

THE JUVENILE JUSTICE REVIEW

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Welcome to Our First Newsletter by Sara Hoyle



With so many changes and new things happening in our Juvenile Justice System, I thought it would be helpful to distribute a quarterly newsletter. I titled it after the Juvenile Justice

Review Committee and the newsletter will provide information on programs and services offered by members of the Committee. The newsletter will be distributed to Juvenile Justice Review Committee members, Lancaster County Juvenile and Adult Justice Agencies, elected officials, community organizations and neighboring states.

These newsletters will focus on new and existing

programs, grant announcements, committee updates and new processes. If you have ideas for upcoming newsletters or would like to submit something, please e-mail me at shoyle@lancaster.ne.gov.

I hope you find these newsletters interesting and helpful. As always, I appreciate any and all feedback. The focus of this newsletter is the Graduated Sanctions Programs. ENJOY!

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ◆ Juvenile Offender & Victim Mediation
- ◆ Graduated Sanctions
- ◆ Juvenile Drug Court
- ◆ Juvenile Assessment Process
- ◆ New Programs

Juvenile Assessment Process by Sara Hoyle

After many collaborative meetings, a visit to the Douglas County Juvenile Assessment Center, and a couple of consultants, a new Assessment Process and programming has begun for juveniles in Lancaster County. This process has 3 separate service points described below:

1. Early Juvenile Justice Assessments—

First time law violators with diversion eligible offenses are being screened through the CEDARS Juvenile Assessment Specialist located at the Human Services Office. The screening instrument used is the Nebraska Youth Screen. In order to complete this screen, interviews are completed with both the parent(s) and the youth involved. Once the interview is complete and the Nebraska Youth Screen is scored, a recommendation is sent to the County Attorney. The County Attorney reviews everything and

decides how the case should be handled.

2. Young Juvenile Assessments—

The Region has provided funding for Child Guidance to assess youth under 12 who have a law enforcement referral. The County Attorney refers the family to Child Guidance for this assessment. After the assessment is completed, Child Guidance makes recommendations for services to assist these families.

3. Community Assessments

The Region funded a LMHP who will be officed at the Youth Assessment Center to complete assessments and triage families in crisis. Families calling the County Attorney's Office and Lincoln Police Department expressing concern that there child is out of control, are referred to this individual.

Additionally, the Region is funding 3 Professional Partners to provide up to 90 days wrap around case management assistance for the families screened by the LMHP. These wraparound services will also be available as a detention alternative or for youth being released from the Youth Services Center needing additional services.

Again, this process wouldn't be possible without collaboration between the County/City Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, Youth Services Center, Lincoln Police Department, Juvenile Probation, Region V, CEDARS, and Child Guidance. We truly believe this process will assist in determining what youth can be provided services in the community without entering the juvenile justice system and youth who need the services offered through the system.



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BEST (Berniklau Education Solutions Team) by Jacque Berniklau

In the spring semester of the 08-09 school year, students placed at BEST through day reporting (graduated sanctions) earned credits toward high school graduation. Some of those students receiving credit had been excluded from the public school's program for suspended students.

Students who had just a few days before they could attend public school were scheduled into a structured day at BEST. Another day reporting student who was with BEST a little over one quarter this spring made up a full semester of classes.

Only 1 of the 31 graduated sanctions

students attending BEST since January was terminated because the youth was not responding to BEST strategies and was a risk to the safety and progress of other students.

New elective courses in character building and student music composition were offered

this spring. Day reporting students are involved with the "Why Try" curriculum presented by teachers trained in April. This summer, occasional field trips are helping students explore vocational opportunities, leisure activities, and point of interest in the community and surrounding areas.



CEDARS Day and Evening Reporting Centers by Crystal Damewood

The reporting centers took on a cognitive behavior/development approach in handling behaviors and implement groups. A new curriculum, Why Try, was implemented. Another program referred to as "40 Developmental Assets" was also implemented. The reporting centers created a new service plan for the youth served based on the 40 Developmental Assets. Each domain in the service plan relates to the external and internal factors related to the 40 Developmental Assets as well as substance use/abuse and employment.



