



Youth
Achievement Edition Part II

PENNSYLVANIA Juvenile Justice

Spring
2006



The Talents of Our Youth

By Andrew J. DeAngelo

This special edition of Pennsylvania Juvenile Justice depicts the award winning submissions for the Juvenile Court Judges Commission's 2005 Youth Awards Program and a story from the Fulton County Juvenile Probation Department. The theme for the 2005 Youth Awards Program was America and Me: What Do I See? The young people that participated in this program provided their thoughts and impressions of the values and beliefs our country was built upon. During the awards ceremony, the youths thanked

"Every contact is based on a positive accomplishment – a poster, an essay, or an outstanding achievement submission."

their families, probation officers, judges, and caseworkers for not giving up on them. Their acceptance speeches included remarks concerning their future goals and ambitions, which were completing college and working in the fields of business, medicine, law, education, social work and serving in the armed services. Several youths remarked that they have never been recognized for anything positive in their lives before and appreciated this opportunity.

Edward R. Robbins, the Chairman of the Youth Awards Committee and the Chief Juvenile Probation Officer for the Lycoming County Juvenile Probation Department related that the Youth Awards Program is a great opportunity to meet youth not in the courtroom or office, but in a positive circumstance. "Every contact is based on a positive accomplishment – a poster, an essay, or an outstanding

achievement submission. It is interesting to see the winner's nervousness before the ceremony and to hear their acceptance speeches during the program. For me, the best part is seeing the elation in their eyes as well as the smile on their parent's faces afterwards. The positive emotion and connection with adults in their lives makes all the hard work worthwhile."

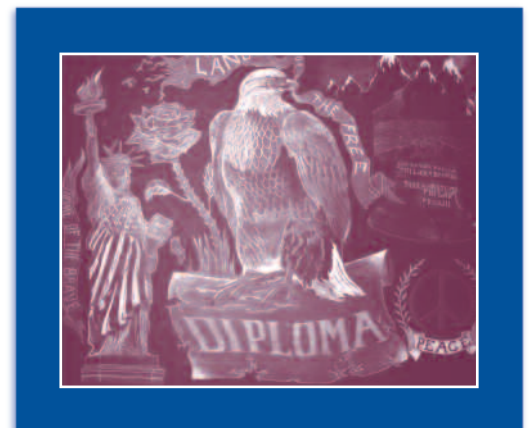
The speaker for the awards program, Marvin Worthy, asked the youths in attendance to "live a life that matters, there are people counting on you that you haven't met yet." He advised the youth to surround themselves with positive people and to believe in yourself and stay committed to your goals.

The Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers will also post youth projects from probation departments or juvenile facilities/organizations on their website. The submissions can be sent to the attention of Andrew J. DeAngelo via email at andrewdeangelo@lehighcounty.org or mailed to Andrew J. DeAngelo, Deputy Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, Lehigh County Juvenile Probation Department, 455 West Hamilton Street, Allentown, Pennsylvania 18101.

Special thanks to Arlene L. Prentice, Juvenile Court Consultant, Juvenile Court Judges Commission for her assistance in the production of this newsletter.



By Candise



By Fernando



By Mike

America and Me: What do I See?

By Jonathan

I see the police doing their job,
I see a police officer placing me under arrest,
I hear a police officer asking me some questions,
I feel a police officer putting me to the test.

I see my judge doing his job,
I see my judge looking at me,
I hear my judge speaking,
I feel my judge about to set me free.

I see my P.O. doing his job,
I see my P.O. going through my file,
I hear my P.O. saying his recommendation,
I feel my P.O. getting me out of exile.

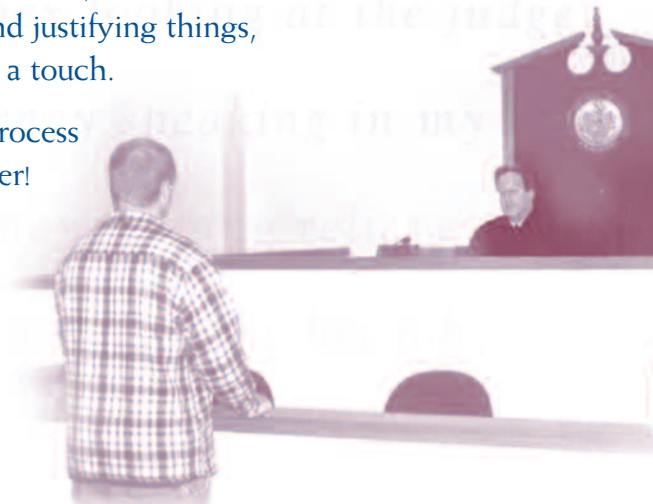
I see my attorney doing his job,
I see my attorney looking at the judge,
I hear my attorney speaking in my defense,
I feel my attorney helping relieve a grudge.

