



Utah Board of Juvenile Justice

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W.O.W.!

Work Opportunities for Women

For years the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Greater Salt Lake Area have provided job training for teens. However, most of the jobs available, and thus the connections made, were for young men. Two years ago the Federal Government's Challenge Grants asked communities to come up with gender specific programs.

That's how *Work Opportunities for Women* was born. In its second year, the director of operations for the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Greater Salt Lake Area, is calling the program a success.

"We're attracting girls," said LeAnn Whiteside. "We're placing the young women in jobs, and we seem to be a huge resource for the Department of Workforce Services caseworkers...It's been just a wildly successful program."

The program was originally intended to prevent pregnancy and delinquency. But there was

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Out-of-State Placements:

A temporary solution or the answer to overcrowding?

It has always been the philosophy of Youth Corrections that juvenile delinquents should be placed in programs or lock-up facilities as close to their home communities as possible. The reasoning was simple.

The youngster would likely go back into the same home or community after being punished and treated. Keeping him close to home allowed him to remain part of the family and community to which he'd return. It would allow family and friends to visit and support the offender while in treatment and sometimes it offered them help in dealing with the youth.

But that philosophy seems to have shifted for some in the juvenile justice system. More and more youngsters are being sent to out of state programs, and some believe state officials must re-evaluate the practice and decide if that money wouldn't be better spent in Utah.

Beginning in 1993 with a recommendation from Youth Corrections, the state has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars sending young delinquents out of state. The youths are sent to programs in several states, with one of the most popular being the Glen Mills Schools in Pennsylvania.

The initial investment was \$983,000 and allowed the juvenile court and youth corrections to send about 25 young people to out of state programs. These programs are usually more than a year in length and involve heavy educational or job training components. According to judges, they offer training and opportunities that Utah

alternative to long-term secure care," said Youth Corrections Division Director Gary Dalton. "In fact, out of state placements allow for a comparative, modest cost while offering intensive supervision, excellent programming, especially in the area of vocational services and a belief to the courts and the public that the juvenile is held accountable for their crimes due to their removal from the community."

Right now about 60 teens are in out of state programs at a price tag of more than \$2.4 million. During the last legislative session, law makers designated \$2 million in federal funding for out of state placements.

Because the out of state placements are considered community-based placements, judges can send teens there instead of locking them up. Third District Judge Andrew Valdez sends more juveniles to out of state programs than any other judge.

"I have confidence in the programs, that they're effective and meaningful," he said. Glen Mills, in particular, he said, offers teens positive peer reinforcement, treatment, as well as, academic and vocational opportunities. Valdez said he would gladly keep

It costs about \$40,000 a year to send one youth out of state

programs lack.

It's a concept that Youth Corrections officials support because it gives them an alternative to locking teens up in scarce secure beds in Utah. The Legislature's willingness to spend money on out of state placement has forestalled the need for building additional secure beds in Utah.

"These placements have grown in numbers and costs and yet continue to provide the division with an important

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Chairman's Remarks

Ronald N. Vance

Hollywood has rediscovered Shakespeare. Not that he was ever missing, but producers have found that there is money to be made from riding the crest of his current popularity.

I have always loved Shakespeare because his ideas are as fresh today as when he first wrote them. My favorite scene is from Henry V where King Henry is rallying the troops before the battle of Agincourt where his small army is so outnumbered that defeat is all but certain.

But Harry rallies his little band of soliders against the arrogance and pride that infests his foe. Reminding the men of the righteous cause for which they fight, Harry calls them brothers, for anyone willing to fight with him that day was truly his brother. And cursed would be those who were not there to share the battle with them that day, Saint Crispin's Day.

Motivated to overcome their fear of inevitable defeat, they not only survived the battle, but conquered the army of the King of France and ended the war.

This is the inaugural edition of a newsletter about juvenile issues. It is produced by the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice, a 22 member board consisting of citizens and professionals in the area of juvenile justice.

The Board is charged with the responsibility to oversee the use of federal funds granted to our state under the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. As the name of the act implies, the funds are to be used for new and innovative programs in our state which will insure that our youth are treated fairly in the juvenile justice system and will hopefully prevent them from ever entering the system in the first place.

The Board has funded a wide range of startup programs over the years, some of which have been adopted and expanded by state agencies and juvenile court.

