

# THE JJC CONNECTOR

The Clark County Juvenile Justice Center Newsletter – Winter 2011, Volume 2, Issue 1

In this issue:

1	Restorative Community Service
2	JJC's New Name
3	Truancy Workshops
4	Change Through Integration
5	Recovery Court Digital Storytelling Project
6	Drug & Alcohol Intervention Class
7	Civil Penalties for Shoplifting
8	Detaining Juveniles w/ Felony Charges
9	Helpful Websites

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## **Restorative Community Service Promotes Positive Relationships between Probationers and Community**

Sean Scrivner, our Restorative Community Service Coordinator, submitted the following information on how community service is done in our juvenile justice system:

The Restorative Community Service program of the Clark County Juvenile Court (CCJC) was initiated in January 2001 as an initiative to change the face and nature of community service. The CCJC's commitment to a holistic Restorative Justice focus has dramatically changed our understanding of the purpose of community service and how it is practiced.



Restorative Community Service project at Kline Fishing Derby in April 2010.

Restorative Justice can be defined as a community's purposeful response to crime that is focused on meaningful outcomes for offenders, victims and the community. Such a response focuses on what needs to be repaired, what needs to be healed and what needs to be learned. It brings balance to the community's response, placing a high priority on the needs of victims and the community.

**One aspect of responding restoratively to offenders is holding them accountable for the harms they have caused, and to do so in a manner that the accountability actually integrates the offender into the fabric of the community.**

Accountability is important not only for the victims of crime and for the broader community; accountability is important for the offender's own growth as a responsible community member. In taking meaningful responsibility for their crimes, by making amends, offenders can establish themselves in the community as positive, contributing citizens.

**Restorative Community Service focuses on accountability, integration and change.** It provides offenders with the opportunity to fulfill their obligation to make amends for their crimes by giving service of recognized value back to the community. Through performing such service, offenders can begin to change how the community views them. They have the opportunity to be seen as individuals who can contribute positively to the health and well-being of their community. Offenders can also begin to change how they see themselves, as individuals capable of making positive contributions to the community in which they live. **Melding accountability for harms done with the chance to make a positive contribution to one's community creates the opportunity to integrate these youth into the fabric of the community.**

**Active community involvement is key to making community service a restorative activity.** Community members

working side by side with youth on projects selected and planned by the community is an essential element. Without this community involvement the full restorative potential of community service is lost. When members of the community volunteer their time to work with juvenile offenders, the youth see the value the community places on the work. The community volunteers also have the opportunity to interact with the youth on a personal level to convey to them the purpose and value of the work. By their very presence and willingness to give their time and effort, community members give credibility and value to the community service.

Community volunteers fulfill a second crucial role. As stated, community service that is restorative helps integrate offenders into the community. Having offenders work in isolation only increases their sense of separation and being marginalized. Working side by side with a positive role model from the community provides juvenile offenders with an opportunity for community connection. Youth can see themselves as capable of relating to positive adult members of the community. They have the opportunity to engage in conversation and to receive messages of affirmation for who they are and what they can contribute to the community.

Making community service restorative requires more than a name change. It requires a new way of understanding the purpose of such service and how it is carried out.

**Our minds can shape the way a thing will be because we act according to our expectations.**

**~ Federico Fellini**

## New Name for Juvenile Justice Center



On December 15, 2010 the signs on the entrances to the Clark County Juvenile Justice Center were changed. Earlier in 2010, our building was named after retired Judge Robert L. Harris.



As presiding judge of the Superior Court, of which the Juvenile Court is a part, Judge Harris supervised the Juvenile Court from 1997 until his retirement in 2007. At that time Judge Barbara Johnson took over the duty.

Judge Harris was very supportive of introducing Balanced and Restorative Justice to our juvenile court, and his skilled supervision was instrumental in making us what we are today.

## Truancy Workshops



On January 10, 2011, the Clark County Juvenile Court, local school districts and the Clark County Truancy Project began offering Truancy Workshops to students aged 12 to 17 who have had a truancy petition filed against them. This is a new process for our court. Historically, students and their parents/guardians would appear in court on Monday afternoons. In court, families would wait for their case to be called to explain to the judge or commissioner why the student had been absent from school. The new workshop process will provide families with information about our state's school attendance laws, the benefits of attending school, and services and resources available in the community to assist them.