I see my caseworker doing his job,
I see my caseworker clearing his mind of doubt,
I hear my caseworker teaching me the treatment,
I feel my caseworker trying to help me out.

I see my parents doing their job,
I see my parents being very worthy,
I hear my parents asking me to change,
I feel my parents regaining trust in me.

I see myself not doing my job,
I see myself messing up too much,
I hear myself minimizing and justifying things,
I feel myself being afraid of a touch.

But I do see myself in the process
of changing and doing better!



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.



From Rough Start to Strong Future

Submitted by Pat Yeager, Program Director, VisionQuest

At just 17, Brittany already seemed to have lost her way in life – she was weighed under by felonies, property offenses and adjudicated delinquent. Yet she dug her way out of despair and into the sunlight of success orientation.

Now, all of America's positive potential is working for Brittany. And she appreciates her new chance to embrace these new found opportunities, friends and strength of spirit.

Brittany had been in several placements prior to coming to our facility in November 2005. She was street-smart in a quiet way. Now she uses her "smarts" to move on...beyond issues of running away and negative choices to being open and honest with herself and others. She accepts direction and moves past her fear by discussing her challenges.

The secret? Brittany wanted to change. Learning to be a leader was her first step. While with us, she has attained the status of "EagleQuestor", the highest level a youth may achieve. This status carries with the responsibility of leading other program youths into a positive, accountable peer culture. She achieved this status through perfect school attendance, exemplary behavior, recommendations from teachers and treatment staff and an interview process before administrative staff.

Brittany has consistently attended school daily and earned an overall grade average of 87 with good behavior. Her community service hours, which were in the hundreds, have been completed. As of April 2005, she has paid over \$1,600 towards her restitution which totaled over \$2,000. She earned the money through dedication and hard work.

After months in one of our residential programs for girls and young women, Brittany expressed her goals and was offered the prospect of expanding her personal vision. She willingly transferred to one of our gender-specific facilities which specializes in career training and is

now earning while learning to be a Personal Care Aid in a Personal Care Home. In this environment, Brittany lives with other young women on a separate floor of the home and works as a Personal Care Aid with the residents of that home. Brittany has completed over 200 hours of training in this promising and rewarding field.

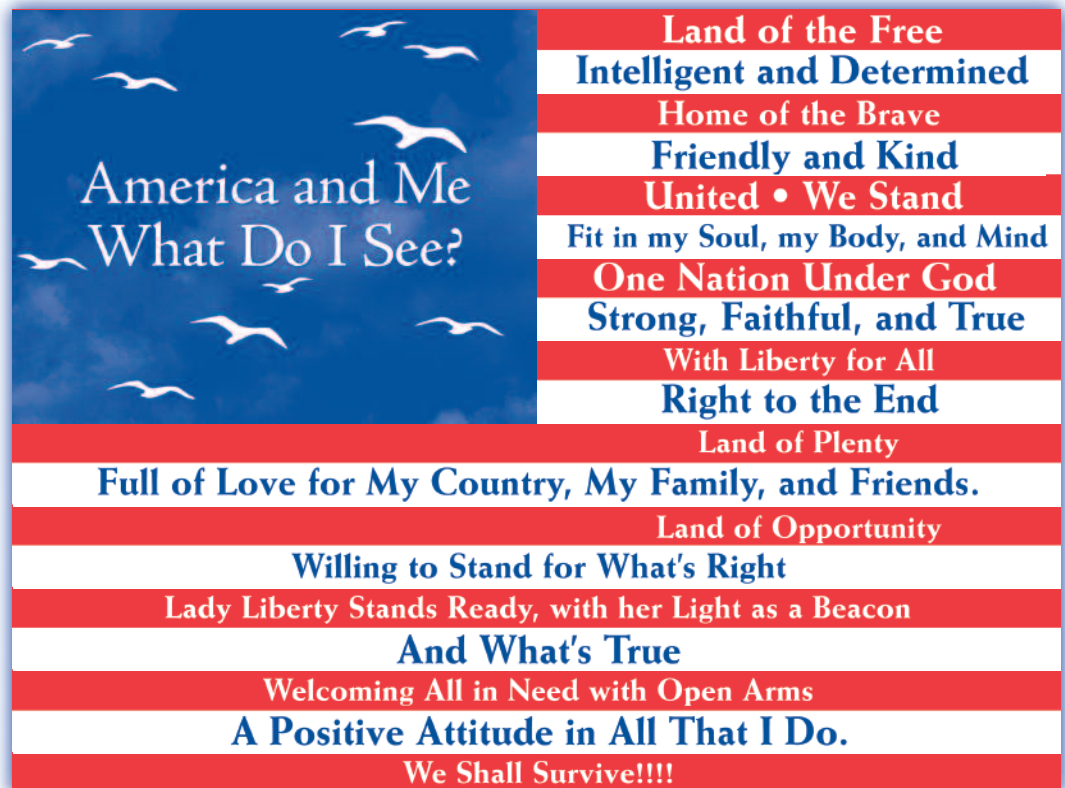
Realizing she was no longer a child has been a motivating force. While in placement, Brittany has strengthened her home relationships while building strong bonds with staff and peers. Brittany diligently studied and attained her G.E.D. She has been researching colleges and becoming more independent through guidance. She finds "lots of satisfaction in making a difference" and finds that "going to work is therapeutic."

