



## **CHARLOTTESVILLE/ALBEMARLE COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

**First Annual Report to Charlottesville City Council  
June 30, 1999**

### **Citizen Members**

*Maria Bell  
Dr. Michael Dickens  
Bryson Grover  
Meredith Gunter  
Richard Merriwether, Vice Chair  
Larry Miller  
Deborah Pomerantz  
Jeffrey Sobel, Private Provider Representative  
Esi Yarney*

### **Organization Members**

*Martha Carroll, Court Service Unit  
Dr. Kevin Castner, Albemarle County Schools  
Robert Cox, Charlottesville Social Services  
Dr. Susan McLeod, Thomas Jefferson Health District  
James Peterson, Chair, Region Ten CSB  
Dr. Robert Pianta, University of Virginia  
Katherine Ralston, Albemarle Social Services  
Dr. William Symons, Charlottesville Public Schools*

### **Non-Voting Members**

*Linda Peacock, City of Charlottesville  
Cathy Train, United Way, Thomas Jefferson Area  
Roxanne White, County of Albemarle*

***Saphira Baker, CCF Director  
Charlottesville City Hall, Room 340A  
Charlottesville, VA 22902  
Telephone 804/970-3550 Fax 804-970-3653***

**Charlottesville/Albemarle  
Commission on Children and Families**

**Room A340  
Charlottesville City Hall  
Charlottesville, VA 22902**

**First Annual Report, June 30, 1999**

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## I. Executive Summary

The establishment of the new Charlottesville/Albemarle Commission on Children and Families in the spring of 1998 reflected a common goal to coordinate the community's resources and plan to make Charlottesville and Albemarle a better place to raise a family.

By merging two planning entities concerned with children and families – the citizen-member Charlottesville/Albemarle Commission on Children and Youth and the state-mandated Community Policy Management Team – local policy-makers, agencies, and citizens opted to form one body focused on improving outcomes for children and families.

The Charlottesville/Albemarle Commission on Children and Families (CCF) membership consists of nine citizens, seven heads of institutions serving children --including the public schools – a representative of the University of Virginia, and non-voting members from the City and County Executive Offices and United Way.

During its first year Commission members and staff have established a results-oriented governing and work group structure and have begun a range of efforts to accomplish its adopted mission of "centering the community on children and families" and its five goals:

1. Identifying and Supporting Priority Issues:
  - Ensuring that all children are born healthy and ready to learn through an early childhood development initiative, the Growing Healthy Families Partnership;
  - Improving services for children who are in danger to themselves or to the community;
2. Measuring the Health of the Community and Raising the Visibility of Children and Families
  - Keeping score of the community's health through a community report called "Stepping Stones;"
3. Providing Reliable Information on Planning Efforts and Services to Children and Families
  - Publishing a *Guide to Youth Services* and developing an on-line search engine for residents seeking services for young people and their parents;
4. Providing Comprehensive Planning and Funding Guidance
  - Developing an "outcome funding" approach to funding children and family agencies to understand the true results of programs;
5. Coordinating Services for Better Results and Accountability
  - Managing and coordinating state and local funds dedicated to juvenile justice, foster care, and therapeutic services

This first annual report details the five areas of focus for the Charlottesville/Albemarle Commission on Children and Families during FY99, and the activities and outcomes resulting from the work in each area.

## II. Introduction: Establishing the Commission

- ✓ *Consolidating state and local resources in one public body to plan for a healthy community*
- ✓ *Bringing citizens and professionals together to shape the area's service delivery system*
- ✓ *Setting the first year's tasks to improve outcomes for children and families*

The establishment of the new Charlottesville/Albemarle Commission on Children and Families in the spring of 1998 reflected a common goal to coordinate the community's resources and plan to make Charlottesville/Albemarle a better place to raise a family. By merging two planning entities concerned with children and families – the citizen-member Charlottesville/Albemarle Commission on Children and Youth and the state-mandated Community Policy Management Team – local policy-makers, agencies, and citizens opted to form one body with a mission to improve outcomes for children and families.

