



Juvenile Justice Institute

Spring/Summer 2014

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Message from the Executive Director

Welcome to our spring/summer issue of the Juvenile Justice Institute's (JJI) Newsletter. This spring was particularly difficult for services delivered to youth in that, they like so many other human services, received significant cuts due to the troubles in the country's economy. One area that continues to be of concern to JJI has been the long standing problem among minority youth of disproportionate minority contact.

In North Carolina, the number of minorities youth incarcerated in our Youth Development Centers continues to be disproportionately high for minorities (The RRI rate is at least 2 minorities to one white). In Durham, the risk of a minority being referred to the juvenile justice system in year 2012-2013 compared to white youth was 13 to 1. The RRI has never been so high for Durham County. Although the circumstances and reasons for this are more complicated than just the number, any reasonable person would be alarmed by this high rate of disproportionality. As a result of these alarming disparities, JJI applied and will receive a grant from the Governor's Crime Commission (GCC) to address the DMC in Durham County. I will write more about this in our next newsletter.

JJI has also explored the use of Restorative Justice as an effective approach to prevent juvenile crime. After several round table discussions and seminars at NCCU, we interviewed several youth service agencies in Durham who are using some form of Restorative Justice. They all indicated that they were receptive to JJI taking the lead in assisting them with the appropriate use of the Restorative Justice as an intervention to youth conflict and as an alternative to contact with law enforcement or the courts. In our exploration, we found that this approach can also prove helpful in facilitating re-entry of youth back into the community after incarceration. JJI plans to continue its work in this area.

Found in this issue are articles on trafficking of youth, and an example how JJI is partnering with community groups to help address the problem of substance abuse. Some space is also given for JJI & North Carolina Division of Public Safety updates on juvenile justice as a way of keeping you informed of current activities. We encourage readers to share with us any best practices that are being implemented in North Carolina and other states that will help juveniles avoid involvement with law enforcement and the courts. We in turn will share as appropriate this information with our readers across the state.



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"We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future."

~ Franklin D. Roosevelt ~



Child Trafficking

Trafficking is not just an issue that happens to people in other countries. The United States is a source and transit country, and is also considered one of the top destination points for victims of child trafficking and exploitation. Cases of human trafficking have been reported in all 50 U.S. States; anyone can be trafficked regardless of race, class, education, gender, age, or citizenship when forcefully coerced or enticed by false promises.

Child victims of trafficking are recruited, transported, transferred, harbored or received for the purpose of exploitation. They may be forced to work in sweatshops, on construction sites or in houses as domestic servants; on the streets as child beggars, in wars as child soldiers, on farms, in traveling sales crews or in restaurants and hotels. Some are forced to work in brothels and strip clubs or for escort and massage services.

Trafficking can involve school-age youth, particularly those made vulnerable by challenging family situations, and can take a variety of forms including forced labor, domestic servitude, and commercial sexual exploitation. The children at risk are not just high school students—pimps or traffickers are known to prey on victims as young as 9. Traffickers may target minor victims through social media websites, telephone chat-lines, after-school programs, at shopping malls and bus depots, in clubs, or through friends or acquaintances who recruit students on school campuses. Thousands of children are trafficked right here in the United States. These kids are not criminals, they are victims. Give them what they need to go from victims to survivors. Signs a child is being trafficked: Knows little about his or her whereabouts; Works excessively long hours; Exhibits fear or anxious behavior; Was hired with false promises; Has inconsistencies with his or her story.

JJI Project Updates

Campus Community Coalition: As the first year of our 3 years SAMSHA grant to address substance abuse and high risk sexual behaviors among minority (ages 18 to 24) comes to a close, planning efforts are wrapping up. Interventions will begin in August 2014 for students on the NCCU campus and residents in the surrounding community.

DMC in Durham County: This fall JJI will begin a project to reduce DMC in Durham County. JJI will work with Durham Public Schools, Durham Police Department, and the Durham Sheriff's Office to facilitate DMC reduction strategies. This project is funded by NC the Governors Crime Commission in the Dept. of Public Safety.

Crime Reduction Metric: JJI is finishing work on the development of a literature review examining the impact of parks and recreation programs in the reduction of delinquency and the development of an economic metric to determine value of parks and recreation afterschool programs in the reduction of juvenile delinquency. This is a national study which is funded by the National Recreation & Parks Association.

Partnering with the Community

The Juvenile Justice Institute has partnered with various organizations and agencies in the past in order to better serve the community.

Recently, the Institute partnered with an organization called Together for Resilient Youth (T.R.Y) to reduce substance abuse and reduce the risk of the HIV virus on the campus of NCCU and the surrounding community. The grant is known as the C3 project and focuses on ages 18-24; the grant is funded by the Department of Health and Human Services/ Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). T.R.Y will do work in the surrounding community promoting environmental strategies to reduce alcohol and drug use in the Durham.



North Carolina Juvenile Justice Updates

- Governor Pat McCrory declared the month of March as Bullying Awareness and Prevention month in North Carolina.
- Mr. William Lassiter assumed the role of Deputy Commissioner for Juvenile Justice in the Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice on May 1, 2014. Mr. Lassiter has also worked within North Carolina's Juvenile Justice System and Delinquency Prevention in various administrative capacities. This office has merged with the Division of Corrections and is now known as the Division of Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice.
- House Bill 725 which would raise the age of juvenile jurisdiction for all 16 and 17 year olds charged with misdemeanors passed the House but the Senate failed to take up the bill. A new bill will need to be reintroduced next session.
- Legislation was passed in North Carolina to review and recommend the replacement of the Common Core educational standards for students in grades k-12. Common Core standards will remain in place for the 2014-2015 school year while the standards are reviewed.
- The Juvenile Justice Facilities Strategic Plan recommended the closing of two youth development centers: C.A. Dillon and Dobbs and re-opening two newer, more secure, recently-funded youth development centers: Lenoir and Edgecombe.
- Programs funded through local Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils (JCPC's) will be required in fiscal year 2015 to be evaluated using the Standardized Program Evaluation Protocol (SPEP) to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs. This is an evaluation tool that has been adopted by division of Public Safety.

About Us

The Juvenile Justice Institute conducts research on juvenile justice issues and uses the findings to help North Carolina policy makers and practitioners make well-informed policy and program decisions to reduce juvenile crime and improve the juvenile justice system.

In addition, the Institute focuses on assisting public agencies to incorporate evidence-based knowledge and practices into new and existing programs in order to improve performance and outcomes. Our approach stresses the relevance of linking theory to practice, and consequently bridging the gap between science and service.

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