Lake County Children's Services Council

The Lake County Children's Voice

Volume 5 | Issue 5 | 1st Quarter 2008

TRUE OF FALSE

Girls get in trouble with the law for different reasons than boys do.

Girls are sent to lock-up facilities because local intervention and treatment services are unavailable.

Florida leads the nation in locking up girls.

You can do something to improve Florida's juvenile justice system.

All of these statements are **TRUE**.

Girls Turn Inward and Boys Lash Out

As early as age eight, some girls suffer from low self-esteem resulting in higher rates of depression, suicide attempts and eating disorders. Often, they turn to drugs and alcohol in futile attempts to ease their personal suffering. While boys are inclined to lash out at others, girls are more likely to engage in self-destructive behavior.

Placement & Treatment Alternatives Are Needed

Girls make up the fastest growing segment of Florida's juvenile justice system for reasons other than the commission of violent or serious crimes:

* Eight out of 10 girls in Florida's juvenile justice system suffer from serious mental or emotional problems caused by past trauma.
* Seven out of 10 girls are living in homes affected by domestic violence.
* More than seven out of 10 girls placed in residential care or institutions have been sexually abused.

Even when girls are not a threat to public safety, Florida locks them up. The problem really starts with a lack of gender-specific therapeutic and treatment programs.

Better Results Locally at a Lower Cost

Girls require gender-specific services and treatment to address the root causes of trauma. Greater emphasis must be placed on promoting positive pathways to future success. This approach works with approximately 90 percent of girls who receive appropriate placements. Florida, however, spends most of its money for girls in facilities or lock-ups hundreds of miles away from the communities where the girls will return. At $35,000-$45,000 a year per girl, these slots devour the funds that could be directed to local programs with far greater success rates at a cost as much as 80 percent lower.

Judges and law enforcement are frustrated. They have not been given options to prevent, intervene or treat at-risk girls. They say the lives of girls could be turned around, but community services are unavailable.

Girls Need YOU to Help

Chances are a girl you know needs help. The new administration at the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice has convened a Blueprint Commission. This citizen led group is crafting proposals to improve the juvenile justice system. Attend the public hearings. Tell commission members you support systemic, gender-specific changes that work for girls at risk.

Do it for our daughters, granddaughters and the girls they know.

As published in Florida Trend Magazine Oct-Nov-Dec 2007 & Jan-Feb 2008

For additional information: http://www.iamforkids.org/jj/?content=S_Justice

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Getting Smart

There are no bad boys. There is only bad environment, bad training, bad example, bad thinking." - Father Edward Flanagan, founder of Boys Town

That motto has been replaced in recent years by a new view. That there are many bad boys, and increasingly, bad girls. Incorrigibles who need to be locked up. This view gained currency thanks to a few sensational incidents, such as the 1993 attack on British tourists at a rest stop off Interstate 10 near Monticello. The vision of the super predator, juveniles attacking ruthlessly and without remorse, gained currency nationwide.

This overly negative view has created an expensive system that relies on prison as the first and last option in too many cases.

By 2000, the Florida Legislature eliminated the option of judges to place juveniles in minimum-risk, nonresidential programs. The result is an overly harsh, highly expensive system that simply does

Getting Smart (Cont'd)

not work. Those are a few of the observations inspired by a new report from the Blueprint Commission on Juvenile Justice, chaired by Frank Brogan, president of Florida Atlantic University and former lieutenant governor.

The commission reported that many juveniles were sent to rural facilities "notorious for severe and harsh discipline, including corporal punishment."

These large facilities often are ineffective in rehabilitating the juveniles. In fact, gang activity and violence can flourish there.

Doing time, petty crimes. Thanks to this view, Florida is putting away many juvenile offenders who don't need to be locked up.

This policy costs much more than less intensive programs and it's probably less effective, as well. So getting tough for petty crimes makes no sense from both practical and cost reasons.

At current rates of incarceration, Florida will run out of room in its juvenile facilities in five years, the commission reported. There will be no room in secure facilities in 10 years.

Yet the cost for prevention services is just a fraction of detention: $2,128 compared to $42,606 for detention.

The blueprint commission advocates a change from "get tough" to "get smart."

The focus already was beginning to turn. In 2004, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency urged Florida to develop graduated penalties for different offenses - which doesn't seem all that radical an idea.

In detention centers, almost half of those had committed nothing worse than misdemeanors.

"The smart strategy for Florida is this: Invest in a continuum of services that can address the needs of low-risk offenders outside of secure and residential placements, while continuing to provide appropriate sanctions for youth involved in serious and violent crime."

We need more prevention, more rehabilitation and more diversion from detention, said Walter McNeil, secretary of Florida's Department of Juvenile Justice, in the report.

The vice chairman was Richard Danford, president of the Jacksonville Urban League.

"It's mind-boggling to hear what is going on in this state," Danford said in a telephone interview. "Florida may not have the worst system in the country, but we're close."

