



Fayette County Juvenile Probation

Juvenile Justice Journal

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Summertime Community Service on the Horizon

With the days getting longer, the weather warmer, and the school year shorter, the Juvenile Probation Office is getting the summer community service train warmed up.

The JPO will once again work with Wharton Township for litter pick-up on various roadways in the township as well as at the fairgrounds. Litter pick-up will also take place at Dunlap Creek Park. The JPO also works to clean and maintain several properties

owned and operated by the County as well as several old cemeteries within the City of Uniontown and North Union Township.

The JPO has worked in the past at the Joseph H. Hardy /Connellsville Airport, the Fayette County Fair and the Brownsville Area Revitalization Corporation and many others, and hopes to do so again this summer according to community service coordinator Mike Lukac.

A new project to be under-

taken this year will be graffiti removal in Uniontown. The JPO has received a \$600.00 Alternative Activities Grant from the Fayette County Drug & Alcohol Commission which will be used to purchase power washers for the project. The JPO will be working in cooperation with the City of Uniontown to complete the project. "We think that it's a great way for our kids to give back to the community," adds Lukac.



Administration of Justice Students at Penn State Fayette Campus

Spreading the Word

In what has become an annual event, the Juvenile Probation Office made an appearance at Penn State Fayette Campus.

Judy Sturges, an Assistant Administration of Justice Professor at the University, has annually asked Nathan Henning, a Penn State Fayette Alumnus, and Mike Lukac to speak to her class.

Officer Henning and Officer Lukac go over the day to day operation of the Juve-

nile Probation Office in Fayette County, including their duties and responsibilities. "Since our duties are different, it gives the students a nice contrast of what we do," according to Lukac.

Officer Henning is one of eleven community-based probation officers whose territory is the Albert Gallatin School District. He has contact with his clients in their home, in school, and within the community. Offi-

cer Lukac coordinates all of the JPO's community service activities as well as their Youth Commission Program. He also handles intake complaints from the County's District Magistrates.

"We enjoy the opportunity to pass along what we know to folks interested in a Juvenile Justice Career." adds Lukac.

From the Chief - Life Before and After BARJ



**Jerome M. Andria, Chief
Juvenile Probation
Officer**

**Has BARJ been a
success? My
answer to that is
YES.
--Jerome Andria,
Chief Juvenile
Probation Officer**

As I look around our current staff complement of 17 probation officers, there are only two of us who were here prior to the implementation of the BARJ Principals. I recall the day when BARJ became part of the Juvenile Justice fabric in Pennsylvania and I remember thinking how in the world we would be able to “pull this off.”

I know that I am dating myself but I actually attended a two day training 25 plus years ago on the BARJ principals presented by the authors. At that time I honestly thought that these guys were from outer space and this type of approach would “never” work in today’s juvenile justice world.

I also vividly recall reading the first drafts of the BARJ legislation and shaking my head and saying to myself “how in the world are we ever going to make this happen in Fayette County?”

I can speak from my own personal and professional perspective in this regard, and after getting over the initial shock, I thought to myself, “this stuff is pretty interesting.” Going from a complete child centered philosophy to one that pays equal attention to the child, the community, the victim, and at the same time emphasized accountability for youthful offenders seemed to make more and more sense the longer we were required to work with this BARJ stuff.

As an agency administrator I had the opportunity to begin building a new system of care and services within Fayette County. Within Pennsylvania, we had several things

to be very thankful for. First, we had an entity called the Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission who offered support, guidance, interpretation, and money to assist in implementing change. We had a State Legislature that, although I don’t particularly agree with all of the laws that they pumped out beginning in 1995, they did provide funding to make system wide improvements. During the past decade or so, we all became close friends with PCCD and some of us, for better or worse, also became experts in grant writing.

For me personally, I had two additional positive factors working on my side during this period of change; that being Boards of Commissioners and President Judge Conrad B. Capuzzi, whom I have worked with for 30+ years, who were both supportive of change and system wide improvement.

With the guidance and assistance of all of the above-mentioned individuals and entities, we have gone from an agency with four probation officers to our current staff of 17. I tell people jokingly that prior to BARJ, we were merely an agency that put out fires, while now, we take a comprehensive approach to all aspects of Juvenile Court services.

As an agency administrator, the BARJ system has given me an opportunity to be creative and objectively look at systemic problems and issues and develop programs and services that address these issues. Equally as important, I have taken these skills and am trying to apply them to

other systems, particularly the system reform efforts taking place with the social service delivery system for the County of Fayette.

Has BARJ been a success? My answer to that is YES. We just completed our annual Court Service Visit with our consultant, Keith Graybill, from the Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission. Part of that review is to look at the case closure statistic for the past four years. Not only am I impressed with the “numbers and percentages” but more importantly the activities from where the numbers are derived from; re-offending rates (lack thereof), restitution payments, completion of competency related activities, commitment rates. The two statistics that constantly amaze me is the level of restitution that we collect in full (almost 45% in 2007) and our school attendance rate, which is nearly 87% agency wide.