The Charlottesville/Albemarle Commission on Children and Families (CCF) membership consists of nine citizens, seven heads of institutions serving children --including the public schools – a representative of the University of Virginia, and non-voting members from the City and County Executive Offices and United Way. With a diverse group of residents and agency heads, the localities set in motion a structure aimed at capturing the expertise and concern in the community to improve delivery of local services.

The Joint Agreement between the County and the City, approved in October of 1997, spells out the task envisioned for the new Commission: “to plan, coordinate, monitor, and evaluate a community-wide system for all children and family agencies and programs.” Commission members also carry the legal responsibility for developing long-range planning and monitoring administrative functions and expenditures for two state-mandated functions: those children served through the Comprehensive Services Act (encompassing over five million dollars in FY99) and the Offices on Youth funded by the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice (\$54,000 in FY99). Further, the Commission has on staff a coordinator of all programs funded under the Virginia Community Crime Control Act (\$990,850, including \$790,000 to Community Attention Home) who is responsible for monitoring and reporting on these initiatives.

Thus, in addition to its local mandate, Commission members have the sole responsibility, granted by the Commonwealth of Virginia, to administer combined annual state and local resources of over six million dollars dedicated to services for children in need.

*Appendix 1: CCF members*

*Appendix 2: Organizational Chart of Merger*

*Appendix 3: Organizational Chart with CCF staff*

### III. History: Building Organizational Capacity

- ✓ *Understanding and analyzing the community's resources*
- ✓ *Defining priority issues: Emphasizing prevention efforts for children, ages 0-6; helping children poised to harm themselves or others find support in the community*
- ✓ *Establishing a structure to get things done*
- ✓ *Developing a means to engage the community in planning*

From the first meeting of the Commission in March 1998 until October of 1998, Commission members reviewed local resources for children and families, clarified their state-funded mandates, established an organizational structure, and identified their priority issues and action steps for 1999.

At the same time, a new staff came on board to help Commission members operationalize their goals. A new director was hired for the Commission in June of 1998, a new Juvenile Justice Coordinator position was created as part of the Commission in June of 1998, a Project Assistant was brought on board in October 1998, and the CSA Coordinator moved to the CCF office from the Region Ten Community Services Board in October 1998.

Robert Cox, Director of Social Services, served temporarily as Chair of the new Commission with Larry Miller, citizen, as Vice Chair, from March 1999 until December 1998. In December 1998 the Commission held its first formal election of officers. James Peterson of the Region Ten Community Service Board was elected Chairperson and Richard Merriwether, a citizen member, was elected Vice-Chairperson.

To understand the community's resources, Commission members heard presentations on the community's teen pregnancy prevention efforts, its juvenile justice and violence prevention efforts, the area's preventive early childhood development initiative, and the resources available through the Comprehensive Services Act for children and families at risk.

By the summer of 1998 members were taking steps to design the shape and scope of the Commission on Children and Families. At a July 1998 CCF meeting, the CCF director reported on her informal discussions with Commission members regarding their expectations for themselves as a new public body. In brief, Commission members envisioned a proactive planning body emphasizing the health of all children in the community.

Many members saw the possibility of emphasizing preventive strategies; addressing a perceived duplication of services, capturing reliable information on services to children and families, and hearing from residents about the state of youth and families in the locality. High on the list of member priorities for CCF were responsible evaluation of programs; investing in programs with effective outcomes; and developing a system for recommending the allocation of dollars to children and families. CCF members reported that they were concerned about young peoples'

success in school, the health of young children, easing transition to kindergarten for young children, a lack of activities for teenagers, and affordable and safe childcare, among other issues.

In September 1998, CCF agency members were asked by the full Commission for their perspectives on the question, “*Where is the current system breaking down?*” Meeting on October 21, 1998, agency members analyzed the local service delivery system’s strengths and weaknesses. They characterized the area as resource rich, with promising new early childhood development efforts in the City and the County aimed at prevention of poor outcomes. They identified responsive staff within the schools and agencies that help families navigate their way toward needed resources.

These same participants saw the flip side of this resource-rich community – lack of a clear means for children and families to access the often-confusing range of services with their specific entrance criteria. A particular group that was singled-out as not getting sufficient services was court-involved youth, due largely to an over-burdened court system and not getting to these young people earlier. There was overall concern that resources were being spent too late, and a desire to focus resources in the early stages of child development and family life.

