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Dauphin County SHOC program shows positive results



SHOC youth gather at the entrance to Sunshine Park after a picnic on Family Unity Day

In the Allison Hill section of Harrisburg, the Community Action Commission has instituted a community crime prevention program that is exhibiting several positive outcomes. Students Helping Our Community (SHOC), developed within the Commission's Communities That Care initiative, is a program that rewards youths for being good and staying out of trouble. A team of youths is paid for work they perform doing chores for elderly and disabled individuals in their neighborhood, as well as for crime victims and single mothers.

SHOC also provides training sessions that youth and their parents must attend. Topics of this training include dealing with peer pressure, hygiene, sexuality/sex education and abstinence, drug and alcohol abuse, conflict resolution, sensitivity training, and arts/cultural activities.

In addition to working and doing community service, the SHOC youths participate in organized recreational and educational activities such as cookouts, bowling and skating parties, fundraisers,

and field trips. The youths also participate in the Dopebusters program, being sworn in as a positive posse of youth who are anti-drug and anti-violence. In operation for approximately two years, SHOC has served 66 youth ages 8-17 years. Several promising outcomes have been reported. Approximately 72 percent have increased their overall report-card grades, and all have advanced to the next grade. Only 8 percent of the youth were tardy to school five or more times during the school year, compared to 35 percent the previous year. Nearly 61 percent of the youth have opened savings accounts. Lastly, all of the youth have stayed out of trouble with the police department and have not violated "zero-tolerance" policies.

SHOC has provided positive outlets for youth, and is improving the youths commitment and involvement in the community. For more information regarding SHOC, contact Vladimir Beaufile at 717-232-9757.

School safety survey results

Pennsylvania's Chief Juvenile Probation Officers were recently asked to complete a survey on school safety issues, including questions pertaining to school-based probation programs, in conjunction with the Attorney General's Task Force on School Safety. All 67 chiefs responded to the survey questionnaire.

Fifty-two counties (78 percent) reported employing school-based probation officers who are located in 228 of Pennsylvania's 501 school districts (46 percent of school districts). These school-based probation officers maintain a presence in 452 school buildings. More than 90 percent of counties reported that they always notify school building principals, or their designees, about children who have been adjudicated delinquent. Nearly all of the counties using school-based probation programs report they are very effective in achieving the program's intended purpose and believe school-based probation should be encouraged as a school safety strategy.

Chief Juvenile Probation Officers reported initiating and participating in a variety of interagency committees as a school safety strategy. Other initiatives reported which involved juvenile probation staff and/or students under juvenile court jurisdiction, included requiring community service from students who are suspended from school, requiring mental health evaluations of students referred for acts of violence on school grounds, swift and firm responses by juvenile courts for all students charged with acts of violence on school grounds, working closely with school resource police officers, and developing safety plans with local schools and law enforcement agencies.

Peer juries, victim/offender mediation on school grounds, portable radios, certification in defensive tactics/safety training, school district personnel training, random drug tests on juvenile probation clients, regular meetings with school district personnel, joint school district/juvenile court program development, joint juvenile probation/children and youth case management, shared information, promoting relationships/programs through the media, classroom presentations and involvement by probation staff in school activities such as coaching athletic programs and chaperoning after-school activities are all important steps in the process of creating safe schools.

The chiefs made the following recommendations for enhancing working relationships between juvenile courts, juvenile probation departments, children and youth agencies, and schools and improving school safety; clearly communicating roles, limitations, and expectations among agencies, communicating on a regular basis, cross-systems training, expanding school-based probation programs, developing truancy and other delinquency prevention programs, joint program planning, blending funding streams to develop programs, and addressing the high turnover/low salaries experienced by county programs.

These survey results will be incorporated into the attorney general's task force report. Please phone Keith Snyder at 717-787-5634, or email Ksnyder@state.pa.us, if you have any questions or need more information.

Juvenile work crew gives back to the community

In Montgomery County, juvenile offenders are paying their communities back for the harm they caused with WORK. Over the past few months the crew, under the supervision of Jay Viola, has been working on several projects. At the Norristown Public Library, the crew restored a bookshelf in the rare book department that suffered severe water damage, and built bookshelves for the daily book sale. Delinquents and valentines are not often thought of together; this work crew designed and created victorian valentines which were distributed to local homebound children and adults in memory of Ruth Saylor, who started the practice.

They have been trailblazing a nature walk at Norristown Farm Park. The trail along Stony Creek will provide a hiking/walking trail in the midst of the 500 acre park. The work crew helped to restore the Hamilton House on the grounds of the Valley Forge National Park, which will serve as the future site of the Park's Nature Center. Fellowship House and St. Pius X High School, the United Way of Pottstown and Upper Perkiomen, Empire Hook and Ladder Company, Manor Care and Mothers Against Drunk Driving have also been the recipients of hard work by the crew.

Although every juvenile referred to the probation department is assigned community service hours, only about 15 juveniles per month are assigned to the work crew for several reasons; there may not be enough community service sites in their communities, they may have been uncooperative at other sites, or they have failed to show up for past community service as scheduled.

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Philadelphia probation observes Martin Luther King Day with a day of service to the community

On January 17, Philadelphia juvenile probation showed the true spirit of service as they observed this year's Martin Luther King Day with a number of community service projects at sites throughout the City of Philadelphia. Led by Tom Quinn and Jean Serinsky, supervisors of the Victim and Community Services Unit, a group of 100 probation officers and juveniles joined with community residents and other volunteers to give something back to the community. Nineteen probation officers and administrators volunteered their time on the court holiday to help the neighborhoods. Chief Probation Officer Ken Hale, seeing a connection between the Martin Luther King Day of Service and BARJ principles, recommended participation.

