

Delinquency Prevention Council



2006 Annual Report

“I still think about what I’ve done and how I was completely stupid for doing what I did. I was supposed to be going to watch a movie with friends, but I went with some other kids—I should have stayed with my friends. But I ditched them and went with the other kids. I realize now I should pick my friends more closely and be careful of what I do”—Youth in the restorative justice programs commenting on the value of the programs

The Delinquency Prevention Council envisions that all children, youth and families grow and prosper because a positive and healthy environment is provided through collaborative efforts of individuals, organizations and institutions in Jefferson County communities.

Dear Citizens of Jefferson County:

This report highlights the efforts of the Delinquency Prevention Council during 2006 and the impact those efforts have had on the youth and families of Jefferson County. It also previews new programming for 2007. Some of the major accomplishments for 2006 include **the developmental asset youth survey** of most 7-12 graders in Jefferson County; the receipt of grants to **prevent truancy, address childhood obesity, and continue substance abuse prevention efforts**; continued community education, including a **gang identification and prevention seminar**; and **continued decrease in juvenile crime** as a result of the restorative justice programs.

Thank you to the members of the Council who volunteer their time, talents, and resources to make the work of the Council possible. We also thank Opportunities, Inc., Jefferson County, and the Department of Human Services for funding many of our programs and for their continued support of our efforts and mission. Finally, thank you to those individuals and organizations that have worked with the Council and its programs. Your efforts have improved the quality of life for Jefferson County's youth and families.

Respectfully submitted,

Bev Marten	Tim Roets	Kris Moelter	Don Nolan
Chairperson	Vice Chair	Director	Secretary

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROGRAMS

Teen Court

A 2005 cost-benefit analysis concluded that the teen court program resulted in a net present value to Jefferson County of at least \$75,400 annually. During 2006, the Center for Democracy in Action conducted a qualitative study of the program to determine the effects of teen court on youth participants. The study revealed that teen court has a positive effect on the choices youth make, increases self-esteem, and improves relationships with parents and peers.

Thirty-five youth were sentenced through teen court in 2006. Only one participant reoffended. Since the program inception, 481 youth have been sentenced, and only two percent reoffended within one year of program completion.

Community Service and Restitution

Jefferson County youth involved in the juvenile justice system completed over 3,500 community service hours in 2006. They performed community service at St. Coletta's by rebuilding furniture and gardening; at assisted living facilities by engaging in recreational activities with elderly and dementia residents; mentoring elementary-age children at the Boys and Girls Club; and helping with community activities.

Victims of juvenile crime were reimbursed almost \$9,400 in 2006.

The Teen Court difference

Here is what teen court participants have to say about how the program affected them:

"Teen court helped me see that there is way more out there than just trying to fit in and do what everyone else is doing. There are people making good choices...being involved in school events can be positive."

"I have a better sense of who I am—I don't let people change who I am or influence me. I stand up for myself more now."

"I'm involved in the school musical and play. I never would have thought of doing that before teen court."

"Actually I think I've gotten closer to everybody...It is kind of weird, you do something bad but something good comes out of it."

Educational Programs

The Council offers educational classes for first-time offenders and classes for youth experiencing substance abuse issues. In 2006, 29 youth completed educational classes, and only one reoffended after taking the class. Two youth were referred to the class but did not attend. Both of those youth have gone on to commit other delinquent acts.

Youth learn valuable lessons

Angela, age 16, had this to say six months after attending drug classes.

“I went into class with a closed mind and a couple of times I felt like I wanted to cry and I realized so much about myself in that class. We learned about our assets and things we hold dear. I knew what they were, but I realized that I had stopped caring about my family or what was going on at school. I kind of shut myself off. Since I have taken the class my mom and I talk a lot about why I did what I did. I have a little sister, and my actions weren’t only affecting me, but my sister, my mom and dad.”

Victim Offender Conferencing

The Victim Offender Conferencing program gives victims of juvenile crime the opportunity to meet with the offender and be involved in determining how the youth can best be held accountable for his/her actions. In 2006, none of the youth who participated in the program reoffended, and the victims expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the program.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Mentors do make a difference

There may be nothing harder for a teenager to deal with than the loss of a parent. Especially when a daughter must go through the loss of a mother at such a young stage in her development into an adult, it is hard for a father to fill that void of his daughter having a positive female influence in her life that she can turn to for advice and guidance. Realizing this and wanting to give his daughter a positive role model that could help ease this transition, Howard signed his daughter up for the Juvenile Mentoring Program.

As it turns out, much like his daughter, Molly, there was an available mentor with

In 2006 the Juvenile Mentoring Program began its fifth year of matching at-risk youth with a caring adult in a one-to-one mentoring relationship. In 2006, 14 youth were mentored, and only one had contact with the juvenile justice system. An evaluation of the program revealed that youth who are mentored experience improved relationships with their parents and increased school attendance. Both parents and mentors report that the youth show marked improvement in communication and attitude.

a similar experience to that of his daughter. Kate, the mentor with whom Molly would be matched, also experienced the loss of a parent at a young age. Molly and Kate developed a close bond with one another as the match developed. Molly felt comfortable enough to approach Kate with

typical issues teenage girls have, as her father consequently expressed having a better relationship with his daughter at home as well. Kate “gave my daughter someone to talk to besides her dad,” as Howard further expressed to the program coordinator that he could not thank Kate enough for the positive difference she made in his daughter’s life.