On October 26, 1998, Commission members held a full-day retreat. The retreat resulted in the development of a mission -- “*The Charlottesville/Albemarle Commission on Children and Families centers our community on the well-being of its children and families.*” The retreat also generated a general work plan for 1999, with five tasks for the year. These were:

- Achieving meaningful community involvement
- Raising the visibility of children and families
- Identifying and promoting top issues
- Defining a system for managing information
- Developing operating principles

In December 1998, the Commission members voted in a new structure to accomplish these goals and approved a set of Bylaws. Seven work groups were established with a CCF member serving as a work group leader and involving other residents and agency representatives from the community. Each group was to be staffed by a CCF staff member and accountable to the full commission for producing a recommendation for action.

These work groups – including three that were already underway -- included: CSA Administration; Data Management, Early Childhood Development, Outcome Funding/Evaluation, Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, and Public Involvement. An ad-hoc Agency Budget Review Team was also created to assist with the City/County agency budget review process from December 1998 to February 1999. An Executive Committee was established to insure good information flow and coordination between the many efforts envisioned to take place under the Commission’s new structure. In July 1999, an additional work group focused on Court-involved youth was established.

*Appendix 4: Summary of Agency Heads Focus Group*  
*Appendix 5: List of CCF Work Groups, July 1999*

#### **IV. Putting Goals into Action: Five areas of Focus**

- ✓ *Identifying and Supporting Priority Issues Based on Community Needs*
- ✓ *Measuring the Health of the Community and Raising the Visibility of Children and Families*
- ✓ *Providing Reliable Information on Planning Efforts and Services*
- ✓ *Providing Comprehensive Planning and Funding Guidance*
- ✓ *Coordinating Services for Better Results and Accountability*

The work of the Commission has evolved since its retreat in the fall of 1998 and Work Group members and staff have given more specificity to the goals. The work to date has taken place in five general areas. The activities and anticipated outcomes of these five focus areas are detailed below.

##### **1. Identifying and Supporting Priority Issues Based on Community Needs**

- ✓ *Building consensus on a unified early intervention strategy to insure that all children are born healthy and arrive at school ready to learn*
- ✓ *Leveraging the community's institutional resources – libraries, hospitals, local government, community agencies, and businesses – as partners in creating a healthy community*
- ✓ *Launching an enhanced Growing Healthy Families Partnership in the Fall of 1999*

At a December 1998 meeting, Commission members unanimously voted to make “Early Childhood Development” its priority issue for 1999. A second priority issue was adopted to focus on "children poised to harm themselves or others and likely to require costly treatments."

It was determined that both of these issues met the criteria set by the Commission staff for its determination of a priority issue which included: compelling local need; achievable milestones within one year; willingness of CCF members to dedicate time and resources; high level of public awareness for rallying support; non-duplication of existing resources; and of a proactive and preventive nature. Work began on the Early Childhood Development issue in the summer of 1998; a work group to address the second priority issue was established in July of 1999.

In the case of early childhood development, two local needs assessments -- one conducted by the Thomas Jefferson Planning District and the other by the County of Albemarle in 1995 -- independently called for a coordinated preventive effort to reach families early with intensive support and parent education and information, as a means of avoiding negative outcomes in the future. Both reports echoed national research that prenatal and early childhood home visits in the first years of a child's life can reduce negative outcomes for older children, decrease child abuse and neglect, and improve child health and education.

*Appendix 6: Early Childhood Development Priority Statement*  
*Appendix 7: Children in Need of Services Priority Statement*

## **Organizing for a Healthy Community: Early Childhood Development Initiative**

CCF members and staff have taken the lead in working to strengthen the education and support offerings the community has available for new parents and parents in need. Soon after the Commission was established, a "Healthy Families" Work Group was formed to revisit and enhance the community's approach to supporting the development of healthy children and families. This work group -- comprised of 14 representatives from local agencies, hospitals, city and county government, and including citizens from the Commission -- was charged with assessing the current array of services, defining needed resources, and putting together a plan for a more comprehensive model with broad-based support.