Probation officer Michelle Reibel and 10 juveniles worked in West Philadelphia at the Kingsessing Recreation Center while Shannon Higgins and Jackie Widmeier and five probationers were at the Shaw Middle School painting with volunteers from the Greater Philadelphia Martin Luther King Day of Service program. At West Philadelphia High School, school-based probation officer Frances Stewart and 10 of her "posse" painted lockers on the third floor of the building.

In North Philadelphia, Bennie Price, who is assigned to Simon Gratz High School, worked with four juveniles from the school in a painting project. Over in Kensington, Andy Schwab was at the Ramblers Recreation Center with a team of 12. They swept and mopped the gym and the room used for after-school activities. At Kensington High School Kevin Comey and 15 juveniles painted

lockers.

In Logan, a group of 12 led by probation officer Mike Tyson cleaned the Cooke Middle School. In South Philly Terence Brown, of the Victim & Community Services Unit, had 20 young people at the Murphy Playground. They cleaned and washed floors, walls, and windows in the locker rooms and bathrooms. In the Northeast, Norine Quinn and 17 juveniles worked at the Jardel Playground. They cleaned the buildings and the grounds, and afterward the staff asked if the probationers could come back on a regular basis.

In Germantown, Leroy Whitt and a crew of 16 cleaned up two playgrounds, working with a coalition of community groups. While at the Rivera Recreation Center in North Philly, Alex Bilinski, a crew of juveniles, and some volunteers from Beaver College cleaned the facility. The hardest part of the job was cleaning up the mud-caked boiler room area.

In Olney, Jennifer Adams and Lisa

Schillinger led a team of six juveniles who worked at the Barrett Playground. They policed the entire outside area of litter and other debris. At nearby Fisher Park, Steve Capriotti, Mike Katona, and Ryan Egan labored with 10 probation clients and members of the Fisher Park Community Alliance. And at 20th and Dauphin, Sherman Washington, Maurica Ryder, and 10 juveniles cleaned up the Colorado Community Center.

At many of the sites the probation volunteers received tee shirts, pens, certificates of thanks, and lunch. They worked side by side with neighbors in trying to make their communities better. They also observed the spirit of Martin Luther King Jr., in providing service to their communities.

In the weeks following the Day of Service, letters of thanks and appreciation were received by the Victim & Community Service Unit from administrators of the schools and recreation centers. They said they look forward to the next Martin Luther King Day of Service.



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Work sites are lauding the crew for their hard work and diligence. For some of the juveniles on the crew, this is the first time they have ever heard positive comments about themselves for the community. The crew will be starting their vegetable garden in May. All produce will be donated to local shelters and group homes. Anyone who has questions about the garden project may call Jason Viola at 610-630-2252.

New chief in Lebanon County

On March 20, 2000, William Sullivan was named Chief Juvenile Probation Officer in Lebanon County. Sullivan was born in Richmond, Virginia, but grew up in Abington, Pennsylvania. He graduated from Elizabethtown College in 1972 with a B.A. in Sociology. After graduation he got a job in the Lebanon County Adult Probation Department; when he left there in 1987, Sullivan was a supervisor in charge of the collection of fines, costs, and restitution.

In 1987 Sullivan took a position in Harrisburg with the Federal Office of Defense Investigative Services. While there he performed background checks for security clearances. In 1991 he left the federal government and started his own business investigating workman's compensation fraud. In 1997 the Welfare Fraud Division of the State Office of Investigator General came calling, and Sullivan gave them his talents until March of this year when he accepted his present position.

Sullivan and his wife Tamar live in Lebanon. They have two children, a son Brent, who is 18, and a daughter Paige, who is 16.

JCJC annual conference on juvenile justice to feature workshops

The Pennsylvania Conference on Juvenile Justice will be held November 1-3, 2000, at the Harrisburg Hilton and Towers. The program will again feature a three-day format, providing opportunities for plenary sessions, breakout sessions, and professional caucuses, as well as social activities, for participants.

On Thursday, November 2, there will be series of workshops presented throughout the day. Ninety-minute workshops will be offered three times throughout the day. Pennsylvania-based trainers and presenters are encouraged to develop proposals for consideration of being featured during this year's conference.

Prospective trainers may submit summaries of their training programs. Please include the title of the presentation and a brief summary, approximately 100 words or less. We also ask that you identify the intended target audience, i.e. juvenile probation officers, juvenile court judges, residential service providers, program administrators, community officials, etc.

Review and final selection of presenters and programs will be made during the summer. Interested presenters/trainers should submit materials to: Lisa Freese, CJJT&R, Shippensburg University, 1871 Old Main Drive, Shippensburg, PA 17257-2299.

1999 Statewide Community Service and Restitution Program Activity

As counties continue to integrate practices consistent with the balanced and restorative justice principles, record numbers of youth participated in community service and restitution programs in 1999. This data is compiled each year at the Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research for insurance purposes, and provides a picture of the program activities statewide.

A total of 16,490 youths were assigned unpaid community service in 1999. These numbers increased nearly 14 percent since 1998, and more than 37 percent since 1997. This number represents 511,949 community-service hours; at mini-

mum wage, \$2,636,500 in volunteer efforts was invested in non-profit organizations and agencies across Pennsylvania.

In 19 counties, there were more than 200 participants in the programs. Approximately 76 percent of the youths assigned to community service were males. The average age was 14-16; these figures have remained relatively constant during the past 10 years. The length of time necessary to complete the community service assignments was also similar.

There are also 20 active financial restitution programs throughout Pennsylvania with 1,412 youths involved in these programs.



Communities That Care SHOC program in Allison Hill section of Harrisburg is hard at work cleaning up their neighborhood! *Story on page 1.*