The commission suggests community-based services that help keep kids out of trouble. More interventions and alternative programs are needed as opposed to lockups.

The best programs are small, with good educational and skill-building programs to prepare young people to return to their communities. Programs focused on minorities and a growing proportion of girls are needed.

"We need to put aside all the partisan politics and realize these young people are our future," Danford said.

Statewide, there is not enough communication among the agencies that deal with juveniles, such as school systems and the criminal justice system, he said.

Minorities overrepresented

While blacks represent 21 percent of the population ages 10 to 17, the proportion of blacks is nearly double in the juvenile justice system (39 percent).

And as many as two of three juveniles in the system have mental illness or substance abuse issues. So diversionary centers must have trained therapists to deal with abuse issues, for instance, rather than correctional officers under the imprisonment model.

Jacksonville may be slightly ahead of the trend with the new commitment to reopen a Juvenile Assessment Center that will properly refer juveniles with appropriate levels of security and treatment. The commission suggests each of Florida's regions should have a juvenile assessment center.

As the commission states, "Ultimately, this reform is about changing the way the state of Florida thinks about juvenile offenders - are they villains who need to be punished, or young citizens who need our help?"

Our image of them may determine our solutions.

Where are all the good boys and girls? All around us.

Commission Conclusions

Many challenges: The Blueprint Commission on Juvenile Justice came to several broad conclusions:

* Juvenile crime accounts for only 11 percent of all arrests in Florida.
* In 2007, only 5 percent of Florida juveniles ages 10 to 17 were referred to the Department of Juvenile Justice.
* From 2003 to 2007, referrals for serious crimes among juveniles have increased in Florida. Total referrals are down.
* Gang activity in Florida is "pervasive and undeniable."
* There is a recent increase in juveniles referred for serious felonies. Nevertheless, many juveniles arrested for less serious offenses are being detained.
* There is a disproportionate number of minorities and a growing number of girls.
* Many delinquents have serious mental health and physical health needs.
* Large residential facilities are less effective than smaller units closer to communities.

The Florida Times-Union, February 17, 2008

SPOTLIGHT ON...

LAKE COUNTY CHILDREN'S SERVICES COUNCIL MEMBER MARVA TURNER, DISTRICT 3

When I think of the Children's Services Council of Lake County, I reflect on how I became a board member. Relocating to Florida from Detroit, Michigan just 6 months prior, my husband Ronald and I served as volunteers at the Emergency Operations Center following Hurricane Charley's visit to Central Florida. We were so grateful we came through the hurricane experience without any personal loss. I heard about the CSC, among other committee opportunities, in Lake County at that time. But the decision to serve on this CSC board was a perfect match with my lifelong passion of working with children.

I retired as Principal of Lanigan Elementary School in Farmington Hills, Michigan in 2003 following a 38-year tenure as classroom teacher and building administrator with Michigan Public Schools. I have two sons: one, a Detroit police officer and the other, an enrollment manager for Phoenix University. Though we miss our children, daughters-in-law and 5 grandchildren, Ron and I enjoy living in Tavares and being residents of Lake County.

After serving almost four years with the CSC, I have regrettably resigned to take care of personal matters at home. Serving on this board has afforded me a unique opportunity to work with a fine team of dedicated volunteers who work diligently to promote CSC's ideals of improving and protecting the wellness of children and families, while providing support and public awareness about related issues.

FLORIDA'S VISION QUEST NANCY JEPPESEN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Florida's Vision Quest (formerly Jeppesen Vision-Quest) is a public, non-profit, 501c3 organization that provides FREE vision exams and quality new eyeglasses for "at-risk" and "in-need" students throughout Florida.

As clear vision is critical to a student's success in school, our goal is to insure that every child in Florida is able to see the chalkboard and text clearly. Vision Quest works closely with school districts and county health departments and is currently serving 67 counties in Florida.

In 2007/2008, the Lake County Children's Services Council's generous grant of $20,000.00 to Florida's Vision Quest made it possible for 200 students attending Triangle Elementary School in Mount Dora to receive vision screenings, comprehensive eye examinations, and beautiful new eyeglasses, if required, via our Mobile Outreach Program.

There was no cost to the families or the school for these services. Without the Council's support, these children would continue to struggle with visual impairments that impede both academic and social successes.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

ELCLC Executive Director Lesha Coffield, CSC Chair B.E. Thompson January Volunteer Dorothy Vedder , CSC Manager Rebecca Foley-Kearney and Commissioner Debbie Stivender.

CSC Board Members Standing from left: Lorrie Simmons, Darnell Stewart, Sandy Stura, Barbara Howell, Mike Matulia, Lalenya Robertson, Linda Lewis Julie Yandell and Chuck Crane. Seated from left: Commissioner Debbie Stivender, B.E. Thompson, Retiring Member Marva Turner and Rebecca Foley-Kearney.

