

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

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Somerset County demonstrates the spirit of America in the wake of September 11 tragedy

Members of the Somerset County volunteer group who helped with community efforts following the September 11 disaster. Kneeling (left to right): Scott Walker, Bruce Gallagher, Rhue Lynn Lalley, Jan Walker, Carl Shaw. Seated: Brenda Weincek, Lee Ann Miller, Joyce Hay, Connie Inks, Margaret Charney, Cindy Zeigler, Brigitte Dirienzo, Sherri Hoover, JoAnn Benford, Betsy Montgomery, Deb Ferry and Vicki Rascona-Saylor. Absent from photo: Richard Burke, Dave Roman, Sara Driscoll, Donna Shank, Brett Hinterliter, Nancy Niemiec and community service program participants.



There is no question that the events of September 11, 2001, have forever changed our lives. We all watched in horror as the tragedies of the day unfolded. As our shock turned to anger, fear, or any of a variety of emotions, most of us felt compelled to ask what we could do to help the victims and their families. One Pennsylvania community was profoundly effected by the events of that day when a group of passengers, apparently in a heroic attempt to keep their plane from crashing into a more populated target, overpowered their hijackers and brought their aircraft down in a remote field in Somerset County.

That Tuesday, literally hundreds of emergency personnel, federal agents, airline representatives, state police, and media crews descended on Somerset, a town of about 45,000. There are about seven hotels, seven or eight restaurants, and a couple of Sheetz stores in town. It is surely not equipped to deal with this kind of a mass influx of people. The town is located approximately 10 miles from the crash site and the top floor of the county employees' parking garage was turned into a command center for people headed out to begin the grim task of investigating the tragedy and recovering what was left of the plane.

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The Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers has established a website which will serve council members as well as others interested in the workings of Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system. The web site, developed by Scott Web Service of Wisconsin, provides the viewer with basic information about the Council such as history, by-laws, membership, and a calendar of events. Other sections include a library resource for materials to be downloaded, and a public forum to discuss issues and ideas.

Membership information is strictly voluntary. If you are interested in adding (or changing) the listing about you, please forward the information to Kenton Scott.

Links to the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency are listed, and many other useful links are anticipated in upcoming months. Various publications and articles are expected to be added to the library section in the near future.

We welcome your comments, which can be made on-line, email at Kenton@PunxyPa.com, or by calling Kenton Scott at 814-849-5222.

Remember to save this important resource in your favorites, www.pachiefprobationofficers.org

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.

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Somerset County... from front page

Soon, some employees of the county's probation department discovered the magnitude of what was about to happen and realized that there was nowhere at the crash site for rescue crews to get drinks or food. Several of them got permission to go to various restaurants and businesses in town for donations of food and beverages for the hundreds of workers quickly being shipped to the smoking hole in the middle of the field.

Upon the county workers arrival back at the parking garage with donated food, EMS personnel advised them that they would need someone to help deliver the food and serve it to the rescuers. A group of them went to the crash site and served sandwiches to the hungry emergency crews themselves.

But the story doesn't end there.

The next day, it was learned that many of the victims' families were going to be brought to Somerset that weekend for a memorial service and to view the crash site. Rhue Lynn Lalley, one of the probation office workers who delivered food, woke early Thursday morning realizing that the victims' families would be arriving the following day, but there was no sign in the town to show support or sympathy for their unimaginable loss. She came up with the idea of placing a few flags, and perhaps a few yellow ribbons, around the turnpike entrance, the route upon which most of them would be entering town.

She got to work early and shared the idea with a few co-workers and the chief probation officer, who thought it was a great idea and wanted to help. Some workers from other county offices, many of whom are involved in Somerset's Communities That Care project, heard about the idea and wanted to help.

By 10 a.m. that day, dozens of bolts of yellow ribbon had been donated by nearly every florist in the area, three gross of flags were donated by the Veterans' Administration, and a large group of county workers from many agencies had volunteered to help hang them. Probation's community service coordinator rounded up youth who were expelled or suspended from school, or who had dropped out, and needed to do community service time. They met at the probation office, side by side with probation officers and other county employees, where they all learned to tie florists' bows.



Somerset County Courthouse

Then the group set out in teams to hang their ribbons and flags around town. The decorating started at the turnpike entrance, continued through the business district to the courthouse and up Main Street. As the teams worked, business owners came out, asked what they were doing and jumped in to hang ribbons and flags along with them. As motorists drove by and saw what was happening, they honked their horns, many giving the “peace” sign or a thumbs up. Guaranteed, no one had ever seen these particular kids on the street, honked, and gave them a thumbs up! They were so proud to be contributing, they just beamed.

