

a newsletter of the

Pennsylvania
Juvenile Court
Judges'
Commission

P E N N S Y L V A N I A J U V E N I L E J U S T I C E

Volume 9, Number 2

www.jcjc.state.pa.us

February 2001

Montgomery County groups meet to heal the trauma of violence

by: **Margery K. Miller,**
Montgomery County BARJ
Coordinator

Peaceful Posse believes that hurt people hurt others, so they teach skills for healing the trauma of violence and for promoting peace. Boys are encouraged to open up and share their stories, so they can embark on a self-reflective healing process. Ideally, the healing process leads to personal and group responsibility for making and keeping community peace.

Through a Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant (JAIBG), two Peaceful Posse groups have been meeting in Montgomery County—one in Norristown and one in Pottstown. The groups are led by project leader Brian Gallagher. Gilbert Kinsey facilitates the Norristown group and Todd Shawell the group in Pottstown.

The curriculum includes group discussions focusing on feelings, teamwork, respect, racism, significant life experiences and school issues; physical activities such as cooperative basketball games; and field trips, most recently to the Villanova roller skating rink. Besides providing a shared group experience for the boys, the outings give the leaders a chance to spend time with each boy. Gallagher believes “this individual connection is key to our reaching the boys at a deeper level—allowing them to trust enough, feel safe enough, to be themselves fully, outside the peer pressure of the larger group.”

Since September, the Norristown group of 13-16 boys has been meeting once-a-week in the Human Services Building. Gallagher believes this group of boys is already committed to Peaceful Posse and its goals. They have shared some important life experiences with the group and discussed frankly the trauma of racism.

The Pottstown group has six-to-seven regular attendees who have been meeting at Ricketts Community Center. This group has looked at issues of fairness and street fighting, questioning who has fights and why. The leaders' efforts have been directed at building group morale and “having the boys bolster each other during play, rather than ‘bust’ on each other,” Gallagher said.

Both groups have been working on respecting others while they are speaking. In Gallagher's words, “Everyone wants to talk—all the time! We don't believe in harsh discipline or in yelling until everyone is quiet,” he said. “We believe that if we stress that everyone will get a chance to talk and, firmly, but respectfully, correct those who interrupt, the boys will decide for themselves that it's best to take turns.”

2001-2002 budget proposed

On February 6, 2001 Governor Ridge presented to the General Assembly his proposed FY 2001-'02 budget.

The Governor recommended an increase in the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission budget appropriation for Specialized Probation Services from \$13,267,000 to \$15,623,000. The additional funds are to be used to support new specialized probation services positions in county juvenile probation departments. The appropriation supports school-based probation, intensive supervision and aftercare services, and community-based probation services for juvenile offenders.

Governor Ridge has proposed increasing the JCJC regular grant-in-aid appropriation from \$5,779,000 to \$6,033,000. This increase reflects a 3.5% COLA for the Grant-in-Aid and a \$100,000 increase in the Training and Graduate Education Grant to reinstitute the Graduate Education Program at Mercyhurst College, in Erie, for juvenile probation officers from northwestern Pennsylvania.

The Governor has recommended continuation of the Federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Block Grant (TANFBG) funding at the same level as fiscal year 2000-01 (\$2,000,000).

The Budget proposal includes the transfer of 14 employees to the staff complement of the JCJC from the Statistical Analysis Center operated at Shippensburg University. Adding these employees to the staff complement will enable the JCJC to maintain the staffing level required for the operation of the unit.

This publication is produced monthly at the Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research at Shippensburg University.

Guest articles are always welcome; please submit them by email or on a disk. We particularly enjoy your photographs, but we ask that these be mailed - we will be happy to return them to you.

P.J. Verrecchia is the editor. The address is CJJT&R, Shippensburg University, 1871 Old Main Drive, Shippensburg, PA 17257-2299 or email pjverr@wharf.ship.edu

Please send additions or changes to the mailing list to Nina Weaver at the same address or email nsweav@wharf.ship.edu

School Law Q & A

7: Rights of children in institutions and other settings

This month, we look at the educational rights of students in institutions, juvenile detention and delinquency facilities, and other out-of-home placements. Here's a one-sentence summary: for the most part, young people living in facilities other than their own homes generally have the same educational rights as anyone else.