The workshops are held every Monday at 3:00 at the Clark County Juvenile Court. There is a 30- to 45-minute presentation followed by individual meetings between the family and their school district representative. During the meeting, they will develop a plan to address the student's attendance issues and sign an attendance agreement. Youth and their parents will also be asked to complete a survey that will help us make improvements to the workshop.

If after attending a Truancy Workshop, the student returns to school and is no longer truant, the case will be dismissed. However, if the student continues to have unexcused absences, the School District may refer the student to the Clark County Truancy Project or court for further intervention.

If you have questions about the Clark County Truancy Workshop or other truancy related matters, contact Jodi Martin, Clark County Models for Change Coordinator, at (360)397-2201, ext 4528.

## Change Through Integration



Change Through Integration (CTI) was developed to increase collaboration between Detention Officers and Probation Counselors in their work with youth who are in detention. Probation Counselors often have vital information about what's going on in a youth's family, school or social life that impact the youth's behavior. Detention Officers have the opportunity to spend a significant amount of time with the youth while they're in detention. Because of this, they each have a unique opportunity to help kids strengthen what they already have going for them, and to help them find constructive ways to deal with their problems both inside and outside of detention.

A youth must be sentenced to at least 10 days in detention to be referred to the CTI program. Once accepted, the youth is assigned to a specific CTI Detention Officer. The CTI officer works with the youth to develop:

- a list of goals, such as being successful in school,
- a plan to reach those goals, and
- pro-social coping skills.

Working collaboratively makes both professionals' work with the youth more effective, and it makes the youth's time in detention more meaningful. Ideally, our work is about forming relationships with the youth on probation. When we succeed in that goal, the kids are more successful in the community.

**Things do not change.  
We do.**

**Henry David Thoreau**

## Recovery Court/STASHA Digital Storytelling Project

by Anna Lookingbill

Six Clark County teens representing Clark County Juvenile Recovery Court (JRC) and Clark County STASHA Peer Education participated in a new project to pair stories from life experiences with digital technology.

Modeled after the process taught at the Center for Digital Storytelling, youth were asked to select a story and 'dig deep', giving it emotional content, voice and truth.

The workshop occurred over 3 days at the Clark County Youth House and was facilitated by Angela Zahas, prevention specialist with DCS and Anna Lookingbill, JRC Resource Coordinator.



When asked how digital storytelling helps someone in recovery, youth said "it was empowering," "turned negatives into positives" and "gave pride in life experiences."

A second workshop for JRC youth will be offered over spring break. Digital stories will be shown publicly on April 20, 2011 to put a positive focus on a day traditionally associated with marijuana use. Details to be announced. \*

The workshop puts youth in control of their stories. It gives an opportunity to share courage, struggle and success through digital technology.

The Columbian covered the digital storytelling workshop on 12/27/10: <http://www.columbian.com/news/2010/dec/27/hoping-for-happy-endings-teenage-offenders-turn-th/>

\*For information on when and where the stories will be shown, call Brad Finegood at (360) 397-2304.

## Drug & Alcohol Intervention Class



Janet Bentley-Jones, CADC II, has been teaching a Drug & Alcohol Intervention class at JJC since April 2010. She was approached by Donna Boyer, a probation counselor who works with kids on diversion, because some of the community programs designed to intervene in early drug and alcohol use were disappearing due to budget cuts. Donna didn't want to require drug and alcohol treatment for these kids as their first intervention, but she wanted a way to address the issue. That was how this class came to be.

The class is 2 ½ hours long. During the first half hour, Donna talks to the kids and their parents about the legal ramifications of MIPs (Minor in Possession). Then she takes the parents out of the room so the kids can talk freely during the class discussion.

Janet starts by asking the kids what happened that got them referred. She asks them what they want out of life, and affirms that she wants them to have what they want out of life. Then she asks them if drugs and alcohol are getting them what they want. She points out that being in this class is probably not one of the things they wanted for themselves.

Then she shares some of the reasons other people use drugs and alcohol. For example, a lot of women say they used methamphetamines because they wanted to be skinny and look beautiful. Maybe it worked at first. They lost weight, as they had hoped, but later on they looked "sucked up, old, dried up, toothless and had sores on their faces." Did meth get them what they wanted in the long run?