The reporting centers staff adopted a new classification for discharging youth. In the past, discharges for youth were either successful or unsuccessful. Now, youth are discharged successfully if the youth completed groups, attempted to obtain employment, or had positive behavior even if the youth was detained for probationary reasons. However, if youth did not comply with program requirements, continued negative behavior after consultations, or were detained due to a behavior that occurred at the reporting center, those particular youth are classified as unsuccessful. The reporting centers also allowed youth to return to the reporting center after the youth were discharged unsuccessfully for another attempt to assist the youth.

The reporting center management implemented a letter that is sent home to all parents/caregivers of the youth referred to reporting centers welcoming the family. The

letter contains program curriculum information, volunteering/community service locations, how the youth were referred, and contact numbers for all staff and the program manager.

During this reporting year, the CEDARS day reporting center served 73 youth and the evening reporting center served 82 youth. Both programs combined completed 158.5 hours of community service throughout the reporting year.

The CEDARS reporting centers offers many educational group opportunities such as: Academic tutoring, job search and job skills, family problems, relationships group, self esteem, ethics, gangs, anger management, substance abuse and use, cognitive development, diversity groups, educational videos, guest speakers, and community/volunteer services. The CEDARS reporting centers also adopted a highway through the Nebraska Department of Roads.



Committee Meetings

*Disproportionate Minority Contact Committee
Juvenile Substance Abuse Action Coalition
Truancy Run Response Committee*

*2nd Thursday of the Month from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. at the Lincoln Police Department
3rd Thursday of the Month from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. at the Independence Center
4th Wednesday of the Month from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. at the Human Services Office*

Project HIRE by Nola Bennett

Project HIRE (Helping Improve Readiness for Employment) is a program designed for youth ages 16-18 that are in need of employment skills. The program was developed in 2001 in Lancaster County as part of the Graduated Sanctions for Juvenile Probation. Project H.I.R.E. includes three phases:

- Job readiness training
- Job searching assistance
- Supervised employment

Since January 2009—Project HIRE at the HUB has served 28 youth.

- 11 of 28 (39%) have obtained employment and have completed or are currently completing the supervised employment phase.
- 3 of 28 (11%) are currently seeking employment and are attending classes regularly.
- 5 of 28 (18%) were discharged due to excessive absences.
- 5 of 28 (18%) were discharged due to Probation Officer Request.

- 4 of 28 (14%) were detained prior to completion of the program.

Additionally...

The HUB has received a 3 Year Accreditation in Community Youth Development through CARF (Commission for the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities).

The HUB is currently seeking applicants between the ages of 16-24 to participate in Youth Build. This program will begin on September 14, 2009.

Juvenile Probation - Electronic Monitoring & Home Detention by Ryan Dvorak

There were a total of 74 youth placed on Home Detention for the month of May, 2009. Of these 74 youth, 38 were placed on Home Detention, 36 were placed on Home Detention with an electronic monitoring. On average an additional 10 youth were on Home Detention supervised by Probation Officers (minimum supervision).

For Electronic Monitoring supervision days totaled 887. There were a total of 36 youth placed on electronic monitoring with 15

being new hook-ups. 12 of the new hook-ups came from the Youth Services Center. Of these 36 youth, 10 went to Probation, 3 were detained or 8% of the total, 4 were Office of Juvenile Services (OJS) commitments, 0 Absconded, and 0 went to Drug Court. There was a total of 24.63 supervision days per youth on the electronic monitor. 2 youth were placed on a cell monitor.

For Home Detention supervision days for May 2009 totaled 951 days. There were a

total of 38 youth placed on home detention without a electronic monitor as 7 of the youth were new, 3 came from detention. Of these total youth, 13 went to probation, 2 were detained or 5% of the total, 4 OJS were commitments, and 0 went to Drug Court. A total of 25.70 supervision days for the month of May 2009. This was an increase from April. Home Detention youth were mainly supervised by the home detention Probation Officers, with an additional 10 youth supervised by Probation Officers.

New Programs Funded Through Crime Commission Grants

BUILD—Building Up Interdependence and Leadership Development will provide 10-15 young people ages 16-18 with individual counseling and 15-20 young people with counseling in a group setting. This program is offered at the HUB.

Si Se Puede - A Latino Intervention Program at El Centro de las Americas will allow for the development of a cultural specific curriculum and program for Latino youth and their families.