One of the accomplishments she is most proud of was training for, and finishing the Disney Half Marathon in January 2005. "It represented the commitment it took to train for the race and the commitment I have made for the rest of my life to finish what I started." Her focus is on returning home and continuing her education in the nursing field with the goal of becoming a registered nurse.

Other interests that Brittany has nurtured and built while in our program include sports, dancing, listening to music and writing in her journal.

On finishing the Disney Half Marathon in 2005:

"It represents the commitment...to finish what I started."



By Anthony

America and Me: What do I See?

Freedom: It's an American Feeling We All Share

By Estella

As a teenage female growing up in America, I see many things. But the single most important thing that comes to my mind's eye is freedom. I look out and see people free to do as they please while abiding by the law. I see people free to come and go as they please. I see love and I see hate; these, too, are part of how people are free to express themselves in America. The fact that so many freedoms are available to me, especially at this age and time of my young life, just amazes me more and more.

Even fights for freedom, like the war that is going on, has served to bring people closer together...especially families with sons and daughters in the war. It's curious how something like that can bring so many people together at once.

Another time when everyone joined together to help each other was during the Terri Shiavo case. Even those who never met the

woman were drawn together. It just goes to show that as rough as it may get in America, no matter what happens, everyone will pull together to stay strong.

Yet another example is when America was attacked on September 11. Everyone came together to help each other through the struggle. No one hesitated, people risked their own lives for those they had never even met before. This willingness to help each other is why no one will ever defeat us.

"...a teenager, the benefits and freedoms my friends and I experience seem endless"

I figure that only in America can you find people who would risk their lives for a stranger. We hear the stories all the time on the news about this. We also see movies based on true events. In so many other countries, they have no

chances for these freedoms. In some countries, a citizen can be arrested just for chewing a piece of gum.

The fact that America is such a free and beautiful society is only a part of my amazement. Other countries may laugh at us, or consider our way of life a joke, but that is only because they do not live here themselves. They do not know what we go through, how we stick together, how we know that so many other Americans will back you up whenever it is needed.

Others may laugh, but the fact is that America is one of the most free, loving, high-spirited countries there is. For me as a teenager, the benefits and freedoms my friends and I experience seem endless. Just the facts that we are free to work and drive at our young ages is amazing.

For several weeks last March and April, our school had some German exchange students come and spend time with us in our classroom while

they lived in our country. In several of these classes, they would tell us about themselves and we all wanted to know what they thought of America. They always told us that they thought America is a very lucky country, that our people are great and are always very warm and welcoming.

The good first impressions America made on these visitors is important to remember in our own lives. When we go for job interviews and begin relationships throughout our lives, we always need to make good impressions. Because America's first impression on visitors is a good one...and we are America.



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The Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice and Youth Awards Program, 1980-2005, CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

By Ron Sharp, Ed.P. Psychologist, Alternative Rehabilitation Community, Chairman, Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Advisory Committee



By Mike

The central idea in establishing the Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice was to recognize and celebrate the work being done by the thousands of people who devote their lives to helping youth in contact with the juvenile justice system. As the conference grew, and more people became involved in thinking about the essential

elements of this conference, the idea emerged that a central part of the recognition effort should include the youths themselves.

The Awards Committee, made up of those juvenile justice professionals planning the conference, took on the responsibility of developing the Youth Awards Program. Initially, the committee developed a nomination process that relied on juvenile probation staff to identify possible award recipients. These nominations were evaluated using established scoring criteria. Selected winners attended the conference as guests, in order to be recognized and honored.