For three months, the "Healthy Families" work group members reviewed model home-visiting and early childhood development initiatives in Virginia and nationally, studied local home-visiting and parent education resources, identified strengths and weaknesses of the current system, and set about envisioning a more comprehensive approach to building an initiative to support the development of healthy families in the community.

This initial "Healthy Families" Work Group which completed its work in November of 1998, and an Early Childhood Development Work Group which continued that work into the Spring, chose to build an expanded initiative -- the Growing Healthy Families collaborative, a community-based program formed in 1996. The collaborative, involving four local agencies -- the Health Department, Children, Youth and Family Services, the Child Health Partnership at the Monticello Area Community Action Agency (MACAA) and the Infant Development Program at ARC -- provides intensive home-visiting services to families in need. In fiscal year 1998 over 1100 adults and children were served with almost 7,000 home visits. For those enrolled children: 99% have a medical home; 95% have appropriate immunizations; less than 3% of their mothers have a repeat pregnancy during the first year postpartum, and there has been reported child abuse and neglect limited to 3% of the cases.

Building on the successful outcomes of the collaborative, the anticipated Partnership creates a "Healthy Community" by increasing the availability of universal parent education classes in the community, as well as identifying and coordinating existing parent education resources, opening library and community-based family resource centers, and distributing newsletters to new parents with child development information. It is envisioned that a facet of the parent information and education campaign will be raising awareness of the importance of early literacy development through public information, trainings to staff working with parents and young children, and engagement of businesses, pediatricians and others to emphasize reading to young children.

The Partnership consolidates and strengthens the current home-visiting services to first-time mothers, teen mothers, and other families with at-risk children. Finally, the work group applied for affiliation with Healthy Families Virginia® to strengthen its capacity, enhance evaluation and

quality assurance methods, increase services and community education, and increase accessibility and unity of local programs.

As the Partnership moves from planning to implementation in the Fall of 1999, CCF members and staff aim to assist with transition and coordination of new and expanded partner agencies and to play an ongoing role in helping to leverage support from diverse sectors of the community, and assuring improved outcomes for local children and their families.

## 2. Measuring the Health of the Community and Raising the Visibility of Children and Families

- ✓ *Developing an annual statistical measure of a healthy community in the areas of health, education, neighborliness, and social issues*
- ✓ *Providing decision makers with data on trends affecting the health of children and families*
- ✓ *Educating the public on issues facing children and families*
- ✓ *Creating a family-friendly and accessible image for CCF*

### **"Stepping Stones" -- Keeping Score of the Community's Health**

Commission member and local pediatrician, Dr. Michael Dickens, is spearheading a method by which the Charlottesville/Albemarle community can use specific indicators to objectively measure its progress toward creating a community which nurtures children and families. The goal is to keep track over time of our "vital signs" using a set of data that will be collected regularly and published annually ("Stepping Stones" – see Appendix 7). The data will be presented in a reliable, easy to understand format for the benefit of the community, and will be organized in several levels with different purposes in mind.

- Level One will be a graphic presentation of year-to-year progress in the broad categories of Health, Education, Neighborliness, and Social Issues. This level is intended for use by the media in introducing and informing the community of progress in the four categories, and for stimulating community interest and discussion.
- Level Two will be a breakdown of the Level One data into components for each category. The data again will be presented to emphasize trends over time, though snapshot views of where the community is at the present time will also be available. Level Two is intended to give interested citizens, the Charlottesville City Council and the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors a first look at components of a social "scorecard."
- Level Three will be a more in-depth look at each social trend for analysis by agency and program heads, for discussion about funding priorities by citizens, agencies, and local government, and to inform the CCF planning and review activities.

Emphasis will be on analyzing relative progress as measured against past performance, and striving for continual improvement on the broad indicators. Comparisons to national norms will be provided at Level Three for benchmark comparisons.

The publication of this "report card" on an annual basis will call attention to the condition of children and families in the Charlottesville/Albemarle area. Over time "Stepping Stones" will point to areas requiring local attention as well as identifying area successes. In addition, on a daily basis, residents, practitioners, media and local leaders will be able to call the Commission on Children and Families staff to access this data.

Commission members envision that, by becoming a reliable resource on the demographics and health indicators related to children and families and putting forth solutions for a healthy community, CCF will raise the visibility of children and families and help "center the community" on addressing the health of our local families.

