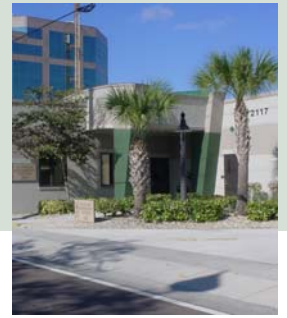


Juvenile Assessment Center
of Lee County
2117 Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd.
Fort Myers, FL 33901
(239) 344-5100
www.swfjac.org

December 2007

The JAC Perspective

Happy Holidays from the JAC Staff



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 Board Executive Committee

December 5
1:30 p.m.

Southwest Florida Workforce Development Board

Juvenile Sanctions Team

December 6
12:00 p.m.

Joseph P. D'Alessandro
Office Complex (formerly known as Regional Service Center)
2295 Victoria Ave., Room 165

Lee County Juvenile Justice Council

December 6
1:30 p.m.

Joseph P. D'Alessandro
Office Complex (formerly known as Regional Service Center)
2295 Victoria Ave., Room 165

Prevention Network

No meeting in December

Law enforcement should call ahead to

**344-5161
or 344-5171**

when bringing an arrested youth to the JAC.

One Wish

Commercial advertisements surround us this time of year telling us what we should buy, trying to convince us they have the answer to finding the perfect gift. A tradition for some parents this time of year is to ask children to make a list of the gifts they would like. What if the question was asked differently? If children could have one wish of something they would like from their parents, how would they answer? Recently, The Bridge youth center in Fort Myers asked that very question to the youth in their afterschool program. They videotaped their answers. What did the youth wish for most of all from their parents? The video shows a few of the younger children wishing for their parents to buy them more toys. However, the majority of the youth wished for things that



money can't buy. Some wished that their parents would respect them more. Some wished that their parents would listen to them more. Some wanted their parents to talk to them more. Most wished that their parents would spend more time with them and spend more quality family time together. As we approach this holiday season, *The JAC Perspective* reminds our readers that not all gifts we give to our children can be purchased at the store. Spending time with youth, taking time to talk, taking time to listen, making time for family meals and other family activities, and being emotionally available to our children, are gifts we can give to our children every day. We don't have to wait for special occasions. In doing so, we may be giving our children the gift that they want and need most of all.

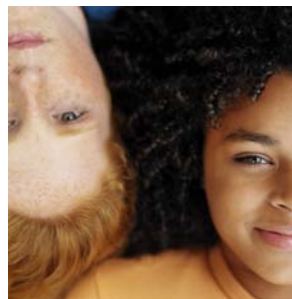
Emancipation of Minors

"My son says he can do what he wants to and that he doesn't have to listen to me because he is going to file for emancipation. Can he do that?" Almost always there is a tone of desperation in the parent's voice when they call the JAC and ask about emancipation. Emancipation is a process in which a minor gains all of the rights and responsibilities of an adult. In Florida Statutes it is called "removal of disabilities of nonage." In general, to become emancipated, a youth must be at least 16 years of age, be able to support himself without public benefits, and demonstrate that

emancipation is in his best interest.

Probably the main thing that parents need to know if their child is using the threat of emancipation as a manipulation is that an emancipation case cannot proceed until both parents are notified and **give their consent**. In fact, statutes provide for an extensive and thorough process to ensure that both parents are notified and

agree to the emancipation. The JAC sees different sides to questions about emancipation. Sometimes youth stop by the JAC and also inquire about (Continued page 2)



Emancipation *(cont.)*

emancipation. Some youth simply don't want to abide by their parents' authority. There are others who tell of a neglectful and dysfunctional home life. They often have given up on their parents taking care of them and wonder if emancipation might allow them to take better care of themselves. The JAC has prepared a brochure to help answer questions from parents and youth about emancipation in Florida. It is available in the JAC lobby and also can be downloaded from the JAC web site at www.swfljac.org/emancipation.pdf.

Other Resources Now Available From The JAC

Locating Services in Downtown Fort Myers

Providing information and education is one of the key functions of the JAC. However, being located in downtown Fort Myers, the JAC gets more than just questions about the juvenile justice system. It is not unusual for people who are trying to find their way around downtown Fort Myers to drop in to the JAC to ask for help. One only has to walk around the block where the JAC is located and the chances are that someone will stop to ask for information or directions. Some of the biggest puzzlers the public has asked the JAC to help solve are finding building entrances when the address of the building is on a different street and locating services when agencies have offices in multiple buildings. In order for JAC staff to become more informed and to provide better information to the many people that ask for help, the JAC has prepared a brochure with a map of downtown Fort Myers, which includes information on agencies and services that the JAC is commonly asked about. Copies are available in the JAC lobby and can also be downloaded from the JAC web site at www.swfljac.org/map.pdf.

Know the Law: Truancy

What are the laws on school attendance? What are some of the legal consequences to youth for not attending school? What are the possible consequences to parents when their child does not attend school? The JAC has a new brochure, "Know the Law: Truancy," to inform youth on school attendance laws. The brochure is available in the JAC lobby or a copy can be downloaded at the JAC website at www.swfljac.org/truancy.pdf.

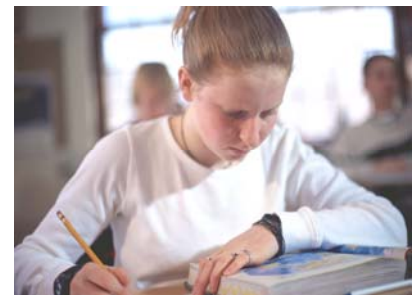
School Bullying Workshop

The Lee County Neighborhood Accountability Board (NAB) program will host a workshop for NAB volunteers and juvenile justice stakeholders on "School Bullying & Violence" on December 13th at 5:00 p.m. Jeffrey Shicks with The Bridge youth center will be the presenter. The workshop will be held at the Lee County Human Services, 2440 Thompson Street in Room 102. Those who plan to attend should RSVP to Anthony Miller at 533-7968 or ABMILLER@leegov.com by December 9th.



Drug Test Kits Available

Free drug test kits are available at the JAC to parents of non-arrested youth. The kits include information for parents on how to use the test kit as a drug prevention strategy with their child. The kits can be picked up at the JAC during regular business hours.



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.