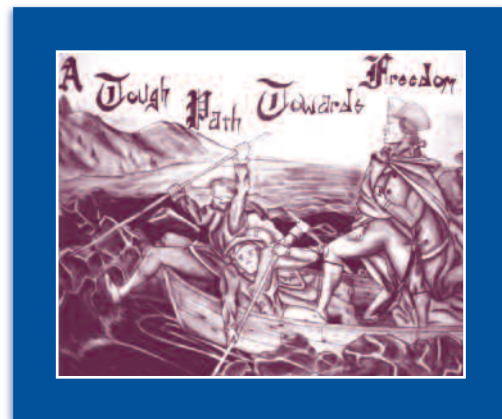
During this inaugural first Youth Awards Program, it became clear that this addition to the annual conference enhanced the meaning and significance of the event. Most of the youth who were selected talked about their positive accomplishments and



By Emmanuelle

recognized the people in the juvenile justice system who had helped them. This process of “giving back” also seemed to help the honorees. It was also clear that the people who had helped these young men and women, were grateful for the role they had played in helping another human being.

As the Youth Awards Program has developed and expanded, the core values of recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of youth served by the juvenile justice system have remained intact. While the future will bring new and exciting changes to this event, the essence of this experience will remain constant. To all of those who read this article and have had a hand in developing the Youth Awards Program, thank you for your belief that every young person needs someone who cares enough.



By Kevin



By Cierra

Lycoming County Drug Court: A Successful Graduate

By Larry Smith, Juvenile Justice Probation Officer

Perry was referred to juvenile probation in September of 2003. While on probation, Perry appeared in court two more times for new charges. The last charges resulted in placement in the Lycoming County Juvenile Drug Treatment Court.

At his initial placement into the Drug Court Program, no one thought that he was going to graduate. He had some initial issues that set him back; however, he worked through those issues. While in the Drug Court Program, Perry was able to graduate

from high school. This is significant since he is the only member of his close family that has ever graduated. He was able to complete 200 hours of community service, and pay off his fines of \$165. He was able to realize his home situation was conducive to his sobriety, so when he graduated he got his own place. He was able to maintain employment at Hoss's Steak House, along with completing all the conditions that were placed upon him through Drug Court. He is currently looking into attending a college for the culinary arts.

The most significant aspect of Perry's involvement in Drug Court is that he was our first graduate. He was the one participant that no one gave a chance to complete the program. From the beginning, it was thought that he would be the first one kicked out of the program and sent to a juvenile facility.

Surprise outcomes like Perry's may not happen often, but when they do, it's a welcome performance!

A Learning Experience to Last a Lifetime

By George C. Cutchall, Fulton County Juvenile Probation Officer

Last summer I received a call from one very angry District Justice concerning a juvenile whom she called "Bud". Bud had entered the District Justice system again by somehow hitting a school bus with a paint ball. Bud was a repeat offender and had given the District Justice a hard time in the past, grudgingly paying his fines only after repeated reminders. This time the District Justice had ordered Bud to perform Community Service, in lieu of fines and costs, in an attempt to turn this juvenile around.

Bud showed up at my office with his mother the next week to sign the paperwork for his inclusion in Fulton County's Juvenile Community Service Program. After going over all the paperwork associated with the program, this PO told Bud that Community Service wasn't a joke and that what ever happened between the District Justice and him was history. What he was being judged on now was how he acted in the Community Service Program. Starting the next day Bud showed up a half an hour early, even though transportation had been an issue during intake. Bud proved to be a willing worker, often staying later than originally planned in order to get the jobs done. He always made sure that the job was completed successfully and done right.

Once one of the other juveniles was complaining loudly over some perceived slight of the Community Service Program while picking green beans in the service garden. Bud directly confronted the individual and explained that it was the individual's behavior that had caused him to be picking beans, not the PO's. The complaining stopped immediately.

He continued to be a role model to the rest of the juveniles on Community Service, often assisting them with their assigned tasks after he completed his own, even though this meant that he

would have to stay later than was planned and do it on his own time.

On the last day of his Community Service, the two of us were clearing mountain trails on Cowans Gap State Forest on an extremely humid Saturday morning. I told him I was slowing down as we ascended a particularly steep hillside and just to go ahead and I would catch up when I rested a bit. Bud replied that we were a team and he wasn't leaving me...that we would finish together. Later that morning, as we were getting ready to leave the park I told Bud that he had been a real asset to Fulton County's Juvenile Community Service Program and that if he ever needed a reference for work to please include me. Bud thought about it as we drove back to the Probation Office and as he left, he told me if I ever needed any help at Probation to call him. He said he'd be glad to help me out as he had finally seen how his poor attitude had been affecting his decision making and behaviors, and he now understood what helping others meant.

Introducing Office of Victims of Crime National Calendar of Events

OVC has launched a master calendar (<http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ovccalendar/>) that integrates information on conferences, trainings, and other victim assistance-related events. Sign up to be notified of new victim assistance-related events as they are added. Take advantage of this Web-based tool to search for or submit victim assistance-related events in anticipation of National Crime Victims' Rights Week (<http://www.ovc.gov/ncvrw/welcome.html>), April 23-29, 2006