The efforts of the Somerset probation staff and other employees have had a snowballing effect. The group also sold red, white, and blue ribbons, raising more than a thousand dollars to build a memorial to the crash victims. A noted quilt designer has donated her talents to design a memorial quilt to be made by local volunteer quilters. The county volunteer group will sell chances for the quilt and proceeds will benefit the memorial fund.

While no one will forget the horrible events of September 11, this group of volunteers, particularly the young people, will also have the memory of being a part of their community’s healing...and that meant a great deal to many people.

Pennsylvania hosts 7th Joint Conference on Juvenile Services

Pennsylvania recently hosted the **7th Joint Conference on Juvenile Services** on October 7-10, 2001, at the Westin William Penn in Pittsburgh. The Conference Theme was *Representing America’s Youth: Responding to the Needs of the Offender, Victim and Community*. Over 200 of the nearly 500 attendees were juvenile justice professionals from the host state of Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania turnout helped make this the most attended conference since its inception in 1995. Forty-three States, Canada and the Virgin Islands were represented in this 7th annual forum that originated as a collaborative effort by the Alliance for Juvenile Justice, to provide state-of-the-art training to professionals in the field of juvenile justice.

State Keynote Speaker James E. Anderson, Executive Director of the Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission, exposed conferees to the genesis and ongoing work of Balanced and Restorative Justice reform in Pennsylvania. Dennis Maloney, Director of Deschutes County Community Justice, provided the follow-up National Keynote Address. Dennis Maloney is a national leader and recognized expert on the Balanced Approach to Juvenile Justice

Clay Yeager, Executive Director of the Governor’s Community Partnership for Safe Children, provided the Awards Luncheon Address. Alice Peoples, Training Manager of the New Castle Youth Development Center, received the National Juvenile Justice Training Association “Trainer of the Year” Award. Conference Workshops, a tour of the Shuman Juvenile Detention Center, a Riverboat Gala Event, and an Exhibit Showcase also added to the range of resources and opportunities for competency development and relationship building. A Silent Auction Benefit was held at the conference, which yielded approximately \$1,500.00. The three charity recipients were The Kingsley Association, Outreach Teen and Family Services, Inc., and The Center for Victims of Violent Crimes, all of whom were from the Pittsburgh area.

The Pennsylvania co-sponsoring agencies and
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Westmoreland County celebrates Juvenile Justice Week

by Megan Anton, Westmoreland County juvenile probation officer

With the falling of the leaves and the crisp October mornings, there is a feeling of anticipation in the air at the Westmoreland County Juvenile Probation and Detention Center. Invitations are sent to all of the middle schools, planning meetings are held, posters are displayed and judged, prizes are donated, a mock trial is created, and contacts are made with public agencies. For the past 20 years, the juvenile facility has been turned inside out for one week of the year to celebrate Juvenile Justice Week as proclaimed by the Governor—a week that is recognized in varying degrees throughout Pennsylvania, but held in particularly spectacular fashion in Westmoreland County.

A minimum number of hearings are held that week as juvenile probation officers and support staff join together to create a successful program that approximately 800 students will never forget. No, it's not the zoo or the museum, but this field trip engages kids at all levels of maturity as they hear the click of handcuffs, see the view of barbed wire from minuscule windows, feel the firmness of brick beds and the chill of steel toilets, and smell insitutional cleanser. From one room to the next, teachers and students crowd to hear the description of each phase of the intake process—each child

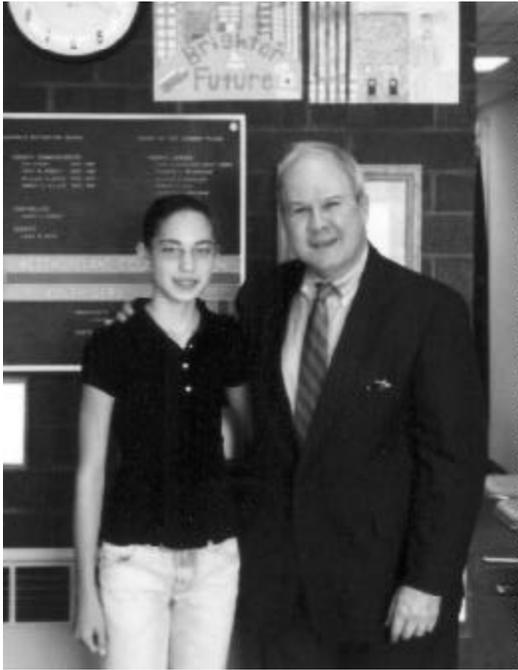
smugly confident that he or she will be “paroled” at 2 p.m. when the buses arrive.