Events...

On February 15, 2008 the Early Learning Coalition of Lake County hosted the unveiling of the new Big Blue Bus.

The new bus, which formerly served as the Lake County Sheriff's Mobile Command Center, was donated to the Coalition in August 2007.

The bus is a new addition to the existing Big Blue Bus program which provides early education training and resources for children, parents and early learning professionals. ~ Lesha Coffield, Executive Director

Community Bulletin Board

Lake Sumter Grantsmanship Network

Meeting Schedule
February - June 2008

Meeting Address
Lake County Agricultural Center
Auditorium
1951 Woodlea Road, Tavares Fl

Meeting Time
10:30 a.m. till noon

February 20th
March 20th
April 16th
May 15th
June 19th

Camp Boggy Creek

Join us for the time of your life!

Weekend Volunteer Lifeguards Needed!

Camp Boggy Creek, founded by Paul Newman, is a year round camp north of Orlando for children with chronic and life-threatening illnesses, ages 7-16.

Play hard all day long!

Be a positive role model!

Make a difference in the life of a child!

Dozer Day
March 15, 2008

A Special Thanks To Our Sponsors

Painting the Town Red!

Grant Professionals Network of Central Florida, Inc.

GPN

LEARN, LEAD, & LAUGH

11th Annual Conference
March 11-12, 2008
University of Central Florida
Rosen College of Hospitality Management

www.gpnfc.org/conference/index.html

LAKE COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

Head Start / Early Head Start
VPK
REGISTRATION
2008 - 2009

Infants, Toddlers, 3 & 4 Year Olds, Pregnant Moms

(CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES ARE ACCEPTED)

WHEN: MARCH 3 - 28, 2008

WHERE: Eustis CDC, 550 E. McDonald	(483-3583)
Eustis Resource Center, 1224 Hazzard	(589-2606)
Leesburg Resource Center, 920-B CR 468	(323-8732)
Mascotte CDC, 2000 Park Circle (EHS)	(326-8277)
South Lake CDC, 690 E. DeSoto St.	(394-4289)

TIME: 9:00am - NOON & 1:30pm - 4:30pm

DOCUMENTS NEEDED

PROOF OF BIRTH, MEDICAL INSURANCE CARD, SOCIAL SECURITY CARD, PROOF OF INCOME (2007 INCOME VERIFICATION / W-2)

Youth Reach

SAFE
School-Age Families Education
LAKE County

"Pathway to Relating Across Youth"

SAFE is a delinquency prevention program that serves youth ages 7 to 15 and the whole family. SAFE offers youth and parents a dynamic prevention curriculum that will act as strengthening the family bond and will provide young people with opportunities to develop practical resiliency. Youth must attend with at least one parent or caregiver.

SAFE consists of eight consecutive weeks of workshops, held one evening per week. After completing the workshops, SAFE youth earn a certificate of completion.

Cost: FREE, including CHILDCARE for children under 7, and LIGHT DINNER before the workshops.

Location: Milestones Community School, 10126 Treadway School Road, Leesburg, Florida 34788

Day/Time: 8 weekly workshops of 2 hours each held on Tuesday evenings starting at 6pm

Also: SAFE youth and parents complete an exit interview prior to their graduation.

Referring Agencies: SAFE receives referrals from DCF, Public Schools, Assorted Homes, The Courts and other organizations as well as self-referrals by families themselves.

Eligibility:
1. Any at-risk youth and their family seeking to strengthen the family bond and create positive functions at home and behaviors for all.
2. Youth and family reside in Lake County

** NOTE: If youth does not meet these requirements, the year he/she may still be eligible for the program – please contact the SAFE Program Manager.

Contact: Angela Thomas, SAFE Program Manager, Lake County Youth Reach, (352) 787-2000

The Florida KidCare state children's health insurance program still has plenty of enrollment slots available...to learn more about Florida KidCare, visit:: www.floridakidcare.org.

2008
child PROTECTION
MINI-CONFERENCE

Wednesday, May 7, 2008

Lake-Sumter Community College
Paul P. Williams Fine Arts Auditorium
9501 U.S. Highway 441
Leesburg, Florida 34788

PRESENTED BY:

LAKE COUNTY
SHARED SERVICES NETWORK

www.LAKESSN.com

To find out more about CSC's:

- Meeting Information
- Event Calendar
- Resource Directory
- Newsletters
- Funded Programs
- Volunteer Nomination Forms

www.lakecountyfl.gov/csc

2008 Keep Leesburg Beautiful
"A Neighborhood Clean-Up"
March 15 & April 12, 2008

Volunteers Needed

LEESBURG

Hats & Horses

LifeStream Behavioral Center Foundation presents the "Hats and Horses" Event to be held at The Villages Polo Field on Sunday, May 18 from noon to 3pm.

LifeStream

LAKE COUNTY FLORIDA

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Website: www.lakecountyfl.gov/csc