

PENNSYLVANIA Juvenile Justice

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From Mean Streets to Wall Street: The Right Choice at The Right Time

by Mark E., Vice President, Institutional Sales

I was born in San Louis Potosi, Mexico to a Pennsylvanian-German mother and a Mexican father. I was the youngest of four children. My mother fled an abusive marriage with all of her children, when I was four years old. We traveled to her hometown of Allentown, PA where we started a new life.

Growing up in Pennsylvania, I had no father. My mother became a middle school teacher. In addition to teaching she worked many side-jobs in order to support her children. Fortunately, my grandparents helped in raising us. Although I had no father, my grandfather became the father-figure in my life.

During my early teens my grandparents became terminally ill. My mother spent the majority of her free time caring for her parents. It was during this time I started hanging out in gangs and experimenting with drugs. With this lack of parental supervision, I entered into a life of delinquent activity.

At the age of 13, I formed a small gang. This gang was made up of boys with no fathers and little parental supervision. The members of this gang became each other's family. The boys were inseparable... if one member was involved in something... the gang was also involved in that situation. The members were all from poor families and were very close to one another. Therefore, once a few members began smoking pot the rest of the gang joined in. By the time I was 14, we not only were smoking, but were causing all kinds of trouble.

One day when I was hanging out with some of my friends, I was arrested for smoking pot in a car. As a result of this arrest, I was placed on juvenile probation for six months. This was the start of my four years on probation. During my senior year in high school, I was arrested two more times; once for Aggravated Assault which resulted in placement and house arrest. Because of this, I missed my senior prom and high school graduation. At this point in my life, I had no intention of attending college or pursuing a life on the "straight and narrow."

The year after high school graduation, I became immersed in criminal pursuits. My goal was to become the largest, most profitable drug dealer in my neighborhood. That was until two events would change my life forever. First, in February of that year, I met with a mentor assigned to me through the Lehigh County Juvenile Probation Department. This gentleman was a Wall Street broker who saw that I was "diamond in the rough." He spent time with me and eventually convinced me to enroll in a local community college. I did not realize I could attend college because my mother could not afford the tuition.

Within a month of deciding to go to community college, I was involved in a shooting. I was robbed, beaten and shot in the arm during the struggle. It was at that point that I decided to try something new in my life "another way." My mentor helped me to realize that, so far, my best thinking had gotten me nowhere.

I attended my local community

college and graduated with honors. I did not have any hope of being accepted to a four-year university, but with encouragement from my mentor, I applied and was accepted to Lehigh University. Lehigh took my background and financial condition into consideration and gave me the grants and scholarships I needed to attend the school. Prior to attending Lehigh, I began working with my mentor on Wall Street. My mentor realized the potential I possessed and allowed me to take the *Series 7 Exam*, which is needed to obtain a broker's license. At the age of 19, I passed this exam and became a registered Wall Street broker.

Three years later, I graduated from Lehigh University with a Finance degree in Business and Economics. After graduation I began working with my mentor in New York City. Two years later we became business partners at the Union Bank of Switzerland.

Today, my business partner and I have other team members and we all work at a Wall Street firm managing assets for corporations and banks. But I have not forgotten how I got here. I work closely with the Lehigh County Juvenile Probation Department speaking to young people at various functions. I am also a committee member of the Lehigh County Integrated Children's Development Program. I've been married two years and my lovely wife and I are parents of a healthy baby boy. I am living proof that hard work pays. It made the difference between a career on Wall Street ... or becoming another victim of the streets. And that's a difference worth working for. ✨

Second Chance: House-Arrest Program for Juveniles Finds Community Service Helps Rehabilitate Offenders

by Lillian Thomas

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A game of cards can change things.

A few months ago, James was in a stolen car being chased by police. The friend who was driving wrecked it, and James, 17, ended up before a judge. He learned about his new life on house arrest with an ankle and a crew of adults breathing down his neck.

One of the few places he was allowed to go was a McKeesport Personal Care Home in McKeesport, PA, where he was to put in community service hours.

Now the youth is an employee of Glenshire Woods Personal Care Home, serving coffee and setting tables for the senior citizens he has been playing cards with on Tuesday and Thursday evenings for the past several months.

This youth and three others hired by the home are in the Community Intensive Supervision Project (CISP), a house-arrest program started in 1990 by the Allegheny County juvenile court system.

"An integral part of CISP is community service," said Jim Rieland, Director of Juvenile Court Services in Allegheny County. The program aims to make children who have broken the law understand the effects of their actions and, to build up connections between them and others in their communities.