Janet helps the kids weigh the costs and benefits of drug and alcohol use – physically, mentally, emotionally – as well as how it affects their relationships, how it affects them legally, and how their use impacts the community. The kids try to focus on the benefits of using drugs. Some say they use drugs or alcohol because they want to have fun. She balances that out by pointing out the costs – ending up in the hospital with alcohol poisoning isn't fun – not only to the kids themselves, but to their families and friends.

She asks the kids if anyone else in their family uses drugs or alcohol, and asks how that affects them. For instance, what does it do to their trust level with that person? Do they want people not to trust them?

Janet shares her personal story about her two older kids' involvement with drugs and what it did to her family. She invites a speaker who's in recovery to each class to talk about their drug and alcohol use. In most cases, the speakers were just like the kids attending the class. They just wanted to have fun, to fit in, to be cool. Then they talk about the tragedies they've experienced. Janet said she hasn't taught a class yet in which the personal stories (whether it was the kids' stories, hers or the speakers') didn't bring tears to the eyes of the participants.

"The personal touch is what drives the message home for the kids," Janet explained. "Weaving the real life stories in with the education" is what makes this class so impactful.

Janet explains to the kids the difference between substance use and substance dependence. She teaches them about the progression of the disease and the dangers of certain drugs. The kids try to minimize the effects of drugs, especially marijuana. Janet comes armed with factual information, such as the research that showed a link between adolescent marijuana use and schizophrenia.

The class is taught three times a month. Janet's interested in coming up with a better name for it, so if you have any ideas, let her know. She can be reached at 360-397-2201 Ext. 5105.

## Civil Penalties for Shoplifting



Your son or daughter was caught shoplifting, but the store personnel didn't call the police. Does that mean he or she is off the hook? Not necessarily.

A number of parents, who thought the matter had been resolved, have reported getting letters in the mail from a law firm a few days or weeks after the incident occurred. Regardless of the dollar value of the stolen item, the store can impose a penalty of hundreds of dollars. Under the 2005 Washington Revised Code RCW 4.24.230, retailers have the right to impose these penalties even when the youth has been adjudicated for the crime. Parents of minors who take something from a store without paying for it are responsible for paying the penalty, as well as related court costs. If the parents don't pay, the fees can be sent to a collection agency. In most cases if parents contact the firm who sent the letter, a payment plan can be set up. (If you're considering paying online, check to see if there are additional fees for doing so.)

Parents are understandably angry when this happens. We at the Juvenile Justice Center are in support of youth paying for their crimes. Contact your child's probation counselor if you'd like help discussing with your child ways he or she can pay you back for the money the crime cost you.

## Detaining Juveniles with Felony Charges

The Clark County Superior Court Judges made an important decision in January 2011 regarding new legislation that came from House Bill 2624, Chapter 254 Laws of 2010. The law applies to juveniles as well as adults arrested for felony crimes. Effective immediately, all juveniles arrested for

a felony crime will automatically be held in detention. They cannot be released until they have a first appearance in court. This means that all youth arrested for a felony crime will be held, even if they meet release conditions on our detention points system.



The new law raises a number of questions and is subject to differing interpretations. Therefore, the Judges' determination may change as they consider the issue further and become aware of interpretations and practices around the State.

## Reminders to Parents:

1 - When you take your child out of detention on a pass, please bring them a change of clothes and arrive early to allow them time to change.

2 - Low income families can submit a fee waiver request to the court. If you meet income guidelines, the court costs can be waived. The form requires the CODIS and JUVIS numbers, which the probation counselor can provide. You can choose which day you want to appear in court, but it needs to be at least a week after you turn in the form.

## Helpful Websites for Families

**ParentHelp 123** helps families to apply for state-sponsored health insurance and food benefits, and lists services in their community.

<http://www.parenthelp123.org/>

**Tina Feigal**, parent coach, author of *The Pocket Coach for Parents*, and founder of **The Center for the Challenging Child**, offers helpful tips for parents of children who exhibit challenging behaviors. Log onto <http://parentingmojo.com/> and check out the list of articles on the left side of the Home page.