Drug Free Communities Support Program

Opportunities received second-year funding for the Drug-Free Communities Support Program grant. The \$100,000 grant allowed us to continue our juvenile substance abuse prevention programs. Specifically, in 2006 grant money has made it possible to train students from Lake Mills High School in how to develop and implement a social norms marketing campaign. One objective of the campaign is for the students to inform their peers as well as the community on the misperceptions of alcohol and drug use among high school teens. This information will be disseminated through two commercials to be aired on Charter television, the use of posters created by the students, and through school newspapers. Another objective of the campaign is to educate teens to use data and research to guide the decision-making process.

In addition, five focus groups were held throughout Jefferson County where teens were able to discuss their perceptions of alcohol and drug use. The information was collected, shared, and distributed to local coalitions, schools, and service providers.

Developmental Assets

Almost 5,400 Jefferson County youth in 7th – 12th grades participated in the survey, “Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors” in 2006. The purpose of the survey was to find out how young people think and feel as well as mobilize adults to provide more opportunities to youth for their healthy development.

Jefferson County youth reported an average of 17.7 of the 40 developmental assets, the highest number reported since Jefferson County began administering the survey in 1997. The more assets a youth has, the less likely the youth will engage in risk-taking behaviors and become involved in the juvenile justice system.

The survey revealed a **decrease** in youth:

- smoking cigarettes
- drinking alcohol
- attending parties where other youth were drinking
- using inhalants, marijuana, and other illicit drugs
- fighting, hitting, and threatening someone with physical harm
- gambling
- staying alone at home
- watching TV or videos

On the flipside, the survey data showed an **increase in thriving behaviors**, or values and activities that promote healthy development such as:

- succeeding in school
- having a caring school climate
- bonding to school
- family support
- positive relationships with other adults
- serving others
- having positive peer influences

Some of the positive values that youth reported as being “external compasses” to guide their choices were caring, equality and social justice, honesty, peaceful conflict resolution, restraint, and a sense of purpose.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

During 2006 the Delinquency Prevention Council sponsored several community education forums designed to provide current, best practice information in juvenile justice and youth development topics relevant to Jefferson County.

In April, Dennis Maloney, an innovator and national expert in juvenile balanced and restorative justice, spoke on ***Emerging Best Practices in Juvenile Justice***.

In October, Dr. Stephen Small from the University of Wisconsin came to Jefferson County and presented his report ***What Works, Wisconsin***, a cost-benefit analysis of prevention and intervention programs.

In November, the Council hosted a ***Gang Identification and Prevention*** seminar. Eighty people from throughout Wisconsin attended the seminar, which featured local and state wide experts in gang identification and best practice prevention/intervention programs.

NEW FOR 2007

Drug Free Communities Support Program

In 2007 the DFC Social Norms Marketing Campaign will shift its focus from teens to parents. Adult focus groups will be held throughout the county in an effort to understand adult perceptions of youth alcohol and drug use. Students in the Palmyra School District will receive social norms marketing education and develop a campaign for the youth and parents in their school district.

Community Service

The Restorative Justice Team will offer a new community service activity to further help youth and the community in which they live. A "Job Club" is currently being created to help youth find jobs. The team has developed weekly workshops that will include topics such as: interest inventories, completing job applications, interviewing tips, employer expectations, and developing budgets. Other areas that will be discussed at the "Job Club" will include helping with future professional goals, college applications, and prepping for college. To help get the workshop going, the team is offering an incentive program where the kids will receive community service credit if they complete all workshops, hand in 5 applications, and get a job. The first workshop is scheduled to start the middle of January. Any youth who obtain employment and who owe court-ordered restitution will allow Opportunities to garnish their paychecks until the restitution is paid.

Keeping Kids Connected

Opportunities received a \$5,000 from the AT&T Foundation to develop an interactive website aimed at keeping youth in school. The Delinquency Prevention Council, in partnership with local school districts, is looking at ways to keep youth from dropping out of school or becoming truant. The website will have information on resources such as alternative schools; mental health and AODA support; suicide prevention; and other information that will provide youth and their families with a direction on where to turn for help.

Childhood Obesity Prevention

The Delinquency Prevention Council and the Jefferson County Health Department received a one-year, \$50,000 grant from the Wisconsin Partnership Fund to develop a pilot childhood obesity prevention program. Beginning in the spring of 2007, the Council will work with Jefferson County Headstart to design a curriculum for obesity prevention in young children. The program will be evaluated, changes made, and then marketed to community-based child care facilities beginning in the fall of 2008.

MANAGING PUBLIC FUNDS RESPONSIBLY

The Council has brought over **\$1,351,000** into Jefferson County for its youth and family development programs since 1998 through federal, state, and private grants. Referrals to the juvenile justice system have decreased dramatically since that time; youth report an increase in developmental assets; community awareness of juvenile delinquency, its causes, and best practices for prevention has increased.

This report is dedicated to Corrie Potthier, a restorative justice specialist currently deployed in Iraq

and to

Sister Mary Lou for caring enough about youth to dedicate the last 10 years to teaching them new skills and values through community service at St. Coletta's.