Youths at all five CISP centers do 100 hours or more of community service such as picking up litter or cutting grass during their six to eight months in the program. "The McKeesport center, started in 2001, has been strong in making community links," Rieland said.

"We require community service as a way for our clients to give back to the community they victimized," said John Fiscante, Supervisor of the McKeesport center. He was interested in finding a way to create one-on-one relationships with residents.

"We tried to go around the community and find a place. At first we were unsuccessful," he said. But last year, he talked with the administrators of Glenshire Woods, who agreed to try evening visits from four or five of the center's youths each week.

"It was a bit awkward at first, but once the cards and checkers were broken out, the conversation started flowing," said David Herchelroath, Probation Counselor at the CISP center. "The kids initially had to be

badgered into going to Glenshire, but now they all want to go." The Glenshire residents, who hadn't done much card playing before, now have the tables set up and are ready to start games of Tonk, 500 and Uno as soon as the boys walk in the door.

"Miss Mary, Miss Viola, and Miss Karen are waiting for us when we come," said a 16-year-old youth, who was arrested on charges of using and selling drugs.

Officials from both CISP and Glenshire were happy with the results — livelier seniors, kids forming bonds with older people in their community.

A month or so ago, Fiscante and the center's administration began to discuss the possibility of hiring some of the boys to work there. Two — a 17-year-old, and a 16-year-old — are working there now as nutrition aides. They set and clear tables, serve beverages and help residents at mealtimes.

Two other youths will begin working shortly. All four are nearly done with the CISP program.

Everyone involved is taking a risk. The personal care home, the court system, the supervisors of the CISP center and the boys all stand to lose if they blow it.

A spokeswoman for the corporation that owns Glenshire said it was the first arrangement of this kind she had ever heard of.

"We do work with other community organizations, like job corps, but this is the first one of this kind I'm aware of," said Holly Gould, director of communications for Glenshire Woods' owner, Milwaukee-based Extencicare Health Services Inc., which runs 440 nursing homes, assisted living centers, rehabilitation clinics and retirement communities in the United States and Canada.

Fiscante knows he is out on a limb. But the CISP philosophy is based on the idea that juvenile offenders are most likely to change their behavior permanently by being at home, closely supervised, rather than in a juvenile facility.

"Most ordered into the program are property offenders," Rieland said, "burglary, auto theft, misdemeanor retail theft, charges related to drugs, drug use and sales." Judges do not send those who have committed violent crimes or who are repeat offenders to the program.

They are supervised 24 hours a day. They are permitted to be at home, at the CISP center, at school, and at work if they have a job. At the McKeesport center, a staff of 14 supervises a group which ranges from 15 to 22 juveniles who live in the McKeesport Area School District.

The boys report to the center every afternoon and are dropped off at home around 9 p.m. After that, center staff members make phone checks and home visits. The electronic monitoring devices the juveniles wear on their ankles let CISP staff



Original photo: Alyssa Cavanger, Post-Gazette

James, right, plays cards with a resident at Glenshire Woods Personal Care Home in McKeesport. The youth and three others were hired by the home after taking part in the Community Intensive Supervision Project. All youths in the program are required to do 100 hours or more of community service.



know if they are anywhere they aren't supposed to be; violations show up on a computerized system that is monitored day and night.

Police have photos of all the CISP youths in case they disappear. If they are in violation, they are taken to Shuman Juvenile Detention Center.

Probation officers are involved in the program, which includes frequent group meetings to discuss problems or successes. There is a drug and alcohol counselor on staff, and the juveniles are regularly drug tested. They also pay restitution, where required, and write letters of apology to victims, where appropriate.

"We're trying to change everything," Fiscante said. Boys must respond with "yes, sirs" and "ma'ams" to all adults.

During a card game last week, a resident dealt and the game clicked along with the efficient ease of familiar routine. The boys talked to their older companions, leaning over to discuss the hands and play. They were routinely and consistently polite, minding their "yes, ma'ams."

Gould, the spokeswoman for Extendicare, said that because CISP itself is so unusual, she didn't expect to get more requests of this sort from other facilities.

"I think it's fairly unique. We will evaluate the success after a period of time. We are always looking for ways to bring people into the long-term care industry, and volunteering, to see if they are interested in the work, is a good way to do that." ♣

For further information, please contact Lillian Thomas at 412-263-3566 or lthomas@post-gazette.com.



Another youth shares a laugh with a Glenshire Woods resident.

