

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

June 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

Circuit 20 Juvenile Justice Board

July 15
1:30 p.m.
Southwest Florida Workforce
Development Board
9530 Marketplace Rd., Ste 104
Fort Myers

Lee County Juvenile Justice Council

(No meeting in July)
August 5
1:30 p.m.
D'Alessandro Office Complex
2295 Victoria Ave., Room 165
Fort Myers

Prevention Network

(No meeting in July)
August 14
10:00 a.m.
Lee County Human Services
2440 Thompson Street
Fort Myers

**Law enforcement
should call ahead to**

**344-5161
or 344-5171**

**when bringing an
arrested youth
to the JAC.**

Costs Add Up for Missed Court

It is a fairly common practice for doctors' or dentists' offices to mail postcards or to call their patients to remind them of their next appointment. It is estimated that medical practices and similar businesses can miss out on 10-15% of all their scheduled appointments due to patient no shows. This results in lost revenue. So, it makes good business sense for an appointment based businesses to have strategies in place to address the reality that patients forget appointments, particularly those with a long lead time.

While the financing of the juvenile justice system is not the same as that of a revenue generating business, the juvenile justice system faces a similar challenge called "Failure to Appear" or FTA. When a youth is arrested, he or she, is given a court date. This date is

usually about three to four weeks out. If the youth does not show up for the scheduled court date, the judge may issue an order to take the youth into custody for FTA. This typically results in the youth being arrested and placed in secure detention. Detention hearings are held once a day. A judge decides at the detention hearing whether the youth should remain in secure detention, be placed on home detention, or released. For youth with an FTA arrest a new court date is issued.

So far in 2009, the number of arrests the JAC has seen each month for FTA ranges from 34 to 45, or about 9% of the total arrests per month. Not all of the youth who are arrested for FTA are a public safety risk and some may be released following their detention hearing. In May, for example, about half of the youth arrested for FTA spent *(Continued page 2)*



Vehicle Registration Surcharge Funds Juvenile Programs

Anyone who registers a motor vehicle in Florida directly invests in the juvenile justice system. There is a \$1.00 surcharge on each new registration or annual renewal of a motor vehicle registration. Fifty-eight cents is deposited into the General Revenue Fund and forty-two cents is deposited into the Grants and Donations Trust Fund within the Department of Juvenile Justice to fund the Community Juvenile Justice Partnership Grants Program (CPG). The CPG was established under Florida Statute 985.676 to fund local early-intervention and diversion services that support the local juvenile justice

plan. During the past year the African American Caribbean Center received \$37,606 through the CPG program for its SKILLS Mentoring Program. Also, the Lee County Department of Human Services received \$44,217 through the CPG program for the Neighborhood Accountability Board program. According to the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles, there was more than \$18 million collected statewide through the vehicle registration surcharge in 2007-08. In Lee County, \$582,283 was collected through this surcharge during the same timeframe.

Costs Add Up for Missed Court (cont.)

one night in secure detention and then were released with a new court date. While there is no revenue lost when youth do not show up for court, there is a cost. This includes the staff time for all the agencies who prepare for and are present for the scheduled court date, the judge's time to issue the pick up order, staff time involved in processing the order, the law enforcement officer's time to arrest the youth, the booking officer's time, and the Department of Juvenile Justice staff's time to process the youth at the JAC. There is also a more tangible cost to local taxpayers. The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) considers detention days for FTA to be the county's responsibility. The state charges the county \$237 for each day a Lee County

youth arrested for FTA spends in secure detention. In most cases the youth spends at least one night in secure detention. The state charges the county for two days when the youth stays in detention overnight, even if the stay is less than 24 hours. Some youth who are considered a risk to the community stay longer in secure detention while awaiting their court date, up to the statutory 21 day limit. The cost for any days that a Lee County youth spends in secure detention prior to being committed by the court to DJJ are considered the county's responsibility. Based on last year's usage, Lee County's estimated bill this year from the state for secure detention is \$3,752,650.

New Guide for Parents



"Substance Abuse Services for Youth in Florida: A Guide for Families" is a resource to assist parents in accessing substance abuse services for their child. It includes tips for talking to one's child about their substance abuse problem, suggestions for what to do if one's child does not believe they have a problem, a description of the type of help that is available, how to find help, what happens when a youth with a substance abuse problem is arrested, and an explanation of common treatment payment methods. The guide also outlines the use of the Marchman Act, which is a Florida law that provides that, under certain circumstances, a youth can be taken involuntarily for a substance abuse assessment or treatment. The guide is available at www.attcnetwork.org/regcenters/productDocs/14/Family_Guidebook_Monograph-web.pdf.



Tag Proceeds Invested

Proceeds from the sale of Invest in Children license tags come back to the county in which the tags are sold to fund juvenile crime prevention and early intervention initiatives. For the state fiscal year 2007-08, the proceeds from the Invest in Children license tags for Lee County was \$19,900. This represents approximately 995 people in Lee County who have purchased the Invest in Children specialty license tag. During the past year, \$18,871 in proceeds from the Invest in Children tags helped fund the African Caribbean American Center's SKILLS Mentoring Program.

Brochures in Spanish

Three of the JAC's most requested *Know the Law* brochures have been translated into Spanish. They include "Consequences to a Juvenile Arrest or Conviction," "Emancipation," and "Truancy." A special "thanks" to Courtney Lanute, a Spanish teacher at Southwest Florida College who volunteered her time to do the translations. The brochures will be available in the JAC lobby and will also be available for downloading from the JAC website's Partners Resources page at www.swfljac.org/partnerresource.htm. The English versions of the brochures continue to be available at the same locations.



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.