

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

May 2008

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

Juvenile Sanctions Team

May 1
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

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

Prevention Network

May 16
10:00 a.m.
Lee County Human Services
2440 Thompson Street

Circuit 20 Juvenile Justice Board

May 21
1:30 p.m.
Southwest Florida Workforce
Development Board
9530 Marketplace Rd., Ste. 104

**Law enforcement
should call ahead to**

**344-5161
or 344-5171**

**when bringing an ar-
rested youth
to the JAC.**

Blueprint Reforms Die at End of Session

In July 2007, Governor Crist authorized the creation of the Blueprint Commission to provide recommendations for reforming Florida's juvenile justice system. The Blueprint Commission met during the last half of 2007 and heard testimony from state and national experts on juvenile justice. They provided 52 recommendations which were outlined in a report issued in February 2008

entitled "Getting Smart About Juvenile Justice in Florida." HB 7087 proposed implementing many of the Blueprint Commission recommendations that would not have a fiscal impact. The bill quickly moved through both the House and the Senate with all but the last "i's" dotted and "t's" crossed. On Friday, May 2nd, the last day of the 2008



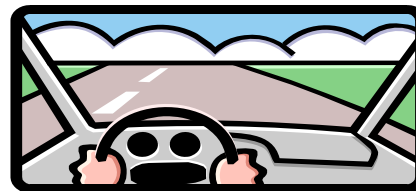
Florida legislative session, the House proposed additional amendments to the bill during the closing minutes of the session. Although the bill passed in the House, it died in returning messages from the Senate on May 5th. Had it passed, the bill would have called for revised zero tolerance policies in statute for school based misconduct, required the validation of the detention risk assessment instrument,

dispensed with a requirement that child inmates in adult facilities should be physically monitored every 15 minutes with documented checks when they are in direct supervision housing with 24-hour supervision, and revised provisions relating to criminal history records of minors, among other reforms.

"Keep Me Safe" Gives Parents a Hand in Watching Teen Drivers

Monitoring teens can be a challenge for parents, especially as teens start to drive. One way to ease the burden is to enlist the help of others. Keep Me Safe is a new program from the Lee County Sheriff's Office Youth Services Division to assist parents in monitoring young drivers. Here's how it

works. Parents sign their child up for the program by filling out a form that includes the parents' contact information. The parent then receives a sticker with an assigned number that attaches to the bumper of a vehicle. The sticker includes the phone number to the Lee County

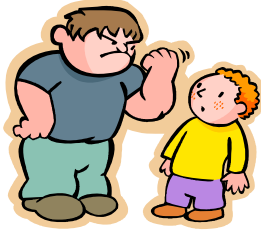


Sheriff's Office with the message "Teen Driver - Keep Me Safe - Report My Driving Good or Bad." If contacted with a complaint or praise, the sheriff's office notifies the parent, allowing the parent to follow up with rewards or consequences to reinforce good driving behavior. The youth's

School Resource Officer is also contacted so that he or she can meet with the youth to discuss their driving. To sign up for the program, contact a School Resource Officer or call 477-3807. The JAC will also have sign up forms available.

Anti-Bullying Legislation Passes

In 2005, 15-year-old Cape Coral resident Jeff Johnston hanged himself, leaving a note that said he "would never get over the eighth grade." His note was referring to relentless bullying he endured in school. In the last week of session, the Florida Legislature passed a bill named the "Jeffrey Johnston Stand Up for All Students Act" in the boy's honor. Aimed at

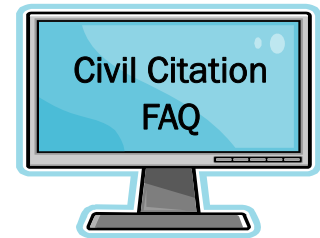


preventing bullying in school, the bill directs school districts to develop policies and punishments to deal with bullying and to focus on changing the behavior of the bully. School districts also would be required to report instances of bullying to law enforcement agencies and the parents of both the bully and the victim. The bill has been sent to the Governor, who is expected to sign the bill into law.

New For Law Enforcement : Civil Citation FAQ Online

"When is the court date?" "Why do I call the Department of Juvenile Justice if a youth is not being arrested?" "Do I bring the youth to the JAC?" These are some of the frequently asked questions from law enforcement officers for whom issuing youth a civil citation has recently become an option, or when it has been awhile since the officer received an orientation on using civil citations. Civil citation serves as an alternative to arrest

with timely interventions for youth committing minor misdemeanor crimes. Youth are assigned community service hours and/or a service learning project as a consequence of their offense. The program began in Lee County in March 2007. A link is now available online at www.swfjac.org/cc.htm with answers to some of the most frequently asked questions from law enforcement officers on



using a civil citation in Lee County. Call 344-5115 with additional questions or to recommend additional information for the Civil Citation FAQ web page.

State Funding of JAC's

Last month *The JAC Perspective* reported that the Florida legislature proposed to cut \$7 million in funding to JAC's statewide. This potentially could have resulted in the closing of numerous JAC's throughout the state. This has been a concern statewide for many law enforcement agencies which have benefited by being able to drop off arrested youth at a JAC and quickly getting back on the road. In final budget negotiations, state funding for JAC's was cut by \$392,579. This cut will be spread across all JAC's currently receiving state funding. Since the Lee JAC



does not directly receive state funds, its funding was not directly affected by the statewide cuts. However, Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) positions located at the JAC have been reduced as a result of the state budget cuts. DJJ has reallocated Juvenile Probation Officer positions working in the field to the Lee JAC to help make up for some of the loss in staffing. For small to medium volume JAC's, the legislature replaced \$3 million in recurring revenue with non-recurring funds. This move saves

the small JAC's during the 2008-09 budget year, but it makes it all but certain that their long term survival will be debated again next year.



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.

STD Screening at JAC

STD screening for youth will be available at the JAC on a walk-in basis on Wednesday mornings, starting May 7th from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. The service will be provided by the Lee County Health Department. There is no charge for the service.

A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study found at least one in 4 teenage girls in the U.S. has an STD.