Getting the Message & Making Good Choices

submitted by Thomas Gregor, PA Youth Development Centers

Terrell* was 16 years old when he was sent to the Dual Recovery Program at YDC New Castle by the Philadelphia court. The intake alert on him was typical of other students sent to the program from Philadelphia; dropped out of school at age 13, running the streets, selling drugs, violence, guns, angry at his life and everyone in it. His father was incarcerated for most of Terrell's life and his mother and grandmother raised him.

Tragedy struck when his mom died of AIDS when he was 13, which is when problems with the law began. When he arrived at the Dual Recovery Program, they were uncertain if he was even appropriately placed due to his history of violence. The next eight months were full of hard work, dedication and behavioral changes. Even though he had been out of school for three years and had fallen behind, his dedicated efforts earned the respect of staff and teachers and he was voted student of the year at Frew Mill School.

When it came time for discharge, Terrell had developed a positive relationship with staff built on honesty and trust. It was clear that what he wanted most was someone to believe in him and give him an opportunity to make a life away from the streets of Philadelphia. His discharge plan included placing him at the Bair Foundation Foster Care Program in Lawrence County and enrolling him in the local high school as a junior. Soon school and basketball became his world and he worked hard to excel in both. In May of 2004 Terrell graduated with a 3.0 grade point average and was the captain of the basketball team.

After graduation, the financial support from the Court ended and he moved into the home of his former counselor at the Dual Recovery Program to become part of the family. He currently is attending Southwest Jr. College in Iowa and following his dream to earn a degree and play basketball. Once again he is doing well in both. Terrell is now 19 and has not forgotten the help and support he received in the Dual Recovery Program at YDC New Castle. He has returned a number of times to talk with the students, providing encouragement and inspiration. He was the main speaker at Frew Mill School's graduation ceremonies in June of 2004.

* not his real name

My name is Tyrone. I am an 18-year-old African-American from North Philadelphia ... and I was headed for a lifetime of trouble.

Arriving at YDC on Jan. 2, 2004, I did not care and I told myself to do my time and get out. I began, as I have in the past, "falling" back and building superficial relationships with the staff.

There was something different about this placement. There was a very high fence, barbed wire and a highly structured program. But something that really impacted me was the way my counselor shared with me the concepts of core beliefs, distorted thinking patterns and how they controlled my life.

We worked on the idea that to change my future I had to look at my past and my anger. At first I didn't care, or want to care, about the things that the program was teaching. Then after being here a couple of months, the Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) program taught me that I can make it successfully without the street mentality. To make it, we must make things right from our past, even if they are unfixable. BARJ gives an understanding that the crimes that we commit don't just affect us as individuals but they affect our communities, our families, and the next generation. We should look at authority figures as people who can help us and not as the enemy. I am in the process of changing my inner self. I achieved my High School Diploma and graduated Valedictorian of my class. I am now attending the Community College of Butler County by taking on-line classes.

As I look back on my life, I would never have dreamed that I would graduate from high school and take college classes. My family is very proud of me and has been very supportive. I am living proof that lives can be changed for the better. It is important to recognize that the staff and programs of placement facilities can make a huge impact on turning lives around.

A Profile of Victim Offender Mediation

by Gale McGloin, Pittsburgh Mediation Center



Susan was distraught over the recent break-up with her boyfriend. She didn't want to live anymore if she couldn't be with Tom. She took off in her mother's car with the intent to hurt herself.

Down the street, Ms. Lewis had just pulled up in front of her babysitter's house. Her boyfriend, Mr. Parker, went in to pick up their four-year-old son, while she waited in the car. Suddenly she was hit from behind. Susan had driven her mother's car into a parked car and pushed it under Ms. Lewis's vehicle.

Susan fled from the vehicle but quickly sat down on the curb, overcome by what had happened. After checking on Ms. Lewis, Mr. Parker walked over to Susan, cell phone in hand. He wanted to be sure she was okay and asked if she wanted to call anyone. When Susan was unable to make any decisions, Mr. Parker became concerned. Just then the police and paramedics pulled up, and Susan was taken to the hospital. After some time spent in therapy, Susan was able to return to school and graduate. Though anxious, she was also ready to face the victims of her actions.

Ms. Lewis and Ms. Michaels, the owner of the unoccupied vehicle, both agreed to take part in Victim Offender Mediation with Susan. They wanted to make sure that Susan was all right and felt this was the best way to support her. Though willing to participate, Ms. Lewis was struggling. Six years earlier, her two-

year-old son was hit and killed by a drunk driver. This accident and the thought that her son could have been in the car were impacting her both physically and emotionally. Despite her own pain, however, Ms. Lewis was still adamant about participating. Susan had made a mistake and neither Ms. Lewis nor Ms. Michaels wanted this to ruin her life.