This information comes from the Education Law Center, which can also provide help to callers on many other school law issues. ELC's phone numbers are (215) 238-6970 (Philadelphia) and (412) 391-5225 (Pittsburgh); also, many publications can be obtained from ELC's website, www.elc-pa.org.

This discussion does *not* apply to school-age youth in the adult criminal justice system, where the rules are somewhat different. For more information, contact ELC.

Q: If a student lives in an institution or other residential facility, is the student entitled to public education?

A: Almost always yes, if the student is of school age.

Q: What's "school age?"

A: Generally, a student is of school age from his or her sixth birthday (younger in some districts) to the end of the year in which s/he turns 21, or until graduation from high school - whichever comes first.

Q: Does the student's right to education depend on the type of facility in which he or she lives?

A: Generally, no. These rules apply regardless of whether the facility is a mental health or retardation institution, a group home or other community living arrangement, a juvenile justice facility, a drug and alcohol facility, or some other sort of setting. The rules also apply to students in foster homes. There are just a couple of exceptions.

Q: What are the exceptions?

A: Some non-special-education students placed in Pennsylvania facilities by out-of-state parents may be ineligible for public education. Also, there are some exceptions involving immigrants, though

for the most part a student's immigration status shouldn't affect his or her right to attend school. (As we noted in the preface, moreover, there are different rules for school-age students in the adult criminal system.) For more information on these special situations, contact the Education Law Center.

Q: Who is responsible for educating a student residing in an institution or other out-of-home placement?

A: As a general rule, the school district in which the facility is located.

Q: Does this mean that the student has the right to attend a local public school?

A: Generally yes, if the student is residing in a non-secure facility.

Q: Are the student's educational rights in this situation different from those of other students in the local public school?

A: No. He has all of the same rights as anyone else (including, for example, the right to special education evaluation and/or services, the right to certain hearings and other protections in school discipline, the right to special services for students whose native language is not English, and so forth).

Q: Who typically provides education to students in secure facilities?

A: In youth development centers, the state provides educational services, sometimes through contracts with other providers. In other secure facilities, education may be provided by staff of the local school district or intermediate unit, or by a private provider.

Q: What sort of educational program must be provided to students in secure facilities?

A: As a general rule, the program must be comparable to that offered in the regular public school system. Thus, the great majority of students in detention and correctional facilities are entitled to a full school program that includes (at the secondary level) 5.5 hours of instruction per day, at least 180 days per year, in all major subjects. The program must include, where appropriate, special education, special services for English language learners, disciplinary protections, and so forth.

Q: Do these rules apply even where the student's stay in the facility is short?

A: Yes, though for very short stays, it may be

impractical to implement the program in full.

Q: What can I do if I'm aware of a student in a facility who is not receiving adequate educational services?

A: Besides involving the parent, and perhaps talking with officials of the facility and the agency that provides educational services to students in the facility, you can seek help from the Education Law Center. See above for our phone numbers.

Supreme Court Establishes Juvenile Court Procedural Rules Committee

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court, by Order dated January 22, 2001, established a Juvenile Court Procedural Rules Committee.

The Committee is composed of nine members appointed, respectively, to one-, two-, or three-year terms commencing February 1, 2001. Future appointments will be for three-year terms, and members may serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms.

