

# THE JJC CONNECTOR

The Clark County Juvenile Justice Center Newsletter – Spring 2011, Volume 2, Issue 2

In this issue:

1	Annual Volunteer Recognition Night
2	Victim Impact Program
3	Aggression Replacement Training Videos
4	JJC Youth Helped with Annual Fishing Derby
5	Legal Terminology Commonly Used in the Courtroom
6	Digital Storytelling Showcase
7	Helpful Website



Henry S. (left) and Mick Hoffman (right) at the Volunteer Appreciation Night

**The JJC Connector**  
**Clark County Juvenile Court**  
**500 West 11<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**PO Box 5000**  
**Vancouver, WA 98666-5000**  
**360-397-2201**

Log onto the JJC Connector:  
<http://www.clark.wa.gov/juvenile/index.html>

## JJC's Annual Volunteer Recognition Event

The Clark County Juvenile Justice Center (JJC) holds an annual event to demonstrate our appreciation for the invaluable work volunteers do to help us work restoratively with youth. This year's event was held on Tuesday April 12, 2011, at the Juvenile Justice Center. Superior Court Judge Robert Lewis swore in six new Community Accountability Board (CAB) members prior to the celebration. Judge Lewis and County Administrator, Bill Barron, spoke at the event.

"Volunteers are essential to the survival of this government," Barron commented, describing how they help fill the gaps created by downsizing staff to compensate for the budget cuts the county has faced for the past few years. "We can't do the work we do without volunteers."

Judge Lewis described how Superior Court has gradually shifted its focus to

more evidence based sentencing, which led to the creation of specialty courts such as the Drug Court, Mental Health Court, Family Offender Court, among others. "I thought the court process was already based on evidence," he quipped, then added that evidence based sentencing started in the juvenile system.

Patrick Escamilla, JJC's administrator, and managers Eric Gilman and John Shoemaker, also thanked the volunteers and attested to the quality of work that is done within our department by volunteers.

This year the event organizers added a new component to the program by bringing in speakers from the community to talk about their experiences with the Juvenile Justice Center.

The first speaker was Nichole Peppers, who started with JJC in 2006 as a college intern. After graduating, she went on to become a CAB member and a volunteer for the Victim Impact Program (VIP). Nichole talked about the rewards she has experienced while helping young people contribute to their community in positive ways.

The next speaker was Henry S., the father of a crime victim who spoke

from the heart about his experience participating in a Victim Offender Meeting. Henry talked about growing up in a troubled community in the Midwest, and moving to the West Coast to get away from the crime and social problems he'd dealt with as a youth. His own kids, by comparison, had enjoyed a relatively trouble-free lifestyle. Then his son was assaulted during a fight that broke out after a sports event at a local high school. Henry expressed a great deal of compassion toward the other youth involved, knowing that these young men didn't have the kind of support he knows his son has. With VIP's help, Henry and the schools met with the young men involved to work through their emotional reactions to the incident and its aftermath.

Following Henry's speech, Mick Hoffman, Safety Coordinator from the Vancouver School District, spoke about his experience in working with our juvenile department. In the past, he said, he "went for the hammer" when dealing with problem student behavior. Since working with JJC, he's gradually developed alternative means of addressing student problems.

Mick expressed appreciation for Pat Escamilla, who called him when he first became the JJC administrator. Mick's first thought when he heard that the administrator of Juvenile Court was calling was that something was wrong. Instead Pat had simply called to ask, "What can we do to help?" Mick said he values the collaborative nature of the work JJC does with local schools, and that our commitment to working restoratively with youth is also part of the work we do with other youth serving organizations.

Also honored at the Volunteer Appreciation night were the doctoral level psychology interns, Restorative Community Service mentors, Community Accountability Board members, Truancy Board members, Victim Impact Program intern and volunteers, Victim Offender Meeting volunteers, Detention Exodus volunteers, Detention Alcohol and Drug Group leaders, the Detention Library Coordinator, Detention Therapy Dogs and their owners.

### Victim Impact Program (VIP)



Nichole Peppers, VIP volunteer

The Victim Offender Program addresses the needs of victims of crimes that are processed by the Clark County Juvenile Justice Center (JJC). Our philosophy of Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ) focuses on restoring the victims, the offenders, and the community.

"Clark County is the only juvenile court in the state that contacts every identifiable victim," said Chris Simonsmeier, the VIP Coordinator.

The Victim Impact Program is proactive in its approach. VIP staff and volunteers initiate contact with the

victims. The purpose in making those contacts is to:

- Acknowledge the harm to the victims because of the crimes,
- Provide information,
- Assist victims in having a voice,
- Provide options for addressing victim needs,
- Help victims establish restitution
- Educate them on laws regarding juvenile court,
- Tell them how the youth are being held accountable.

