Models for Change Mentioned

The Newsletter of The Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission
‘Reforming Juvenile Justice’ – June 2011
http://www.jcjc.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/jcjc_community/5030

Reprinted with Permission of the Macarthur Foundation Newsletter, May 2011

States across the nation may be poised for the biggest wave of juvenile justice reform since the mid-1990s. Youth crime is down and fiscal pressures are causing states to rethink the wasteful and unnecessary warehousing of youth. MacArthur-supported research helped to establish the profound developmental differences between adolescents and adults, and the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled repeatedly that the justice system cannot ignore those differences…Pennsylvania, the first of 16 states to receive support from MacArthur’s Models for Change juvenile justice reform initiative, has instituted a range of changes in law, policy, and practice that are building a fairer, more effective and rational system…

American Press (LA)
http://www.americanpress.com/lc/blogs/wpnewssum/?p=23141

This week, the Calcasieu Parish Multi-Agency Resource Center will officially open its doors to the public. The center was designed over several years of planning in an effort to provide improved assistance to at-risk children and their families. The effort came together with the help of several local agencies and a grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation…So the planning board teamed up with the MacArthur Foundation Models for Change, which was (a) pretty big philanthropy out there. And they awarded the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury Office of Juvenile Justice a grant to develop and implement at that point a Community Assessment Resource Center…

Pennsylvania Summary

The Newsletter of The Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission
‘Pennsylvania Selected to Participate in Juvenile Justice System Improvement Project’ – June 2011
http://www.jcjc.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/jcjc_community/5030

The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University’s Public Policy Institute recently announced that Pennsylvania was selected as one of four states to participate in its Juvenile Justice System Improvement Project (JJSIP). The competitive application process sought to identify states with both the interest and capacity to implement the JJSIP effectively…
**Reading Eagle**

‘National juvenile justice program picks Berks for project’ – June 25, 2011  
http://readingeagle.com/article.aspx?id=316410

Berks County’s juvenile probation department is one of four departments nationwide to be selected for a Georgetown University program to find better ways to reduce crime. "We will be learning whether we are treating kids properly," said Robert N. Williams, chief juvenile probation officer. "The goal is to treat kids in the community." The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University in Washington selected its four departments from applicants representing 30 states...

**The Times Leader (Wilkes-Barre)**

‘Changes urged for judge rules’ – June 25, 2011  

A report by the American Bar Association’s Standing Committee on Professional Discipline says the state judicial system should change the way alleged ethical violations of judges are handled...Luzerne County President Judge Thomas Burke on Friday said the recently released report is another step in improving the state’s justice system...Burke noted that Castille and the Supreme Court have already instituted important rules changes in the juvenile system and will continue to review other proposed changes...

**Pittsburgh Post-Gazette**

‘Programs trying to reduce restraints have mixed results’ – June 26, 2011  
http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/11177/1156332-454.stm

Many providers who did not participate in the state's Sanctuary Model program worked to reduce restraints on their own. Some declined to release numbers to the Post-Gazette. Others reported varying results. Restraints at The Summit Academy, a facility for juvenile delinquents in Herman, fell from 91 in 2008 to 19 last year, said Joe Daugerdas, former executive director of the program...

**The Times Leader (Wilkes-Barre)**

‘Filing links Skrep to juvie’ – June 26, 2011  

His name doesn’t come up in the brief meeting between then Judge Michael Conahan and developer Robert Mericle at a golf outing years ago, but attorneys representing juveniles in a suit over their alleged illegal incarceration maintained they’re talking about former Luzerne County Commissioner Greg Skrepenak. In a filing Friday in U.S. District Court, Scranton, the attorneys, Elmer Robert Keach III of Amsterdam, N.Y., and Arnold Levin of Philadelphia, used the conversation and other evidence to support their case that Skrepenak received bribes from the developers of the detention center where the juveniles were committed...
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
‘A long road to a safe place: Children in state-licensed residential programs still face risk of injury’ – June 26, 2011
http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/11177/1156383-454.stm

Something as simple as a dispute about a piece of cake or as ugly as a trash can planted on a spitting child's head can lead to confrontation, injury and trauma for children in state-licensed facilities…In 2006, the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare began a campaign to reduce such incidents in the private residential facilities that care for abused and neglected children, juvenile delinquents and other youth with profound needs…

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
‘Staff turnover at youth homes makes job more perilous’ – June 27, 2011

With little warning, the girl attacked a staff member at a Zelienople facility, scratching his face and grabbing his shirt to pull him to the ground. The man tried to put his hands in front of his body "to defend himself," according to a report filed by the state-licensed residential program, Glade Run Lutheran Services. But in the scuffle, he lost his balance. He fell on top of the girl as she continued to fight. The March 9, 2010, incident illustrates what staff members at youth residential facilities will tell you in a heartbeat: Their jobs are demanding and dangerous. Working long shifts for as little as $10 an hour, staff in these privately owned, publicly funded institutions face tough decisions daily and harsh repercussions if something goes wrong…

The Scranton Times-Tribune
http://thetimes-tribune.com/opinion/fix-judicial-conduct-board-1.1167696#axzz1QrboDL6v

For the third time in two years, an independent body has recommended major changes to the operation of the state Judicial Conduct Board. Last week the American Bar Association’s Standing Committee on Judicial Discipline followed Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts and the Interbranch Commission on Juvenile Justice in recommending major reforms…

Beaver County Times
‘Juvenile justice system evolving toward more open proceedings’ – July 2, 2011
http://www.timesonline.com/news/police_fire_courts/juvenile-justice-system-evolving-toward-more-open-proceedings/article_f8b5b728-d610-5b70-87ff-b4fd7e948b22.html

Juveniles accused of committing a crime most often move through a different form of the justice system than their adult counterparts. But because of laws regarding juvenile defendants, it’s a process less known to the public. With a few exceptions, juvenile court proceedings are closed to the public. It is rarely known when a juvenile has been accused of a crime or what the outcome of that accusation is. However, it’s a system that is evolving and may lead to more openness…
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
‘New call for change: The bar association weighs in on judicial discipline’ – Tuesday, July 05, 2011
http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/11186/1158200-192.stm

Nobody can say that the juvenile justice scandal in Luzerne County did not send a shock wave through the Pennsylvania judicial system. In reaction to the lurid facts of two judges running a kickback scheme that exploited juvenile offenders who were sent to private detention facilities, a round of thoughtful introspection began about what went wrong and how it might be avoided in the future. A process of reform began…

Altoona Mirror
‘Teen to be tried as adult after fatal’ – July 8, 2011

A Cambria County teenager will stand trial as an adult in Blair County Court on charges he crashed his car at high speed in September, killing a 16-year-old passenger. Ruling from the bench Thursday, Blair County President Judge Jolene G. Kopriva said while Daniel Paul Sullivan Turous is "a troubled person," she was denying his public defender's motion to move his case to juvenile court…Two defense experts concluded Turous was an emotionally stunted boy who would benefit from five years of treatment to address a condition called oppositional defiant disorder. But Kopriva pointed out that if adjudicated through the juvenile system, Turous would receive only receive treatment and supervision for three years, until he was 21 years old…

Souderton Independent
‘Youth Aid Panel gives first-time offenders a second chance’ – July 8, 2011

For more than a decade, the Youth Aid Panel has been giving young people in the Indian Valley a second chance…The Youth Aid Panel is a diversionary program for juveniles who have committed a first-time, nonviolent summary or misdemeanor offense, said YAP Director Eileen Schaeffer. Instead of going to court, youths can be referred to the panel, and those who complete the program successfully do not receive a criminal record…
CNN.com – The Chart (Blog)

There's new research to challenge the idea that a young convicted criminal can't change his or her behavior. A study in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences suggests that the brains of juvenile offenders aren't necessarily maturing abnormally; rather, they are delayed in their typical development...

Illinois Times
‘Work beats prison’ – June 30, 2011

Three Decatur teens watch as a cloud of sawdust erupts from power tools operated by their wood shop instructor, Jim Taylor, in a warehouse used by Macon County Probation. For two hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays, these boys are like kids on summer break. In reality, Jimmy Lee, Tylor and Greg, are all minors on probation, and are one step away from serving time in one of Illinois’ eight juvenile prisons. But thanks to the Redeploy Illinois program, instead of being locked up, the boys are close to family in their hometown. They get another chance to make restitution for the harm they have done...

Reason Magazine - Online
‘Keeping Kids Outside the System’ – July 1, 2011

Rashad never took his eyes off his mother. While his public defender questioned him, Rashad clenched and unclenched his hands, answering in staccato bursts, his large brown eyes imploring or challenging his mother, who returned his stare from the front row of the courtroom. No, he hadn’t pushed his mother into the coffee table…Yes, he knew why his mother called the police and why she claimed he had pushed her first. She wanted him arrested. She had called the police before…A cheaper and more effective approach than arresting Rashad would have been referring him to Family Resources, a Pinellas County, Florida, shelter for runaway and homeless youth that also provides family counseling and an alternative respite from violent domestic disputes. Family Resources is one of 233 agencies across the country that belong to the National Network for Youth, which provides services to kids and families while keeping the kids out of the juvenile justice system…
News Summary
June 25 – July 8, 2011

Burlington County Times (NJ)
‘County looks for options for detention’ – July 3, 2011

The county will use more than $125,000 in grant money to enhance its programs for juvenile offenders within the county corrections system. For the third consecutive year, the county, in partnership with the Burlington vicinage of state Superior Court, has obtained a grant from the private Annie E. Casey Foundation. This year, the county will receive $125,200, bringing its total since 2009 to $405,200…

Northwest Herald (IL)
‘State treating some teen offenders as juveniles now and not adults’ – July 5, 2011

A state law placing 17-year-olds charged with misdemeanors under the juvenile court system makes legal sense to local defense attorney Matt Haiduk. Considering that a 17-year-old is not old enough to vote, buy cigarettes and alcohol or even agree to a plea agreement without a parent or guardian's permission, the statute needed an update…It's been more than a year since Illinois joined 33 states in placing youths up to age 17 under the juvenile court's jurisdiction. In McHenry County, as of June, there were 16 minors on informal diversion, and 12 are in formal juvenile court. These minors were 17 when they were charged with misdemeanors…

The Los Angeles Times (CA)
‘Editorial: A juvenile justice system that’s adrift’ – July 6, 2011

These are interesting times for those who work in the field of juvenile justice. In many states, lawmakers and voters are turning away from the 1990s model of treating youth offenders like adults and locking them up in adult prisons. Influential conservatives have banded together to support constructive and cost-effective alternatives to lengthy sentences. Across the nation, juvenile crime rates are falling, giving states some time and breathing room to restructure delinquency programs…
Reforming Juvenile Justice
The Newsletter of The Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission
June 2011
Volume 19, Number 6
http://www.jcjc.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/jcjc_Community/5030

Reprinted with Permission of the Macarthur Foundation MacArthur Newsletter, May 2011

States across the nation may be poised for the biggest wave of juvenile justice reform since the mid-1990s. Youth crime is down and fiscal pressures are causing states to rethink the wasteful and unnecessary warehousing of youth. MacArthur-supported research helped to establish the profound developmental differences between adolescents and adults, and the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled repeatedly that the justice system cannot ignore those differences. Practice reforms based on research have demonstrated that treating kids as kids, recognizing their differences and responding to their needs, reduces costs to taxpayers, makes communities safer, and improves the life chances of young people in trouble with the law.

Pennsylvania, the first of 16 states to receive support from MacArthur’s Models for Change juvenile justice reform initiative, has instituted a range of changes in law, policy, and practice that are building a fairer, more effective and rational system.

• An innovative community-based evening reporting center developed in Berks County has reduced the number of kids of color in juvenile detention while saving taxpayers $2 million.

• Local governments have expanded early screening and assessment to help identify youth who could be safely diverted away from formal court processing to effective alternatives.

• Juvenile defenders have been given the training and tools they need to ensure that youth have access to adequate representation.

These changes are proving to be sustainable. This year, the State announced more than $4 million in funding to help local governments expand these innovative models and practices introduced with MacArthur support. Fifteen other states have joined in the effort to create a juvenile justice system based on evidence rather than prejudice, dedicated to the well-being of the young people it serves, and focused on a better future.
This week, the Calcasieu Parish Multi-Agency Resource Center will officially open its doors to the public.

The center was designed over several years of planning in an effort to provide improved assistance to at-risk children and their families. The effort came together with the help of several local agencies and a grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Dane Bolin, director of the Calcasieu Office of Juvenile Justice Services, and Jason Barnes, special programs coordinator, spoke with American Press Managing Editor Bobby Dower and Staff Writer John Guidroz to discuss the services that the center will provide. Here are excerpts.