#### *Appendix 8 -- Stepping Stones parameters and sample trend graphs*

### **Keeping the focus on children and families**

The CCF's Public Involvement Work Group is charged with finding meaningful ways to engage residents in the planning work of the Commission and building positive name recognition for the Commission among residents and local institutions. Toward this end, one of the first decisions made by the CCF at its retreat was to publicize and hold its monthly meetings during 1999 in community locations throughout Charlottesville and Albemarle County to attract neighborhood residents to attend and participate.

The Public Involvement Work Group -- comprised of CCF citizen members, CCF staff, and representatives of local agencies -- is developing a rollout strategy to reach residents with information about CCF and local services, and involve residents in work group activities. This will include presentations of local services and data trends to neighborhood groups, parent/teacher organizations, community-based agencies, and other local audiences. Dissemination of 1,000 copies of the new CCF/United Way *Guide to Youth Services* is part of this broad outreach strategy.

CCF is beginning this dialogue with the simple step of presenting itself as a positive force for children and families -- centered on solutions as well as problems. To convey this message, the Public Involvement Work Group launched a contest for area high school students to design a logo for the CCF. Over seventy-five students sent in submissions for the contest with over five hundred dollars in prizes donated by local businesses. A public awards ceremony recognizing award winners and their families, contributing businesses, and introducing members of the Commission to the public was held on June 2, 1999.

This event was the first in several vehicles designed to bring news of the CCF's activities during its first year to the community. Since the June 2<sup>nd</sup> reception, Channel 29's Abena Foreman has

run a segment on the Commission on Children and Families highlighting the new *Guide* and the CCF's early childhood development efforts. The Commission was described as an organization "working to make Charlottesville/Albemarle a better community." In addition, WINA radio aired an interview with the CCF director, resulting in increased requests from parents for the *Guide to Youth Services*.

### 3. Providing Reliable Information on Planning Efforts and Services to Children and Families

- ✓ *Publishing a directory and on-line listing of services to young people*
- ✓ *Establishing a "Cooperating Organization" clearinghouse to coordinate and inform local planning efforts*
- ✓ *Providing public and planners with available data on children and families*

CCF staff has developed several new resources designed to increase local knowledge and active usage of area resources for children and families as well as to coordinate planning activities among local agencies and coalitions.

In May of 1999, the Commission published *A Guide to Youth Services* in collaboration with the local United Way -- Thomas Jefferson Area. The Guide has over 300 listings of agencies and their programs. The collaboration between the CCF and the local United Way was intended to reduce duplication of services, maximize local capacity to maintain and disseminate updated information, and set the stage for joint publication of materials on an annual basis. Copies of the *Guide* are being distributed throughout the Charlottesville/Albemarle area libraries, schools, neighborhood associations, City and County offices, local community agencies, and all the entities listed in the Guide.

The original youth services guide, initiated by the former Commission on Children and Youth in 1981, is known in the community as a reliable tool for training social service agency staff. This year an attempt was made to make the directory more accessible to parents and children with a user-friendly subject index, an alphabetical list of agencies and programs, and concise descriptions of services.

This information, as well as updates on CCF activities and work groups, was placed on a new Web Site -- [www.ccf.ci.charlottesville.va.us](http://www.ccf.ci.charlottesville.va.us) -- in June 1999. The centerpiece of the web site is a search engine, based on the *Guide*, where residents and staff attempting to make a referral, or agencies searching for collaborators in a grant proposal can search for local resources based on a key word. The CCF web site is currently linked to the City of Charlottesville home page, and is being linked to the Albemarle County and Monticello Avenue home pages in July 1999.

Finally, CCF has established a means of inviting local committees, councils, and other planning bodies to join the CCF network as "Cooperating Organizations." This allows local agencies and planning groups to take advantage of the statistical, planning and service information that CCF has on hand. As well, it allows CCF staff can keep track of and coordinate the local planning efforts underway." Cooperating Organizations will be able to access local agency e-mail, consult

with the CCF on the latest local data, and strengthen their efforts by avoiding duplication of services.

