

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

June 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

Juvenile Sanctions Team
June 1
12:00 p.m.
Lee JAC

Lee County Juvenile Justice Council
June 5
12:00 p.m.
Lee County Justice Center
1700 Monroe St.,
Hearing Room 1, 4th Floor

**Neighborhood Accountability Board
Volunteer Training**
June 17
9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m.
Call 533-7947

Law enforcement should call ahead to 344-5161 or 344-5171 when bringing an arrested youth to the JAC.

Juvenile Justice Programs Survive Cuts

Four local juvenile justice community budget requests survived the Governor's veto pen when the state's 2006-07 budget was approved in late May. The projects include Contracted Conditional Release (aftercare) for \$273,750, Mental Health and Family Counseling for \$268,000, Domestic Violence Diversion Treatment Program for \$100,000 and Trauma Counseling for Victimized Youth for \$50,000. The budget proposals grew out of research done by the Lee County Juvenile Sanctions Team under the leadership of the Honorable Sherra Winesett, Circuit Court Judge, which identified the



community's special needs juvenile offenders and local service gaps. The team recommended evidence-based programs to fill service gaps and to reduce recidivism. The proposals were also adopted and prioritized by the Lee County Juvenile Justice Council. The Lee County community has Representative Jeff Kottkamp, Senator Dave Aronberg and Representative Trudi Williams to thank for their sponsorship of one or more of the proposals. A local proposal for a Substance Abuse Treatment Diversion program for \$175,000 did not survive the Governor's veto pen.

Juvenile Crime and Substance Abuse

As many as 75% to 80% of youth that become involved in the juvenile justice system have a drug or alcohol problem. The Lee County Juvenile Sanctions Team estimates that this translates to approximately 2,747 youth per year in the juvenile justice system with some degree of substance abuse problem. Substance abuse has been identified as a strong predictor for risk of re-offending. Our area of the state has historically ranked near the bottom in per capita funding for adolescent substance abuse treatment. Treatment resources have not kept pace

with the need. As a result, youth sometimes re-offend while on a waiting list to receive treatment. The local capacity for outpatient substance abuse specific treatment for adolescents is estimated at approximately 150 youth annually. A follow up on 117 arrested youth who successfully completed substance abuse treatment in Lee County indicated that, one year later, 98% of the youth had no additional arrests.



Accountability Boards Focus on Repairing Harm

Neighborhood Accountability Boards

Neighborhood Accountability Boards, or NAB's, are one of the local court diversion options for youth charged with a first-time, nonviolent misdemeanor. Rather than focusing on who broke the law, what laws were broken and how the offender will be punished, the NAB's utilize a restorative conferencing model that focuses on what harm was done, what needs to be done to repair the harm, and what level of repair the responsible party can realistically accomplish. The conferences are facilitated by

staff from the Lee County Human Services Department's Neighborhood Building Program and include the victim(s) (if they choose), the youth, family members, and trained community volunteers. The victim, the youth, his/her guardian, and the board enter into an agreement for the youth to repair the harm. Examples of repairing the harm include performing community service hours, serving as a resource to other youth by attending youth programs to inform participants of the dangers and damages associated with com-



mitting a crime, writing letters of apology, essays, public service announcements, or utilizing other creative media that acknowledges the crime. The NAB program is always looking for new volunteers. The next training for volunteers is Saturday, June 17 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. For more information call 533-7947.

Restitution Accountability Boards

Restitution Accountability Boards, or RAB's, are similar to Neighborhood Accountability Boards in that they are based upon the principles of restorative justice and they are also facilitated by staff from the Lee County Human Services Department's Neighborhood Building Program. Participants in the program are juveniles on proba-

tion who are under the age of 18, owe restitution, and are court ordered to participate. The program generally works with youth who have charges of grand theft, grand theft auto, burglary, felony criminal mischief, or other charges deemed appropriate by the court. A conferencing model is utilized to focus on repairing the harm. A

plan to repair the harm is agreed upon by the victim, the youth, his/her guardian, and trained volunteer board members. The repair of harm may take the form of monetary reimbursement, but the financial compensation may also be mediated down to include community service or competency development outcomes.

*"If crime is harm,
justice should be
healing."*

School Social Workers Say "Thank You"

At an end-of-school luncheon on May 26th, Lee County School Social Workers honored Bill Naylor, JAC Director, with a certificate of appreciation for his coordination of the Truancy Intervention Program during the past school year. The TIP targets elementary and middle school youth with school attendance problems to prevent them from becoming habitually truant. The TIP program served 193 youth/families during the 2005-06 school year

211: “The Source” for Finding Community Services

Did you know that 211 is the national abbreviated dialing code for non-emergency health and social service information and referral? The local 211 line is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year through a partnership with the United Way and Abuse Counseling and Treatment. A trained Information and Referral Specialist will answer your call, assess your needs, and provide information and referrals to programs and services that can assist you. 211 calls may not be able to be made from some pay phones and cell phones. An alternate number is 433-3900. Or, try out United Way’s interactive Community Resource page at www.irissoft.com/LCUW/. One can search for local programs by type of service, city, and zip code.



Free Counseling for Non-arrested Youth

The Family Intervention Program (FIP) and the Family Assessment and Intervention Response (FAIR), both offered by SWFAS, provide prevention services for non-arrested youth ages 10–17. Services include assessments, individual and family therapy, and intervention groups.

Fort Myers Location:

To schedule an appointment or for the current walk-in schedule for the FAIR program at the JAC in Fort Myers, call Jeff Sundberg at 344-5115.

Cape Coral Location:

To schedule an appointment or for the current walk-in schedule for the FIP program at the SWFAS office in Cape Coral, call Ethel Bakke at 772-1211.



Jail Tour

One Saturday a month the Lee County Sheriff’s Office provides a jail tour to teach youth about the consequences of crime. A parent or legal guardian must accompany the youth on the tour. The program is held at 5:00 p.m. To sign up, call 533-7947.



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.