Dane Bolin: (State) Act 555 in 2004, established our governing authority the (Calcasieu) Police Jury, to establish a Children and Youth Planning Board. In that resolution, there were listed the stakeholders about 25 spots on that. The planning board was started in 2005.

We were required by the Legislature to have a planning board across the state in all jurisdictions. But nonetheless … all agencies in this jurisdiction are represented from the (District Attorney’s) office, all law enforcement agencies, a private non-profit, religious organizations. So it’s a big collaboration.

So we had this collaboration, and the intent of that legislation was to determine the needs of the community. So that’s what we set out to do. And this is not talk(ing) about us at a table, let’s do some surveys, let’s get public feedback. Well, we did a lot of surveys and when it was all said and done, probably guess about a year or so later, after this work was being done of trying to find what the needs are for Calcasieu Parish and specifically what could the planning board (do) to meet those needs.

Out of that discussion, the planning board determined a list of priorities. Number one priority at that point was a one-stop shop which we’ve heard about for years for service delivery for kids at risk and families who need services. So that was the concept … we had this (but) how do we get there?

Across the country, they are commonly referred to as JAC’s, Juvenile Assessment Centers. A Juvenile Assessment Center is more of a law enforcement approach only. And so you take these kids from law enforcement and you go through that process. Most JAC’s across the country are very law enforcement focused as far … even the interior of the building. We realized we didn’t want a JAC at that point. We wanted to accomplish the same thing that JAC’s do across the country, but we also wanted something unique to Calcasieu Parish.
So the planning board teamed up with the MacArthur Foundation Models for Change, which was (a) pretty big philanthropy out there. And they awarded the Calcasieu Parish Police Jury Office of Juvenile Justice a grant to develop and implement at that point a Community Assessment Resource Center. Down the road, we decided that (we) would call it the MARC — Multi Agency Resource Center.

So MacArthur came in and we received a pretty good amount of funding to develop this, and it took a couple of years. But that funding gave us the opportunity to bring national experts in. If they could build a JAC the way Calcasieu wanted to build a JAC, cause it hasn’t been done before, how would we do it? Not only do we get to come down here, we went to (Washington) D.C. to meet the folks a lot.

We also went around the country and looked at different JAC’s. Went to Miami Dale; it’s a very big juvenile assessment center — law enforcement approach. Went to a couple other approaches in Florida. We had some people come down from Connecticut and D.C. to tell us how they thought we should open a MARC and if they could have their way, what they wanted.

The turning point came, we had some plans already, we had a building out there, used to be an old halfway house and the Police Jury allowed us to purchase that building, but at that time we actually didn’t know what it was going to be. We knew we could use it. We knew that there was a thought process out there amongst the planning boards that we need a one-stop shop. But we didn’t have a route to get there.

It all came to a head as the planning board continued to meet and discuss what we really wanted. MacArthur funded a trip for 13 of our planning board members — which were judges, police jurors, private non-profits — to take this trip to look at a place in Colorado. So we went up there to take a look at this place and immediately walked in and saw how it was built, the aesthetics of it and everything else. We sat back there, I picked up my phone, I called the architect, I said stop. We’ve got some changes to make, we think we know what place we want to model. We wanted to model the actual building part and then we took the process from everywhere around the country and tried to put it in one deal. So that took care of how we wanted the building designed.

The other part of our planning board committee was talking about the processes that were going to take place. (The) biggest key about the MARC is that we have done these processes forever, but we were not very efficient at doing those processes. And a perfect example would be … a typical shoplifting case that would come … a child would get picked up shoplifting at Wal-Mart. Law enforcement goes to pick that child up.

The Juvenile Detention Center does not take misdemeanors because they are low-risk kids. You don’t want to put those with the high-risk kids. So law enforcement … (will) take that child to the police department, try to locate parents and guardians, do their offense report, refer that offense report to the District Attorney’s office. The district attorney reviews that report then refers it to our office, at which time we schedule an intake interview within 10-15 days. The family comes in; we find out what’s going on and plug that child into services. That was about a 43-day process. We looked at the numbers (and) the average time for that to take place over a year was 43 days.
We made it our goal that we can take our whole process on 43 days and put it down to two hours. And that seemed kind of crazy, but to the point we’re at today we have accomplished that with the processes and the flow of the MARC. Now a child gets picked up for shoplifting, law enforcement takes him to the MARC. We have two entrances, the law enforcement approach and then the family approach. Our goal is for law enforcement to stay there no more than 12 minutes and leave.

At the same time we run that child through … an assessment process. He sits down and takes a validated computerized screening, which may or may not send off red flags of things that are occurring in the home. We also have a face-to-face with the family at that point, and then we immediately deliver those services to him or put him in those services. Everyone got on the same page to help this process.

One of the bigger issues in the parish is what we call our status offenders. These are the ungovernable kids, the truants, runaways, those type of issues. Things if we did wouldn’t be against the law, but to them it’s against the law. If a child was having a domestic issue at night and took off out the door and kept running away and law enforcement had to go to that home, the juvenile justice system by law we do not take those kids into detention obviously because they have not committed a crime. And we could provide services to that family the next working day if we got the referral on time which sometimes we get them from law enforcement. But this now, we take all kids. We take kids from law enforcement, but we also take kids … people who just want to walk in.

Say if you want you think your child is using drugs and you would like a drug screen. You could walk into the MARC, we’ll give you a drug screen test and you could walk out. I think some parents are reluctant sometimes to go to Walmart and do those things. We supply those free of charge.

They could come in and say, “look I’m having some issues with my child, what can you do for me?” Then we’re going to sit down with that family at that point, no appointments needed, and we do the same assessments we do and apply those services. Many people are part of that collaboration private non profits for etc., Family and Youth, Big Brothers Big Sisters is part of the MARC. Now, if we see a match, we have guaranteed matches with Big Brothers Big Sisters which is very big for us on that. Office of Child Protection has already worked out of their office. They’re all providing services here, to the MARC or at the MARC. So, hopefully down the road, the more … we have the collaborations, but the more these state agencies can provide those services the better.

We also wanted to place, when a parent walked in, that their child was arrested or they just needed services, when they walk through the front door of the MARC, they weren’t in your typical government building. If you walk into it, it’s very nice. You’ll walk in there and say, “Wow, this is a different approach to dealing with kids at risk,” because families are stressed out enough. You want them walking in a place and immediately that de-escalation starts taking place. I think that you’ll see that the MARC does that.

As people walk in I just like to watch their face and say this is kind of … the colors and how it’s designed. And it’s designed for the process that we have. So the efficiency part obviously is huge.
One of the great things about it is the Police Jury Office of Juvenile Justice Services, when you open new programs or do renovations and you move into a new building, people say how many staff did it add to take this. We have not added one staff member, which I think is pretty unique.

What we have done is take these processes and realize we could do better and moved them around so that we keep the same number of staff. We just move them over to a different building, and we needed the space anyway.

One of the biggest things about it is over the years government entities have worked 8 a.m.-5 p.m. One thing that’s very unique about the MARC, we realize that looking at all the reports coming in and all the data. The problems are not occurring 8-5. When you think about it, kids come home from school, the problems occur at night. We had determined through looking at all the numbers that most of the issues have trouble in the home are really after school till about 11 p.m. So the hours of the MARC are 8 a.m.-11 p.m. And that’s just to begin with. If we find there’s a need down the road to open 24 hours, we will. We also determined that just because it’s Saturday, families are good over the weekend. So now, we’re open on Saturdays from 8 a.m.-11 p.m. The only day we’re closed is Sunday. The reason why … is the numbers just didn’t say we needed to be open on Sundays.

Friday nights and Saturday nights are huge. Law enforcement is spending a lot of time out there trying to fix these domestic issues, these crises in the home. Now they can bring them to us, we have (a) person on staff for crisis intervention, we have counselor on staff to handle those calls, we have our staff, we also have the staff of these other agencies that will provide services at the drop of a hat. We have hotlines out to those people. And we have a very detailed service directory through the planning board website on there. The main point is realizing that you could do better with the same resources, and I think we’ve accomplished that with not adding any things to our budget other than the remodeling cost itself.

American Press: So, in essence you’ve streamlined the process from weeks down to days and you made it much more user friendly for everyone involved whether it’s law enforcement or the counselors and the juvenile and their families.

Bolin: Right. I think you hit it right on the head when you talk about it you hear about government entities and bureaucratic processes the old pipe theory where there’s all kind of kinks in the pipe and you look at it and say what would you do without that kink in the pipe? And we straighten that pipe out, we think we have. And so we think that this whole process, although it was being done, it wasn’t being coordinated very well. And we felt that we had some things in place we could just make the process more efficient. But the whole part of the MARC is it doesn’t say the Office of Juvenile Justice MARC. That was done for a reason. The reason because it’s all these other entities. There’s 21 members on the planning board, and they all push this effort. So that’s why it’s just not one agency. Although it’s under our umbrella for certain it is one of the biggest collaborations we’ve seen in our kind of field of work.

American Press: Well you reached out to all the stakeholders and got their opinions and valued their opinions and tried to incorporate that into this one basic entity.
Jason Barnes: Well and to expand … is from an outsider looking in, not only did they do that, but this planning group also took nuggets from all these places all over the country and put the best result together where there’s nothing like it. I think that they already got some agencies from other parts of the country ready to come and look at this place as a model for their own project.

Bolin: The MacArthur Foundation is the one who gave us the funding the development part implementation. If you know anything about the MacArthur product, when you have a product that you have to finish, they insist that it be a model to replicate. In this case not just around the state but around the country. We are on weekly phone calls with people around the country to discuss the processes of the MARC. (An) institute who is part of the part of the MacArthur Foundation under that grant will come in two or three months after it’s opened to look at the process and see if it is being as efficient as we think it is. And so they are going to compile that data. But all eyes are on us across the country with the MacArthur Foundation and even the Casey Foundation which we do a lot of work with. But they’re very pleased with the product. They’ve been greatly involved and again, when you accept MacArthur foundation money, you better have a quality product when you’re said and done.

American Press: I think law enforcement, I think people in the (District Attorney’s) office, the judges, certainly the counselors and some of the non profits and certainly you understand the need. But the general public doesn’t necessarily know the need and quite frankly probably they would be astounded if they knew the numbers.

Bolin: Yes. I think that just on what we call our status offenders where truants and curfew violations, we receive over 1,000 referrals a year for those kids. And that’s excluding delinquency, the crime referrals. So, we’re looking in the neighborhood of 1,500 to 2,000 referrals a year.

Hopefully, most of those will be referred to the MARC. Again, we also do a lot of walk-ins.

The MARC is heavy on customer service. We trained on it. Our staff has been training now for months and we start that training off where you’re no different than you open up a furniture store. It’s customer service. A customer walks through the door you drop what you’re doing because most of the customers that come through our door are in crisis. Most of the time, pretty bad off. They’re having a tough time with their kids, and they just need help.

I think there’s a huge misconception out there that most parents or some parents out there really don’t want to help their child. I find the opposite. I think parents really want to help. I just don’t think they know where to go and I think the systems are too … we’re too complicated to help them out. And I think they get that a lot, but I think when they see MARC we have made them as much user friendly. School systems will benefit greatly from this process. One of those leaves and breaks off the collaboration, the MARC is almost doomed for failure.

American Press: What are some of the common denominators in terms of what’s bringing these kids in?

Bolin: There’s such a broad range. It’s amazing when people talk about the Office of Juvenile Justice. Most people think we’re just a detention center. But we actually deal with kindergarten …
we have one our task program which is a truancy program deals with kindergarten through 5th grade truants. I think we get about 400 referrals a year from the school system just K-5 for truancy issues. So, just in that itself program our processes or departments we have at OJJS are much more than juvenile detention.

Then we have the whole issue of families just don’t know what to do. The kids are being ungovernable in the home law enforcement has been at their home two or three times. And we bring those in and then we … once we meet with the family, discuss it with the child, we do some evidence based screening on them.

We take all that. Just not one computer screen. And then the key to the MARC also is plugging the families in and it’s just not the kids, not into services, but the right services. I think that we do a better job in finding the right services for the right family because you can do just as much harm by providing wrong services to the families. So, we’re going to take pride in having better means to identify those right services.

Barnes: One thing that you’re also saying with the MARC center is that you really want to lower that recidivism rate. For a lot of these services, OJJS already has a good recidivism rate at the detention center, but that’s something that you want to work on with the MARC.

American Press: And what you’re really doing is this is about rehabilitation as opposed to the old deal of well it’s prison for rehabilitation or it’s punishment. Well, you’re on the rehab side.

Bolin: We are definitely early intervention and rehabilitation. One thing that the public should know but maybe doesn’t that if you look at this crime statistics … juvenile crime is down almost 30 percent across the parish in 2010. So we want to ride on those coattails and continue that work that we’re doing. We do know, sometimes we can say we don’t know what works but we definitely know what doesn’t work: Taking these low-risk kids and putting them into a system with high-risk kids. You cause much more damage than anything when you do that. And we think that this process will only further that decline.

