

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

June 2007

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

Prevention Network

June 5
11:00 a.m.
Lee JAC

Circuit 20 Juvenile Justice Board Executive Committee

June 6
1:30 p.m.
Southwest Florida Workforce Board

Lee County Juvenile Justice Council

June 7
1:30 p.m.
Joseph P. D'Alessandro
Office Complex (formerly known as
Regional Service Center)
2295 Victoria Ave., Room 165

Juvenile Sanctions Team

June 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.

State Budget Request Outcomes

Three local juvenile justice community budget requests were approved by the Florida legislature and survived the Governor's veto pen when the state's 2007-08 budget was approved in late May. This is the second year that the projects have been funded by the legislature. The projects include Contracted Conditional Release (aftercare) for \$273,750 to Associated Marine Institutes, a Domestic Violence Diversion Treatment Program for \$100,000 to Abuse Counseling and Treatment, and Trauma Counseling for Victimized Youth for \$50,000 to the Children's Advocacy Center. The budget proposals grew out of research done by the Lee County Juvenile Sanctions Team, which identified the community's special needs juvenile offenders and local service gaps. The proposals were also



adopted and prioritized by the Lee County Juvenile Justice Council. A local proposal for second year funding for a Functional Family Therapy program through the Lee Mental Health Center was not approved by the legislature, but may continue next year through a separate state funding stream that was included in the state's juvenile justice budget. A community budget request for a substance abuse diversion program through Southwest Florida Addiction Services was not approved by the legislature. "Thanks" goes to Senator Dave Aronberg and Representative Gary Aubuchon for their sponsorship of all five local proposals. A statewide budget request for the Girl's Advocacy Project was also funded. It will provide funding for an education/intervention program for girls at the Southwest Florida Regional Detention Center.

Vurro Appointed Circuit 20 DJJ Coordinator

The Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) has announced that Vincent Vurro, Superintendent of the Southwest Florida Regional Detention Center, has been appointed as the Circuit 20 Coordinator for DJJ. In addition to his responsibilities as Detention Superintendent, he will serve as a single point of contact for all areas of DJJ operations within Circuit 20. DJJ operations include Prevention and Victim Services, Probation and Community Intervention, Detention Services, and Residential Services. Circuit Coordinators will facilitate the flow of information that may be of public interest be-



Vincent Vurro

tween other areas of operation within DJJ and to local citizens and stakeholders. Circuit 20 includes Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee Counties. Vurro can be contacted at (239) 332-6927.

Talk to Youth About the Consequences of Joy Riding

A golf cart may seem harmless enough. By statutory definition, a golf cart should go no faster than 20 miles per hour. The JAC has seen that, when youth impulsively take a joy ride on a golf cart, the consequences can be steep. Youth can rack up thousands of dollars in resti-

tution owed by damage they do while joy riding. Golf courses are most frequently the victims. Youth can be charged with larceny theft or criminal mischief, but they can also be charged with grand theft auto and criminal damage, which are felonies.



JAC Audit Conclusions Positive

In May, the Lee County Clerk of Courts completed an audit of the Juvenile Assessment Center of Lee County at the request of the Lee County Manager. The scope of the audit was to review and evaluate operations, programs, resources and financial data with regard to the JAC achieving its mission, goals, and objectives. The scope particularly focused on the Lee County Sheriff's Office management of the JAC. Responses from surveys sent to JAC stakeholders reflected that the JAC has significantly improved the juvenile booking process, has brought together agencies in a collaborative manner to assess arrested and non-

arrested juveniles for mental health and substance abuse issues, has been extremely useful in helping to identify the concerns and overall needs of both the juveniles and their families, and JAC staff have worked diligently to engage community partners in initiatives that identify gaps in services and work on possible solutions. The audit concluded that the JAC provides "a good quality of service for Lee County." The audit report is available at the Lee County Clerk of Court's website at www.leeclerk.org/Audit_Reports/2007_Audits/LeeCountyJuvenile.pdf.

Resources for JAC Partners

If you scratch your head wondering what an "OPS JPO has to do with a PACT at the JAC," you are not alone. The juvenile justice world is one where acronyms abound and the uninitiated frequently feel as if they have been transported to a foreign country. The JAC – or Juvenile Assessment Center – works to form partnerships with many community organizations, some of which are new to the juvenile justice world. To assist our partners, an additional page has been added to the JAC website at www.swfljac.org/partnerresource.htm. The web page includes a guide to frequently used acronyms, a community resource guide, a link to a model programs guide, a link to the Florida statute search system, and a link to Florida statutes. Suggestions for additions are always welcome.

The Importance of Keeping Youth Busy

Research from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA), released in April 2007, indicates that the greater the number of any school-based, community-based, church or faith-based or related afterschool activities a youth participated in during the past year, the lower the rate of substance use, including cigarettes, alcohol, and illicit substances. The study concluded that youth from households with higher family incomes were more likely to participate in a greater number of activities than those from households with lower family incomes.



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.