

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

August 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

Circuit 20 Juvenile Justice Executive Board

August 1
1:30 p.m.
Southwest Florida Workforce Board

Prevention Network

August 2
12:30 p.m.
D'Alessandro Office Complex
2295 Victoria Ave., Room 165

Lee County Juvenile Justice Council

August 2
1:30 p.m.
D'Alessandro Office Complex
2295 Victoria Ave., Room 165

Juvenile Sanctions Team

August 13
12:00 p.m.
Lee JAC

Funding Strategies Committee

August 29
11:00 a.m.
Lee JAC

Law enforcement should call ahead to

**344-5161
or 344-5171**

when bringing an arrested youth to the JAC.

Medicine Abuse Awareness Month

August 2007 has been designated as National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month by the U.S. Senate to raise awareness about an increasing trend among youth in rates of intentional abuse of both prescription and over-the-counter drugs to get high. Abuse of medications is a topic that is often overlooked by parents and other adults in discussions with youth about drug abuse. Drug stores in Florida are now placing many more over-the-counter medications behind the pharmacists counter, but there are still lots of places that kids can



access potentially dangerous medications. Kids are still easily getting them from their own homes or the homes of relatives and friends, or even over the internet. National rates indicate that 1 in 10 teens report having used over-the-counter medications to get high and 1 in 4 knows someone who has tried it. In a survey of Lee County high school youth, 14.5% indicated they had abused prescription pain relievers, 10.5% had abused depressants, and 5.2% had abused prescription amphetamines. There are steps that parents and other adults can take to help prevent medicine abuse with kids.

(Continued page 2)

Back to School - Time to Review School Code of Conduct

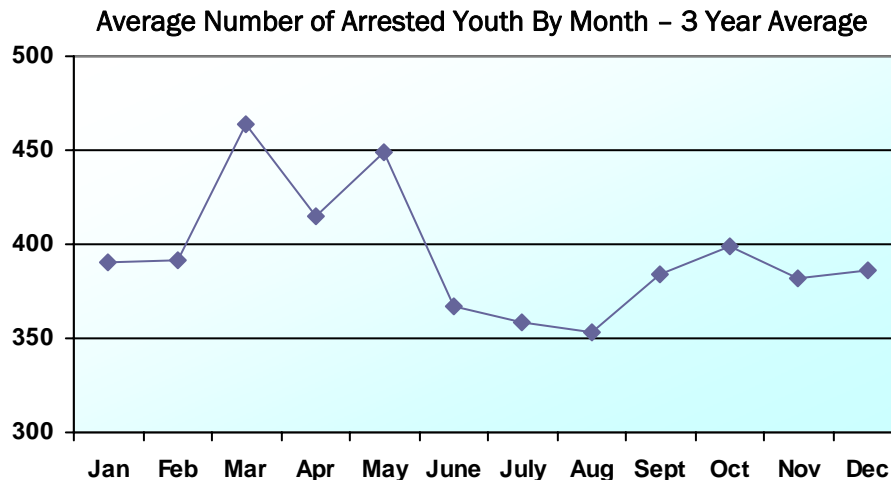
The JAC reminds parents that the start of the new school year is a good time to review the school district's code of conduct with youth. It's also a good time of the year to remind youth about appropriate problem solving strategies at school, showing respect for authority, and expectations that youth will make good decisions. Every year the JAC sees youth who are arrested at school for behavior which violates both the school code and is an arrestable offense. Besides possession of drugs at school, one of the most prevalent offenses that youth are arrested for at school in Lee County is breach of peace. In the 2006-07 school year, the JAC saw 90 youth



who were arrested for breach of peace. A review of booking reports showed that youth behaviors which led up to receiving this type of charge included physical altercations with other students, verbal disturbances, physically threatening to fight another student, use of profanity, use of profane gestures, refusing to leave a classroom or bus as requested after causing a disruption, refusing to report to a time-out room as requested, and refusing to follow directions of a school administrator or law enforcement officer. The first day of school for students attending Lee County public schools is August 20th.

Juvenile Arrest Trends

It is a commonly held assumption that juvenile arrests spike during the summer time. The JAC has not found that to be the case. In Lee County, juvenile arrests tend to spike in the springtime, especially in the last few months of the school year, and, on average, have declined during the summer months.



Medicine Abuse (cont.)

It is important to educate ourselves about the problem of medicine abuse and to talk to kids about the risks of drug abuse, including the abuse of medications. Additional steps that parents can take at home to prevent medication abuse include:

- Safeguard medicines in the home.
- Monitor what products one has

and the amount of medicines in the home. Watch for missing bottles of medicine or empty boxes or bottles in the trash.

- Recognize signs of drug abuse: changes in friends, appearance, sleep habits, and eating patterns, loss of interest in usual activities, or a hostile attitude.
- Monitor youth’s internet use. Evidence of youth visiting pro-

drug websites that provide information on how to abuse medicines is a red flag.

- Properly dispose of unused or expired medications.

For information on prescription drug abuse and proper disposal of medications, visit the following website: www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/drugfact/prescr_drg_abuse.html.



Youth participating in the Lee County Parks and Recreation Department’s summer program in Estero toured the jail and the juvenile assessment center during July. Shown is Corporal Kelley Weathers explaining the role of the CERT Team (Corrections Emergency Response Team) which handles critical incidents and prisoner extractions in the jail. Also pictured is Deputy Jason Steinke, who explained the role of the “Shake Down Team.” The team utilizes K9’s to perform sweeps for contraband in the jail.

During the past year prescription drug abuse ranked second - only behind marijuana - as the nation’s most prevalent illegal drug problem.



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.