

News from the Juvenile Probations and Detention Services Division: Fact Sheet

Last update: December 2015

The Juvenile Probation and Detention Services Division provides a continuum of services to families of youth who have been referred by law enforcement for delinquent offenses. Services range from informal diversion from court to highly structured supervision or probation in the community. The Division also provides in-house residential treatment as well as a secure detention center for more serious and/or chronic juvenile offenders. More about the individual functions of the Division may be found here.

PROBATION

In November of 2015, Probation staff participated in a content discussion for website tools for the 19th Judicial Circuit Court website. In working with a new vendor, we are looking at creating a more responsive web design that is user friendly. We will have the ability to manage our own content.

Juvenile Probation Officers continue to use Round Lake and Park City Branch Courts as well as Adult Probation as satellite offices. This allows officers to be in closer proximity to the clients they serve in respective communities. Minimum group reporting also continues to utilize the satellite offices to meet with families. The parent orientation group for the Jr's Challenge also conducts meetings at the satellite offices.

New signage including an aerial view photo of the complex was posted at the Juvenile Court entrance advising the public of building office locations.

There is a listing of the courtroom locations, court-related services, and ancillary agencies. Since the courthouse functions are spread amongst two different entrances, directions to entrances are posted. This has greatly lessened the public being screened through security only to be redirected back out of the building to the proper entrance.

The Juvenile Division administration office has improved the distribution of courtesy copies of court reports for attorneys. Reports are available at the administration office and are filed in accordance with case last names and organized in a file box. A seemingly small change in organization has significantly improved the efficiency of this task and less waiting for attorneys.

The Juvenile Division's Database and Technology Analysis (DATA) focus group continued to meet regularly to develop work processes and incorporate technology in order to capture data in more efficient ways and improve work flow.

The Juvenile Division has been exploring alternative tools for youth assessment of risk and staff sign in/out technology to replace current tools that are no longer compatible.

As of December 2014, Probation Support staff is scanning all closed Probation files using the OnBase scanning program. Juvenile staff now has the ability to access closed files electronically at their workstations.

In April of 2015, a work group met in Probation to discuss the current workflow for Court rooms with respect to Court liaisons and office coverage. An ideal workflow has been created to include new technologies and was submitted to Judicial Information Systems.

In June of 2015, designated staff was trained to use the Vanguard Archives database, allowing the Juvenile Probation unit to store closed Probation files off site (255 boxes total).

In July 2015, LEADS was installed at ten juvenile staff's terminals that have been certified to run LEADS checks.

In September 2015, the Juvenile Division converted from a paper-based County Vehicle log to an automated system making the log accessible to all staff at their workstations.

All staff in the Juvenile Division will receive CPR/AED/First Aide training which began in October 2015. A Probation Officer, Intake Officer and Juvenile Counselor are certified trainers that will facilitate the training which will be completed in early 2016.

In-house training was conducted for all staff at juvenile. This included training conducted by the State's Attorney's Office in July of 2015 on the Juvenile Court Act as well as training provided by the Lake County Health Department in April of 2015 on Compassion Fatigue.

Juvenile Probation staff continue to participate in trainings offered through the Juvenile Officers Association, Lake County Health Department, Illinois Victim Assistance Academy and Lake County Juvenile Justice Council that included trauma training, leadership and ethics, mental health and substance abuse, to name a few.

Assistant Directors along with Unit Managers have started meeting on a monthly basis to address workload equity and gaps. Meetings have resulted in identifying the need to address high-risk youth in the community as well as FACE-IT programming to include aftercare support. As a result, a unit planning session with Probation has resulted in generating ideas for how to address the needs of high-risk youth. Also, a work group will be created with representatives from all units to work on creating programming to address this population to also include the needs of youth going into aftercare from the FACE-IT residential program.

The Jr's Challenge program, in its fourteenth year, continues to have trainers re-certify new facilitators. This is a cost savings for the Juvenile Division. Facilitators receive ongoing training for emergency procedures.

COOP training was conducted this past year with staff exchanges occurring between Kane, Lake and Winnebago County.

On 10-13-15, Claudia Gilhooley and Mary Marsolek, along with Claudia Kasten from the State's Attorney's Office participated in an Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission learning collaborative via phone. The topic was "Being Trauma Informed."

On 09-25-15, Patrick Maher manned a resource fair for Juvenile Probation / Detention Services at the Networking in Lake County Resource Fair sponsored by the ROE, SEDOL and Mother's Trust.

The Juvenile Division continues to enhance partnerships with law enforcement departments and service providers throughout Lake County. A Probation Officer communicates with a selected police department and invites the juvenile police officers to the Juvenile Complex for a meet and greet and tour of the facility. Zion Police, Highland Park Police, Gurnee Police and the Lake County Sheriff's Office and Mundelein have participated thus far.