The Board is also provide advice to the Governor and Legislature in adopting policies based upon sound research and not media sound bites.

Over the years this has been a most challenging agenda. It often appears as though we throw our money at the current fad in juvenile programming thinking it will solve all of our juvenile delinquency problems.

On the other hand, there are those who feel that it is better policy to put our emphasis on "bricks and mortar" solutions by warehousing more and more kids than to seek alternatives which may turn them down a more productive path.

Juvenile delinquency is not a black and white issue; rather, the issues, as well as the solutions, are complex and require much thought and discussion.

Our hope is that this news-

letter will provide a forum to explore the complexities which underlie juvenile delinquency in our state, and perhaps even offer solutions.

We hope too that it may serve as an outlet for the small band of juvenile justice professionals in this industry who are constantly battling the overwhelming amount of ignorance which is perpetuated in this industry by the media and other.

At times it seems as though we are so out numbered, that defeat of good programs and sound juvenile justice policy is inevitable.

But as King Harry proved, it is not the size of the army that counts, but rather the righteousness of the cause behind which they can unify their efforts. Let us continue to fight for a state policy which will best serve the youth of our state and dissipate the ignorance which drives that policy. ■

Meeting the Challenges of Young Women

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such a need for a job training program for teenage mothers that the program is now tailored to meet the needs of teen mothers and pregnant young women, too.

Whiteside says there is evidence that when young women have job skills and can get meaningful employment, they delay having a second child. In a year and a half of operation, the program has

graduated 60 young women, and it has higher than a 50 percent job placement rate. Some of the girls don't get jobs right away because they have their children during their time in the program or shortly thereafter.

"The program gives them a sense that they can do something significant for themselves," Whiteside said. "It's very interesting how early these young women get a poverty mentality."

The program aims to break the poverty cycle, get the girls off of welfare and teach them parenting and life skills - all while helping them find and keep a job. Positive role models and the support of other girls in similar situations help the girls find the confidence they need to support and raise their children.

"You can just see the sense of empowerment," Whiteside

said of the girls in the program. ■

Have an idea for a program that you think would aid at-risk or delinquent teens? There are numerous grant opportunities available every year through the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice. For more information on these grants, or to see what other types of programs are being funded take a look at our website at www.justice.state.ut.us

Participants “Enlightened” at St. George Town Meeting

Kolene Granger learned what she already suspected. For Bob Flowers, the feedback was new.

Both participated in the St. George Town Meeting sponsored by the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice on April 23. It was the first of these gatherings to be held during the day, and according to Susan Burke, Juvenile Justice Specialist, it was the best turnout so far.

Between 75 and 80 people came to the meeting, many who worked with young people and others who were just interested in hearing what officials had to say. Many had ideas and input of their own and those who spoke said they found the two hours valuable and enlightening.

Granger, the Superintendent of the Washington County School District said she knew counselors in elementary schools were important, and that's why she already has 10 counselors serving 18 schools. What she learned from the meeting was just how important other people in the community and juvenile justice system thought those counselors are.

“The reality is that we should have one in every school,” Granger said. “We don't have state funding for that right now.”

With the shooting at a Colorado High School fresh in everyone's mind, the meeting also gave Granger and Flowers, the St. George Police Chief, the chance to reassure residents what safe guards they have in place to prevent an incident like that from happening in one of their schools.

Flowers said he learned from those who work in the juvenile justice system what they think of two programs created and operated by the police department.

“I learned the gang task force is working well, and youth court isn't working so well,” he said. Those in attendance had plenty of suggestions for how to improve the youth court.

Flowers said he also found the information provided by the Juvenile Court very valuable. Fifth District Juvenile Court Judge Hans Chamberlain offered insight into how many juveniles the system was dealing with and how many of those were repeat offenders.

“I found that very enlightening,” Chief Flowers said.

Both Flowers and Granger said they met residents who offered help and volunteer services after the two-hour meeting.

“I got a sense of what all the other agencies are doing, and also a sense of what people would like to do,” Granger said.

And that's been the purpose of these Town Meetings. UBJJ hopes that by bringing people together who work in the juvenile system or just concerned about young people in general, they'll help each other find solutions to community and state-wide problems. ■

Town Meetings have been hosted in Logan, Price, and Davis County. Future Town Meetings are planned for Vernal and Weber County. A collection of findings from these meetings will be presented to the Governor and Legislature.