And I think again when you come out to the MARC you’ll see that the atmosphere is much different instead of going into the old processes and actually more user friendly. We’ll get to the point where a family needs to come in and they just don’t know how to apply for possibly food stamps or other government assistance. We’ll have a kiosk right there to walk them through that process. And these programs we put them into, we’re not just going to … we’re going to walk them through it.

We’re going to make sure … we’re going to close that loop to make sure that they’re delivered and that they’re delivered in a timely manner.

American Press: What is in place for assessment in terms of … is there a timetable where you’ll sit down and review and think well after three months or after six months or after a year we’ve done x and we need to be doing x plus y or we’re satisfied with x?

Bolin: When that family leaves the MARC, they will have a plan in place. That plan will be unique to that family. It could include simple things as community service but it might also be in depth that
they might have to go to functional family therapy. Or they might need a match for big brothers big sisters. Once we put those services that are unique to the family in place, they leave out of there with a paper case plan. We constantly do follow up at certain intervals to make sure that again we close that loop. And it could mean that they come back and things aren’t working and we reevaluate the case.

We have done a lot of preparation for the opening of the building, not just the remodeling part but the training our staff.

Online: www.calcypb.org

Top Stories - Pennsylvania

**Pennsylvania Selected to Participate in Juvenile Justice System Improvement Project**

The Newsletter of The Pennsylvania Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission

June 2011

Volume 19, Number 6

http://www.jcjc.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/jcjc_community/5030

The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University’s Public Policy Institute recently announced that Pennsylvania was selected as one of four states to participate in its Juvenile Justice System Improvement Project (JJSIP). The competitive application process sought to identify states with both the interest and capacity to implement the JJSIP effectively. Arizona, Connecticut, and Florida were the other states chosen to participate in the initiative. The JJSIP model requires a local implementation site with the intent of taking “lessons learned” for statewide implementation. Pennsylvania’s application sought to implement the JJSIP in Berks County.

Members of Pennsylvania’s team, who will participate in a week-long intensive training and technical assistance program at Georgetown, include the following: Judge Scott Lash, Robert Williams, Laurie Hague, and Daniel Heydt (Berks County Juvenile Court); Jeffrey Morris (George Junior Republic); Keith Snyder, Tom Green, and Richard Steele (JCJC); Michael Pennington (PCCD); and Elizabeth Fritz (Lehigh County).

The JJSIP takes the vast amount of knowledge gained through Dr. Mark Lipsey’s meta analysis of effective juvenile justice programs, which he translated into the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP), and embeds it within the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders, developed by Dr. James C. Howell and John Wilson. (For more information on this approach, please refer to Improving the Effectiveness of Juvenile Justice Programs: A New Perspective on Evidence-Based Practice.)

The JJSIP model is very consistent with the elements of Pennsylvania’s Juvenile Justice System Enhancement Strategy (JJSES). Five members of Pennsylvania’s JJSES Leadership Team will be
Berks County's juvenile probation department is one of four departments nationwide to be selected for a Georgetown University program to find better ways to reduce crime.

"We will be learning whether we are treating kids properly," said Robert N. Williams, chief juvenile probation officer. "The goal is to treat kids in the community."

The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University in Washington selected its four departments from applicants representing 30 states.

The program costs $225,000 and will be funded by a $175,000 Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency grant and $50,000 from the university.

The other three selected departments are from Maricopa County, Ariz.; Hartford, Conn.; and Pinellas County, Fla. Beginning July 31, the selected departments’ probation officials will train for a year at Georgetown, then help implement the programs across their respective states.

"This creates opportunities for us to be on the cutting edge," Williams said. "I am extremely proud that this is going to benefit the kids and families in Berks."

Court Administrator Stephen A. Weber commended Williams for being selected.

"Williams is a leader in statewide juvenile justice," Weber said. "Because of programs Williams started, Berks has fewer juveniles in costly placements, saving taxpayers millions of dollars."

Dr. Mark Lipsey, a professor at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., will work with the probation officials to determine what programs work to cut juvenile crime.

Since 2009, Williams said, his office has been using standardized assessments to determine the potential risk of juveniles becoming repeat offenders.

"The earlier you identify the high-risk offenders, the better chance you have at keeping them out of the system," Williams said.

In addition to Williams, Deputy Chief Probation Officer Laurie A. Hague, Probation Officer Daniel C. Heydt and Judge Scott E. Lash, head of juvenile court, will participate.
Williams said his budget for placing juveniles in community and residential programs was reduced by $2.2 million since 2007 by using less costly community-based programs.

He said the residential facilities could cost as much as $500 a day compared to community programs that typically cost $80 a day.

One program, the Evening Reporting Center at the Children’s Home of Reading, provides education and sports after school for juveniles who would otherwise be sent to residential treatment programs.

Williams said juveniles have a better chance of succeeding in life if their cases are handled in the juvenile system rather than the adult system.

He said he plans to work closely with the Youth Violence and Prevention project, spearheaded by St. Joseph Medical Center, to coordinate efforts to reduce youth violence.

"We see this as a countywide effort to target and identify the kids who need preventive services," Williams said.

Laura M. Welliver, youth violence project coordinator, said the program pools community resources to address the causes of violence.

---

**Changes urged for judge rules**

*Recommendations on judicial discipline come from a state bar group*

**The Times Leader (Wilkes-Barre)**

By BILL O’BOYLE

June 25, 2011


A report by the American Bar Association’s Standing Committee on Professional Discipline says the state judicial system should change the way alleged ethical violations of judges are handled.

The ABA said it would recommend amending the state constitution as a way to make those changes.

The report also recommends term limits for the Judicial Conduct Board and changes to the rules to make it easier for complainants to report information on judicial misconduct and to deny pension payments to judges who resign to avoid disciplinary action.

Luzerne County President Judge Thomas Burke on Friday said the recently released report is another step in improving the state’s justice system.

The ABA committee released its independent review of the state’s judicial discipline system and it will now be reviewed by the state Judicial Conduct Board and the state Supreme Court, along with state legislators, judges, lawyers and the governor.
In compiling its 56-page report, the ABA committee met with numerous parties, including complainants, litigants, persons directly impacted by the board’s operation, judges, lawyers, current and prior board members, chief counsel and staff, and examined case records and administrative files to get a complete view of the work of the Judicial Conduct Board.

Burke said he has not seen the full report, but he intends to give it a full review.

“It’s clear that (Pennsylvania) Chief Justice (Ronald A.) Castille and our Supreme Court consider this to be a matter of utmost importance,” Burke said. “He has encouraged the Judicial Conduct Board – which is an independent body under the Pennsylvania Constitution – to consider appropriate changes to improve the justice system.”

Burke noted that Castille and the Supreme Court have already instituted important rules changes in the juvenile system and will continue to review other proposed changes.

“It’s evident that all branches of government have made juvenile justice a priority in the wake of the Luzerne County scandal,” Burke said.

Castille issued a statement that the state Supreme Court initiated a comprehensive review of court policies and procedures shortly after the “juvenile justice tragedy that occurred in the Luzerne County court system came to light in 2009.” He said the review was done “to make sure that what happened in Luzerne County would never happen again anywhere in Pennsylvania."

Judicial Conduct Board Chairman Hank Abate pledged the board would carefully study the report and seek public comment on the recommendations.

“We are asking the public to review the report and offer their comments,” Abate said. “Our goal is to consider any and all recommendations that will improve our operation and increase public confidence in our disciplinary system.”

Programs trying to reduce restraints have mixed results

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
By Vivian Nereim
June 26, 2011
http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/11177/1156332-454.stm

Many providers who did not participate in the state’s Sanctuary Model program worked to reduce restraints on their own. Some declined to release numbers to the Post-Gazette. Others reported varying results.

Restraints at The Summit Academy, a facility for juvenile delinquents in Herman, fell from 91 in 2008 to 19 last year, said Joe Daugerdas, former executive director of the program.
Restraints at Bethesda Children's Home, a facility in Meadville, declined from 194 in 2009 to 134 in 2010, with 30 so far this year, according to facility data.

Restraints at Adelphoi Village, which runs several facilities in the region, stayed roughly the same, with 35 in May 2009 and 33 in May 2011, said Chief Operating Officer Mike McCalpin.

The organization is now seeking Sanctuary certification, Mr. McCalpin said.

"We're hoping...that I can give you better numbers," he said.

---

**Filing links Skrep to juvie**

*Attorneys for juveniles say judge, developer conversation implicates ex-commissioner.*

The Times Leader (Wilkes-Barre)
By Jerry Lynott
June 26, 2011


His name doesn’t come up in the brief meeting between then Judge Michael Conahan and developer Robert Mericle at a golf outing years ago, but attorneys representing juveniles in a suit over their alleged illegal incarceration maintained they’re talking about former Luzerne County Commissioner Greg Skrepenak.

In a filing Friday in U.S. District Court, Scranton, the attorneys, Elmer Robert Keach III of Amsterdam, N.Y., and Arnold Levin of Philadelphia, used the conversation and other evidence to support their case that Skrepenak received bribes from the developers of the detention center where the juveniles were committed.

The attorneys representing Angela Rimmer-Belanger, Joseph Rimmer, and Kelly and Zane Farmer filed documentation opposing the motion by defense attorneys to dismiss the suit.

Although Skrepenak has not been charged criminally in connection with the PA Child Care detention center, the plaintiffs’ attorneys said he was one of two commissioners who approved the county’s $58 million lease of the center that figured prominently in the corruption probe resulting in charges against the developer and former co-owner Robert Powell, builder Mericle, and former judges Conahan and Mark Ciavarella.

Skrepenak received a two-year sentence for his guilty plea in December 2009 to corrupt receipt of a reward for official action. He accepted a $5,000 reduction in closing costs on his home in Jenkins Township for helping a contractor get accepted into a tax forgiveness program.

The juveniles’ attorneys included that plea and the meeting between Conahan and Mericle in a list of circumstantial evidence that they said showed Skrepenak’s role in a bribery scheme surrounding the construction of the detention center and the placement of juveniles in it.
Powell, who agreed to cooperate with federal authorities investigating the former judges, wore a concealed recording device during a meeting with Conahan and Ciavarella on July 30, 2008.

While Ciavarella stepped away, Conahan told Powell of the meeting with Mericle.

“I’m golfing with him one day at the CYC,” said Conahan. On a par five hole he shared a cart with Mericle who inquired about Powell. They engaged in small talk and Mericle said something that stuck with Conahan.

“And he (Mericle) looks at me and goes, well, tell him (Powell) he has me to thank for him getting’ that lease,” said Conahan.

Back in February before they asked to amend their suit a second time, attorney Timothy T. Myers of Blue Bell, who represents Skrepenak, the county and other county officials objected in a letter to U.S. District Judge A. Richard Caputo.

The amended filing “alleges that former Commissioner Skrepenak received bribes from the developers of the juvenile facilities in exchange for his vote to award a lease to PA Child Care and Western PA Child Care,” wrote Myers.

He said the plaintiffs’ attorneys are “pushing the ethical envelope by asserting factual allegations that are simply unsupported at this time.”

But he acknowledged that could change with the testimony of Mericle at the Ciavarella trial. Mericle admitted paying $2.1 million in finders’ fees to Ciavarella for directing the construction of the detention centers to the builder.

A jury found Ciavarella guilty of taking $997,000 from Mericle among other charges.

Ciavarella is appealing the verdict, and Conahan and Powell are awaiting sentencing for their guilty pleas in connection with the alleged bribery and kickback scheme connected to the centers.

Mericle did not mention Skrepenak in his testimony, but acknowledged he possibly faces a stiffer sentence because he did not initially disclose that he made payments to other public officials.
Something as simple as a dispute about a piece of cake or as ugly as a trash can planted on a spitting child's head can lead to confrontation, injury and trauma for children in state-licensed facilities.

In moments of danger, workers in residential programs are permitted to physically restrain the youth in their care. Laying hands on a child almost always involves a struggle, though, and it is not uncommon for children -- and staff -- to get hurt. Sometimes, they walk away with bruises. Other times, they leave in ambulances, nursing concussions or fractured bones.

In 2006, the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare began a campaign to reduce such incidents in the private residential facilities that care for abused and neglected children, juvenile delinquents and other youth with profound needs.

"Nobody goes out and wants to hurt kids. I believe that in my heart," said DPW policy director Angela Logan. "I believe it was a perfect time for the providers and the state to get together -- and the family members -- to learn from one another."

In many of Pennsylvania's 767 residential programs, staff restrain children less often now. The total number of youth injuries reported to the state declined 7 percent between 2008 and 2010, though the number of youth in residential care also dropped significantly over that period.