*Appendix 9 -- Guide to Youth Services*

*Appendix 10 -- CCF home page from the Website*

#### 4. Providing Comprehensive Planning and Funding Guidance

- ✓ *Measuring the 'true results' of programs for children and families*
- ✓ *Revising the grant application process to focus on outcomes rather than activities*
- ✓ *Recommending funding decisions to City Council and Albemarle County Board of Supervisors*
- ✓ *Analyzing local funding trends to inform future decisions*

#### **Moving toward use of measurable outcomes in planning and allocation**

The CCF and the United Way-Thomas Jefferson Area have organized a work group of citizens, government, and agency personnel who have taken on the responsibility of ensuring that the City, County, and United Way grant review process gets at the question: *What are the true results for children and families?* This group has reviewed several approaches to funding -- including the Rensselaerville Institute's *Outcome Funding: A New Approach to Targeted Grantmaking* and the United Way's *Measuring Program Outcomes* -- and interviewed practitioners across the country who have successfully employed an outcome funding method of grant-making. By the fall of 1999, they aim to pilot an improved application and review process to objectively measure and describe how programs are impacting the lives of children and families over time.

The Outcome Funding/Evaluation Work Group is taking preliminary steps to revise the unified application form in an effort to transform it from an annual request for funding to a planning "road map" that will guide agencies' service delivery. Agencies will gain flexibility to provide targeted and responsive services through an adaptable plan, similar to a business plan, focused on customers, projected outcomes, and milestones along the way. As funders and CCF members increase their understanding of agency outcomes, they will more readily support their "investments" in local agencies. Funding decisions will become simplified -- based primarily on assessment of the agency's target plans, verification of last year's outcomes, and effective use of resources.

This outcome-funding concept will be presented in more detail to the Charlottesville City Council and the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors in the early part of planning for FY00 to determine whether leaders will find it useful in decisions regarding allocations. At the same time, the approach will be presented to local agencies for comment and discussion. If embraced by the community, the Outcome/Evaluation Work Group envisions inviting a pilot group -- of

between 3-8 agencies -- to participate in a first round with the revised application and review process.

### **Making Funding Recommendations**

During the winter of 1998-99, the CCF director and other citizen and agency members of the Commission participated in the annual FY00 funding review of fifteen local City/County agencies serving children and families. Commission members helped make recommendations to the City Manager and County Executive for allocation of over two million dollars.

This review process, which has been conducted jointly with the local United Way for the last three years, has been managed through the County and City Executive's offices. It is anticipated that the Commission members and staff will play a larger role in managing this funding and review process next year.

To inform this process for FY00, CCF staff is currently analyzing funding patterns over the last two fiscal cycles for the children and family agencies reviewed by the Agency Budget Review Team. By determining the amount of funds allocated in ten basic social service categories, CCF staff aim to discern the de facto priorities of the local governing bodies -- i.e., into what areas are the majority of our children and family funds being directed?

It is anticipated that this information will be used to help inform the development of a statement of priorities and outcomes that Commission members would recommend. It will also be compared on an annual basis with the "Stepping Stones" parameters to keep an eye on the relationship between local demographic trends and local funding patterns.

#### 5. Coordinating Services for Better Results and Accountability: Juvenile Justice, Therapeutic and Foster Care Services

- ✓ *Planning for cost-effective and responsive services to support foster care, special education, mental health, and other services for at-risk children and families*
- ✓ *Convening stakeholders in the juvenile justice arena to develop a set of guidelines and system improvements for the juvenile justice system*
- ✓ *Monitoring and enhancing the community's Virginia Community Crime Control Act programs*

### **Collaborative management of Comprehensive Services Act Funds**

A fundamental part of the CCF's mandate is to streamline and coordinate efforts among City and County agencies serving at-risk youth and families. Since the passage of the Comprehensive Services Act (CSA) in 1993, the state has provided an annual allocation of funds to each Virginia

locality, with a required local match, to support foster care, special education, mental health, and other services for at-risk children and families. The Comprehensive Services Act requires administration of the funds to be a collaborative effort among local agencies.