After discussing the incident with Susan and hearing her story, Ms. Lewis and Ms. Michaels shared about the impact Susan's actions had upon them as well as expressing their concern for Susan. In coming to an agreement, neither woman requested community service or sought financial restitution as insurance had covered their expenses. Since Susan was preparing to begin her first year of college away from home, the women asked for one letter each per month for six months from Susan to let them know how she was and what she was doing with her life. These letters would be sent via PMC. Ms. Michaels in turn chose to write to Susan, sharing her personal struggles and feelings as well while encouraging Susan in her school work. Upon completion of the agreement, Ms. Michaels requested that Susan be sent a letter from her with her personal contact information so they could maintain the relationship that they had developed.

Victim Offender Mediation allowed the victims to meet and speak with their offender and receive the restitution they desired. It is a voluntary, victim-sensitive process which gave the crime victims the opportunity to choose an alternative that met their needs. At the same time, a young woman not only was given a second chance after making a bad choice but gained a mentor in her life. ✦

For further information, please contact Gale McGloin at gmcgloin@pittsburgh-mediation.org

Mission of the Juvenile Justice System

*"Juvenile Justice:
Community Protection,
Victim Restoration,
Youth Redemption."*

Community Protection refers to the right of all Pennsylvania citizens to be and feel safe from crime.

Victim Restoration emphasizes that, in Pennsylvania, a juvenile who commits a crime harms the victim of the crime and the community, and thereby incurs an obligation to repair that harm to the greatest extent possible.

Youth Redemption embodies the belief that juvenile offenders in Pennsylvania have strengths, are capable of change, can earn redemption, and can become responsible and productive members of their community.

Furthermore, all of the services designed and implemented to achieve this mission and all hearings and decisions under the Juvenile Act — indeed all aspects of the juvenile justice system — must be provided in a fair and unbiased manner. The United States and Pennsylvania Constitutions guarantee rights and privileges to all citizens, regardless of race, color, creed, gender, national origin or handicap.



Goals of the Juvenile Justice System

1. To hold juvenile offenders accountable for offenses committed.

When a crime is committed, obligations to the victim and community are incurred. Victims shall have the opportunity to be active participants in the juvenile justice process. They shall have their losses restored to the extent possible, through the actions of the juvenile offenders. Offenders shall take responsibility for making reparation, restitution, and participating in structured activities that benefit the community. Responses should be individualized.

2. To protect the community from known offenders.

The public has a right to a safe and secure community. The level of restrictions on an offender shall be matched to the level of risk. Adults and organizations in the community can take an active role in juvenile crime prevention.

3. To assist juvenile offenders in developing competencies.

Juvenile offenders who come within the jurisdiction of the court shall leave the juvenile justice system more capable of being productive and responsible members of their community.



Finding His Future ... In the Nick of Time

by Tony Krystoff, Tioga County Juvenile Probation

Nick entered the juvenile justice system on December 17, 2001, on felony charges of stealing cars and leading police on a chase through the county. As the story is so often heard, "he got mixed up in the wrong crowd." At first, Nick had some difficulty shedding the old routines that got him in trouble. He continued his drug use, flirting with lock-up. Nick progressed from marijuana to cocaine. He was caught and consequences followed. In December 2002, Nick found the right track. He was ordered to the Ridgeview drug and alcohol treatment center near Pittsburgh. After excelling in his treatment, Nick moved on to Evergreen, a half-way house in Canton, PA. Upon completion of the program at Evergreen, Nick returned home to finish out his senior year at Wellsboro High School. The following summary details Nick's progress.

Community Service

Punctual, motivated, and good-natured describe the attributes Nick brought to whatever community service project he was working on. Nick completed 300 hours of service in the community doing a variety of tasks including working at a little league baseball field keeping score, manning the concession stand, trash clean-up, and cooking. Nick also worked for the borough doing minor maintenance, lawn mowing, and similar manual labor tasks. Nick did such a fine job with the borough that the head of the department hired Nick after he completed his hours.

Victim Reparation

Nick made amends for his crimes by paying off the debts he created to the victims; but more importantly, by apologizing to them. He paid back over

\$2,000 in restitution by working at a local grocery store and doing community service.

