

Juvenile Assessment Center
of Lee County
2117 Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd.
Fort Myers, FL 33901
(239) 344-5100
www.swfjac.org

January 2010

The JAC Perspective



The Juvenile Assessment Center of Lee County ... assisting youth and their families to seek the treatment and programs they need to lead productive, crime free lives.

CALENDAR

Lee County Juvenile Justice Council

January 7
1:30 p.m.
Justice Center Annex
Sixth Floor, Courtroom A
Fort Myers

Prevention Network

January 8
10:00 a.m.
Fort Myers Police Training Facility
1803 Golf View Avenue
Fort Myers

Circuit 20 Juvenile Justice Board

January 20
1:30 p.m.
Southwest Florida Workforce
Development Board
9530 Marketplace Rd., Ste. 104
Fort Myers

**Law enforcement
should call ahead to**

**344-5161
or 344-5171**

**when bringing an
arrested youth
to the JAC.**

Civil Citation to Continue

A state grant, which has funded the Lee County Civil Citation program for three years, ended December 31st. However, the Civil Citation program will continue with local funding. Under the grant the program has been limited to serving a small number of zip codes. This limitation will no longer be in effect with the grant ending. This will allow the program to expand the use of civil citations throughout Lee County. The Civil Citation Program provides timely consequences for youth who have committed a minor crime while freeing up law enforcement and court resources to address more serious crimes. At the discretion of the law enforcement officer, a youth who has committed a minor crime may be issued



a civil citation as an alternative to arrest. The youth is required to contact the Civil Citation Coordinator within seven days. Typically the youth is assigned community service hours and

a service learning project. If youth successfully complete their sanctions, they will not have an arrest record. If a youth does not comply, the case is referred to the Office of the State Attorney for criminal prosecution. The Lee County Civil Citation program is

operated in partnership between the Lee County Sheriff's Office and the Office of the State Attorney of the 20th Judicial Circuit. For more information about the program, contact Deputy Carolyn Woulard at (239) 344-5115.

Lee JAC Not State Funded

State funded programs are bracing for what looks to be another round of state budget cuts this year. Once again, a reduction in state contract funding for the operation of juvenile assessment centers is on the list of proposed cuts. It is anticipated that, as in previous years, a number of statewide organizations will sound the alarm about this proposed cut. This often prompts a degree of local concern and questions about the effect that a cut in state funding to JAC's would have on the local JAC. Although several state-funded Department of Juvenile Justice personnel are co-located at the Lee JAC, this JAC currently does not receive any funding from the state.



The Bridge Closed

The Bridge afterschool program closed its doors December 18th due to a lack of sustaining funding. The Bridge was one of the few local afterschool programs available that was specifically for teens. The Bridge

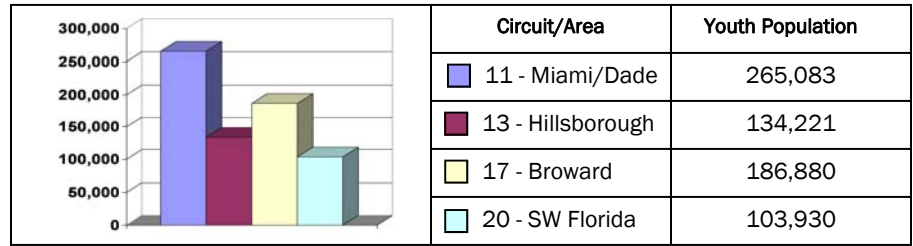
provided a safe, pro-social environment for teens, as well as other supports, such as, tutoring, GED preparation, gang prevention and intervention, and a "Hurts and Habits" teen

support group. The Bridge's closing represents a significant loss to the community as it served as a key delinquency prevention and intervention program for local youth.

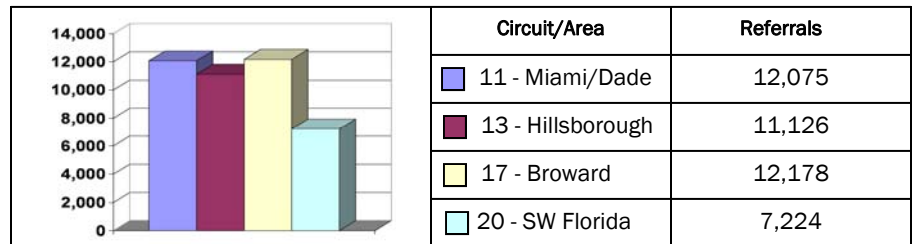
Use of Residential Commitment Programs High for This Area of the State

On December 15th, JAC Manager and Lee County Juvenile Justice Council Chair, Bill Naylor, made a presentation to the Lee County Legislative Delegation on behalf of the Lee County Juvenile Justice Council. With the likelihood of additional state budget cuts this year, Naylor noted that many of Circuit 20's* (Southwest Florida's) prevention programs and community-based services have already been eliminated or reduced over the past few years. He asked legislators not to lose sight of the cost benefits of the few prevention and community-based services that remain in Circuit 20 and to save them, if at all possible. He noted that Circuit 20 sends more youth to residential commitment programs than many larger circuits, such as, Miami-Dade County, Broward County, and Hillsborough County (Tampa). One factor that contributes to the high number of commitment referrals is that there are very few community-based services available for youth in Circuit 20.

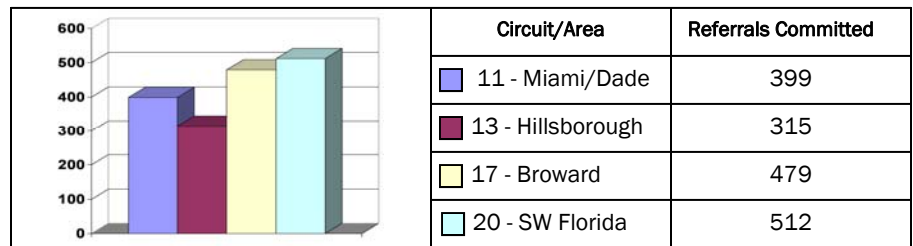
Youth Population, Ages 10-17



Referrals to the Department of Juvenile Justice, 2008-09



Referrals Sent to Commitment Programs, 2008-09



Source: Department of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Profile, 2008-09

Costs of Commitment

It is estimated that the average cost to send a youth to:

- a low risk residential commitment program is \$13,317;
- a medium risk residential commitment program is \$24,186;
- a high risk residential commitment program is \$50,558; and
- a maximum risk residential commitment program is \$61,888.

These estimates do not include any additional costs for programs that have specialized services, which many youth need, such as, mental health or substance abuse treatment.

It is estimated that for 2008-09, the cost to Florida taxpayers for the youth from Circuit 20 who were sent to residential commitment programs was \$15,167,116, not including any additional costs for youth who were placed in specialized programs.

From 2007-08 to 2008-09, commitments for delinquency increased 36% for Lee County, whereas commitments for delinquency decreased 5% statewide during the same timeframe.



The JAC of Lee County is operated by the Lee County Sheriff's Office in partnership with the Lee County Board of County Commissioners and the Department of Juvenile Justice.

* Circuit 20 includes Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee Counties.