But 361 incident reports obtained by the Post-Gazette show that children in residential facilities continue to face danger at the hands of staff members and peers, as well as their own. According to these reports, there were at least 264 injuries to children living in Western Pennsylvania programs between January 2005 and December 2010, including 17 bone fractures, four broken bones and 18 lacerations deep enough to need stitches. Most of these injuries were related to restraints. Recent reports show that some staff members still restrain youth for offenses like "aggressive posturing," despite repeated state bulletins reminding providers that restraint is "an emergency measure of last resort."

"We haven't moved as much forward with it [as I'd like]," said Marcia Sturdivant, head of Allegheny County's Office of Children, Youth and Families. "They have some challenging work. And it's not the worst, but it can certainly get better."

Dr. Sturdivant gasped as a reporter read some of the incident reports to her. "Oh my goodness," she said, reacting to documentation of a supervisor who "removed child from his personal space" during a verbal dispute. The girl's back hit a file cabinet; a laceration to her head was stapled shut.
"You don't remove kids from abusive situations to be re-abused," Dr. Sturdivant said. "It makes the people who work very hard to do the right thing; it makes the work that much more difficult for them."

A Post-Gazette review of the reports, as well as interviews with officials, parents, youth and staff, suggests that years of good-faith efforts to make institutionalized children safer have collided with practical barriers, entrenched staff cultures and, increasingly, a bleak financial reality for these publicly funded entities.

Complicating the matter, the DPW requires providers to report just a small subset of restraints and youth injuries, and did not compile the injury data until the Post-Gazette requested it, making it hard to evaluate state initiatives.

"I think we've done a lot better over the last six or seven years," said Allegheny County Common Pleas Judge Kim Berkeley Clark, who sits on juvenile court. "But we still have a ways to go."

Cynthia Allen, who lobbied for reform after her 16-year-old son died in a restraint in Lancaster County in 2006, said she is losing patience.

"This could have been your child," said Ms. Allen, of Bethlehem. "This could have been his son, or his brother, or his nephew. Anyone has the capability of having a relative go to one of these places."

A contact sport

No one disputes that the work of residential providers is tough.

"One of our typical clients is a combative client," said Gene Wisinski, CEO of Bethesda Children's Home in Meadville. "When they get frustrated, or feel disappointed or rejected, they've got a lot of issues that can bring about that aggressive behavior."

If a child moves to hurt someone, workers are permitted to use their hands to restrict the movement of the child or hold the child on the floor. The procedures are intended to protect; Restraint should be used only "to prevent a child from injuring himself or others," according to state code.

In this unpredictable line of work, restraint is a necessary tool, said Peggy B. Harris, president and CEO of Three Rivers Youth, a Pittsburgh-area provider.

"If somebody just mandated we would never put our hands on a child, I think that is an admirable goal to set, but not a realistic one ... ," Ms. Harris said. "Some of the work that we do in group home care, it's a contact sport."
From 2005 to 2010, children in Allegheny County facilities were hurt at least 123 times during restraints, according to incident reports and individual stories. Some injuries were minor: scratches, brush burns. Others were serious.

Danny's case fell in the middle. A boy removed from his mother's care after she developed a drug addiction, Danny was living in McKeesport last June, at a facility called Auberle, when he argued with a staff member about cleaning his room, he said. The staff member restrained him. Danny, then 12, ended up with a painful, bloody-looking eye: a blotch of red eclipsing the white. (The Post-Gazette is withholding Danny's last name to protect his privacy.)

The way Danny, now 13, tells it, the staff member flipped a chair over during the restraint, hitting him in the face.

Auberle does not dispute that Danny was hurt. Nurses evaluating the boy found a scabbed abrasion above his eye, abrasions and pink skin below and bleeding underneath the eye’s membrane.

The facility's documents note nothing about a chair, though. Nothing about a messy bedroom. Danny was restrained because he hit a peer with a trophy, Auberle CEO John Lydon said.

Before restraining a child, staff must "anticipate and de-escalate" the situation using other methods, according to state regulations. Mr. Lydon said his staff tried other ways to calm Danny, but failed.

"DPW's been called, done an investigation and long since left," Mr. Lydon said. State investigators determined that report of abuse was unfounded.

A complicated truth

To Danny's grandmother, a Penn Hills woman with custody of five of his younger siblings, the result of the investigation felt deeply unfair.

"I gave them to CYF so that they could take care of them for me, not abuse them," Dorothy Guy said, referring to Danny and his older brother, who has also lived in a residential facility. "They gave me their word that they would not injure them."

Each year in Pennsylvania, there are more than 1,000 reports of alleged child abuse at residential facilities. Incident reports indicate that many of these, but by no means all, are related to restraints.

The state requires "substantial evidence" of abuse to deem a report "indicated" and a criminal guilty plea or conviction to deem a report "founded." All other reports are marked unfounded. Last year, 98 percent of the reports from residential facilities fell in the last category.

"Most of these allegations are not valid," said Charles Lockwood, president and CEO of Glade Run Lutheran Services, a provider in Zelienople. "It's part of the psychology of the kids at times."
Indeed, numerous incident reports obtained by the Post-Gazette describe children trying to get staff members in trouble.

During a 27-minute restraint last year at the Bradley Center in Robinson, a girl told staff members: "I'm going to get you fired. I'm very good at it. I know what I'm doing," according to the facility's report. The next day, she claimed that a staff member had punched her in the eye, kicked her, choked her and bashed her head against the wall.

Staff do not always tell the truth either, though, according to a former worker at a local facility, who spoke anonymously. The former staff member, still in the child welfare field, said there was an "unwritten rule" in residential care: "It's never what you do, it's how you and your partner write your report."

"I have definitely wrote my share of reports where, you know what, did it really happen that way? No it didn't," the former worker said. "Was there a thing or two omitted? Yeah, maybe."

Sometimes, staff bribe children to stay quiet, promising perks or privileges, said Antonio McCaskill, a former foster child from Philadelphia.

Mr. McCaskill, now 21, said he was frequently restrained and sometimes hurt while living at a facility in Hazleton: "I got slammed into a pool table. I got choked. It was very brutal."

He did not talk about it.

"I really wasn't able to tell my people," Mr. McCaskill said. "Either I was afraid or I was afraid of the repercussions of the situation."

Judge Clark said it can be complicated to get to the truth.

"The bottom line is, if I feel a kid's not safe, I'm going to pull a kid from a program," she said, "And sometimes, quite frankly, I have chosen to accept the word of a child over the provider."

The move for change

In 2005, a Post-Gazette investigation found that children suffered repeatedly at homes licensed by the DPW. The state did not keep computer records or analyze data about such incidents, but the Post-Gazette determined that there were numerous injuries at Allegheny County facilities during the previous seven years, many related to restraints.

At the time, DPW Secretary Estelle Richman told the Post-Gazette that she wanted to reduce restraints "to practically zero."

The DPW took action in January 2006, issuing a "special transmittal" to providers clarifying that restraint is "an emergency measure of last resort." The bulletin advised providers that the DPW was working to create a data system "to measure the reduction of restraint statewide."
Officials began to travel around the state, engaging providers in tough debates, said Ms. Logan, the DPW policy director.

“The challenge that we had is it’s so easy to come in after an incident and second-guess everything that was done,” said Bernadette Bianchi, executive director of a membership association of private providers, the Pennsylvania Council of Children Youth and Family Services.

"At one point, the edict was 'no,' no hands-on anything," Ms. Bianchi said. "And then there was a lot of dialogue: 'Well, what do you expect staff to do if a youth is on the verge of hurting someone else?'"

In 2007, the DPW created the Home and Community Services Information System, a computerized process to replace pen-and-paper reports.

The same year, the DPW introduced a program called the Sanctuary Model to providers here. Participating agencies said Sanctuary certification helps facilities change their cultures, cultivating a nonviolent and "trauma-informed" environment.

The DPW sent the offer to join in to every provider in Pennsylvania, Ms. Logan said. Twenty-nine agencies were eventually selected to go through the process.

"It was a real partnership," Ms. Logan said. "It was tense, it was hard, but it was a partnership."

Ms. Logan said the initiative has been successful, with Sanctuary-certified sites experiencing less staff turnover, a decline in restraints and a drop in injuries from restraints.

Over the years, the "zero-restraint" goal was tempered, Ms. Bianchi said.

"I think that was kind of taken a little bit out of context," Ms. Logan said. "I think in a perfect world, nobody ever wants to be in a position where you have to restrain anyone. Just like I would want to win the lottery."

Ms. Richman, now chief operating officer of the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, left the DPW in 2009. Through a spokesman, she declined to be interviewed, saying she believed her position and that of the current state administration are not aligned.

Measuring progress

To participate in the Sanctuary Model, providers agreed to report every restraint.

Overall, the participating agencies reduced their monthly use of restraints more than 34 percent between January 2008 and February of this year, according to data provided by Ms. Logan. The average number of restraints per month per 100 residents declined 18 percent, meaning that the number of youth served must have fallen as well.

"These sites are proud of their restraint numbers," Ms. Logan said. "It's not like 10 years ago."
For the rest of the state's facilities, the DPW gathers information only on "reportable restraints," typically cases in which a child is hurt or someone makes an allegation of abuse. Providers must log all restraints for review during licensing inspections, but they do not need to submit that information to the state, DPW spokesman Michael Race said.

It would be impractical to require every facility to report every restraint, Ms. Logan said.

"If I put my hand on Mike and move him a little bit, technically, that could be considered a restraint. That's required in our regulations," she said. "They haven't been rewritten since 1997. They are rather an archaic package. The amount of reporting would be way too much."

As a result, DPW officials cannot say if the number of restraints has declined statewide.

Though the Sanctuary Model yielded results, the DPW has no plans to require the certification, Ms. Logan said.

"The thing about trauma-informed [care] is you can't require it," she said. "They've got to buy in. We sent the initial invitation to the providers, all 900 of them. Only 35 applied."

Part of the reason only a handful of institutions applied was likely cost-related, Ms. Logan said.

During the same years that many providers worked to make facilities safer, undertaking ambitious training programs, they hit a financial wall, hobbled by declining populations and stagnant rates of payment, according to numerous facility directors.

"You've got workers that want increases, you've got health care costs going up, you've got insurance going up, you've got utilities going up, and you get no increase in your revenue stream -- and you get more regulations thrown on top of you?" said Mr. Lockwood, the Glade Run CEO. "It becomes very difficult to provide a quality program, to have the adequate staffing you need for safety."

Changing cultures

In July 2007, a staff member at Bridgeville's Southwood Psychiatric Hospital was fired after pulling a boy out of bed and pouring water on his head, according to the incident report. "She continued to instigate the resident to the point of restraint," the report noted.

In June 2008, a boy at Glade Run Lutheran Services was sent to a psychiatric hospital after staff restrained him twice in quick succession. The second procedure ended when staff saw the boy "foaming at the mouth" and struggling to breathe, according to the incident report. A staff member later reported to a supervisor that staff had placed a trash can over the boy's head.
In April 2009, a counselor at Holy Family Social Services in Emsworth "secured" a boy's pants around his ankles and pulled him down some steps, according to the incident report. State investigators deemed the report of abuse unfounded, but Holy Family fired the staff member, finding that his actions did not comply with facility policy.

These incidents are rare, providers said. But they do occur.

Mr. Lockwood said his staff members had used the trash can as a "spit guard."

"That is still not acceptable," he said. "And they did get terminated."

Such stories illustrate the difficulty of reducing restraints and injuries: to do so requires a shift in institutional culture.

"You've got to retrain people in the way they think," said Jim Rieland, former director of Allegheny County probation and a consultant in the field.

Increasingly, facility staff are taught to try numerous techniques to calm children down before using physical force. Staff are also trained to recognize problems before they start, alleviating situations that might trigger an outburst.

These shifts are not easy, said Mr. Lydon, the Auberle CEO.

"People who are here a long time sometimes don't adjust well as we're doing all these things to change things," he said. "The biggest complaint I get is, 'This isn't the way we used to do it.' " Allegheny County CYF closely monitors the performance of residential providers. But ultimately, sending children into facilities requires "some confidence," Dr. Sturdivant said: a leap of faith.

"We only know what's reported to us through either the children or the facility," she said. "The monitoring of those kids is everyone's responsibility. Caseworkers need to be there to visit the legal representatives, parents. It should be a very open system."

Allegheny County's juvenile court judges tour facilities regularly, Judge Clark said.

"The ones that seem to be the most successful have longevity in their staff," she said, pointing to a Harrisburg agency, Alternative Rehabilitation Communities.

"That is a model that you want to look at, ideally what congregate care should look like or be like," Judge Clark said.