An outside observer may not view these accomplishments as significant as I do but when we take into consideration that the Juvenile Justice system in Pennsylvania operated for over 100 years along basically one train of thought and then one day in 1995, with the stroke of a pen, we totally shifted gears, these accomplishments are very noteworthy. Our colleagues in the educational system should be so fortunate with the coming of the “No Child Left Behind” statutes.

With all things taken into consideration, we as a justice system and as juvenile justice professionals, are much better off with life after BARJ.

Open for Business

The Albert Gallatin Youth Commission is back and open for business!

“For an extended period of time, Laurie and Bobby Mertz were the Commission,” says Youth Commission Coordinator Mike Lukac. “It’s nice to have things back up and running again.”

Joining the Albert Gallatin group is Rick Howell, who was a mainstay with the group before personal com-

mitments forced him to leave. Also joining is Uniontown attorney Mary Terry, who’s experience in child custody matters will be a valuable asset to the Program.

The group also has a new meeting place. Meetings will now take place at the Mount Moriah Baptist Church in Smithfield, PA. Meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. “It’s nice to have things

working again within the community that they serve,” adds Lukac.

More help is needed however. If you or anyone that you know may be interested in working with the Youth Commission anywhere in the County, please contact Mike Lukac at (724) 430-1223, ext 423 or email at mlukac@jpo.fayette.org.



Getting a Jump on the New Year

The Fayette County Youth Commission got a jump on the New Year with a training get-together on January 25th.

The Youth Commission has training seminars on a quarterly basis throughout the year on a variety of subjects like drug abuse / treatment, parenting, mental health issues, etc. The focus of this training was getting back to basics. “Sometimes it’s good

to step back and take a look at what we’ve done and see if we can do better,” according to coordinator Mike Lukac. “One thing that we will be doing different in 2008 is exit interviews with the Youth Commission clients and their families to get their perspective on the Program and its effects on them. It’s all in making what we do better for our clients.”

Another training seminar is

planned for April. This one will involve “mandated reporting”; which is making a report to appropriate agencies if it becomes known if a child is in imminent danger. This is a requirement for anyone working with children. “We have a lot of new members who may not necessarily be familiar with the requirement, plus it will be a good refresher for our other members,” adds Lukac.

“...it will be a good refresher for our other members.”
 --Youth Commission Coordinator Mike Lukac

Refuse 2 Abuse Rally

The Crime Victims Center in Uniontown in conjunction with Fayette County Children & Youth Services will be holding their annual Refuse 2 Abuse (formerly MASV - Men Against Sexual Violence) Rally on Friday, April 25th.

The goal of the annual rally is to raise public awareness of child abuse, sexual as-

sault, and victim’s rights.

The rally begins at 10:00 AM at the Fayette County Courthouse with a march to the Uniontown Fire Department lot on Beeson Street followed by a luncheon, raffle, and Chinese auction. The public is invited and encouraged to attend.

All proceeds will benefit the Crime Victims Center and Fayette County Children & Youth Services.

For more information, contact the Crime Victims Center at (724) 437-3737 or Fayette County Children & Youth Services at (724) 430-1283.



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The primary mission of the Fayette County Juvenile Probation Office is to protect the community through assessment, treatment, and control of juvenile offenders by providing a range of effective services based on legal requirements and recognized professional standards.

If you have any questions or comments about any material in this newsletter, please contact Michael Lukac at the Fayette County Juvenile Probation Office at (724) 430-1223 ext. 423 or e-mail at mlukac@fayettepa.org.

Send us your comments!

(724) 430-1223 ext. 423 or

email at mlukac@jpo.fayette.org



Groundbreaking ceremonies at the new East End United Community Center

East End United Community Center Groundbreaking

After operating out of their East Main Street Uniontown location, the East End United Community Center will be getting a new home.

Groundbreaking on the Center's new location at the corner of Butler and Coolspring Streets in Uniontown took place on March 31st. Completion of the brand new 6,000 square foot building is

expected to be in October, 2008.

The East End United Community Center's mission is to provide cultural, educational, recreational facilities and enrichment programs for the residents of the Uniontown School District and surrounding neighborhoods, especially those in the East End of Uniontown.

Construction of the new facility was made possible by donations from 84 Lumber Company President Maggie Hardy-Magerko, 84 Lumber Company founder and former Fayette County Commissioner Joe Hardy as well as contractor's in-kind donations.



Officer Henning and his fiancé



Officer Powell and his fiancé

CONGRATULATIONS!!!!

Two of our Probation Officers have decided to take the plunge and get engaged to be married over the last several months.

Officer Nathan Henning, a community-based probation officer in the Albert Gallatin School District (a former confirmed

bachelor) popped to the question to his girlfriend Tammy Simmons. They are planning a September, 2008 wedding.

Also joining the wedded ranks is Officer Gerald Powell, a school-based probation officer for the Intermediate Unit #1 Campus at Colonial. Ge-

rald and his bride-to-be Tiffany Crowe are planning a September, 2009 wedding.

We wish both couples all of the best in their future lives together!