VIP staff sometimes facilitates Victim Offender Meetings when it's deemed to be beneficial for victims and offenders to meet face to face. VIP carefully screens both victims and offenders to ensure that both parties can communicate about the crime in a constructive and meaningful way. If both parties are able to do so, VIP spends considerable time preparing them for the conversation that is about to take place. Once both parties are ready, VIP facilitates the meeting. Such meetings can provide a great deal of healing and understanding of how the crime impacted the victim and the community and what the youth has done or is doing to make amends for the harm he/she caused. Other people, such as family members or others who were impacted can also be part of the meeting.

VIP is also available to help probation staff who have questions or concerns about the victims. For example, they can provide guidance if there's conflict between a youth and victim before adjudication. Once the youth is assigned to a Probation Counselor, the counselor requires the youth to write an apology letter to the victims. If a youth has trouble writing an appropriate letter, VIP is available to help him or her understand the purpose of the letter and how their crime impacted the victims.

**"Nobody gets to live life backward. Look ahead; that is where your future lies"**

~Ann Landers

## Aggression Replacement Training (ART) Goes National with Video



Jackie Hull has been an ART instructor since January 2008. She earned her Master Trainer's certification this February. In order to be certified, she had to assist ART trainers Nels Nelson and Chris Hayes in offering ART training to juvenile programs in other counties.

Jackie has a great sense of humor so she's very good at maintaining the kids' interest. She keeps the discussions fast-paced and fun. She has a knack for creating trust in the group so the kids feel more comfortable practicing the skills in front of the group.

Last year Alan del Mundo videotaped interviews with Jackie and with Michelle Karnath, who teaches the parent ART class, as well as Pat Escamilla, Juvenile Court Administrator. Alan wrote and performed the music and did all of the filming. The video, "**ART Community Outreach**," can be viewed on the Clark County website. [See link at end of article.]

The parent ART class, which is held two nights per week, offers parents an opportunity to experience what their kids learn in their ART classes so they can reinforce their youths' learning at home. During the first parent ART class, Jackie noticed that the kids whose parents were involved did much better in class than the kids whose parents weren't involved. Clark County is currently the only juvenile court in the state that offers an ART class for parents.

Since then Alan created an “**ART Business Outreach**,” featuring Jackie, Michelle, Pat Escamilla and Ruhi Tufts. This video was designed to show local businesses as part of a campaign to request donations to be used as incentives for the kids.

Incentives are a big part of ART. Kids get raffle tickets for participating in class. At the end of each class a ticket is drawn and the youth with the winning ticket gets a prize. Prizes were donated by Baja Fresh, Starbucks, McDonalds, and Steak-burger. This video has been shown in California and Illinois.

Of course, there are other reasons kids enjoy the class. The kids gain confidence as they use the ART skills in their personal lives and find out they really work. They spend less time in detention when they use their ART skills to better manage the conflicts in their lives.

At the end of the 10-week class, the staff throws a pizza party for the graduates and their families. They hand out awards, and some of the graduates demonstrate one of the skills they learned.

Other new additions to the ART program are brand new brochures, and a slide show that is shown at orientations. Jackie now invites graduates from previous ART classes to attend orientation to tell the new kids and their parents what they can expect from the class.

If you have any questions about the ART class, you can contact Jackie at 360-397-2201 Ext. 5517, or for the parent ART class, Michelle Karnath at 360-397-2201 Ext. 5111. Or view the videos:

*ART Community Outreach*

<http://www.vimeo.com/13598884>

*ART Business Outreach*

<http://www.vimeo.com/13598884>

**"A smart person knows what to say; a wise person knows whether or not to say it."**

**~ Unattributed**

## **Restorative Community Service Youth and Mentors Take Part in Kline Line Kids Fishing Derby**



On April 9, 2011, thousands of people, including 1700 registered youth between the ages of 5-14 enjoyed a fine day of angling at Kline Line Pond in Hazel Dell. The youth received fishing poles, T-shirts, and were able to participate in face painting and button making.

Though there was a serious lack of government funding for the event this year, an army of volunteers, including youth from the Clark County Juvenile Court Restorative Community Service Program, supported the event by providing services such as parking, registration, face painting, button making, garbage removal, set-up, clean-up and measuring the fish. Altogether over 40 youth and 20 mentors from Clark County JJC helped out at the event.

In speaking with both Al Jafee from the Salmon Creek Lions Club, and Wil Morrison with the department of Fish and Wildlife, both reported the event to be a huge success.

A special thanks to the volunteer mentors and youth who attended and worked at the event. You truly made a positive difference in our community!

## **COURTROOM TERMINOLOGY**

**First Appearance** - This is the first contact that the youth has with the court on a particular charge or probation violation. It is generally at this time that an attorney is appointed. Three things happen at first appearance: Attorney Appointed, Decision to hold in detention or release, Set bail, if applicable.