The members of the Juvenile Court Procedural Rules Committee are as follows:

Francis Barry McCarthy, Jr., Esq., Chairman; Hon. Carol K. McGinley (Lehigh County), Vice-chairman; Hon. Robert J. Colville (Allegheny County); John P. Delaney, Esq., Deputy District Attorney (Philadelphia County); Hon. Thomas J. Doerr (Butler County); Hon. Patrick R. Tamalia, Sr. Judge, Pa. Superior Court; Bruce L. Castor, Jr., District Attorney (Montgomery County); Jason P. Kutulakis, Esq. (Cumberland County); Hon. Abram Frank Reynolds (Philadelphia County)

Judge Colville, Judge Doerr and Mr. Delaney were each appointed for a one-year term. Mr. McCarthy, Judge McGinley and Judge Tamalia were appointed for two-year terms, and Mr. Castor, Mr. Kutulakis and Judge Reynolds were each appointed for a three-year term.

Applications for Mercyhurst College Class of 2004 now being accepted

Governor Tom Ridge has proposed funding in the 2001/2002 Commonwealth budget to enable the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission to reinstitute their support of graduate education opportunities at Mercyhurst College for juvenile probation officers from northwestern Pennsylvania.

We are now accepting applications for classes which will be held on Saturdays beginning September, 2001. Applications are limited to juvenile probation officers from Erie, Mercer, Crawford, Warren, Forest, Lawrence, and Venango counties.

Applicants must meet the following requirements to be considered for JCJC endorsement: (1) at least two years of experience in the juvenile justice field; (2) a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university; (3) a minimum of 18 undergraduate credits in the social sciences.

Mercyhurst College offers a Master of Science degree in the Administration of Justice involving 33 credit hours. Classes are scheduled over three years with students taking 12 credit hours their first and second year, and 9 credit hours during their third year. Coursework includes research, theory, policy, administration, counseling, ethics, and juvenile justice. Classes meet on five (5) weekends during the fall and spring semesters.

Tuition costs and educational fees are paid for by the JCJC for all endorsed students. Students who will be traveling from a distance greater than 100 miles will have their mileage reimbursed (after the first 100 miles to and from Mercyhurst) at a rate of .325 cents a mile. Any students traveling from a distance greater than 50 miles to Mercyhurst are eligible to have lodging reimbursed, up to \$50.00 a night, by the Commission. These students will be responsible for securing their own lodging.

Please note that this initiative is contingent upon inclusion of the necessary funding in the 2001-2002 General Appropriation Act.

If you would like more details or are interested in applying, please call PJ Verrecchia at 717-477-1797.

Bridger appointed Crawford County Probation Director

Stephen D. Bridger was appointed to the position of Director of Juvenile Probation Services in Crawford County on January 18, 2001. He succeeds Earl Brown who retired after 31 years of service. Bridger's career with the department began as a line officer in 1994. In 1997 he was promoted to the position of Deputy Chief.

Stephen Bridger received a BA Degree in Criminal Justice from Edinboro University in 1980. In 1988 he received his Masters Degree in Juvenile Justice Administration, having been part of the first graduating class sponsored by the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission at Mercyhurst College. Bridger is a certified instructor for the Phase II Safety Training.

He spends a considerable amount of time coaching and supporting his son and daughters sports activities.

FYI...

effective immediately

Allegheny County Juvenile Court has a new address and phone number.

Please address all correspondence to:
Allegheny County Juvenile Court
550 Fifth Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
412-350-0200
Fax 412-350-0176

Northampton County Juvenile Probation has moved. Their new address and phone numbers are listed below.

Northampton County Juvenile Probation
684 Washington Street.
Easton, PA 18042
610-559-7211
Fax 610-559-7218

Staff Development News

Four of the remaining 22 CJJT&R-sponsored workshops this spring have been closed to additional registrations because of reaching the class size limit. Both the Allentown and Pittsburgh area sessions of "Understanding Subculture Language" on March 15-16 and April 18-19 respectively are full. The program "How to Predict and Prevent Violence Using Threat Profiling" in Mechanicsburg on March 28-29 is full, as is the May 2-4 "Drug Subculture Competency" program which will be held in State College. There is space still available in several other outstanding training programs being offered this spring which we are encouraging practitioners in the field to consider attending.