"I think we all need to have the opinion of 'What if it were my child?' " said Ms. Harris, the Three Rivers Youth CEO. "And this needs to be good enough, safe enough, for my child."
With little warning, the girl attacked a staff member at a Zelienople facility, scratching his face and
grabbing his shirt to pull him to the ground.

The man tried to put his hands in front of his body "to defend himself," according to a report filed by
the state-licensed residential program, Glade Run Lutheran Services. But in the scuffle, he lost his
balance. He fell on top of the girl as she continued to fight.

The March 9, 2010, incident illustrates what staff members at youth residential facilities will tell you
in a heartbeat: Their jobs are demanding and dangerous. Working long shifts for as little as $10 an
hour, staff in these privately owned, publicly funded institutions face tough decisions daily and
harsh repercussions if something goes wrong.

After the incident at Glade Run, the girl claimed the worker she attacked had abused her, saying
that he had "lumped her head up." Even when such allegations are deemed "unfounded" by state
investigators, they can still cost workers their jobs, according to 361 incident reports obtained by
the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

The incident reports, released by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, show that
despite years of good-faith efforts, children in residential facilities continue to face danger at the
hands of staff members and peers, as well as their own. But the reports also reveal that workers in
these facilities -- which house abused and neglected children, juvenile delinquents and other youth
with profound needs -- risk physical injury on a regular basis. They've been punched, kicked and
evenstabbed with pens by children in their care.

With high rates of burnout, staff members in the state's 767 youth residential programs quit or are
fired often: sometimes within days, usually after a handful of years, according to interviews with
officials, private providers and former staff members.

"There's big turnover, because they won't pay people what they're worth," said Robin Williams,
who quit his job at a McKeesport facility, Auberle, in December 2009. With a bachelor's degree and
six years of service, he earned $13.27 an hour, no longer worth "all the hassle and the
headaches," he said.

Hiring skilled people, training them well and getting experienced workers to stay is the first and
most important battle that private residential care providers face.

"You can't have bare-bones staff," said Jim Rieland, former director of Allegheny County probation
and a consultant in the field. "And when you talk about staff, that's the most expensive part of this
whole operation."
But as revenues drain, understaffing has reached "near-emergency" levels in some facilities, undermining efforts to keep children safe, according to state inspection reports and numerous facility directors.

Auberle CEO John Lydon said he would not argue with Mr. Williams' assertion that his program was understaffed.

"We need to have twice as many people as we do," he said. "We exceed all the state mandates, but at the same time, we need more people."

Danger and self-defense

In August 2006, a worker at a branch of The Bradley Center, in Robinson, was strangled until she lost consciousness and sexually assaulted by a teenage resident, according to court documents and news articles. She sued the agency. In response, lawyers for The Bradley Center wrote that "due to the nature of services provided," the boy's actions constituted "a hazard normally expected to be present in the workplace."

There were at least 264 injuries to children in Western Pennsylvania facilities from January 2005 to December 2010, according to the incident reports obtained by the Post-Gazette. It is impossible to determine how many injuries to staff there were during the same time period; facilities are not required to report staff injuries to the Department of Public Welfare.

One former worker at a local facility, who spoke anonymously, described taking two separate trips to emergency rooms for treatment after confrontations with youth.

Staff members are told repeatedly that child safety comes before their own safety.

"I hear you," the former worker said. "But if I have a kid who punches out a window, grabs a shard of glass and tries to cut me? All bets are off."

Staff members who defend themselves can end up jobless or legally liable, said Mr. Williams, the former Auberle worker.

Mr. Williams quit in protest after a teacher at the program's school was fired because of a youth's accusation, he said. The 280-pound boy moved as if he was going to hit the teacher, the teacher physically restrained him, and the boy's aunt threatened a lawsuit, according to Mr. Williams.

To prevent a child from hurting himself or others, staff members are permitted by state regulations to restrain a child, using their hands to restrict his movement or hold him on the floor.

"I put in my two weeks notice on the same day they fired him," Mr. Williams said of his colleague. Sometimes workers get "targeted," swept into accusations by an angry child, said Peggy B. Harris, president and CEO of Three Rivers Youth, a Pittsburgh-area provider.
"I remember a case where the person went through, in their mind, the humiliation of being implicated -- it turned out there was no finding -- and that person was not able to continue because they didn't feel they had credibility with the kids, or even amongst their peers," Ms. Harris said. "They felt like they'd been criminalized."

In this environment, staff members must be exceptionally well-trained to diffuse disputes, said Marcia Sturdivant, head of Allegheny County's Office of Children, Youth and Families.

"It takes some maturity and experience," Dr. Sturdivant said. "But, unfortunately, a lot of the people that work there are fresh out of college."

Hiring, training, retaining

The first hurdle facilities face is hiring "folks that have the credentials," said Bernadette Bianchi, executive director of a membership association of providers, the Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth and Family Services.

At the very least, staff members must pass a child abuse clearance and criminal background check. Even then, it is difficult to determine whether someone is cut out for the job, facility directors said.

"How do you pick that in advance?" said Mr. Lydon. "We actually find it takes us about 30 days as you're going through training to figure out, are you going to be good at this or not?"

Ashley Hartman, 20, of Mount Oliver, who lived in residential programs as a teenager, said facility directors need to work harder to scrutinize the passion of potential workers.

"When I walk into certain places, I still see staff that are too young ... that act like teenagers, that get in between the gossip and the drama," said Ms. Hartman, who works as a Youth Support Partner for Allegheny County CYF, helping girls navigate the child welfare system.

"I understand it's a difficult job, but I think you need to have a certain type of heart," Ms. Hartman said.

When facilities find good workers, the second hurdle they face is keeping them, Ms. Bianchi said. "This is very challenging and emotionally draining work," she said.

It is not unheard of for staff members to quit or be fired within days, facility directors and former workers said. As a norm, an agency might lose 35 percent of its workers in a given year, Ms. Harris said.

Last year, a DPW inspection of the Abraxas Center for Adolescent Females in Wilkinsburg found that the turnover rate for the month of May alone was 21.5 percent.

"Client safety was routinely being compromised," the state inspectors wrote.
"The chronic issue of insufficient staffing had risen to a near emergency level, making it impossible for staff to provide consistent supervision, much less, meaningful programming to clients."

A spokesman for The GEO Group, an international correctional company that acquired Abraxas last year, declined to make Abraxas officials available for comment.

State code mandates that one child care worker be present during waking hours for every eight children over the age of 6.

So when staff quit, facilities must act quickly to hire replacements.

"You give them a lot of training, a lot of support, they get good and then they want to move on to something else ...," said Susanne Cole, president and CEO of Pressley Ridge, a provider with facilities in several states. "Then you're constantly in this training and hiring mode."

Ms. Bianchi said minimizing risk "usually comes down to being able to retain staff."

"More experienced staff give you better outcomes, and there's research to show that," she said.

Because of that, continually training new workers makes it difficult to follow through on safety initiatives, said Gene Wisinski, CEO of Bethesda Children's Home in Meadville.

"Are they doing a good job? Do they get it?" he asked. "It starts the whole cycle all over for you of where you're vulnerable."

Money and morale

In recent years, many agencies that provide residential care have hit a financial wall, hobbled by declining youth populations and stagnant rates of payment per child.

As a result, the struggle to keep staff members has become even harder, according to numerous facility directors.

"We believe in this concept of a just wage," said Charles Lockwood, president and CEO of Glade Run, the Zelienople facility. "It's just hard to do that when your costs are choking you to death."

Mr. Lydon said money is not the most important factor in keeping staff, though: "We talk a lot about morale."

During the past five years, Three Rivers Youth reduced turnover significantly by creating an incentive program that encouraged peer recognition, Ms. Harris said. Staff stay for 7.8 years on average now, compared to 3.8 years in the past, she said.

The key is hiring people who truly enjoy the work, said Daniel Elby, CEO of Alternative Rehabilitation Communities in Harrisburg. Staff members stay for 12 to 15 years on average in his programs, Mr. Elby said.
"They like what they do, and they can see what they're doing is making a difference with the young people who we have," he said.

Despite the occasional "bad apple," workers in residential facilities are for the most part "really special people," said Mr. Lydon, the Auberle CEO.

"They clearly don't do it for the money," he said. "They clearly don't do it for the working conditions. In some of the programs, we don't have air conditioning."

"Sometimes those people get lost in the story."

Correction/Clarification: (Published June 28, 2011) A sexual assault to a worker at The Bradley Center in August 2006 occurred at the program's Robinson campus, which is still open. A story Monday about injuries to staff in state-licensed residential facilities misidentified the incident's location.

**Opinion: Fix Judicial Conduct Board**

*The Scranton Times-Tribune*

June 28, 2011

[http://thetimes-tribune.com/opinion/fix-judicial-conduct-board-1.1167696#axzz1QrboDL6v](http://thetimes-tribune.com/opinion/fix-judicial-conduct-board-1.1167696#axzz1QrboDL6v)

For the third time in two years, an independent body has recommended major changes to the operation of the state Judicial Conduct Board.

Last week the American Bar Association's Standing Committee on Judicial Discipline followed Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts and the Interbranch Commission on Juvenile Justice in recommending major reforms.

The Judicial Conduct Board has implemented some of the recommendations of the Interbranch Commission on Juvenile Justice, which was created specifically to study institutional issues, beyond direct criminal conduct, that contributed to the gross corruption of the Luzerne County juvenile court system.

But the ABA and Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts reports demonstrate that further improvement is needed.

The principal problem with the JCB at the time of the juvenile court scandal was a very fundamental one: it often seemed a mechanism to protect, rather than expose wayward judges. Some of its procedures reflected that posture. As the ABA noted, its requirement that complainants acknowledge that they were subject to perjury prosecution for unverifiable complaints.

The ABA said its Model Rules for Judicial Disciplinary Enforcement allow for information in any form from any source.
The JCB has said it is open to recommendations. Now it is time to act on them in order to ensure that the JCB becomes an instrument to consistently fight corruption in the judiciary.

**Juvenile justice system evolving toward more open proceedings**

Beaver County Times  
By Kristen Doerschner  
July 2, 2011  
http://www.timesonline.com/news/police_fire_courts/juvenile-justice-system-evolving-toward-more-open-proceedings/article_f8b5b728-d610-5b70-87ff-b4fd7e948b22.html

Juveniles accused of committing a crime most often move through a different form of the justice system than their adult counterparts. But because of laws regarding juvenile defendants, it’s a process less known to the public.

With a few exceptions, juvenile court proceedings are closed to the public. It is rarely known when a juvenile has been accused of a crime or what the outcome of that accusation is.

However, it’s a system that is evolving and may lead to more openness.

For the first time in more than a decade, possibly for the first time ever, the media was permitted access to a juvenile court proceeding in Beaver County Friday regarding an assault case.

Beaver County District Attorney Anthony Berosh said the whole concept of closed court proceedings regarding juveniles is to protect young people accused of crimes. Berosh said the hope is that it is easier to rehabilitate young people and keep them out of the adult courts.

Bob Rose, director of Juvenile Services in Beaver County, said when a juvenile is accused of a crime the first step in the process is for the police to submit an allegation form. From there an intake officer informs the juvenile of his rights and offers him a chance to make a voluntary statement.

Rose said many times when a youth is willing to make a statement — depending upon the seriousness of the allegations and his or her past record — the case can be resolved informally without involving a judge.

Unless charged with a felony, juveniles go before what is known as a “master,” or a court-appointed attorney who has the ability to hear misdemeanor cases, Rose said.

For some very minor offenses in which a hearing isn’t required, the juvenile may be referred for counseling or ordered to make a small restitution.

“We do a very sizeable number of those,” Rose said. “We try to divert kids from the juvenile justice system whenever possible and get them help.”

Juveniles are not found “guilty” as adults are. Instead, they are found delinquent.
While adults are sentenced, juveniles are given a disposition, Rose said. The Juvenile Services Division prepares a pre-disposition report — the juvenile equivalent of a pre-sentence report for adults — for the court before the case is adjudicated. The report is filed after an extensive look at the juvenile’s situation, he said.

Rose said there are a variety of tools used when evaluating juveniles to ensure that their cases are handled in the most appropriate way and that they get any help needed.

“We try to do as thorough a job as we can and based upon what we think is in the best interest of the public and the juvenile and is consistent with principals of balance and restorative justice, which is the philosophy of the juvenile court,” Rose said.

Open to the public?

Rose said that although juvenile court proceedings are commonly closed to the public, there are times when they can be opened.

“It’s not really a simple matter, because certain criteria have to be met,” Rose said of the exceptions.

The one obvious exception is when a juvenile is charged as an adult.

Changes in the law under then-Gov. Tom Ridge made charging a juvenile as an adult easier. It used to be that juveniles were charged as such, and the state had to argue to move them out of the juvenile system and into adult court. Now, juveniles charged with certain felonies can initially be charged as an adult, and there is a hearing to determine whether they should be moved to juvenile court.