**Waiver of Attorney** – When a youth wishes to represent him/her self he/she is said to waive the legal right to an attorney. This is not done frequently on a new charge, and only a little more often on a probation violation.

**Arraignment** – The court appearance during which the defendant enters a guilty or not guilty plea.

**Trial** – When a youth enters a not guilty plea the case is set for trial. The statute (law) reads that when a youth is held in custody (detention) he or she has a right to have a speedy trial within 30 days of arraignment. When out of custody the youth has 60 days.

**Omnibus** – An exchange of information before a trial. Some of the items to be exchanged are: witnesses, whether one is going to trial based on insanity, self-defense, evidence, etc.

**Readiness** – This is a pre-trial date set so that both the defense attorney and prosecutor agree that the case ready for trial. The readiness date is generally a couple days to a week prior to the trial date.

**Standard Sentencing Range** – This is a term that describes what our legislators have deemed an appropriate length of sentence for a particular crime. Judges must stay within the standard range unless they determine a finding of Manifest Injustice above or below the standard range.

**Manifest Injustice** – When a judge goes outside a standard range sentence. If the sentence is above standard range, it's called M.I. up. If it's below standard range it's called M.I. down.

**Local Sanction** – This term is used to describe the range of sentence. Local sanctions are often 0-30 days. This means that the youth stays in the community to serve his/her sentence, as opposed to being sent to a juvenile institution.

**Concurrent Sentence** – If a youth is sentenced on a probation violation (PV) and a new charge in the same hearing, the judge can order that the detention time be served concurrently, i.e. at the same time. For example, if

the sentence is for 10 days on the new charge and another 10 days on the PV, the youth would serve a total of 10 days.

**Consecutive Sentence** – This is the opposite of a concurrent sentence. If sentenced to 10 days on the new charge and another 10 on the PV, the youth would serve one after the other for a total of 20 days.

**Disposition** – This refers to the court's final determination of a criminal charge. The disposition could be a sentence to a specialized program, such as SSODA (Special Sex Offense Disposition Alternative), CDDA (Chemical Dependence Disposition Alternative), MHDA (Mental Health Disposition Alternative), Manifest Injustice, or it could be Standard Range.

[Definitions courtesy of Leslie Torres, from the Intake unit.]

## Clark County Youth Digital Storytelling Showcase

For several months now, young people from the Juvenile Recovery Court (JRC), Strong Teens Against Substance Abuse Hazards and Abuse (STASHA) Peer Educators, and Columbia River Mental Health Services' Options program, participated in a Digital Storytelling project, creating videos that portrayed some aspect of their personal lives.

On April 20<sup>th</sup> (4/20 being a significant date among marijuana users) fifteen of those youth, ranging in age from 14 to 20, hosted a public presentation of their artwork in the auditorium at Fort Vancouver High School.

The results were amazing! Without exception, the artists who created the videos expressed a high level of insight and creative talent.

Anna Lookingbill from JRC and Angela Zahas from STASHA told the audience how much work the students put into the videos. After hours of initial preparations, such as writing their scripts and poetry, and taking photos in the community, they spent three whole days in a conference room putting all their artwork together. They downloaded just the right pictures and music from free sites on the Internet to create the desired mood for their stories.

Anna and Angela introduced the videos three at a time, after which the artists shared what the experiences depicted in the videos meant to them.

All of the stories were emotional, some evoking tears from members of the audience. They were stories about loss and survival, disconnected families and promising reunions, identity, meaning, spirituality, and hope. They were stories of lessons learned the hard way, the determination to prevent others from following in their footsteps, and pride in the accomplishments they've achieved. They were

stories that every one of us could relate to in some way

After all of the videos were shown, the audience responded with a heartfelt standing ovation. As Angela said, these youth are worth listening to.

The next step for this group is to send some of them to the Spring Forum at Great Wolf Lodge. There they'll compete with youth from similar programs to win prizes, such as a digital camera or video recorder.

A group called Reclaiming Futures is studying outcomes for juvenile recovery courts and will do a webinar to share the results of their study.

For more information on these programs, log onto:

Juvenile Recovery Court  
<http://www.clark.wa.gov/juvenile/programs/recovery.html>

STASHA  
<http://www.clark.wa.gov/youth-family/prevention.html>

Reclaiming Futures  
<http://www.reclaimingfutures.org/>

## Helpful Website for Families

Cara Larson, from Children's Home Society, offers a monthly list of parenting classes, support groups and special events for families. Log onto [http://www.chswa.org/Our\\_Locations/Vancouver/Vancouver\\_Family\\_Center.html](http://www.chswa.org/Our_Locations/Vancouver/Vancouver_Family_Center.html). Click on the link "Check out our current parent classes and workshops."



These are the youth from the Digital Storytelling Project displaying their certificates after their premiere community screening.