Before the Commission was established, CSA administration was the responsibility of the Charlottesville/Albemarle Community Policy and Management Team – agency heads from the Albemarle and Charlottesville Public Schools, the Albemarle and Charlottesville Departments of Social Services, the Thomas Jefferson Health District, Region Ten Community Services Board, the 16<sup>th</sup> District Court Service Unit, and a parent and private provider representative. CSA administration now became part of the Commission’s responsibilities, and policy decisions engaged all members, including the citizen, university, school superintendents, and high school students at the table.

The Commission’s CSA Committee is charged with developing procedures to ensure accountability for CSA funds, compliance with all state requirements of how funds are used, coordination among agencies using CSA, development of new services and cost-effective plans, and utilization review. During FY99, approximately 440 children in Charlottesville and Albemarle received CSA funded services, totaling over five million dollars. The CSA Committee also oversees the work of the inter-agency Family Assessment and Planning Teams (FAPT's) that meet weekly to create and review service plans.

Local practitioners believe that the driving force behind the increase in costs is a significant increase in the number of children with severe emotional or behavioral problems who are entering foster care and require specialized care. There are few options for local placement of children with severe needs, resulting in higher cost placements outside the community. In addition, Albemarle County has also seen an increase in both its urbanized and overall population. This comes at a time when the courts have made a shift away from family preservation efforts -- which used to keep children in the home -- to removing children sooner from situations involving substance and other kinds of abuse and neglect.

In addition to its significant monitoring and administrative roles, the CSA Committee has been engaged in several efforts to contain costs, which have been escalating statewide. These efforts include:

- Representatives of the Charlottesville and Albemarle Department of Social Services, Region Ten, the Court Service Unit, and the CSA Coordinator visited Hampton and Newport News and met with their CSA staffs. Having learned about both the creative service delivery and the problems faced by those localities, the CSA Committee (with the Case Authorization and Review Team) is now in the process of exploring the development of a pilot program that would assign a “care coordinator” to the children who are costing our community the most but who are making the most marginal progress.
- The CSA Committee has been concerned about making FAPT members and case managers aware of ongoing budget constraints. They have made the new recommendation that case managers present three alternatives when making service plans, including how to serve the child best if no additional funds were available. In addition, the Committee has

recommended the development of better ways to track and manage funds for children in the "non-mandated" category (children involved with the Juvenile Justice system).

- Since the fall of 1998, the CSA Committee had researched automation systems that would enable us to track, plan, report, and analyze our fiscal and policy-making decisions, as well as identify trends behind the rise in costs in the numbers of children and types of cases. Members of CART and the CSA Committee, as well as the CCF Data Management Work Group, attended demonstrations by the developer of Harmony software. After researching a range of software options, Charlottesville has purchased the system, and Albemarle is in the contract negotiation phase. This automated system will make financial reporting more accurate and effective, and will provide clearer information both on our service users and providers, that will help contain costs and improve service delivery.

In February 1999, the state CSA office carried out a two-day compliance review of the Charlottesville/Albemarle community's use of CSA funds and adherence to required regulations. The review, anecdotally reported to be "one of the best in the state," included the following comments:

- "In spite of the multi-tiered approach to administering the CSA, there appears to be no duplication in functions and the approach provides an ample number of knowledgeable individuals who can dedicate their time to specific tasks."
- "All required documentation was available and it appeared that placements are reviewed within the time frames established in the local utilization management plan."

### **Developing a set of guidelines for juvenile offenders**

The creation of the Charlottesville/Albemarle Commission on Children and Families provided the opportunity for key players involved in the juvenile justice system to bring an agenda for system-improvement to the forefront of local policy discussions.

With the assistance of a grant from the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, the CCF has established a Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee to recommend innovative improvements to the system, with an eye toward assuring equitable services and sanctions for judicially-involved youth. According to one member, "the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee encourages cooperation and communication among groups interested in juvenile justice and the local system -- something that has never been done before."

The Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee is comprised of CCF citizen members, leaders from the Albemarle and Charlottesville Public Schools, the Charlottesville and Albemarle Police Departments, the 16<sup>th</sup> District Court Services Unit, the Albemarle and Charlottesville Commonwealth Attorneys' Offices, the Albemarle and Charlottesville Departments of Social Services, Community Attention, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and the Region Ten Community Services Board. The adopted goal of the Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee is to create a system of local Accountability-Based Sanctions for court-involved youth, develop

uniform guidelines for services for youth at the point at which they enter the system, and to enhance service delivery.