Conversations at dinner tables that night probably revolved around the comedy skit that was performed by amateur actors/probation officers to illustrate what actually occurs at a juvenile hearing, and the juveniles already in placement who were brave enough to stand up and reveal their offenses to their silent audience. The adult offenders serving time at the State Correctional Facility at Greensburg were memorable as they described in graphic detail their lives in lock-up and the offenses they had committed.

Honorable John J. Driscoll, Westmoreland County Juvenile Court Judge, presented the grand prize in the most meaningful poster contest to Caitlin Solan. In a few weeks, all of the contest winners, along with their parents and classmates, will take part in a formal ceremony in the judge's chambers at the courthouse. Former Pittsburgh Pirates pitcher Nellie Brilles, along with one of the current Pirates team-members, will recognize the winners of the poster contest. The ballplayers will encourage the students to stay on the right path and continue to reach for success. They will also sign autographs and pose for pictures with students.

In the skit depicting an assault which takes place at a rock concert, juvenile probation officer Karen Slater handcuffs officer Kevin Linter. Officer Dean Thomas was the “victim” who is shown lying on the floor.





Caitlin Solan, grand prize winner in the poster contest, with the Honorable John J. Driscoll

Another element of the special week is Juvenile Court Night Open House at the Center from 5 - 9 p.m. People of all ages traipse in to get an up close and personal view of what occurs in this small building on the hill. Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts, clubs, teachers, and people from all walks of life watch and listen attentively while the probation officers and support staff lead tours through the "jail." This program is the same as the one presented during the day to students. Out back in the barbed wire playground, other public agencies are invited to display their information to apprise the public of what is available. Approximately 250 community members attended the evening's event.

Westmoreland County estimates they have educated and entertained roughly 16,000 junior high school students during these yearly events. School officials have supported and encouraged the program, and it is a program which cannot succeed without everyone's help.

JCJC Sponsors Community-based Probation Forum

The first Community-based Probation Services Forum, sponsored by the Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, served to bring together 41 community-based probation officers, supervisors and chief juvenile probation officers in a 1½-day forum to discuss their community-based probation programs.

The workshop participants had the opportunity to share information about their programs and define the obstacles in developing and maintaining successful community-based probation programs. The JCJC Community-based Probation standards, with both community supervision and community liaison models, were reviewed and discussed. Several possibilities for change and improvement were recommended. Participants then worked in small break-out groups to discuss various issues regarding this supervision approach.

Participants felt the best features of their county's community-based probation programs included:

- the ability to connect youth to their communities in positive ways by involving the community and being visible to the community at large;
- smaller caseloads that allow for greater contact with the youth, their parents and the community groups, agencies and resources in communities;
- flexibility offered by working in the community that is a benefit to not only the officers, but to the youth, their parents and the community alike; and,
- Balanced and Restorative Justice comes to life in the community setting.

Although the overall perception toward community-based supervision was positive, several obstacles in developing and sustaining community-based supervision programs emerged. Of primary concern was the difficulty experienced in engaging the youth, the parents and the community. The group determined that the public's misperception surrounding the juvenile court and juvenile probation needs to be explored, and additional training on media relations is necessary. Additionally, a working definition of competency development and the associated measurements for success was deemed an area that needs further research and inquiry.

Ms. Amy Zarefoss, from the Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research, presented a brief

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organizations included, the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers, Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research, Juvenile Detention Centers' Association of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare/ Bureau of State Children and Youth Programs, Pennsylvania Association on Probation, Parole and Corrections, and the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. Pennsylvania's leadership and response to the needs of the Offender, Victim and Community were evident and helped shape a framework for discussion and action. Next year's conference will take place in Maine.

Forum...continued from page 5

but informative overview of the Communities That Care Model for community-wide mobilization to address youth development issues. The group wrapped up with a case-planning exercise and then a moment of silence to recognize and honor the victims of the September 11th tragedy.

It is anticipated that a subsequent forum will be scheduled for the upcoming Spring/Summer 2002 Training Schedule to be offered through the Center for Juvenile Justice Training and Research. Thanks to the participants and the Pennsylvania Council of Chief Juvenile Probation Officers, this training served to begin to bring together those officers whose responsibilities include the development and enhancement of this specialized model for juvenile probation supervision in Pennsylvania's juvenile justice system.