Beaver County averages around 4,000 initial criminal filings a year, Berosh said. Of those, he said very few — fewer than 100 each year — are juveniles who were charged as adults.

There is a section of the law, which was also changed under Ridge, that states juvenile court proceedings can be open to the public if the juvenile is at least 14 and is charged with a felony, and either the state or the defense agrees to an open proceeding.

Such is the case in the charges filed against a 14-year-old accused of assaulting another teen in Ambridge, recording the attack and uploading the video to YouTube. Berosh has said his office will agree to public proceedings in that case.

Media were present Friday, though the hearing was rescheduled.

By the numbers

Selected statistics from Beaver County's Juvenile Services division from 2010:
* 691 delinquency allegations were filed.
* Those allegations represent 1,104 charges.
* 19 percent of those charges were felonies.
* 670 cases were adjudicated.
* 57 percent of the cases were handled informally.

**New call for change: The bar association weighs in on judicial discipline**

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
Tuesday, July 05, 2011

Nobody can say that the juvenile justice scandal in Luzerne County did not send a shock wave through the Pennsylvania judicial system.

In reaction to the lurid facts of two judges running a kickback scheme that exploited juvenile offenders who were sent to private detention facilities, a round of thoughtful introspection began about what went wrong and how it might be avoided in the future. A process of reform began.

A state-appointed Interbranch Commission on Juvenile Justice heard evidence and last year made recommendations. With the discussion broadened to include the question of judicial discipline in general, not just in the juvenile courts, Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts, a nonpartisan organization, recently issued its own recommendations to improve the system.

The American Bar Association has now come out with its report, which was earlier sought by the state’s Judicial Conduct Board. Although the ABA document has more detail and its own areas of emphasis, its recommendations mirror many of the points in the PMC report.

For example, both cite the need to expand public education and outreach about the judicial discipline system and both recommend revising a confidentiality rule that limits the Judicial Conduct Board.

Both reports see the Judicial Conduct Board as lacking sufficient funds to do its job. Unfortunately, that problem must wait to be solved. While the state budget just signed by Gov. Tom Corbett brought a welcome $22 million boost to the Unified Judicial System, the conduct board’s funding stayed the same -- $1.182 million.

Pennsylvania has been an elephant's graveyard for many reports. But with the continuing leadership of Chief Justice Ronald D. Castille on judicial disciplinary reform, we hope these different examinations can be a catalyst for meaningful change.
Teen to be tried as adult after fatal
death

17-year-old accused of driving under the influence at speeds of more than 100 mph

Altoona Mirror

By Greg Bock
July 8, 2011


HOLLIDAYSBURG - A Cambria County teenager will stand trial as an adult in Blair County Court on charges he crashed his car at high speed in September, killing a 16-year-old passenger.

Ruling from the bench Thursday, Blair County President Judge Jolene G. Kopriva said while Daniel Paul Sullivan Turous is "a troubled person," she was denying his public defender's motion to move his case to juvenile court.

It is out of a concern it wouldn't meet the varying needs of those involved, including the community, the victims and Turous himself, Kopriva said.

Turous, 17, of 267 Blacklick Road, Vintondale, faces 33 charges, including homicide by vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, aggravated assault and recklessly endangering others for the Sept. 25 crash on the 300 block of Blair Street in Hollidaysburg that killed Kelsey Lynn Miller, 16, of Nanty Glo.

Miller's father, Francisco Miller of Johnstown, said Kopriva's ruling to allow the case to move ahead in adult court was the right decision, one the family had hoped would come down, although it doesn't bring back his daughter and ultimately affects Turous' family as well as Kelsey's.

"It hurts. It hurts very much," Miller said. "This is just the beginning."

Turous was already speeding through Duncansville when a patrolman activated his lights to pull over the teenager's car in which Miller, a 14-year-old girl and Patrick Fyock, 21, of Vintondale were passengers, police said.

Police said Turous pushed the vehicle to more than 100 mph before hitting a curb and flipping the vehicle.

After the car came to a rest at Blair and Montgomery streets, Turous allegedly climbed over his injured passengers and fled before being apprehended a short time later by police.

Two defense experts concluded Turous was an emotionally stunted boy who would benefit from five years of treatment to address a condition called oppositional defiant disorder. But Kopriva pointed out that if adjudicated through the juvenile system, Turous would receive only receive treatment and supervision for three years, until he was 21 years old.

"That's where it falls short of the assurance the system can give you the help you need," Kopriva told Turous.
Turous’ run-in with state police in Cambria County five months after the fatal crash was also telling, Kopriva said.

Police said Turous, on an ATV with a 15-year-old girl passenger, fled when police attempted to stop the 17-year-old who was riding the machine on the road. While Turous' mother, Melissa Sullivan, testified Thursday that her son showed remorse and suffered sleepless nights filled with flashback images of Kelsey Miller's face and the skidding car, Kopriva pointed out that a mere months after the accident he showed scant signs the horrific crash had left any impression by fleeing police on the ATV. The lights of the troopers patrol car should have triggered thoughts of the Sept. 25 crash, causing him to stop, Kopriva said.

"Yet it didn't affect you, it didn't stop you," Kopriva said.

Kopriva's ruling came at the end of Thursday's four-hour hearing, the final chapter in Turous' bid to be decertified as an adult that began with testimony on May 27 followed by another hearing on June 16.

On Thursday, Assistant Public Defender Kristen Anastasi presented the admissions director of the George Junior Republic juvenile treatment and rehabilitation center in Grove City, who testified Turous would benefit from the type of behavioral modification programs offered at the facility.

April Hyatt, a treatment specialist with Nulton Diagnostic Treatment in Johnstown who has counseled Turous for the last eight months, took the stand again to reiterate her belief that Turous felt remorse for what happened, that he had the emotional maturity of a 10 or 11 year old and that he lacked the "criminal sophistication" to know what he was doing the night of the crash.

Psychologist Wayne D'Agaro of Altoona, a prosecution witness, countered Hyatt's claims and similar ones presented in previous testimony by Dr. Joseph Antonowicz, medical director of the Altoona Regional Center for Behavioral Health Services, that Turous was unable to know right from wrong or control his impulses because of his childlike mind and had acted out of panic the night of the wreck.

D'Agaro also testified that Turous seemed to show no remorse and had made very adult decisions leading up to the crash.

Blair County District Attorney Richard Consiglio said after the hearing he would have been surprised had Kopriva not denied the defense's motion, although he said it was not likely an easy one to make for the judge.

Miller's death outweighs every other factor, he said.

"The impact on the victims in this case is tremendous," Consiglio said, adding that Assistant District Attorney Derek Elensky's hard work and knowledge of the juvenile justice system played an integral role in fighting Anastasi’s motion.
Turous, who turns 18 on July 30, remains free on $50,000 unsecured bail, something Consiglio said will be discussed by his office. With the Cambria County incident, Consiglio said it's possible that prosecutors may move to have Turous' bail increased.

Turous, accompanied by his parents, rushed from the Blair County Courthouse Thursday without comment.

Because of the decertification hearing, Turous will not have the usual preliminary hearing in adult court. Kopriva will use the testimony from the decertification hearing and arguments to be presented to her by both sides to decide whether a prima facie case has been made to send the case to the court of common pleas.

Outside the courthouse, Miller's father said he worries Turous will get off lightly if convicted.

"We'll see if the system works," Miller said.

--

Youth Aid Panel gives first-time offenders a second chance
Souderton Independent
By Erin DuBois, Associate Editor
July 8, 2011

For more than a decade, the Youth Aid Panel has been giving young people in the Indian Valley a second chance.

"Kids make mistakes. This is a way to have them learn from their mistakes in a positive way," said Ginny Prevost, executive chair for the panel in the Souderton Area School District.

The Youth Aid Panel is a diversionary program for juveniles who have committed a first-time, nonviolent summary or misdemeanor offense, said YAP Director Eileen Schaeffer. Instead of going to court, youths can be referred to the panel, and those who complete the program successfully do not receive a criminal record. A program of District Attorney Risa Ferman’s office, YAP is administered by the Montgomery Conflict Mediation Center.

Prevost accepts referrals from juvenile officers in Souderton, Telford, Lower Salford and Franconia and from the state police barracks in Skippack. Panel volunteers, who commit to a minimum of one year of service, undergo background checks and training before meeting with youths and their families.

During an initial meeting, which a youth must attend with an adult, panel members discuss the offense, the family’s reaction and whether any punishment was already meted out at home.

“We tell them we’re not here to judge them,” Prevost, a Harleysville resident, said. “They already admitted their involvement in the act.”
Panel members also discover the young person’s interests and areas in which he or she excels at school. Then they put their heads together to come up with an assignment tailored to the individual’s interests in order to ensure successful completion, Prevost said.

Sometimes the assignment involves community service at a participating local organization, but that is not the only option. Young people committing retail theft have been asked to interview small business owners about the impact of theft on their establishments, Schaeffer said. One young person interested in art and writing created a children’s book explaining why the offense was wrong and suggesting better alternatives, Prevost said.

“We tell them it’s a one-time opportunity,” Prevost said. “The goal is to learn something from the experience and to give something back to the community, because what they did took something away from the community.”

The panel might follow the young person for one month or several months, depending on the seriousness of the offense and the number of tasks assigned. During this time, the young person is required to call an adult mentor once a week and to write apology letters, Prevost said.

Youths discuss what they gained from the experience during an exit interview.

“I haven’t had anybody who’s been successful say it wasn’t a positive experience,” Prevost said. “Both the juvenile and the parents say things they’ve learned.”

Around 94 percent of the participants complete the program successfully. Only 6 percent or 7 percent reoffend a year after completing the program, a statistic that has been fairly consistent since the program began in 2000, Schaeffer said.

“The kids really respond well and the parents are pretty universally happy with the experience,” Schaeffer said.

Lower Salford Police Department Sgt. Thomas Piatek said that the program also benefits the community.

“The benefit to the community is taking an active role in communicating with families that there’s a different opportunity here,” Piatek said.

Piatek became involved with the panel even before it became a program of the district attorney’s office, meeting with Bucks County panel members in Hilltown and Doylestown to view the process firsthand.

Previously, limited options were available for dealing with juvenile offenders beyond sending them to court, Piatek said, but the YAP offers a monitoring process and a way for community members to meet with families in a timely manner to create a resolution.

Volunteering on the YAP requires only a small time commitment, since the panel generally meets
once a month, according to Prevost.

“It’s a tiny, little thing, but it’s meaningful to me,” Prevost said.

Five other volunteers currently serve on the panel with Prevost, including a Realtor, a stay-at-home mother, a retired teacher and a pharmaceutical company employee. Prevost works as a counselor at Royersford Elementary School.

“I’d like to believe that we have helped students,” Prevost said. “I really think we have. Being hopeful that we are making a difference — that’s what I take away from it.”

The Montgomery Conflict Mediation Center is always looking for volunteers for the YAP program, Schaeffer said. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, but training takes place twice a year, with the next training scheduled for September. Panels range from three to seven members.

“I’m on the panel in my neighborhood and I absolutely love it,” Schaeffer said. “It’s a great way to help kids in your community.”

For more information, visit the Montgomery Conflict Mediation Center website at www.montcomediation.com.

Top Stories - National

Inside young offenders’ brains: Where impulsiveness comes from

CNN.com – The Chart (Blog)
By Elizabeth Landau
June 27, 2011

There’s new research to challenge the idea that a young convicted criminal can’t change his or her behavior. A study in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences suggests that the brains of juvenile offenders aren’t necessarily maturing abnormally; rather, they are delayed in their typical development.

"It raises very important questions about our treatment of juvenile offenders," said Benjamin Shannon, of the Department of Radiology at Washington University, St. Louis, and lead author of the study. "We need to have a discussion about the idea that these people deserve very harsh prison treatment, that someone at the age of 14 can be ruined for life.”

More than 90,000 people aged 20 and younger are incarcerated in residential placement facilities, according to the most recent statistics from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
Researchers looked at more than 100 juvenile offenders incarcerated in a maximum-security facility. They found specific patterns of brain activity associated with impulsive behavior.

"What we found was that it was the relationship between their motor planning regions and other parts of the brain associated with attention and control that predicted whether they were impulsive or not," Shannon said.

Study authors then wanted to find out whether they would see these effects in non-offenders, and whether they would fade in older individuals. Researchers tested 95 people aged 7 to 31. And they did find that younger brains seemed to have a "more impulsive" brain connectivity pattern; older participants' brains seemed to have a "less impulsive nature," Shannon said.

In other words, although the imprisoned young people received severe punishment, they have the potential to grow out of their impulsivity just like other children, and therapies may be developed to help them do that, he said.

