

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

October 2006

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

Circuit 20 Juvenile Justice Executive Board

October 4
1:30 p.m.
Southwest Florida Workforce Development Board

Lee County Juvenile Justice Council

October 5
1:30 p.m.
Old Lee County Courthouse East Room

Juvenile Sanctions Team

October 14
1:30 p.m.
Lee JAC

Law enforcement should call ahead to

344-5161

or

344-5171

when bringing an arrested youth to the JAC.

Detention Improvement Initiative to Begin

According to the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), juvenile referrals for violent crimes and other felonies declined over the past ten years. However, admissions to secure detention have remained relatively constant. Only two juvenile detention facilities in the state did not exceed their designed operating capacity at some point during the past year. SWFL Regional Detention Center in Fort Myers operated at an average of 107% capacity during the past year. Overcrowding at detention centers can create conditions that are stressful and dangerous for both youth and staff. DJJ has identified several detention functions that can be targeted and improved, including detention screening, population management, and the expansion of detention alternatives. Toward these ends, DJJ selected three pilot sites in the state to begin implementing targeted improve-

ments. Lee County was selected as one of three pilot sites, along with Broward and Alachua Counties. The pilot communities will have the opportunity to work with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, nationally known for their work to improve outcomes for disadvantaged youth. The Casey foundation is also known for their Juvenile Detention Reform Initiative. They have focused on reform of the detention component of the juvenile justice system because youth are often unnecessarily or inappropriately detained at great expense, with long lasting negative outcomes for public safety and youth development. The Casey foundation has successfully demonstrated in more than 75 jurisdictions cross the nation that communities can safely reduce reliance on secure detention, while at the same time reduce costs and increase successful outcomes for youth.

TechBridge Assists Youth

The TechBridge program assists youth, ages 16 to 21, to develop employability skills, develop customer service skills, and to learn basic computer skills. The program also assists youth with completing a GED, career exploration, job placement assistance, and college placement assistance. The program is funded by the SWFL Workforce Development Board and is operated by Hensels & McCoy, Inc. For more information, or to find out about eligibility requirements, call Andy Hallinan at 337-3798.

Burglary Top Felony Charge

Burglary is the most frequent charge for arrested youth who are brought to the JAC. In July, there were 100 burglary charges, which represented 24% of all charges for the month. This is the highest it has been since the JAC opened in 2003.



FAIR Assists Families

The Family Assessment and Intervention Response (FAIR) program works with families impacted by anger control and substance abuse issues. Intervention groups offered at the JAC include a Parent/Adolescent Substance Abuse Intervention Group and a Parent/Adolescent Anger Management Group. The groups run for seven weeks. There is no cost to families. The FAIR groups help youth to de-

velop coping skills, identify anger triggers, enhance decision making skills, improve communication skills, and to cope with peer pressure. A Teen Girls' Group will be offered soon. The FAIR program also provides assessments, individual counseling, and case management. Walk-in hours are available for those without an appointment. For more information, or to make a referral, call 344-5115.



The JAC welcomes Tricia DeLacy, new clinician for the FAIR program.

Career & Service Center Has Services for Youth

Recently, a youth participating in Lee County's Pilot Reentry Board appeared before the board for his 30-day review. He was beaming. He had found employment on his second day out of a residential commitment program and he was feeling good about his new identity as a productive, hard-working citizen. He told the reentry board that his work experience had given him some new insight. "I never realized how hard those people I stole from had to work to get the things I took from them. I can see now why they would have been really angry!" The

board has no doubt that this young man is making good progress in transitioning back to the community. In large part, his progress is a result of job placement services he received at the Career and Service Center on his second day back to the community. Staff at the center can assist youth in finding out about job openings, internships, and apprenticeships. They also offer classes on resume' writing, interviewing skills, computer classes, and more. The center is located at 4150 Ford Street Extension in Fort Myers. Call 275-3100 for information. A schedule of

classes, job fairs, and other events is on their web site at : www.careerandservicecenter.org/lee.htm .



New Program Offered: "Hurts & Habits"

"Hurts and Habits" is a class for teens who are experiencing depression, addictions, death in the family, divorced parents, and other hurts. It will begin meeting Tuesday nights from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. beginning October 3rd at The Bridge. The Bridge is a youth center located at 2128 Cleveland Avenue in Ft. Myers. For more information, call 337-3798.



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.