Out of Sight and Mind?

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teens in Utah if there were programs that offered the same opportunities.

Another attraction for Valdez is that most of the teens he sends out of state, stay in those programs longer than they would stay in a secure facility in Utah.

“When kids leave (the out of state programs) they've accomplished something in sports, in education,” he said. “They've changed their behavior, their belief system.”

There is an unresolved problem for many of these teens who thrive in the out of state programs, and it's a problem that everyone acknowledges.

There is no transition for juveniles coming back from these programs into their former families or communities. There is some supervision and counseling, but it is often not consistent with what they've been participating in and in some cases, just not enough.

For one young girl coming home began the unraveling of what she thought she'd learned in the Forrest Ridge School. It's a program that serves girls exclusively, and she said she made significant changes in her thinking and her life while living in Forrest Ridge. She spent more than a year there, but came back to a family that was in turmoil.

Within three months, she asked a juvenile court judge to put her in a proctor home. She ended up running away from there after her mother announced she wanted to move to another state. A judge placed her in a secure facility hoping to stabilize her. She recently graduated to the adult system after assaulting a counselor and is now in the Oxbow Jail awaiting trial on that charge.

Before the most recent incident, she said the place she felt herself beginning to lose control was coming home and trying to apply the things she'd learned at Forrest Ridge. While she'd made strides, her family had remained essentially the same. She had trouble convincing them that she had changed and that she needed their support.

Juvenile Court officials and Youth Corrections officials admit transition is where out of state placements are failing. There are no numbers available, although a study is underway that would tell officials how many teens coming home from out of state placements end up in the Youth Corrections system or the adult system.

And while everyone acknowledges transitioning these teens from the programs to their homes is critical, there is no concrete plan in place to address this need.

“We've lost a lot of kids that have done well in these types of community-based placements in transition,” Valdez said. “It's a tragedy.”

Valdez, like many in Youth Corrections, would like to see the state develop some programs in Utah like the ones he sees out of state.

“I just don't know if there's the political will there,” he said. “We'll just continue to pour our money out of state instead of keeping it here.” ■

Annual Report

In 1998, the Utah Board of Juvenile Justice awarded over one million dollars in federal funds to 46 programs.

Funds are allocated in four program areas. (1) *Title II Formula Grants* for delinquency prevention and alternatives to incarceration. (2) *Title V Community Delinquency Prevention* to implement a three-year community prevention plan. (3) *Challenge Grants* for gender specific programs and alternatives to suspension and expulsion. (4) *Innovative Local Law Enforcement and Community Policing* for programs that involve juveniles in community policing activities. ■

Legislative Juvenile Wrap Up

During the 1999 Legislative session 23 bills dealing with juvenile justice were passed by the Utah Legislature. All will become law this year. The bills ranged from creating and standardizing youth courts to expanding the Serious Habitual Offender database and creating two new juvenile court judge positions.

The Youth Court Act creates a standard for peer courts, which can hear class B and C misdemeanors or violations of the municipal or county code with the permission of the juvenile court judge and prosecutor. Anyone can refer someone to the youth courts and participation is voluntary. There are a number of Youth Courts already up and running or in the development process along the Wasatch Front.

There were also a number of amendments to current laws including the state's truancy law. The bill defines habitual truant and separates the process that prosecutes parents for educational neglect from the prosecution of juveniles for habitual truancy.

A bill that creates the crime of contributing to the delinquency of a minor also passed and will allow the juvenile court to prosecute those cases.

Middle school is often a critical transition for young teens and a bill establishing alternative middle schools will address the needs of students who either drop out or are expelled from traditional programs.

A bill allowing judges to use a lower standard of proof in

cases involving gang members was also passed. Because the Supreme Court ruled the gang enhancement statute was unconstitutional, legislators reduced the burden of proof for prosecutors when they ask a judge to impose a gang enhancement during sentencing. Instead of beyond a reasonable doubt, prosecutors must convince a judge that the defendant committed the crime in a gang by a preponderance of the evidence.

For more information about what new laws will take effect this year, and brief summaries of what the changes mean, check out the website of the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice. The address is www.justice.state.ut.us. ■

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