

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

March 2009

# 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

March 5  
1:30 p.m.  
Joseph P. D'Alessandro  
Office Complex  
2295 Victoria Ave., Room 165C

### Prevention Network

March 13  
10:00 a.m.  
Lee County Human Services  
2440 Thompson Street

### Circuit 20 Juvenile Justice Board Conference Call

March 18  
1:30 p.m.

No Sanctions Team meeting in March

Law enforcement should call ahead to

344-5161  
or 344-5171

when bringing an arrested youth to the JAC.

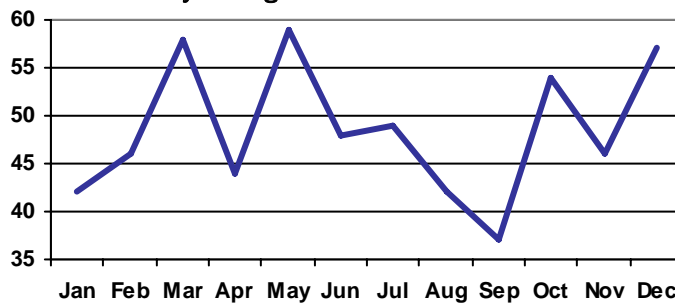
## Shoplifting Prevention Benefits All

Shoplifting is one of the most prevalent crimes in the nation. It is also the most prevalent crime committed by youth in Lee County. 687 youth were arrested for petit theft in Lee County in 2008, which represents 13% of all local youth arrests. According to the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC), 25% of youth admit to having shoplifted by the time they are 12 to 16 years old. The NCPC also reports that 50% fewer children than in years past are receiving guidance from their parents



about why shoplifting is wrong. The problem of shoplifting is more than an issue of right and wrong. It is estimated that retailers lose billions of dollars each year due to shoplifting. Those costs are passed on to the community. In these times, when almost everyone is looking for ways to cut costs... here is one more. Parents and others working with youth need to talk to them about why shoplifting is wrong and about the harm it causes to everyone. When shoplifting is prevented, it benefits everyone.

5 Year Monthly Averages for Youth Arrests for Petit Theft\*



The monthly averages for youth arrested with petit theft charges in Lee County suggests that youth may be more likely to shoplift in some months than others.

Consequences to the store!

- Causes 1/3 of all new businesses to fail.
- Forces them to raise their prices.
- Businesses lose sixteen billion \$\$\$ annually in lost revenue as a result of shoplifting.

Consequences to Community!

- Paying more for items because stores had to raise the prices.
- Average family pays 300\$ every year in order to subsidize the cost of ~~what~~ what shoplifters stole.
- discriminate against teens when entering store, because 50% teens commit the crime of shoplifting

Above are excerpts from a poster on the harm caused by shoplifting. A girl who received a civil citation for shoplifting completed the poster as part of her case plan.

\*Averages based on local youth arrests from 2004 through 2008.

## Scholarship Funds Available

The Florida Juvenile Justice Foundation has indicated it still has funds available for the Youth Investment Award. The Youth Investment Award provides assistance to youth ages 16 to 22 years, who are or were served by the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice. A youth may apply for funding needed to assist with the next step in his or her transition when that need cannot be met through any other available resources and is essential to the youth's success.

Examples may include tattoo removal, costs for taking the GED exam, costs for employability skills training, glasses, transportation, college tuition, fees, and books. The funds are paid directly to the vendor rather than to the youth. The application is available at [www.djj.state.fl.us/foundation/FJJF-Universal-Youth-Investment-Award-Application.doc](http://www.djj.state.fl.us/foundation/FJJF-Universal-Youth-Investment-Award-Application.doc).

*Are you part of a group that would like to learn more about the juvenile justice system? Tours of the JAC can be arranged upon request.*

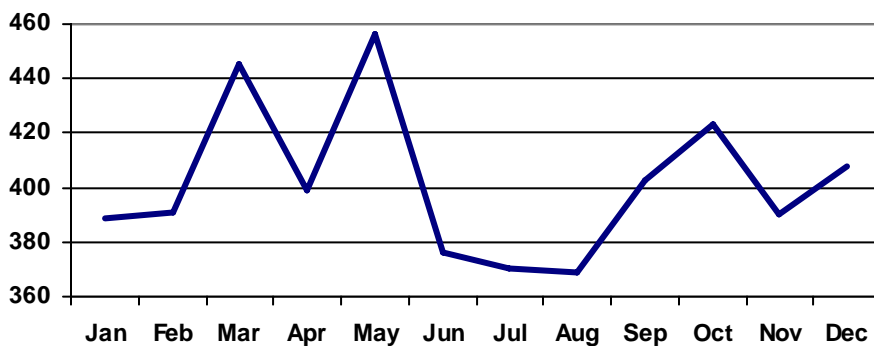
## Start of Fire Season Rekindles Need for Caution

Southwest Florida is well known for its beautiful scenery and warm climate. Many of the same qualities that make the area such a desirable winter tourist destination - sunshine, little rainfall, balmy breezes - also can create conditions that make the area vulnerable to wild fires. While fires can occur at any time of the year, March marks the beginning of the fire season in Southwest Florida when extra caution is warranted. Areas of the community that have been hit hard by the home foreclosure crisis may be more vulnerable than usual if many homes have

been abandoned and have become overgrown with vegetation. Only a handful of youth are arrested for arson each year in this community so it is not that fire setting has been identified as a local youth problem. However, given the potential magnitude of destruction that can occur from a wildfire, the fascination that many children have about fire, and youth's all too frequent failure to consider the consequences of their actions, now may be a good time to talk to youth about fire prevention and the potential destruction that can result from a fire.



5 Year Monthly Averages for Total Youth Arrests at the Lee JAC\*



The months of March and May have historically had the highest number of youth arrests, while the summer months have had the lowest number of youth arrests.



*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.*

\*Averages based on local youth arrests from 2004 through 2008.