"These juvenile offenders, they're not monsters, they're not something completely out of the ordinary. They're basically on the same developmental trajectory as the rest of us; they're just delayed a bit," Shannon said.

The next steps would be to follow up with these participants to see if the brain patterns have changed, and to see if there's therapy or training inspired by these brain relationships that might help, he said.

This research is not aimed at using brain scanning in a preemptive way - it's not to be used as a means of seeing who might be predestined to commit crimes based on brain patterns, Shannon said.

But it does contribute to a growing body of research suggesting that the brains of young offenders are different - even some 3-year-olds have brain signatures associated with committing a crime in the future. For more on that subject, check out this Q&A about the nature vs. nurture questions that arise.

---

Work beats prison
Redeploy Illinois keeps juveniles out of jail
Illinois Times
By Holly Dillemuth
June 30, 2011

Three Decatur teens watch as a cloud of sawdust erupts from power tools operated by their wood shop instructor, Jim Taylor, in a warehouse used by Macon County Probation. For two hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays, these boys are like kids on summer break.

In reality, Jimmy Lee, Tylor and Greg, are all minors on probation, and are one step away from
serving time in one of Illinois’ eight juvenile prisons. But thanks to the Redeploy Illinois program, instead of being locked up, the boys are close to family in their hometown. They get another chance to make restitution for the harm they have done.

Sangamon County doesn’t offer the program yet, but planning is underway. The quest for the Redeploy program in the capital city is part of a new statewide effort, complemented by legislation passed this year, to find alternatives to incarceration for troubled youth.

Program participants must be at least 13 years old, but most are 15 to 17 when judges refer them to the program. To qualify, a youth must not have committed a violent crime. The program’s goal is to give courts an option other than a juvenile prison sentence for youth who have committed nonviolent crimes like burglary and theft. Programs like the class Taylor teaches are part of an effort to help teens stay out of trouble. The Decatur program involves a network of social service agencies working together to keep offending youth out of juvenile prison.

“These kids are so much wanting to be respected,” says Taylor. “When you work with kids, there’s no cookie cutter that you can use.”

Jimmy Lee was a part of the wood shop class last year, but the class instructor ended his participation because he skipped too many school days. Even though he skipped school, he rarely missed Taylor’s wood shop class because he enjoyed it so much.

“We didn’t want to reward him for bad behavior because this was the only thing he liked doing,” says Taylor. Some of the kids may complain that they don’t feel like building a birdhouse, but Taylor adds: “You ought to see their eyes light up when they’ve completed something.”

Agencies form a task force to provide constant supervision, substance abuse counseling and mental health services, home intervention and life skills training as well as an anger management class. Someone is also available to drive teens to and from school, to court appointments or basketball at the YMCA. Success is measured in little things like attendance.

Before Taylor even picks up a power tool or has his students put on safety goggles, he and the boys gather around a table so they can talk. After a few minutes, Tylor is already showing off his cell phone ring tones to Taylor. The hip-hop tune isn’t familiar, but Taylor listens anyway.

“They kind of start seeing you as non-threatening. That’s why I don’t wear my probation badge or any of that. I try to just be a regular person. It gives them a chance to see a probation officer who’s not being a probation officer, necessarily,” he says. Although Taylor is not their probation officer, he works for the county and volunteers his time with the program, a better environment for them, he says, than they are getting at home or on the street.

Tylor is a freshman at MacArthur High School in Decatur where he attends Trisha Isaac’s special education class, which has two students who are part of the Redeploy program, a program she describes as “for those kids who might have a chance.” Isaac’s class is geared toward teens who have been suspended more times than their limit or have broken the law. Isaac is in constant contact with Tim Shelley of Love Christian Fellowship, a
partner of the Redeploy program. Shelley stops by the class at least once a week to check in with Tylor and to keep in contact with the students’ teacher to stay updated on their behavior.

Isaac says her students don’t want to let people down by getting in trouble, thanks to the program.

The teens keep busy during the summer helping elderly, disabled and low-income residents by working on their yards for free. Teens mow lawns and pull weeds for residents, sometimes as many as five to six lawns per day. They’re paid minimum wage by the program. Decatur resident Paula Rex cannot afford a lawn mower and appreciates the free service.

Lawn mowing supervisor Mike McCoy, dressed in a bright orange vest, sets a potted tomato plant down on the steps of Rex’s home as three youth finish up working on her yard. “I’m just thrilled they can help me out like they do,” she says, repeatedly thanking them for their work.

The potted plant is a way to show appreciation to those who take part in Redeploy’s lawn mowing service. Director and coordinator of Decatur’s Redeploy Illinois program Thea Toussaint says the work done by these youth change the perspective of those they help, like Rex.

“Somebody might look them in the eye and acknowledge that they’re human, which sounds simple but doesn’t often happen to these kids,” says Toussaint.

Working with these kids is not easy. “It can be trying at times,” says McCoy, who worries about safety of teens who participate in the job program.

Redeploy started under the dome

In 2003 the state legislature approved legislation to fund pilot programs for four Redeploy Illinois sites: Macon, St. Clair and Peoria counties and the Second Judicial District. The programs were expected to save the state $235.8 million over the first 10 years. Counties must pledge to reduce the number of youth who are sentenced to serve time in juvenile prison by 25 percent in the first two years. The 2011 Redeploy Illinois annual report shows a 53 percent drop in youth sentences from the Department of Corrections since 2004 because of the program. Last year the Macon County program received $321,650.

Redeploy Illinois funding has been cut for the past four years and staff at Macon County Redeploy say there could a 5 to 10 percent cut in funding if the proposed 2012 budget is signed into law by Gov. Pat Quinn. The budget approved by the General Assembly would cut Redeploy Illinois funding from $2.53 million to $2.48 million. Spokesperson for the Department of Human Services Januari Smith said in an email, “Continued expansion of Redeploy sites could be difficult, but we are looking for ways to manage the upcoming budget year(s).” She adds that funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) would help fill gaps created by the cuts.

While major juvenile justice reform remains a low priority for state government, the General Assembly passed legislation this year to set a standard for judges regarding how they sentence youth who have committed nonviolent crimes.
House Bill 83 would allow judges to exhaust all resources before sentencing youth to “hard time.” The legislation was pushed by the Illinois State Bar Association and the Juvenile Justice Initiative during this year’s spring legislative session. The bill passed both houses and awaits the governor’s approval to become law.

“We simply must reverse this trend,” writes Mark Hassakis, president of the ISBA, who has taken a keen interest in juvenile justice issues. “Expensive institutions are being used where there is little need for such investment and where it is arguably counterproductive.”

Will Sangamon follow?

The capital city does not have a Redeploy Illinois site, which would have the potential to divert youth from prison. That could soon change now that Sangamon County has received a planning grant to help the county decide if it needs a better juvenile justice program.

Frank Kopecky is a retired legal studies professor at University of Illinois Springfield and was president of the Juvenile Justice Initiative between 2004 and 2007. He is a policy consultant for a possible Redeploy Illinois site for Sangamon County. Kopecky sees a strong possibility for Sangamon County to become part of the state-funded program because there were 52 youth sentenced to juvenile corrections between 2008 and 2010.

“Decatur is involved, Christian County is involved, Peoria is involved, so we’re sort of surrounded. Sangamon would fit right in there,” he says.

Sangamon, Tazewell and LaSalle counties have applied for Redeploy Illinois planning grants. Sangamon was awarded $8,785 to analyze data from youth sent into juvenile corrections within the past three years. The Institute of Legal, Legislative and Policy Studies at University of Illinois Springfield is currently analyzing data on youths’ prior offenses, family life, age and ethnicity to understand the needs of future offending youth. Sangamon County will have until mid-August to apply for startup money if officials decide to do so.

Sangamon County Court Services Department director Mike Torchia says Sangamon County’s caseload of nearly 150 juveniles with five probation officers is “pretty much manageable,” depending on the risk-level of youth. But programs to supplement probation by keeping youth busy and out of trouble are lacking.

One reason the county has applied for the planning grant is to find out if there is a gap in court services or other programs. Terry Moore, assistant director of Sangamon County Court Services, says that services to youth have been “scaled back to where we’re doing what we’re mandated by the law to do.”

“As the state’s money has dried up, the city has not been able to sustain positions,” says Moore.

For example, the day and evening reporting program is an after-school program that once gave teens a meal and homework help, as well as a ride service. That program has since been cut.
It shouldn’t be hard to see that Sangamon County needs the programming, according to Kopecky.

“You can serve a kid better in the community and certainly cheaper than you can in a correctional institution,” he says.

A 2010 cost-benefit analysis by the Illinois Department of Human Services released May 19 shows that teens sent to juvenile prison from Macon County dropped from 51 to 36 during 2010, a 29 percent reduction. The state saved $736,869 in 2010 by keeping Decatur youth in their home community. The entire program saved the state more than $9 million in 2010.

But not everyone is concerned about the financial costs as much as they are the impact of committed crimes, even if they are seen as nonviolent by the court.

“That's not going to change our position on these individuals who commit violent crimes or who will not follow the conditions of the court,” says Sangamon County State's Attorney John Milhiser. “We will continue to ask for the Department of Corrections time for them when appropriate because the number one goal for this office is to make sure our community is safe, and if that means asking if these juveniles be sent to the Department of Juvenile Corrections, we will do so.”

There are now 27 counties participating in Redeploy programs, including Macon, Lee, Peoria, St. Clair, Christian and Marion.

The social services programs work as a team but many programs are a product of trial and error. Decatur’s Redeploy Illinois program connects youth to mental health counseling, anger management classes, and promotes life skills through hands-on programs, an effort to keep youth on a track to being productive members of society. Not every program is successful, according to staff and volunteers.

“But being one of the four original pilot sites, I think a lot of the error is behind us and we have moved forward quite a bit finding what’s worked, and what hasn’t worked,” says Taylor.

One of the goals of the group is to give youth a positive environment so they don’t have to worry about being influenced in a negative way. Chriss Walters, a home interventionist with the Youth Advocate Program, has nine teens on her caseload and has contact with most of them daily or at least three times each week.

“The kids look to us to help keep them on track. They know that they have somebody in their corner,” says Walters.

Walters is always on the move, often picking up youth in the program between activities and reporting back to Toussaint continually throughout the day. Youth seem comfortable opening up to her and she tries to be someone they can count on.

“I always tell them, I look at it like the boxing scenario, that they’re the ones in the ring, you know, fighting the fight,” Walters says.
“Their community service is really not a punishment,” says Shelley. “It’s kind of like they’re restoring the harm that they have done ….”

---

**Keeping Kids Outside the System**

*Alternatives to juvenile detention are cheaper and more effective.*

**Reason Magazine - Online**

By Irene Sullivan

July 1, 2011


Rashad never took his eyes off his mother. While his public defender questioned him, Rashad clenched and unclenched his hands, answering in staccato bursts, his large brown eyes imploring or challenging his mother, who returned his stare from the front row of the courtroom. No, he hadn’t pushed his mother into the coffee table. No, he hadn’t tried to strangle her. Yes, he tried to tell his story to the police. Yes, he knew why his mother called the police and why she claimed he had pushed her first. She wanted him arrested. She had called the police before. According to her, he was 14, “good for nothing,” and headed for prison like his father.

It’s bad enough that a judge has to decide who is telling the truth in domestic violence cases like this. Worse, even if found guilty of misdemeanor domestic violence, Rashad would return home with his mother. Imagine the dinner table conversation that night.

A cheaper and more effective approach than arresting Rashad would have been referring him to Family Resources, a Pinellas County, Florida, shelter for runaway and homeless youth that also provides family counseling and an alternative respite from violent domestic disputes. Family Resources is one of 233 agencies across the country that belong to the National Network for Youth, which provides services to kids and families while keeping the kids out of the juvenile justice system. In a 2001 study, Florida TaxWatch, a fiscal watchdog group based in Tallahassee, found that organizations such as Family Resources save Florida taxpayers millions of dollars each year by diverting youth from the juvenile justice and dependency-court systems. States that are struggling to balance their budgets should look to juvenile justice alternatives like these, which achieve better results at a lower cost.

While researching a book about my nine years of service as a juvenile judge in the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area of Florida, I met dedicated people all over the country who have had success deterring juveniles from crime. I reviewed the data. I found that diverting kids from criminal careers could save billions of dollars a year in prison costs while helping to create law-abiding, productive citizens, thus enhancing public safety. Here are a few evidence-based programs that work:

Civil citations for first-time offenders. Wansley Walters earned worldwide recognition as director of Miami-Dade County’s juvenile services division by working with law enforcement and social service agencies to help nonviolent first-time juvenile offenders avoid arrest. Instead they are given a civil citation and assigned to a program that matches their needs, such as drug counseling or
shoplifting prevention. Without an arrest record, it is much easier to get a job, obtain a scholarship, or enter military service. Walters diverted thousands of kids in Miami, saving taxpayers millions of dollars that otherwise would have been spent on prosecuting and detaining them. From 1998 to 2008, arrests fell by 46 percent, re-arrests by 80 percent.