Academic Accomplishments

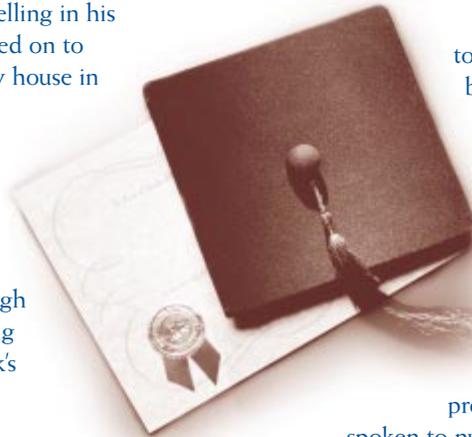
Nick consistently improved his GPA; starting with a 1.85 his freshman year to a 3.10 his senior year, earning him a high school diploma. During his senior year, Nick earned the Student Achievement Award and the Presidential Award for Educational Improvement.

Citizenship

Nick's commitment to the community has been extraordinary. For the past two years, he has spoken to the seventh grade class of his school about his personal experience with drugs and alcohol and

probation. He has spoken to numerous health classes in his own high school about his addiction and recovery. Nick has been actively involved in the local AA/NA meetings by chairing the groups and even starting a new AA/NA group for teenagers. With all his extracurricular activities, Nick still manages to work part-time at a local gas station.

Once a quiet and withdrawn teenager, Nick now personifies the friendly, outgoing young man next door who is an unquestionable asset to the community. Nick enrolled in Mansfield University in the fall of 2004, majoring in business administration, and was presented an Outstanding Youth Achievement Award at the November 2004 Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice Conference and Youth Awards ceremony. ✦



Surprising Craftwork Creating Warm Results for Homeless

by Joni Conrad, Public Relations Specialist, CONCERN



They sit in a circle and quietly offer each other help on picking up dropped stitches, suggest color combinations and talk about their next project, the click of knitting needles punctuating their conversations.

This is not our grandma's knitting club. Grandma's knitting circle? Hardly. These yarn purlers are big, brawny and unmistakably male. And their knitted designs are bold, eye-opening originals created with super chunky yarn and industrial strength needles.

The young men at CONCERN Treatment Unit for Boys (CTUB) in Coatesville, have wholeheartedly embraced knitting with the same determination and zest previously reserved for basketball, dodge ball and video games.

The facility, one of three operated by CONCERN, treats adolescent males in a staff-secure, treatment-oriented

environment. The goal of the CTUB program is to change the mindsets and behavior patterns of the youths so that they will be able to function appropriately in society and return to the community as healthy, responsible citizens.

With a federal Community Service grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Title I tutor Julie Myers, and her friend Linda Wohlberg, an accomplished knitter, have introduced the new skill to the boys. Knitting is a calming, relaxing activity that has fostered patience and creativity as well as some friendly competition in the group.

Each boy in the program will donate at least one of their projects to help warm the homeless of the Coatesville Women's and Youth Association's shelter. The boys are learning a useful skill while performing community service hours and the children at the shelter had handmade hats and mittens to keep them warm this past winter.

CONCERN counselor Carl "Cook" Cannon said in addition to learning a new skill, the boys have learned something more valuable and have given back to the community.

"This project has also given them the confidence to try something new. It's kept them busy but they have learned a lesson about not being afraid to try new things. Hopefully, that is something they'll carry with them," Cannon said. ✨



Editor's Note: Youth Redemption Works.

This special edition of *Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice* profiles youth achievement within the Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice System. Contained within the Mission Statement of the Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice System is the goal of youth redemption, which states "Youth redemption embodies the belief that juvenile offenders in Pennsylvania have strengths, are capable of change, and can become responsible and productive members of their community." The stories in this issue stand as living testimony to the fact that youths can accept responsibility for their actions and can learn to use their talents and skills to become productive, law-abiding citizens.

Articles for publication in the *Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice* newsletter can be sent to:

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Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



Governor's Office
PROCLAMATION

PENNSYLVANIA JUVENILE JUSTICE WEEK
October 2-8, 2005

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system is charged with providing programs of supervision, care, and rehabilitation as well as providing balanced attention to the protection of our communities, the imposition of accountability for offenses committed by juveniles, and the development of competencies to enable children within the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system to become responsible and productive members of their communities; and

WHEREAS, the mission of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system is based on the principles of restorative justice, which give priority to repairing the harm done to crime victims and communities, and which define offender accountability in terms of assuming responsibility and taking action to repair harm; and