At the Holiday Inn Mechanicsburg, on April 24-25, the Center is holding its once-a-year training workshop for the system's support staff. This year's program is entitled "Dealing with Difficult People." It will be led by Ms. Elizabeth Coyle who has taught a wide variety of classes and seminars with businesses, schools and agencies in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware. Ms. Coyle has taught college courses at Penn State University's York Campus and The Lancaster Center. She led

continued on back page

Positions Available

Assistant Dir., Court Supervision Services

Venango County is seeking someone to assist the director with the administration of the Venango County Adult/Juvenile Court Supervision Services. The position shall retain all powers granted to juvenile probation officers by the Juvenile Act, and all powers normally vested in adult probation officers by the Parole Act, except as expressly limited by local rule of the court.

Qualifications include a masters degree in criminal justice, administration of justice, social sciences, or a related discipline., JCJC certification, Act 33/34 clearance, a minimum of five (5) years working as a probation officer or in a related field, and one year supervisory or administrative experience.

Please send a resume to: Robert G. Daugherty, Dir.
Venango County Juvenile Probation
Court House Annex 1174 Elk St.,
Franklin, PA 16323

Secure Detention: Coping With Dwindling Space

Mike Rohan, Director of Juvenile Probation and Court Services, and Bill Siffermann, Deputy Director, from Cook County, Illinois, will present at the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania's (CCAP) Spring conference on Monday, March 25, 2001, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Harrisburg Hilton and Towers. They will be presenting on the process undertaken by Cook County to reduce over crowding in their detention center. The facility in the county encompassing Chicago has a bed capacity of 498 beds. When this process began it was not uncommon a population that exceeded 800 residents. An initiative was undertaken that involved the detention staff, juvenile probation, the courts, county executives, and local business community leaders. Rohan reported in a recent telephone conversation that the population in the detention center is now 350 residents.

This session will cover the extent of the problems that Cook County faced and the methods undertaken to eliminate the overcrowding. The presentation will include a discussion of: 1) major obstacles, 2) key players important in the collaboration, 3) development of community based alternatives, 4) the importance of data collection in this environment, 5) discussion about the value of the screening instrument, and 6) how to sustain the system reform.

The overcrowding in detention felt by the juvenile probation departments is also a major concern for county commissioners. This presentation will begin in a general session at 10 a.m. and will conclude with a break-out session from 10:45 to noon. Court and probation departments are invited to register and attend the sessions. Registration fee is \$50. For more information, call Jane Johnston at 717-232-7554.

continued from page 5

a different Center-sponsored workshop three years ago and received a 6.7 on our seven-point scale. Agency supervisors and directors are urged to encourage their support staff to attend this session scheduled during National Secretaries Week.

On April 11-12 in Mechanicsburg the Center is sponsoring "Conflict Resolution for the Juvenile Justice Professional." This program will be presented by David Trevaskis, the Director of the Law, Education and Participation Project based at the Temple University Beasley School of Law. Through a series of lectures, exercises, group discussions and simulations, this workshop will provide participants with specific skills and conflict resolution techniques for use with groups and individuals.

Michael D. Clark, M.S.W., C.S.W. a consultant, trainer and family therapist will lead the program "Strength-based Practice for Juvenile Courts: Techniques for Raising Cooperation and Motiva-

tion" at the Holiday Inn Mechanicsburg on May 2 & 3. Clark is a former judicial referee and senior juvenile court officer in Lansing, Michigan who has published several articles on Strength-based practice and solutions-focused work with youth and families. He has trained throughout the U.S., Europe, Canada and the Caribbean. The techniques he teaches offer the opportunity to increase respect, integrity in youthful offenders and to advance responsible behavior. The workshop will focus on techniques rather than theory, so that participants can take helpful methods back to their jobs that they can begin to use immediately. Attendees will learn how to interview to begin behavior change and how to focus on strengths and solutions with their clients.

On May 16-17 staff who have not yet had the opportunity to participate in the Phase I Staff Safety program can do so at the Days Inn Penn State. This two-day workshop is appropriate for all new probation officers and support staff. It will be led by David Sheely, a probation officer supervisor from Dauphin County.