC Policy Director for the Center for Children's Law and Policy, manages the DMC Action Network.

Having Faith: Partnering with Religious Organizations to Help Combat DMC

In October 2010, we described how Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, hit the ground running with its DMC reduction work, implementing a detention risk assessment instrument and opening the County's first evening reporting center in just one year's time. This month, we highlight how Lancaster's DMC Workgroup forged new partnerships with its faith-based community to better serve youth and families.

During the spring of 2011, Lancaster County Juvenile Probation Supervisor Sherry Lupton attended a meeting that would change DMC reduction in her community.



At the [DMC Action Network's Fourth Annual Meeting](#), Lupton participated in a workshop on partnering with the faith-based community to reduce racial and ethnic disparities. The session, led by Reverend Romal Tune of Clergy Strategic Alliances, outlined strategies to engage religious leaders in DMC reduction. Moved by the presentation, Lupton walked away with a clear goal: getting Reverend Tune to work with her County's faith-based organizations.

"Reverend Tune's presentation was different than anything I had ever seen before," says Lupton. "He had a plan for engaging leaders in the faith community that was targeted at actually changing outcomes for kids."

Given that Lancaster County boasts over 700 houses of worship, Lupton saw an opportunity to have a significant impact on at-risk youth. "I wanted to raise awareness of DMC among this community, and I wanted to figure out how we could work together by identifying what services were out there, how best to connect youth with those programs, and where there might be gaps," said Lupton. Many faith-based organizations offer services that can help keep kids out of the system, such as mentoring, but they may not widely publicize them.

On May 14th, Lupton and the DMC Workgroup achieved her goal, hosting the County's first ever forum for faith-based leaders aimed at reducing the disparate treatment of children of color in the juvenile justice system. Sponsored by the Intra-City Progressive Pastors' Association, the Juvenile Probation Office, the Crispus Attucks Community Center, and the Lancaster County Council of Churches, the event brought together over 50 community leaders and clergy from various faiths.

Core States

Pennsylvania
Berks County
Philadelphia
Lancaster County

Illinois
Peoria

Louisiana
Jefferson Parish
Rapides Parish

Washington
Benton/Franklin Counties

Partner States

Maryland
Baltimore City
Montgomery County
Prince George's County

Wisconsin
Rock County
Outagamie County
Kenosha County

Kansas
Sedgwick County
Lyon-Chase County

North Carolina
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Cabarrus County

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With funding from the MacArthur Foundation and the DMC Action Network, Reverend Tune traveled to Lancaster to lead a day of discussion and strategic planning. Lupton noted that he kept the group focused on DMC reduction: "At each stage, Reverend Tune would ask for practical suggestions and would ask whether that strategy would help reduce the number of kids of color entering and moving through the system. If the answer was 'no,' he would move the discussion along."

When facilitating the event, Reverend Tune not only shared his expertise in creating partnerships with faith-based communities, but also observed a level of engagement in Lancaster that he had not previously seen. "I'm often invited to facilitate meetings and develop outreach strategies that seek to have an impact on the lives of young people," said Tune. "The strategic planning meeting organized by Sherry was the most encouraging I've had the honor of facilitating, not simply because of the impressive turnout representing service provider and diverse communities of faith, but because of the seriousness with which all participants approached the issue."

A number of religious leaders chipped in to help make the event possible through donations of food, materials, and space to hold the event. The meeting also resulted in tangible commitments that would help improve the lives of children of color moving forward. For example, the First Presbyterian Church volunteered space in downtown Lancaster where the city's [Youth Aid Panel](#) could operate. The Youth Aid Panel is a community board that diverts low-level offenses from formal involvement in the juvenile justice system. Additionally, one of the city's most prominent pastors wrote a column in the Sunday edition of the local paper raising the importance of tackling racial and ethnic disparities in education.

Lupton, who is a minister herself, cultivated relationships with religious leaders in the months preceding the event. She scheduled individual meetings to explain how partnerships with the faith-based community could benefit Lancaster's children by diverting youth from system involvement or increasing the range of services available to those youth. "It was the data that really spoke to them and created a sense of urgency," shared Lupton.

In Lancaster, officials have used those data to drive systems reform. Youth of color represent 13% of the population, but 62% of the youth in detention in the county. Since joining the DMC Action Network, Lancaster has worked to reduce disparities through changes to policies and practices. These include development of a detention screening tool and the creation of an evening reporting center that keeps an average of 10 children of color in the community every day who would otherwise be locked up.

The DMC Workgroup has always focused on engaging community members, including youth, with the goal of reducing the overrepresentation of children of color in the juvenile justice system. On May 13th, the Juvenile Probation Office hosted its fifth annual DMC Youth and Law Enforcement Forum. Over 130 youth from eight of the county's middle schools attended the day-long event, along with police officers, probation staff, judicial officials, and school administrators. According to Lupton, "the goal was to change inaccurate perceptions of youth toward law enforcement and vice-versa" through interactive panels, small discussion groups, and a mock trial.

Lupton is now looking ahead to the next steps in its work with the faith-based community. Lancaster's DMC Workgroup developed an initial action plan in June, and Reverend Tune is crafting a broader strategic plan for involving the faith-based community in DMC reduction efforts moving forward.

We Want Your Feedback!