This past year, Probation Officer Lorenzo Bess along with Mary Marsolek from Psychological Services participated in a series of meetings and a summit at Rosalind Franklin University, along with the community of North Chicago in their undertaking of the My Brother's Keeper challenge. As a result, a written document, CONNECT action plan, was submitted to Washington D.C. in September with Positive Community Take Over supporting the goal of reducing violence and providing a second chance for youth.

Service reviews have been completed through 2015 with Psychological Services, Lake County Health Department, and NICASA Behavioral Health Services. Providers are scheduled to meet individually with Probation Officers in our conference room on a bi-monthly basis to discuss cases with respect to needs and progress. Providers have been open to our feedback and meeting our organization's needs.

The 11th Annual Girl Wise conference was held at CLC in Grayslake on 04-18-15 at the College of Lake County, Grayslake Campus with over 100 girls in attendance. In addition to Juvenile Division staff, committee members of the conference included agency participation from the Regional Office of Education, the College of Lake County, Omni Youth Services, the States Attorney's Office, Waukegan High School, Northern Illinois Counsel on Substance Abuse, One Hope United and the Attorney General's Office. The conference for 2016 is scheduled for the same location on 04-16-16.

This year, Jr's Challenge has paired up with Mundelein High School's Leadership Class. Mundelein High School (MHS) Teachers developed the new Leadership Class for the school and expressed interest in having Jr's Challenge incorporated into their curriculum. This collaborative venture will have 60 students this fall school semester and 30 students next spring school semester complete Jr's Challenge.

During the spring and fall semester of this year, the Juvenile Probation Unit coordinated internships with college students from various universities. The students were nearing the completion of their undergraduate degrees and learned valuable experiences working alongside of a juvenile probation officer and were able to apply the knowledge gained from their class work to practical application.

This year, the Job Readiness Program serviced youth and placed them at contracted work sites throughout Lake County. Unfortunately, the grant authority did not renew the application to continue the program for the remainder of the year.

Probation Officers continue to support the Juvenile Officers Association through their membership as well as serving on the board. Officers attend general meetings bi-monthly during the lunch hour at various locations throughout the County. For the upcoming year, Principle Probation Officer, Mario Urbina, has been elected to the Board to serve as Director and Senior Probation Officer Margo Ferretti, to serve as Secretary.

Juvenile staff is represented at the 19th Judicial Green Team meetings, the Lake County Gang Task Force meetings, the Hazardous Response Committee through Adult Probation, IPCSA, the Juvenile Justice Council, YES and the Lake County Sexual Assault Coordinating Council along with the Treatment committee.

In recognizing the duties and responsibilities (that include direct care of youth) of the Public Service Clerk, the position of Clerk has been upgraded to an Assistant Probation Officer position. Alejandro Guajardo was hired into the position in August of 2015. He has started working with FACE-IT residents supervising completion of public service hours at the soup kitchen in Waukegan. Alejandro has also served as a support to Probation Officers by assisting in the absence of Probation Officers as well as office coverage.

DETENTION

In January, six staff participated in the Washington Aggression Intervention Training (WAIT) which was provided through a grant obtained by the Illinois Collaboration on Youth to three jurisdictions including Lake County. This program directly addresses criminal thinking and has been implemented in the FACE-IT residential program with the hope of modifying the curriculum to use with the residents in the Detention Center.

The Detention Center nutrition program was audited by the Illinois State Board of Education and was found to be in compliance with requirements mandatory to receive monetary reimbursement.

Six additional staff and two volunteers have been trained in Restorative Justice/Peacekeeping Circle groups this year. The next step will include cross-training with other Detention Centers and further in-house training for all staff.

In January, Superintendent Sue Korpai was the recipient of the "Juvenile Justice" award by the Lake County Juvenile Officer's Association and the "Leadership and Excellence" award by the 19th Judicial Circuit. Also, a team of staff from the Detention Center including Tracy Sompolski, now an Adult Probation Officer, were awarded the "Environmental Sustainability" award from the 19th Judicial Circuit for their work on the detention center garden.

Tour requests continue to be in high demand for the Detention Center. In 2015, tours have been provided to school nurses from the Special Education District of Lake County (SEDOL), criminal justice students from Columbia College and a group of new police officers from the city of Highland Park.

In March, prospective interns were interviewed and two were accepted for the summer; one from University of Wisconsin-Parkside and one from Western Illinois University.

Three Juvenile Counselors, Katherine Wenger, Michael Shawn Chism and Matthew Schroeder attended Detention Basic training in Yorkville in March.

Black History month (February) and Women's History month (March) were celebrated with guest speakers including Executive Director Patricia Jones, Waukegan Township; Chief, Del Urban, North Chicago Fire Department; Juvenile Judge Sarah Lessman, Sandra Bankston, Children's Advocacy Center and Cynthia Vargas and Claudia Kasten, State's Attorney's office.