

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

September 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

### Juvenile Sanctions Team

September 4  
12:00 p.m.  
Joseph P. D'Alessandro  
Office Complex  
2295 Victoria Ave., Room 165

### Lee County Juvenile Justice Council

September 4  
1:30 p.m.  
Joseph P. D'Alessandro  
Office Complex  
2295 Victoria Ave., Room 165

### Prevention Network

September 12  
10:00 a.m.  
Lee County Human Services  
2440 Thompson Street

### Circuit 20 Juvenile Justice Board

September 17  
1:30 p.m.  
Southwest Florida Workforce  
Development Board  
9530 Marketplace Rd., Ste. 104

**Law enforcement  
should call ahead to**

**344-5161  
or 344-5171**

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

## Some Juvenile Records Are Public

"A 14 year old juvenile was arrested and taken to the JAC," reads an article from a local media source. "The name is not being released due to the age of the juvenile." Yet another article lists the full name of another arrested 14 year old youth. The JAC sometimes hears from surprised parents who see their child's name in the media, "Aren't all juvenile records confidential?" As a general rule, access to juvenile records is limited, but there are exceptions. All traffic violations by youth are public record and are treated the same as adult traffic violations. Until 1994, law enforcement agencies generally could only release the name of juveniles ages 16 and older who had



been charged with one of a few specific crimes. In 1994, a change in laws governing juvenile confidentiality eliminated the age restriction and expanded what juvenile records could be disclosed. The law now allows law enforcement agencies to disclose the name, photograph, address, and the arrest report of any child arrested for a felony. This same information may be disclosed if a child has been found by a court to have committed three or more misdemeanors. This information may also be disclosed for youth who are transferred to the adult system.

## Talk to Kids About Interacting With Law Enforcement

Fleeing and eluding a police officer, resisting arrest without violence, and giving a false name are some of the ways that adolescents rack up arrest charges. It also reflects ways that adolescents may act impulsively and make decisions that are not in their best interest. Ask any parent of a teen or preteen and they will affirm that reasoning abilities and good judgment are not highly developed in adolescents. New developments in brain imaging technology also confirm that the teenage brain is not as fully developed as has been assumed in the past. In other words, adolescents do



not think like adults. Adolescents' emotional impulses often win out over calm, rational thought. The more emotionally charged a situation is, the less likely that an adolescent will make a good, logical decision. Adolescents do have the ability to see things from the perspectives of others, although they might not always use this ability. Parents and others working with youth can capitalize on this ability by coaching (Continued page 2)

## Times HAVE Changed - *A message from Bill Naylor, JAC Manager*

Working at the JAC since 2004, I've had a lot of opportunities to learn about the youth in our community and I'm not often surprised when it comes to youth issues. So, when I began working with the Lee County Prevention Network to do a survey of the youth of our community, I thought I could guess how the youth would answer. The survey has 14 questions, such as, where do you spend time, do you enjoy living in Lee County, what do you fear, and what, if anything, would you change about Lee County. So far 110 surveys have been returned. The answers have totally surprised me and have me wanting to know more. Over 74% of the youth report that they enjoy living in Lee County. 40% say that there are lots of things for youth to do in our community. 52% said they spend most of their time at home. The

reason they gave for spending time at home was not because of TV, games, phone, or the computer. One of the main reasons the youth gave was because it is safe. That was a given to me growing up. I had no worries when I went bike riding up to the store or hung out at the park playing sports. I was especially surprised with the answers the youth gave about what they fear. For me it was doctors, needles, getting bad grades, and learning how to drive. All of these things combined only came to 7% of the answers. What surprised me is 8.4% said they were afraid of dying/getting shot or killed, 11.5% said they were afraid of turning 18 or being on their own, and 8% reported they were afraid of having some sort of violence

committed against them. The "hot" issues of peer pressure and bullies at school only represented 3.5% of the responses. Some youth wrote that they fear being raped, being robbed, getting beat up by gang youth, getting abused or hurt again, and even being taped, bound and kidnapped! None of those things even crossed my mind when I was a teen. I realize that times have changed the way youth think, feel, and perceive their community. I will share more results of the survey in future newsletters. We are continuing to collect surveys. If you have a youth or work with any youth who would like to participate in the survey, contact the JAC so I can send you the survey or go online to [www.swfljac.org/survey.htm](http://www.swfljac.org/survey.htm).

## Talk to Kids About Interacting With Law Enforcement (cont.)

youth on how they might handle stressful situations by seeing it from another person's point of view. For example, what should a youth do if stopped by a law enforcement officer? For some youth in this emotionally charged situation, the impulse is to run. Or, their impulse might be to give a false name or address. Adolescents may not see the situation from the law enforcement officer's perspective. Parents and others working with youth may want to remind youth that if they are ever

stopped by a law enforcement officer, they should always remain respectful and polite, even if they believe they are being stopped for no reason. They should always give their correct name and address. Assist youth in considering how their behavior in this situation could be interpreted by a law enforcement officer. Running away will arouse suspicion. Disrespect or failure to cooperate add to the officer's perceived threat of the situation. Assist

youth in understanding what responses on their part will be in their own best interest if ever in this situation. Just as youth need to learn what behavior is expected of them in many settings and social situations, they also need to learn what is expected of them if stopped by a law enforcement officer.



## Judge Kyle to Preside Over Juvenile Court

The local juvenile justice system bids farewell this month to the Honorable Joseph Fuller, who will move from juvenile court to civil court. Judge Fuller has served as the juvenile court judge in Lee County since February 5, 2007. The Honorable Bruce Kyle will begin presiding over juvenile court beginning September 2nd. Welcome to Judge Kyle!

*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.*