As part of its planning process, the JJAC --- with the assistance of CCF staff and grant-sponsored consultants -- has collected and produced useful data on the juvenile justice system. This includes a flow chart detailing the local system of intake and diversion for a typical young person, combined with a listing of community and court-based services used by intake and assessment personnel as diversion options. In addition, the CCF Juvenile Justice Coordinator has been collecting available crime, truancy, diversion, recidivism rates, and other statistics to inform JJAC members on the numbers, trends, and demographics of judicially-involved youth.

During the summer months, JJAC members are reviewing this data, identifying strengths and weaknesses of the system, and developing a set of suggested steps for improving components of the system. A report on the first nine months of planning will be produced during the summer of 1999, with a more specific set of recommendations and implementation steps forthcoming in the second year of the grant.

#### **Using Virginia Community Crime Control Act Funds Effectively**

CCF's Juvenile Justice Coordinator provides administrative and fiscal oversight for all services funded through Virginia's Juvenile Community Crime Control Act. These services include: the Intensive Probation Program, the Delinquency Intervention Program, the First Time Truant Offender Project, the Curfew Center Program, the Electronic Monitoring Program, the CSU Purchase of Services Fund, the Juvenile Justice Coordinator's Office and the Community Attention VJCCCA funded programs.

The CCF Juvenile Justice Coordinator, with the assistance of an Oversight Committee, has centralized fiscal information and program outcomes to inform and guide local planning efforts related to VJCCCA-funded programs. This committee brings together the director of the 16<sup>th</sup> District Court Services Unit, Community Attention, the City of Charlottesville's Assistant City Manager and the Assistant County Executive for Albemarle, and the Director of the CCF to insure coordinated planning and broad buy-in for the community's crime control approach.

Staff and committee members have worked to insure that the locality's offerings are responsive and flexible, and are beginning to record their impact on use of services and recidivism over time. During 1999, bimonthly VJCCCA financial reports for all VJCCCA programs were available to local program and planning staff. Further evaluation and data collection will be collected for FY00 to help guide and shape pilot programs for assessment and referral of juvenile first time offenders.

#### **V. Conclusion: Future Goals**

The membership and staff of the Charlottesville/Albemarle Commission on Children and Families have spent this first year establishing a results-oriented structure, identifying CCF's priority issues and plan of action, collecting information on services and trends related to

children and families, working to improve the current mechanisms for funding children and family agencies, coordinating services for children and need, and becoming a central local force for promoting and facilitating a healthy community.

CCF members have begun a range of efforts to accomplish its mission of "centering the community on children and families." These include:

- by collecting reliable demographic and service delivery data, CCF will help community leaders develop responsive solutions to local needs;
- by "keeping score" of the ways in which our community nurtures children, CCF can keep the public debate focused on children and families;
- by facilitating the development of new Growing Healthy Families Partnership, CCF can help enhance the resources available to help parents ensure that their children are born healthy and arrive at school ready to learn;
- by delivering up-to-date information on local services and planning efforts to residents and agencies, CCF can help individuals navigate the human service system;
- by involving residents in planning, CCF can better understand the needs of children and families and inform local government responses to these needs;
- by linking state-mandated administration and oversight of juvenile justice, therapeutic and foster care dollars with local needs, CCF can support innovative and cost-effective local approaches to service delivery.

The work ahead of the Commission is to accomplish these goals with leadership and involvement on the part of all of its members, and active community support from the Charlottesville City Council, Albemarle Board of Supervisors, residents, local public and private institutions, and others. This will be particularly important as the Commission's work groups move from the research, planning and development stage to implementation of improvements to the system.

The initiative demonstrated by both the citizen and agency members of the Commission is promising, particularly when combined with the individuals representative of community agencies, parents, the academic community and other sectors active in CCF's work groups. The collective effort of individuals involved in chairing work groups, leading research efforts, organizing special events, managing coordinated service delivery, and advocating for a unified efforts to build a healthy community, gives the Commission a solid foundation from which to move ahead in its second year.