

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

June 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

Circuit 20 Juvenile Justice Board

June 4
1:30 p.m.
Southwest Florida Workforce
Development Board
9530 Marketplace Rd., Ste. 104

Juvenile Sanctions Team

June 5
12:00 p.m.
Joseph P. D'Alessandro
Office Complex
2295 Victoria Ave., Room 165

Lee County Juvenile Justice Council

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

Prevention Network

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

**Law enforcement
should call ahead to**

**344-5161
or 344-5171**

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

Youth Services Impacted by Funding Cuts

As the dust begins to settle from recent state budget cuts, the impact on local youth services is becoming clearer. Here are some of the local delinquency prevention and intervention services that will be impacted for the state fiscal year 2008-09, beginning July 1.

Girls Advocacy Project (GAP) – a program at the Southwest Florida Regional Detention center that provides psycho-educational services to address specialized needs of detained girls. GAP will lose all of its funding.

TRUE Girls Trauma Program – a therapeutic program provided by the Children's Advocacy Center for girls who

have been victims of trauma. TRUE will lose all of its funding.

Family and Teen Domestic Violence Program (FTV) – a court diversion program provided by Abuse Counseling and Treatment (ACT) that provides
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Knowing How to Ask for Help a Skill For Avoiding Crime

Imagine you are an adolescent boy. You have one pair of sneakers and that pair of sneakers *stinks*...so much so that kids at school complain and tease you. You ask your mom, who is a single parent, for a new pair of sneakers. She says "no," she can't afford to buy you shoes. You are not old enough to get a job. You try washing your sneakers, but it only makes them worse. What do you do? Recently a boy with this problem shoplifted a pair of sneakers. They were not an expensive pair of shoes. He knew it was wrong, but he had not been able to figure out how else to solve his problem. Perhaps it's a sign of the economy, but the JAC has seen more youth lately who have shoplifted items that are often considered necessities. Baby food and over the counter medications (not the kinds that



are abused) are examples. As the economy takes a downturn and people are faced with increased costs and declining resources, knowing how to ask for help and knowing where to ask for help may be new skills for some. Fortunately, Lee County United Way has helped to simplify finding out where to get help with the 211 information and referral phone line. When one dials 211 (or 433-3900 from a cell phone), trained specialists will assess one's needs and help find assistance. It is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The United Way also has a searchable website to find help at www.unitedwaylee.org. Whether it is finding assistance with groceries, baby food, or even figuring out how to replace a pair of old, stinky shoes, 211 can help.

Youth Services Impacted by Funding Cuts *(cont.)*

therapy for youth with domestic violence charges and their families. FTV will lose all of its funding. The program reports it will continue to take referrals as it looks for alternative funding sources.

Conditional Release Supervision – provides case management services to assist delinquent youth returning from residential commitment programs to link them to positive supports in the community. The Southwest Florida Marine Institute will lose 25 conditional release slots. The Naples Marine Institute (NMI) will lose 24 slots. Juvenile Probation Officers in

Southwest Florida will pick up the slack by adding these youth to their case loads. As a result of this decrease in funding, the Naples Marine Institute will also close its day treatment program on June 30th.

Neighborhood Accountability Boards (NAB) – a court diversion program operated by Lee County Human Services utilizes trained community volunteers and a restorative conferencing model to hold juveniles accountable for their crimes. The NAB grant funding will be reduced by 33% .

SKILLS Mentoring – a delinquency prevention program that provides group mentoring to youth through the African Caribbean American Center. The program will lose 33% of its grant funding.

Functional Family Therapy (FFT) – an intensive family intervention used to prevent delinquent youth from entering more costly residential programs. Provided by Lee Mental Health Center in both Lee and Collier Counties, the program will lose 10 slots, or the equivalent of one therapist.

Volunteering Builds Work Experience

With unemployment in Southwest Florida higher now than it has been in years, it may be a tougher year than usual for teens to find summer jobs. However, if a teen doesn't find a summer job, he doesn't have to lose out on gaining valuable work experience. Volunteering is another option for a teen to gain work experience, build his resume, enhance his college transcripts, and explore possible career options. The Lee County Parks and Recreation Department

has a variety of volunteer opportunities for teens at locations throughout the county. Visit their website at www.leeparks.org or call their volunteer services coordinator at 432-2159. The Teen Friendship Volunteer Corps also assists teens in finding volunteer opportunities in the community. Call them at 275-4427 or go online to www.volunteerlee.org.



Sheriff Mike Scott recently helped kickoff the Lee County Boys and Girls Clubs' Summer Appeal Campaign. The campaign will help children attend Summer Enrichment Programs. For information on how to help, call the Boys and Girls Clubs at 334-1886.

Community Resource Guide Updated

The JAC's Community Resource Guide has been updated. The guide was developed to assist Lee County families with youth in need of programs and resources. It is available online at www.swfljac.org/guide.pdf. The updated version allows the user to link to the web sites of included organizations. (Users can also use Control F to search for names or terms within the guide.)



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.