Sudanese Advocates—This will fund 2 Sudanese Advocates to work 10-15 hours per week. One advocate will be from the Nuer Tribe and one will be from the Dinka Tribe. These individuals will provide translation and case management services for Sudanese

youth involved in the juvenile justice system.

Truancy Intervention Project—This will allow for the development of a Truancy Program to assist truant youth before they enter the court system. This is a joint collaboration between Lincoln Public Schools and Lancaster County.

Juvenile Diversion Restitution—Youth in Juvenile Diversion who struggle finding employment will now be able to volunteer and earn money to pay restitution to victims.

80 Hour Alcohol Tests—Probation will now have access to tests that detect alcohol up to 80 hours after consumption.

Detention Alternatives Evaluation—The Juvenile Justice Institute will evaluate deten-

tion alternatives programming based on what developmental assets they are assisting youth in developing.

Juvenile Drug Court Training—Members of the Juvenile Drug Court will attend a conference/training session

Juvenile Justice Training—Members of the Juvenile Justice System will attend a conference/training session.

Why Try and/or Tough Choices - Curriculums will be purchased for Diversion, Reporting Centers, and the HUB.

Laptops—Laptops will be purchased for Diversion, Trackers, and Talented Tenth.

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**WE'RE ON THE
WEB!
WWW.LANCASTER.
NE.GOV**

The underlining mission of Lancaster County's Juvenile Justice System is:

"To provide individualized supervision, care, and treatment in a manner consistent with public safety to those youth under age 18 at the time of referral who violate the law. Further, the Juvenile Justice System shall recognize and encourage prevention efforts through the support of program and services designed to meet the needs of those youth who are identified as being at-risk or violating the law and those whose behavior is such that they endanger themselves or others".

**The Juvenile Justice Review Committee Meets Quarterly.
The next meeting is September 25, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. at the
Human Services Office at 1115 'K' Street—Lincoln, NE**

Juvenile Drug Court by Wendy Barrera-Andazola

Lancaster County Juvenile Drug Court (JDC) currently has 16 participants in the program. There are 6 girls and 10 boys. At the end of 2008-2009 school year, JDC had 7 participants who earned their high school diploma or GED. In the past 7 months, JDC has successfully graduated 3 youth. Of the 3 youth at their time of completion: 1 youth had his high school diploma, working part-time, and was preparing to take SAT/ACT exams; 1 youth had earned his GED and was working part-time; 1 youth had enrolled back into high school and finished the school year with the best reports from school administrators he had ever received.

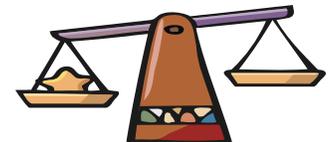
Several participants are working part-time jobs and others are actively searching for employment.

JDC participants continue to participate in community service projects throughout the community. JDC participants have completed at least 12 hours of community service hours as a group at JDC's adopted trail, WICS residence, Pawnee Lake, YMCA, and the Child Advocacy Center.

JDC is also building a new relationship with a treatment service provider to better serve our girl participants who may be in need of a higher level of care while they are

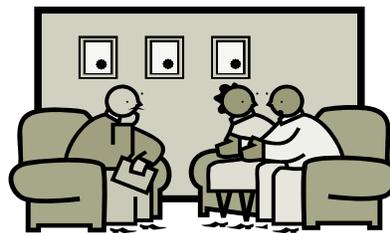
participating in JDC.

It is important to note that the past months have not gone without its challenges. However, JDC continues its commitment of addressing participants' individual needs, help them learn to lead drug and alcohol free lives, and lead law abiding lifestyles that will help them become successful young adults in our community.



Juvenile Offender & Victim Mediation is Back by Sara Hoyle

Funding for Juvenile Offender & Victim Mediation was depleted a couple of years ago. As a result, Lancaster County partnered with the Religious Affinity Action Group, Human Services Federation, and The Mediation Center to make this service available at no cost to all youth in the Lancaster County Juvenile Justice System. This includes youth on Diversion, Probation, or in Juvenile Court.



There are 16 volunteer mediators who received 30 hours of basic mediation training

and 8 hours of juvenile mediation training through the Office of Dispute Resolution and The Mediation Center. These volunteers are supervised through The Mediation Center with case management through the Juvenile Justice Coordinator.

Please send referrals for Juvenile Offender & Victim Mediation to Sara Hoyle at the Human Services Office.