Redirect. Administered by Evidence-Based Associates, a project management company in Summerville, South Carolina, Redirection focuses on more serious juvenile offenders, those who are not eligible for civil citations. By providing in-home family therapy tailored to the needs of the youth and his family, Redirection seeks to prevent institutional commitment. In four years of operation in Florida, Redirection saved the state $36.4 million in juvenile commitment costs while “significantly” lowering recidivism, according to the Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability. Why spend $45,000 a year committing a kid, sometimes just to give the family a much-needed break, when we can order the youth and family to cooperate with much less expensive in-home therapy that produces results?

Parenting with Love and Limits. This nationwide re-entry program, designed by Scott P. Sells, an associate professor of social work at Savannah State University, is aimed at preparing juvenile offenders and their families for the transition from a residential commitment program back to home. In Florida, where Parenting with Love and Limits (PLL) began as a re-entry program in the Tampa Bay area, PLL counselors engage the family in weekly “wound-healing” sessions while the youth is in a secure, locked-down, highly structured setting. PLL counselors continue to work with the family for weeks after the youth’s return home to ease the transition.

While early results with PLL in Florida are promising, Indiana’s PLL statistics, compiled by the Justice Research Center in Tallahassee under contract with PLL, are compelling. The one-year recidivism rate for the 189 Indiana youth served by PLL was just 16 percent, less than half the rate reported by the U.S. Justice Department based on data from eight states.

In March, acknowledging the money-saving potential of alternatives to detention, Florida Gov. Rick Scott took $10 million from juvenile correctional facilities and redistributed it to prevention, intervention, and diversion programs. Reform advocates were also encouraged by the Republican governor’s choice of diversion champion Wansley Walters to head the state’s Department of Juvenile Justice. If Scott, a Tea Party favorite who ran on a platform of fiscal restraint, understands the value of prevention, so should other governors and state legislators in these strained fiscal times.

Irene Sullivan (irenesullivan36@tampabay.rr.com), a recently retired Florida juvenile court judge, is the author of Raised by the Courts: One Judge’s Insights Into Juvenile Justice (Kaplan Publishing). Her website is raisedbythecourts.org.
**News Summary**

June 25 – July 8, 2011

**County looks for options for detention**

Burlington County Times (NJ)

By Danielle Camilli

July 3, 2011


Mount Holly — The county will use more than $125,000 in grant money to enhance its programs for juvenile offenders within the county corrections system.

For the third consecutive year, the county, in partnership with the Burlington vicinage of state Superior Court, has obtained a grant from the private Annie E. Casey Foundation. This year, the county will receive $125,200, bringing its total since 2009 to $405,200.

The foundation’s mission is that “all youth involved in the juvenile justice system have opportunities to develop into healthy, productive adults.” Its Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative includes promoting programs that reduce reliance on secure confinement, improve public safety and save taxpayer dollars.

Jude Del Preore, the trial court administrator in Burlington County, recently presented a plan for the use of the grant money to the Burlington County Board of Freeholders. Del Preore said the grant dollars would fund three initiatives, including the expansion of an existing program and the creation of two others.

He said the detention alternative initiatives are working considering that before, when officials began their efforts, more than 20 young people were housed at the Burlington County Juvenile Detention Center compared with the current 10.

More than $35,000 of the grant money will be used to expand the GPS home-monitoring program for juveniles in the system.

Lawrence Artis, director of the detention center in Pemberton Township, said the money will fund four GPS bracelets, allowing the program to support a total of 12 juveniles on home release.

Artis said about six juveniles are in the home-monitoring program, but the number can fluctuate as cases go through the system.

The grant also presents savings to the county by eliminating the need for a $91,000 contract with an outside service provider by transferring the monitoring program back to the Corrections Department.

Now, a detention officer will monitor the released offenders and be able to respond more quickly if the juvenile goes out of range or violates the conditions of his release, Artis said.
“It makes it a more effective and cost-efficient program,” he said. “It makes it a better deterrent for our kids when they are dealing directly with the officer, because it reminds them that they could be in detention.”

Artis said bringing the program in-house will not require any additional personnel or hours at a cost to the county.

While Artis hopes to keep juveniles and the community safe, Barbara Sopronyi, manager of the Family Division in the county courts, presented the freeholders with a new program to help bolster young offenders’ life skills. Juvenile offenders’ cases are handled in family court, unless a judge determines the matter should be waived to adult criminal court.

“One program is not going to fix them, but if we all do our part, we may be able to impact some lives,” Artis said.

Sopronyi presented a plan to use about $30,000 of the grant for a life-skills program that offenders would take in a series of classes focused on good decision making, communication, anger management and stress management. It would also work on job skills, including writing a resume, conducting a job search and maintaining employment.

“They come to us not well-equipped for jobs, and some of these kids barely get through high school,” Sopronyi said of the need.

Edwin Lee Jr., the county’s chief probation officer, presented plans for a program that will allow juveniles to put their life and job skills to work. The county plans to use about $54,000 of the Casey Foundation grant to start a community transition program for young probationers, Lee said.

He said the county now has about 360 juveniles on probation. Of those, about 20 are 16 years old and older and are neither in school nor working.

“They are in violation, and we need to focus on them,” Lee said.

The new program would have the probation department, through its officers, partner with businesses in the community that agree to employ the juveniles in the system.

“We would pay them to hire and pay our kids,” Lee said. “It would be for a minimum of 12 weeks, with the hope that they would maintain the employment after.”

The county has a similar program for young people, but not specific to juveniles on probation. Lee said he does not want to see the juveniles idle.

“If those kids are working, they aren’t out in the community committing new crimes,” he said.

In 2010, there were 1,816 new juvenile delinquency case filings in Superior Court involving more than 1,400 juveniles for a total of 2,789 alleged offenses, according to court records.
A state law placing 17-year-olds charged with misdemeanors under the juvenile court system makes legal sense to local defense attorney Matt Haiduk.

Considering that a 17-year-old is not old enough to vote, buy cigarettes and alcohol or even agree to a plea agreement without a parent or guardian’s permission, the statute needed an update.

"At least now it's more consistent," said Haiduk, who worked in the McHenry County Public Defender's Office from 2001 to 2003 before starting his own firm. He continues to represent juvenile defendants.

It's been more than a year since Illinois joined 33 states in placing youths up to age 17 under the juvenile court's jurisdiction. In McHenry County, as of June, there were 16 minors on informal diversion, and 12 are in formal juvenile court. These minors were 17 when they were charged with misdemeanors.

Before the 2010 law, the Illinois criminal justice system dealt with 17-year-old who committed misdemeanors as adults and youths 16 and younger as juveniles.

That meant a 17-year-old could be sent to an "adult jail" with hardened criminals, a "whole different environment" from a juvenile detention facility, said Jeanne Swanson, director of delinquency intervention programs for Youth Service Bureau of McHenry County, a division of the Pioneer Center for Human Services.

Proponents also pointed out that a 17-year-old's misdemeanor charge and subsequent court proceedings were made public record, affecting future prospects for employment or college. "Seventeen-year-olds are not adults, mentally or emotionally," said Susan Krause, Youth Service Bureau executive director.

In a report by the Campaign for Youth Justice, 15 states in the past five years have made changes to laws affecting minors in the criminal justice system. And at least nine states began efforts to make those changes into law.

According to the report released this year, "State Trends: Legislative Changes from 2005-2010 Removing Youth from the Adult Criminal Justice System," four types of trends are at play nationwide:

• More states and local jurisdictions are removing youth from adult jails and prisons;
• States are raising the age of juvenile court jurisdiction;
• States are changing laws to keep more youth in juvenile court; and
• States are considering new sentencing laws for youth.

The juvenile system comes with greater flexibility, providing more options for a more “individualized approach,” said Phil Dailing, McHenry County director of court services. In addition, the courts must protect these 17-year-olds’ misdemeanor files from becoming public record.

Some minors are referred to a counseling-based program, rather than being put through the formal court system. Referral to this “diversion” program is based on a set of criteria including the individual’s criminal history, Dailing said.

Others can be held at a juvenile detention facility in St. Charles in Kane County during court proceedings or get sent to the state’s juvenile justice center, an alternative to adult sentencing. In juvenile court, the focus is to keep families together and rehabilitate young offenders.

"The idea is that if a community can help address the root causes, there's a good possibility that they will never offend again," Krause said.

Misdemeanors vary, from battery to minor theft to underage drinking. Before the law took effect, a 17-year-old charged with a misdemeanor could have faced up to a year in jail, said McHenry County Assistant State’s Attorney Bill Stanton, who oversees the juvenile delinquency and felony review divisions.

Stanton said it’s still early for the McHenry County court system to “make a call” on the law’s impact.

“Cases haven’t been around long enough to come up with empirical data [showing whether the law] is working in terms of recidivism,” he said.

Felony cases remain under the jurisdiction of the county’s adult court system.

Initially, prosecutors were worried that the law would lead to an influx of cases to their office, McHenry County State’s Attorney Lou Bianchi said.

Early in the transition, jailers sometimes weren’t sure whether to detain certain 17-year-old offenders in jail or send them to juvenile detention in Kane County. McHenry County does not have a detention facility for juveniles.

“We had three lawyers on call 24 hours,” Bianchi said.

Meanwhile, because probationary terms last two years, the court system soon will be working with 19-year-olds as juveniles, Dailing said.

“Now that we have more youth at the transitional age range, we’re going to have to find ways to provide effective ways to hold them accountable in age-appropriate ways and deal with their risk factors that caused them to re-offend,” Dailing said.
The Youth Service Bureau has been serving youths up to the age of 21. But Krause and Swanson have been concerned with the statewide funding cuts to social service agencies.

"I feel that the current state of the economy and unemployment has driven more people to our doors than the law change," Krause said. "... From our perspective, as a community-based program, our major concern is that we've had several programs that received funding from the state [be] eliminated."

The agency is scrambling to secure alternative funding sources after the state slashed funding for its after-school Day Reporting Center for the 2012 fiscal year. Counselors work with 25 juvenile offenders, most of whom are court-ordered to undergo the program, to help them address issues tied to their criminal patterns. It costs the agency about $130,000 to run the program every year.

Meanwhile, Swanson points out, it costs taxpayers about $70,000 to house one minor in a juvenile detention facility for a year.

Although the law change in 2010 was a step in the right direction, Haiduk is worried that shrinking funds for juvenile probationary and remedial programs will reverse the trend.

"Less counseling could be ordered in the future because of less funding," he said.

---

**Editorial: A juvenile justice system that's adrift**

*The federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has real potential but has been left leaderless.*

The Los Angeles Times (CA)

July 6, 2011


These are interesting times for those who work in the field of juvenile justice. In many states, lawmakers and voters are turning away from the 1990s model of treating youth offenders like adults and locking them up in adult prisons. Influential conservatives have banded together to support constructive and cost-effective alternatives to lengthy sentences. Across the nation, juvenile crime rates are falling, giving states some time and breathing room to restructure delinquency programs. Momentum is building for meaningful and cost-saving reform. All that's lacking is national focus and strong leadership.

California's example shows what happens when that leadership goes missing. Draconian laws put into place in the last 20 years still result in too many youth offenders here being sentenced and imprisoned as adults. Our prisons are bursting, the failing Juvenile Justice Division of the state corrections department has turned over much of its mission to counties, and Los Angeles County's troubled Probation Department is operating under a federal consent decree while critics are calling for even broader scrutiny. What this state and many others need at just this time is effective and creative support from the federal office that for many years sorted through policies, promoted best
practices and offered research and technical assistance. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention could help states and counties sort through what works and what doesn’t — and then advocate for legislation and funding to continue reducing juvenile delinquency.

Instead, the office has been left leaderless. Halfway through his term, President Obama has yet to nominate an administrator for the federal office that once reliably developed national policies and priorities. It is one of only two Department of Justice nominations the president has yet to make. As a result, the office has drifted from its mission while letting states fend for themselves, spending too much money on incarceration of juveniles and on ineffective programs.

The federal government should not be expected to take over the states’ primary role in juvenile justice. But beginning in 1974, when Congress adopted the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, Washington has played a crucial role in helping states push their response to youth crime out of the dark ages. Now the act has lapsed, and without a leader at the office, bills to reauthorize it have gone nowhere. Federal funding for juvenile justice programs has dropped precipitously, and states have suffered as a consequence.

It’s well past time for Obama to name a leader for the office. He should act now, before more precious time is lost and more young offenders become set in their ways and add new burdens and costs to state justice systems.