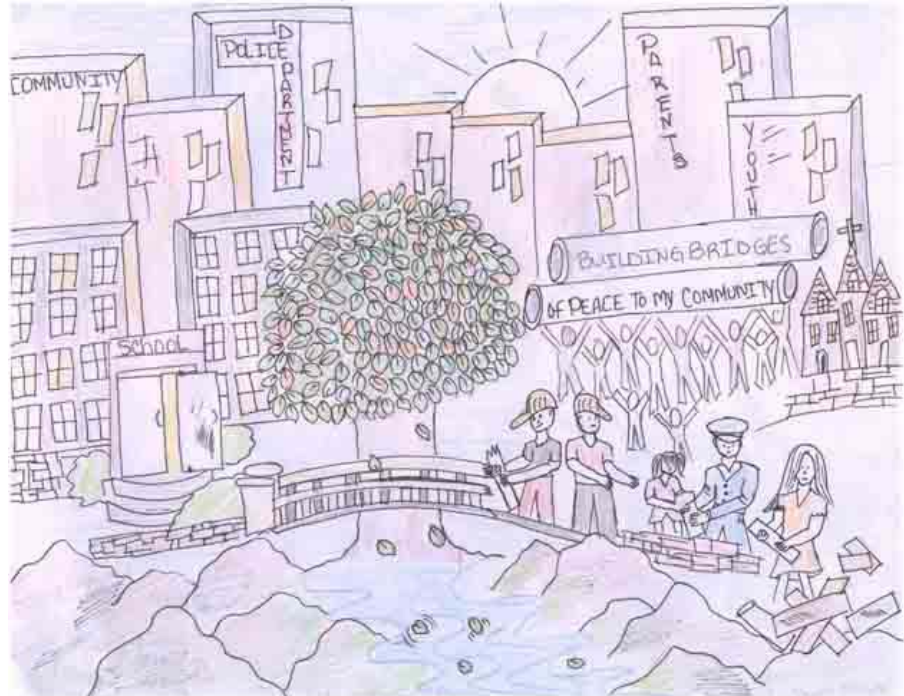
We want to hear from you about how we can improve the DMC Action Network eNews.

Help us ensure that the eNews is a valuable resource for your work by [clicking here and completing a short online survey](#).

You can also contact us anytime with comments or suggestions at jszanyi@cclp.org or 202-637-0377 x108.

Although convening the first faith-based meeting on DMC took a substantial amount of planning and effort, Lupton has no doubts about the potential benefits: "To build relationships, sometimes you just need to get out of your office, put your sneakers on, and walk around knocking on doors. You never know where you will find another partner to help better serve kids in your community."

Tell us about how you've partnered with faith-based organizations to reduce DMC: email jszanyi@cclp.org.



The logo for Lancaster County's Fifth Annual DMC and Youth Law Enforcement Forum, designed by a seventh grade student.

Center for American Progress Announces Leadership Institute Fellowship Program

This month, the Center for American Progress (CAP) announced the launch of its Leadership Institute, a new competitive program to identify and assist the next generation of progressive public policy experts who have an interest in issues related to communities of color. The CAP Leadership Institute's goal is to challenge an emerging class of young leaders and encourage their commitment to working for and in communities of color.

CAP will select nine Leadership Institute Fellows annually to participate in a series of seminars, events, policy case studies, and field trips to network with Washington, DC's public policy community. Leadership Institute Fellows will undergo an intensive, nine-month program that will provide a platform for the greater inclusion of people of color in public policy at every level of government, within nonprofit organizations, and throughout the media.

The Leadership Institute will assist in developing links and networks between the Fellows and policy organizations, including grassroots organizations, media, and government. It will also expose participants to methods to introduce policy ideas to diverse groups and translate ideas into actual policy and practice changes.

Applications are being accepted until September 9, 2011. For more information about the Leadership Institute, or to apply to the fellowship, [click here](#).

The Newest DMC and Juvenile Justice Resources

- Reclaiming Futures, a project of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Portland State University, has released a video on serving youth at risk of entering the juvenile justice system without engaging in "net-widening" - a phenomenon that occurs when an agency establishes a policy or program aimed at diverting youth, but that actually increases the number of youth who have contact with the system. Yolanda Perez-Logan of the Santa Cruz County Department of Probation describes how her office works to strike the right balance. You can view the blog post by [clicking this link](#).
- The Just and Fairs School Fund, an organization that supports grassroots organizing initiatives that work to eliminate harsh school discipline policies and practices, released its summer newsletter, which outlines legislative and policy victories in various states around the country. [Click here to learn more](#).
- The Campaign for Youth Justice has published a new report addressing the impact of Oregon's transfer law on youth and public safety. In 1994, Oregon voters passed Measure 11, which imposed long mandatory sentences and required automatic transfer to adult court for certain crimes. [Misguided Measures: The Outcomes and Impacts of Measure 11 on Oregon's Youth](#) includes data suggesting that the law has not made the state any safer and has created numerous barriers to reentry for children.
- A new study released by the Council of State Governments Justice Center outlines a link between repeated school suspensions and later involvement in the juvenile justice system. The report, [Breaking Schools' Rules: A Statewide Study of How School Discipline Relates to Students' Success and Juvenile Justice Involvement](#), found that nearly 60 percent of public school students in Texas secondary schools were suspended or expelled, with African Americans and children with disabilities overrepresented among those students.
- This month, the Justice Policy Institute launched a new blog that will highlight the latest news and updates on criminal and juvenile justice reform. [Click here](#) to view the latest entries in the Just Policy Blog.
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention recently updated its Statistical Briefing Book, which offers easy access to a wealth of information about juvenile crime and youth involved in the juvenile justice system. Developed by the National Center for Juvenile Justice, the Statistical Briefing Book contains data on juvenile court statistics, the Census of Juveniles in Residential Placement, the National Disproportionate Minority Contact Databook, child maltreatment, state and county juvenile court case counts, and more. [Click here to access this resource](#).